

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. memo	Berger to Talbott re Possible FLOTUS travel to Central Asia (3 pages)	04/22/1997	P1/b(1)
002a. memo	Rumer to Berger re Memo for FLOTUS on Possible Travel to Central Asia (1 page)	04/22/1997	P1/b(1)
002b. briefing paper	FLOTUS Visit to Central Asia (17 pages)	nd	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Speechwriting (Noa Meyer Subject Files)
OA/Box Number: 13006

FOLDER TITLE:

Trip of the First Lady to Central Asia, Russia, and the Ukraine-Speechwriter Trip Book
(David) [Binder] [1]

2012-0869-S

kc948

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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- C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.
- PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
- RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

**TRIP OF THE FIRST
LADY TO
CENTRAL ASIA,
RUSSIA,
AND THE UKRAINE**

**SPEECHWRITER TRIP
BOOK**

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Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

Divider Title: **A - Kazakhstan**

David:

My father just called in with this quote, from Pliny's Natural History. I gave him your number and he may call back with more later today or tomorrow, but he too is a little swamped right now (it's Deerfield homecoming weekend or something).

The quote refers to Central Asia:

"There are the hinges of the world and the ultimate limit of the stars' revolutions ... It is a mysterious land where discord and illness are unknown; the whole population honors the gods and men die only when they are satiated with life."

★

FROM: RUSS HARDESTY

TO: KATY BUTTON

DATE: November 03, 1997

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FIRST LADY TRIP TO NIS

1. ALMATY, KAZAKSTAN- We have shipped one large box of medicines and supplies that will be staged at the Women's Wellness Center and pointed out to Mrs. Clinton during her visit. John Post is left Almaty where he coordinated with the embassy on details. A listing of the DoD medicines and a listing of Partnership/AIHA supplies that will be delivered to the hospital were faxed earlier to your office by Mr. Post.

2. BISHKEK & OSH, KYRGYZSTAN- A USG contracted IL-76 is schedule to arrive in Bishkek on the evening of November 11 carry several million dollars in commodity donated through the private volunteer organizations CitiHope, Heart-to-Heart, and Americorps. In early September, our office solicited CitiHope to conduct a survey in Bishkek to determine needs that might be met in conjunction with the First Lady's visit. The survey is completed and a humanitarian medical package funded by a grant through our office is being assembled which will furnish the 5 most badly needed pharmaceuticals to ten medical institutions in Bishkek. The Reverend Paul Moore worked very closely with our embassy, the Kyrgyz government and inparticular with the Kyrgyz First Lady, Mrs. Mairam Akayev, and The Meerim Foundation, an international chairitable organization founder by her in 1993 in putting together the Bishkek USG sponsored donation. We should have the CitiHope cargo manifest in the in the next few days and will fax it to your office. The private volunteer organization Heart-to-Heart is assembling a package for Osh as a follow-on to a \$6 million donation they made to the people of Kyrgystan through our office in October of 1996. A manifest of this cargo should also be available also in the next few days. Also on this mission per your request we will be transporting 5 pallets of children's clothing for Bishkek from Americorps and 2 pallets of similar items for Osh. This material will be distributed by Peace Corps personnel in Kyrgyzstan and Peace Corps will be arranging the details associated with this donation. Embassy was asked at our request to discuss this project with the preadvance team to see how something could fit into an event with FLOTUS. The Reverend Moore of CitiHope in his trip report giving a detailed outline of his visit to Bishkek recommends that the First Lady visit City Children's Hospital #3. Other suggested possible sites were the AIHA partnership hospitals, either the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology or the Institute of Oncology and Radiology. Jim Smith will be able to shed some light on their projects. Due to the limited time the First Lady will be in Bishkek, we have arranged for the humanitarian flight to be visible on the ramp during her visit. The embassy has suggested that the best time for her to make reference to this mission is during opening remarks at the airport when she

arrives. John Post of our office is in the region and will in Bishkek prior to the FLOTUS arrival to precoordinate the arrival of our November 11 scheduled mission and to tie up loose ends.

3. TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN- It is envisioned that the First Lady will participate in the opening of the Women's Wellness Center at Tashmii II, the AIHA Partnership hospital with the University of Illinois at Chicago medical school. You received a listing of supplies that will be staged at this center. In addition, selected DoD equipment such as exam tables and stainless steel medical cabinets will be available for turnover. John Post will make sure everything is in place for the turnover. Mrs. Clinton recently participated in our 500th Airlift/Operation Provide Hope mission at Andrews Air Force Base. In all, \$22 million in medicines and medical equipment/supplies were delivered in June. DoD excess medical equipment, donated equipment from the University of Illinois medical school and equipment purchased through AIHA will be available for display at the Women's Wellness Center.

4. NOVOSIBIRSK, RUSSIA- We had envisioned that some medicines would go on the FLOTUS aircraft. However, following a recommendation from the embassy in Moscow, a decision was made to NOT include the medicines based on the possibility that this would embarrass Mrs. Yeltsin. Heart-to-Heart is continuing to plan for a humanitarian mission to Novosibirsk in 1998 but it will not be announced by the First Lady. If it comes up during her visit, I would suggest that Mrs. Clinton should acknowledge that she is aware that the U.S. Department of State is working with Heart-to-Heart and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) to do a potential "Physicians With Heart" mission to the Novosibirsk region in calendar year 1998. Heart-to-Heart and AAFP will begin this process with a needs assessment visit to Novosibirsk in the spring of next year.

5. YEKATERINBURG, RUSSIA- S/NISC is not involved with any donations for this visit.

6. L'VIV, UKRAINE- Children of Chernobyl has committed to providing medicines and medical equipment/supplies and an ambulance for this project. A USG contracted IL-76 is scheduled to arrive in L'viv on November 6 carrying approximately \$650,000 in humanitarian cargo. We have furnished you today a breakdown of the CCRF cargo. Most of the cargo is destined for the L'viv Regional Childrens Pediatric center and includes neonatal resuscitation equipment, medicines and medical supplies and an ambulance, all approved for import by the Ukrainian Ministry of Health. Another suggestion- AIHA has a very successful partnership between Henry Ford Health System in Detroit and the L'viv Oblast Clinical Hospital- a neonatology resuscitation training center. Two medical professionals from the L'viv partnership are currently in Detroit for training. We have arranged for them to carry a donation of medicines and supplies that will be there prior to the First Lady's arrival. John Post faxed you an inventory last week. Jim Smith can

provide more details concerning this Partnership. Along with the CCRF cargo scheduled to arrive on 6 November we are including 5 pallets of cold weather clothing and relief supplies being organized by Congresswoman Kaptur from Ohio. These items will be distributed by Peace Corps volunteers near L'viv. AHewitt is coordinating. Nadiya Matkewsky of CCRF will of course be on the ground in L'viv. We have had lengthy discussions with USAID and the embassy in Kiev coordinating the FLOTUS trip concerning Nadiya and the importance of making her a part of the program in Lviv. They assure me they are use to working with Nadiya. Marta Kolomeyets, one of the prime coordinators of the FLOTUS visit, is a personal friend of Miss Matkewsky and has her well in hand.

PUBLIC THEMES FOR THE FIRST LADY'S VISIT
TO KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, UZBEKISTAN, RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

The First Lady's November visit to Central Asia, Russia and Ukraine will underscore the continuing United States interest in developing close bilateral relations with these countries and using people-to-people partnerships throughout the region to foster the establishment of democratic institutions, educational opportunities and a responsive social safety net. The First Lady will also pay tribute to the cultural achievements of the region as a means of highlighting the long history of ethnic and religious tolerance. Mrs. Clinton will visit regions not frequented by high-level officials and she will devote considerable time to meeting with ordinary citizens and grassroots organizations to focus attention on the building blocks of civil society.

Central Asia, where the trip will begin, is a resource-rich region whose history is associated with the Silk Road, Tamerlane and the imperial rivalries of the 19th century. Today, the countries of this region are in the formative stages of defining and asserting their identities following the break-up of the Soviet Union. The United States was among the first countries to recognize the independence of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and has consistently supported the development of these countries as democratic states with market economies.

Since gaining independence in 1992, these countries have taken remarkable strides to establish themselves as independent states with effective governing institutions. Kyrgyzstan has been especially successful in developing responsive democratic institutions that protect human rights and foster the rule of law. No longer tied solely to Moscow, these countries are now establishing links with one another, their neighbors as well as with the broader international community. Almaty, Bishkek and Tashkent each regard relations with the U.S. as pivotal.

By visiting Novosibirsk and Yekaterinburg in Russia and Lviv in Ukraine, the First Lady will be recognizing the importance of regional and local initiative in developing democratic governance and prosperous economies. Her visit will symbolize the commitment the United States is making, through the Partnership for Freedom, to encouraging the establishment of self-sustaining cooperative relationships at the regional level by businesspeople, educators, journalists, healthcare workers and local government officials.

Independence has also engendered fundamental economic changes. Most of these countries are rich in natural resources and are now working with outside investors - including Americans - to develop them effectively. In many cases, the expensive and highly subsidized social guarantees of the Soviet era have not yet been replaced by a viable, affordable safety net or the broad-based economic growth needed to sustain those suffering from the effects of economic dislocation. The First Lady's visit will highlight U.S. efforts to help these societies alleviate the hardship of these difficult transitions.

Since 1992, the U.S. has demonstrated its commitment to the NIS by providing over \$8 billion in technical and humanitarian assistance to the region since 1992. These programs reflect our national interest in encouraging these countries to become responsible members of the international community. Moreover, the American people support initiatives that help these countries improve the quality of their healthcare systems and that promote expanded people-to-people contacts through educational exchanges and community partnerships. Our policy also recognizes the importance of this region for American business and promotes the development of market economies that are open to outside investment.

In Almaty, Mrs. Clinton will focus on building democratic institutions. She will deliver a speech at the Central Asian Conference on Women in Politics and she will meet with Kazakhstani youth leaders. In Bishkek, the First Lady will continue to focus on the next generation of leaders with an event at the opening of the Kyrgyz-American University. She will also highlight Kyrgyzstan's exemplary performance on economic reform by visiting a U.S.-Kyrgyz program that provides loans to small businesses.

The First Lady's trip to Uzbekistan will highlight the importance of religious tolerance and human rights as part of our bilateral relationship, and of health and education, especially for women, as the focus of our humanitarian effort and as keys to economic development. She will also pay homage to the rich heritage of the region with visits to the historic cities of Bukhara and Samarkand. Mrs. Clinton will also meet with the president and First Lady in each of the Central Asian capitals she visits.

President Yeltsin's wife Naina, like the President himself, is a native of Yekaterinburg and she will host the First Lady's visit there. Mrs. Yeltsina first met her

husband at the Urals Polytechnic Institute, which Mrs. Clinton will visit. Mrs. Clinton and Mrs. Yeltsin will also pay tribute to the positive contributions of U.S.-Russian cooperative programs by visiting a clinic that benefits from a U.S.-Russian partnership in healthcare. They will also meet with members of a leading local women's organization and attend a concert of the Yekaterinburg Symphony Orchestra.

In Novosibirsk, the First Lady will visit Akademgorodok, one of Russia's preeminent scientific centers which has also been in the vanguard of educational innovation at the secondary level and has maintained long-standing student-exchange partnerships with American schools. While there, she will give a speech accenting the importance role of educational institutions in building a civil society. Mrs. Clinton will also salute the pioneering spirit of Siberia by spending some time interacting with the local population.

In Lviv, Mrs. Clinton will be hosted by Ukrainian First Lady Ludmila Kuchma. Events planned there will highlight the important role that ethnic and religious tolerance play in democratic societies. A speech before an audience of prominent Ukrainian women will conclude the visit.

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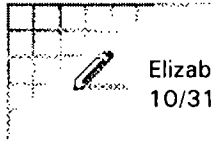
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Elizabeth R. Newman
10/31/97 05:14:53 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Remarks by Samuel Berger at NSC 50th Anniversary Symposium

THE WHITE HOUSE

**Office of the Press Secretary
(Palm Beach, Florida)**

**For Immediate Release
October 31, 1997**

As Prepared for Delivery

REMARKS BY SAMUEL R. BERGER ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

**NSC 50TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM
WASHINGTON, DC**

OCTOBER 31, 1997

I'm delighted to welcome this impressive gathering and to thank you for helping us celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Security Council.

This, of course is also the 50th anniversary of the Department of Defense, the CIA and the Air Force. DoD held a full-honor ceremony with honor guard, bands and a 19-gun salute. The CIA had a week-long celebration and one of the largest tents ever assembled. The Air Force had a forty-foot long birthday cake.

I think it is only appropriate that the NSC commemorate the occasion in a more modest and reflective manner. We have tried to be creative in marking this milestone. After many years of effort, we minted an NSC medallion. And with Hollywood's help, in recent months, National Security Advisors have penetrated popular culture – from the conniving self-promoter in the movie "Contact" to the arrogant egghead who is one of the first to be killed by the terrorists in "Air Force One" to the twisted zealot in "Murder at 1600" who tries to force the

President to resign to the self-important drone who is rendered irrelevant by his daredevil staffer in "The Peacemaker." I don't know who was the role model for these characters, but I would point out that each of these movies was in process before I assumed this job.

As you turn the pages of the last fifty years of American foreign policy, from the Korean War to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the opening to China to Camp David, the Helsinki Final Act to the Madrid NATO enlargement summit, Desert Storm to the Dayton Accords, the NSC has been at the heart of debate, decision and action. I'm very proud to continue the course that has been blazed so well by an extraordinary group of statesmen. With each new day I hold this job, my admiration for the patience and persistence of my predecessors grows.

Of course, much has changed over the past 50 years – in the world in which we live and the way we do our job. Today, I want to talk to you about both as we work to advance our security and our leadership on the threshold of the 21st century.

Over the last five decades, determined American engagement – shaped in part by many of the people in this room – built the institutions and sustained the investments that strengthened our security, advanced democracy and ultimately won the Cold War. Today, because of the bipartisan and sustained assault that broke through the East-West barrier, a world of opportunity has opened before us – a world where democracy, free markets and peace are embraced with increasing resolution by a growing portion of the world.

But let us have no illusions: This new state of affairs also has brought new challenges for the custodians of foreign policy. In the absence of a unifying enemy abroad, many Americans – and the press that sustains public understanding – want to focus on problems at home. Decisions that once were measured through the prism of the Soviet threat -- from where and when we intervene to the creation of security alliances to whether and to whom we give foreign assistance -- must now be weighed in a more complex calculus. And the response time – indeed, the debate time – for decisions of state rapidly is accelerating in an age when even decision makers sometimes learn of key developments at the same moment as the public, from CNN.

In this more complex environment, some long for an overarching axiom that would capture, in one embrative phrase, the essence of America's interests abroad, that would provide the single lodestar for our engagement. Others, with the best of intentions, would define all our relationships abroad around some single value: religious freedom or nonproliferation, arms control or economics.

We must be clear and rigorous about defining America's interests. But let us also be clear that as the world's greatest power, those interests are wide-ranging, sometimes in tension and occasionally at odds. As we define and pursue our interests in this new world environment, let us not substitute doctrine for values, slogan for judgment or metaphor for analysis. Foreign policy is not the business of writing a blanket prescription. It's the business of making the smartest choices to achieve the strongest results.

Our policy must respond to the complexity of the world we face. Our first obligation, is to try to understand clearly what has changed and what has not; and then, to chart the course that best advances, overall, our values and our interests. Half a century ago, the stewards of America's foreign policy were "present at the creation" of a durable international order. Today, we must pioneer its durable *transformation* -- making sure that America remains the world's strongest force for peace, prosperity and freedom.

The touchstones of our policy have not and will not change: ensuring that America's diplomacy and military are the best in the world, bar none, even in a budgetary environment that has become increasingly difficult and where the competition for resources is fiercer than ever. As far as I can tell, the passage of time has not repealed either the laws of gravity or the laws of aggression, human nature, or self-aggrandizing nationalism, as the actions of Saddam Hussein this week prove once again. We are working closely with the other members of the UN Security Council to ensure that UN resolutions are fully respected.

America will always be prepared to defend its interests – with others when we can and alone when we must. America must always be willing to lead the community of free nations. But these enduring truths must be adapted to new times. And today, our time increasingly is defined by the forces of global integration. Integration is not new in itself, but the pace of change today moves almost exponentially.

The very creation of the NSC was part of America's growing realization that foreign engagement to prevent war mattered. In the wake of the most devastating conflict of all time, we knew our security could no longer be protected by a policy of isolation. We knew that America had a unique ability, and responsibility, to lead.

Today, the United States looks out at the world from the pinnacle of our power. Our economy is booming. Our military is unrivaled. Yet even more than in 1947, America's well-being is tied to the rest of the world. Of all the changes that have sparked this new reality, let me mention three:

One, the fact that no great power is our enemy, but several states with the greatest ability to help or harm our interests are in the midst of profound transitions whose outcomes are not yet known;

Two, the rise of the global economy, which brings us new opportunities for growth, but also makes us more dependent on the prosperity and security of others; and

Three, revolutions in technology and communications that shrink the distance between nations and extend the reach of the values that America holds most dear – but which ironically also feed counter-forces of disintegration and destruction – terrorists, drug traffickers and organized criminals – that disregard national borders.

What must we do to protect our security within this new environment?

First, we must adjust the way we view balances of power. During the Cold War, our interests lay in weakening a single enemy and aligning the forces that opposed it. To be sure, history can repeat itself, but it is not preordained to do so. The march of freedom in recent years is striking – but it is not yet secure. We must seize this moment of relative peace to lock in its gains. At this stage, America could be far more threatened by Russia's weakness or China's isolation than from either one's stability and success.

America has led in building a network of institutions and arrangements to consolidate democracy's progress and to fight against its threats. And as nations draw closer, peace grows stronger as each develops a vested interest in helping the other succeed.

In Europe, we are helping the newly free nations develop their market democracies; forging a constructive partnership with a democratic Russia; and adapting NATO to take on new challenges with new members, new partners and new relationships with Russia and Ukraine.

In the Asia Pacific, we are modernizing our alliance with Japan for the 21st century; working to open markets throughout the region and promote prosperity through the move toward a free trade area; and focusing sharply on the real dangers to peace on the Korean peninsula – the Cold War's last armed frontier.

This week's summit between America and China was a milestone. It demonstrated that America could pursue a policy of engagement with integrity – advancing our interests without compromising our values. China is home to one-fourth the world's people. We cannot simply turn our backs. By broadening areas of cooperation, such as stopping the spread of nuclear weapons or trying to promote peace in Korea while candidly but respectfully discussing our differences in areas like human rights, publicly and privately, we are charting a course that will define our relations with much of the world for the next generation.

In our own hemisphere, in just the last 15 years, a quiet revolution of democracy and free markets has dramatically transformed Latin America's landscape – raising new prospects for partnership between the United States and our neighbors. The bonds of hemispheric cooperation were laid at the Summit of the Americas in Miami; solidified through the Mexican peso crisis and our collective response to Haiti; most recently enhanced in the President's visit to Venezuela, Brazil, and Argentina and will grow even stronger in Santiago this spring as we build on our efforts to make the Americas a mainstay of freedom and prosperity.

We are also reaching out to post-colonial, democratic, market-oriented Africa – to help those nations become full partners in the 21st century world. President Clinton will travel there next year.

Our second challenge is to harness the force of the whirlwind global economy – maximizing its benefits but mitigating its burdens.

In 1947, trade accounted for ten cents on the dollar of our GDP. Today, it accounts for forty percent; and exports support more than 12 million American jobs. Back then, tremors in

foreign financial markets were generally contained within national borders. But as we saw this week, when traders, buyers and investors move billions of dollars around the globe every day, shock waves in Bangkok stock markets are felt as far away as Bonn and Buenos Aires within hours.

The increasing openness of the global economy that has been achieved in recent years through NAFTA, GATT, and hundreds of other trade agreements since 1993, and the internal reforms of nations from Chile to Poland, unquestionably boosts prosperity. But it also creates dislocation – sometimes increasing the gap between the haves and have-nots, even as wealth rises overall. The risk is more than social. People who feel only the burdens of globalization will be quick to reject the values of openness it promotes. Ultimately, the backlash can become so strong that democracy itself is endangered.

That is why, even as we pursue a strategy of promoting open markets, we must also work to preserve the social contract on which public cohesion depends.

It would be disastrous for America to try to escape the global economy. We are just 4 percent of the world's population. If we want to maintain our standard of living and continue creating good new jobs, we must keep reaching out to the 96 percent of the world that lives beyond our borders. Over the past four years, more than a third of our growth has been driven by overseas trade. And behind those statistics are thousands of new high-paying jobs for Americans. That is why the fast track authority the President is seeking is so important. The House vote November 7th will be a defining moment.

All of you know the economic arguments for fast track. But it is not just an issue of economics. It's an issue of American engagement in this new world – in short, an issue of national security. Like it or not, the rest of the world views fast track as a reflection of whether America intends to live up to our legacy of leadership, or cede the terrain to others.

When this bill comes up in the House on Friday, it truly will be a vote heard 'round the world.

Consider what could happen if we don't have fast track. American leadership is not divisible. If we fail to lead on trade, our influence will suffer in other areas important to our security. It will send a signal to emerging markets that America is walking away – undermining the developing trend toward free market policies and democracy. It will weaken our relationship with Latin America, as they turn, by our own default, to Europe and Asia – damaging our cooperation on issues ranging from drug trafficking to immigration. And in Asia, where America is viewed as a crucial balance wheel of stability, it will call our engagement into doubt – with serious repercussions on our interests.

With the strongest, most competitive economy in the world today, what does America have to fear? We can walk down the path of leadership we have held to for 50 years – the path that led to half a century of unparalleled prosperity and peace. Or we can walk down the path of isolation – shrinking back, turning inward, ceding our leadership to others – with the

knowledge that isolation in an interdependent world is, more than ever, a path that leads to America's decline. That's the fast track choice we face. It's that stark – and that important.

Economic integration and growth in other countries not only advance our prosperity; they also advance peace and stability. It's no accident that in Latin America, for example, the resurgence of economic growth and democracy have developed in tandem. But to secure the roots of often fragile democracies, leaders from Africa to Europe to the Americas are facing a common challenge: The more they can show that democracy delivers, the more likely that democracy will endure.

Even as governments break down barriers to trade, they must equip their people with the education, training and tools to succeed in the global economy. This is true in America, where the rising tide of trade does not lift all the boats the same, and where we must work to ensure that the benefits and burdens of globalization are shared fairly – for example, by educating our children and our workforce to join the new economy. And it's true in the developing world as well, where growth without greater equity does not provide the solid foundation in which democracy can endure.

The third 21st century challenge I want to touch on today is our interest in supporting the powerful trends that are bringing nations together, while forging coalitions to fight the threats that actually intensify as the world grows closer.

In 1947, the first TVs were being introduced into American homes. Today, you can tune-in to CNN in more than 200 countries around the world. Then, we still spoke (and sometimes listened) on party lines. Today, with satellites, modems and faxes, millions of voices, images and texts flash around the world every day. Then, the first electronic digital computer was one-year old, weighed 30 tons and occupied an entire 40-by-40 foot room. Today, college students have lap-tops – and kids are learning to explore the World Wide Web before they can cross the street.

Undoubtedly, these developments enrich our lives. But the very same technology and openness also can be exploited – by organized criminals plotting together from disparate parts of the globe, drug traffickers conspiring to launder their gains or terrorists trying to build lethal weapons with blueprints retrieved off the Internet. These forces do not recognize boundaries or respect national sovereignty. Indeed, they possess the resources once reserved only for nation-states. Taken together, they have the power to sabotage nations, as in Colombia. They have the corrupting wealth to eat away at the very foundations of fragile democracies until they crumble. And they have the potential to alter fundamentally our own sense of personal safety and well-being in ways that ultimately could challenge our freedom.

We must see these threats as among the most serious national security challenges of our time. We are greatly strengthening law enforcement and intelligence cooperation with our partners. We are opening FBI offices around the world. We've launched intensive international efforts to deprive these outlaws of their ill-gotten gains, to deny safe haven to terrorists, and to shut down the gray markets that sell weapons and false documents. We reached half-way around

the world to capture Mir Amal Kansi, accused of murdering CIA employees in Virginia, and Ramsi Yousef, now on trial for the World Trade Center bombing. We've sanctioned states that sponsor terrorism and worked to get our allies to strengthen their support.

We're also strengthening collective action against the spread of dangerous weapons – through arms control regimes like the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Nonproliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; toughening the mechanisms to control the spread of technologies, equipment and material; and designing regional approaches to reduce incentives for proliferation.

And, overall, we're making investments today that will reduce danger tomorrow – whether helping develop new energy supplies in the Caspian, protecting our critical infrastructure against the threat of cyber-terrorism or taking out an insurance policy on the future with a sensible, sound response to the very real threat of climate change.

The world is different than it was 50 years ago when the NSC was established. Certainly the texture of government and the tools of diplomacy have changed. But the mission is the same: to meet the obligations of American leadership. That means ensuring we have the resources we need to get the job done right. It means ensuring this moment of opportunity isn't squandered by partisan bickering. It means ensuring that even as Congress plays a greater foreign policy role, we resist the trend toward one-issue legislation that threatens to isolate America from its allies instead of securing our place at the core of a new international consensus. I'm hopeful that if we work together, we can restore the bipartisan consensus on America's global leadership that has kept our nation strong for 50 years.

The half-century mark is a time for looking back, for taking stock and setting your sights ahead. And as private citizens and public servants, you feel more than ever the sacred charge to leave for future generations an even better world than you enjoyed.

In the preface of his memoirs, Dean Acheson noted, "History is lived forwards but it is written in retrospect. We know the end before we consider the beginning and we can never wholly recapture what it was like to know the beginning only." Today, thanks in part to many in this room, we stand at the beginning of an era more hopeful than any we have ever known before. Fifty years from now, we want our children and theirs to look back on this time and be able to say we laid the basis for a world that is more free, secure, prosperous and healthy than ever... a world in which our interests and ideals are protected, and where America and Americans can thrive.

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Divider Title: **B – Recent News**

First Lady's November Trip to Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan,
Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan

KAZAKHSTAN

Background Papers

- Main Issues in Bilateral Relations
- Political/Social Overview
- Economic/Commercial Overview
- Human Rights Overview
- Ethnic and Religious Issues
- Education System and Issues
- Women's Issues
- Population and Family Planning Issues
- Children's Issues
- Health Issues
- Overview of U.S. Assistance Program
- Environmental Issues
- Overview of U.S. Embassy

Event Papers

- Arrival/Departure Statements

Other Materials

- Biographies
- Background Notes/Fact Sheets
- Almaty Scenesetters

KAZAKHSTAN: MAIN ISSUES IN BILATERAL RELATIONS

U.S. ties with Kazakhstan have broadened and deepened since the early, post-independence focus on non-proliferation. Kazakhstan became a non-nuclear weapons state in 1995, but other issues of vital U.S. interest - access to energy resources, a stable investment climate, economic reform and democratic development - flesh out a maturing relationship.

Energy issues. The core U.S. strategic interest in Kazakhstan now is the development and delivery to world markets of Kazakhstani oil and gas. Kazakhstan has world-class oil reserves and its Tengiz oil field alone is one of the top ten in the world. The U.S. and Kazakhstan agree on the need to develop multiple pipeline routes to get Kazakhstani oil and gas to market. Multiple routes lessens both dependency on a given neighbor and interruption of the flow of energy because of natural disaster or political exigency. The U.S. supports routes that are commercially viable and which do not profit Iran. Kazakhstan takes a more expedient view and we seek to discourage Kazakhstan from including Iran in its export and pipeline planning.

U.S. investment. Promoting Kazakhstan's stability and independence are critical to U.S. and Western access to its energy resources. The Kazakhstanis, in turn, recognize that greater foreign investment and access to Western technology will be key to developing the resources that fuel economic and social growth, and promote political stability. This symbiosis has resulted in tremendous U.S. investment (an estimated \$1 billion) and Kazakhstani officials like to note that some 40% of foreign investment in their country is American. The Kazakhstani government views this investment as evidence of a long term U.S. commitment to it and an important counterbalance to what it terms a "tough neighborhood" that includes Russia, China, and Iran.

Reform imperative. The U.S. has stressed that greater increases in foreign investment will require more transparency in privatization, control over pervasive corruption and further economic reform, all areas in which the U.S. provides technical assistance. Kazakhstan is on the right track but will require implementation of concrete measures in such areas as improved customs processing, transparency in the tendering process, streamlined registration of businesses, and correcting distorted VAT and customs duties.

Non-proliferation. Although Kazakhstan is no longer a nuclear weapons state, non-proliferation issues remain as a major focus of the relationship. In 1997, the U.S. fulfilled its obligations

to Kazakhstan for the 1995 transfer of 600 kilograms of weapons-grade uranium to the United States. Under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat program, we have provided assistance to Kazakhstan in the form of export control programs, material protection control and accounting (MPC&A), support at Kazakhstani nuclear facilities, and assistance for the destruction and dismantlement of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) facilities.

Democratization and human rights. Human rights are generally respected, abuses limited, and citizens enjoy basic freedoms of religion and speech. In the main, the government respects freedom of the press; there are several small opposition parties, and the media frequently disseminate critical views. The president is the dominant political force, however, and parliament and the judiciary remain weak. The police sometimes harass opposition figures. U.S. assistance is focused on legal reform and on encouraging the legislature to assert its prerogatives. The American Embassy recently sponsored the first nationwide televised debates for Senate candidates in Almaty. The U.S. will be urging that the upcoming 1999 parliamentary elections, and 2000 presidential elections be free and fair. Ethnic Slavs and other minorities are concerned about state-sanctioned preferences in favor of ethnic Kazakhs. President Nazarbayev has emphasized that all nationalities are entitled to equal treatment under the law.

Defense cooperation. The military-to-military relationship is in good shape. The U.S. worked this September with Kazakhstan and its Central Asian partners (Uzbekistan and Krygyzstan) to complete a successful peacekeeping exercise in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This activity, held "in the spirit" of NATO's Partnership for Peace, reflects Kazakhstan's desire to integrate itself more closely with Western security structures.

KAZAKHSTAN - POLITICAL AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW

Increasingly strong presidency. Kazakhstan is politically stable, but with political power concentrated heavily in the presidency. President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was the head of the Communist Party in Kazakhstan prior to independence, has been the nation's only leader since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. He strengthened his political grip in 1995 when he dissolved the parliament and stage-managed two Soviet-style referenda, both marred by serious irregularities. The first approved a new constitution that increased the power of the presidency at the expense of the legislature. The second extended his term in office until the year 2000.

Weak Parliament. Other political institutions in Kazakhstan are weak and unfocused. The parliament is not a serious player and has taken only a few tentative steps to insert itself into debate on issues of national import. In 1996, for example, it twice challenged government efforts to raise the retirement age, but ultimately backed off in the face of Nazarbayev's threat to dissolve parliament. The parliament has also debated the propriety of signing new leases with Russia for use of military test ranges on Kazakhstani territory. The deputies are responding to real public concerns over the catastrophic environmental damages caused by testing in the past. Last session, parliamentary deputies initiated nineteen pieces of legislation; however, parliament is primarily a reactive body. To be a truly effective counterweight, the deputies need to take the initiative, for example, through introduction of more legislation and the holding of public hearings.

Weak judiciary. The judicial system is, if anything, even weaker. Judges are appointed by the executive branch, beholden to it, woefully underpaid, and susceptible to corruption. There is no tradition of judicial independence.

Splintered opposition. A nascent Almaty-based political opposition is disorganized, undermined by rivalries and, when its leaders are not co-opted by the government, subject to harassment. The largest organized movement is the Communist party, but its support is limited almost exclusively to pensioners. The opposition has a number of significant pocketbook issues on which to score the government. Economic dislocations are real: in some localities wages have not been paid for months and pension arrearages are a nationwide problem. But the demonstrations the opposition has been able to muster have been relatively small. Leaders of democratic opposition groups are widely seen as members of the "intelligentsia" not attuned to working class concerns.

Social indicators. Kazakhstan's social indicators, while declining, compare favorably with the rest of Central Asia. In 1996, life expectancy was 66 years, adult literacy was 98 percent, and the infant mortality rate was 40/1000. Kazakhstan's population has declined by almost 1 million since independence because of increasing mortality, falling birth rates, and emigration by ethnic Russians who perceive diminishing economic opportunities. [The social tension between ethnic Russians, who now see themselves as on the outs, and ethnic Kazakhs, now perceived as on the ascendancy in terms of influence and access to political power, is an increasingly sensitive issue.]

Declining social spending. The decay of Kazakhstan's social infrastructure has worsened considerably since 1991, as the government drastically reduced spending on education and health care. The government recognizes that deteriorating social conditions must be addressed; hence its haste to develop the energy resources that will provide badly needed revenues.

Future prospects. Because government revenues are unlikely to grow significantly before the turn of the century, when new pipelines come on line, living standards are likely to continue to decline in the near term. Revenues from an ambitious privatization program, now nearly completed, can meet only a small percentage of needs and will be whittled away further by pervasive corruption. What social services there are will increasingly be provided by private entities, but principally to those who can afford to pay for them. The key for the government will be how it copes with any social unrest generated by income inequalities. In the long term, buoyed by increased oil and gas revenues, a more dynamic private sector, and a commitment by the government to address social concerns, Kazakhstan could make real progress toward a democratic, free-market society. *tough road*

KAZAKHSTAN: ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL OVERVIEW

Dramatic economic decline. Kazakhstan's economy, largely dependent upon extraction and export of its vast energy resource, as well as agricultural production, was severely battered in the years immediately following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Trade dislocations caused by the breakup resulted in a decline in GDP and industrial output of 54 and 52 percent, respectively, between 1990 and 1996. The hardest hit sectors of the economy were in machine building, chemicals, construction, light industry, and agriculture. As output fell, state revenues shrank dramatically, forcing the government to drastically cut expenditures, including wages and pensions to state workers. By early 1997, these arrears equaled nearly 4 percent of GDP.

Bottoming out? Kazakhstan's early willingness to move ahead rapidly with macro-economic reform, especially in tax and commercial law, may finally be paying off. The government has maintained reasonably tight control over credit growth and deficit spending, resulting in a lowering of monthly inflation from 23 percent in 1994 to just over 1 percent in 1997. Kazakhstan's currency, the tenge, has been relatively stable. In 1996, the economy for the first time recorded modest growth.

New Prime Minister's uncertain commitment to reform. Much of this success can be attributed to the policies of former Prime Minister Kazahegeldin, who resigned from office on October 10, ostensibly for health reasons. President Nazarbayev named Nulan Balgimbayev, who was the head of the state oil company as the new PM, promising that economic policies would stay the course. It is too early to judge.

Privatization. Although the government maintained a steady commitment to macro-economic stabilization policies, its implementation of measures to promote private sector growth have not been as successful. While small firms are almost entirely in private hands, privatization has moved forward only fitfully for large-scale enterprises. A shift in 1994 away from "instant" privatization to hiring foreign advisors to restructure enterprises and prepare them for privatization has been moderately successful, with several large enterprises (mostly in the energy sector) having been sold to foreign investors. However, efforts by some ministries to keep some medium-size and larger firms (and their revenue flows) in government hands have undermined the process and underscored the pervasive corruption that plagues Kazakhstan. The government claims to have "corrected" this problem and asserts privatization will be completed by the end of 1998. Again, the October change in government may undermine the commitment to privatization.

Foreign investment. Kazakhstan has tried to create an attractive business climate for foreign investors, passing laws that in principle guarantee fair treatment and foster a more Western-style business environment. As a result, Kazakhstan received some \$3.5 billion in foreign investment -- mostly in the all important oil and gas sector - by the end of 1996. Nevertheless, in practice Kazakhstan's inadequate legal infrastructure, frequent tax changes, and cumbersome, often corrupt bureaucracy pose serious obstacles to foreign investors.

U.S. investment. U.S. investment in Kazakhstan amounts to roughly 40 percent of total foreign investment, or \$1.4 billion. There are more than 85 U.S. companies resident in Kazakhstan. Most of these are in the oil and gas, power generation, legal, and accounting businesses. The principal U.S. policy goal in this area is to ensure that U.S. companies have equal access and that awards are made in an open and transparent manner.

WTO membership. Kazakhstan has observer status in, and is seeking to join, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the U.S. has been providing technical assistance on its application. Kazakhstan is on track for membership in 1998, although the USTR has indicated that Kazakhstan must accelerate changes in trade practices and implementing legislation if it is to meet that ambitious goal.

KAZAKHSTAN - HUMAN RIGHTS

Mixed record. Kazakhstan falls somewhere in the middle ground in Central Asia in the promotion and protection of human rights. It trails neighboring Krygyzstan in actual practice, for example, on the holding of free and fair elections. It is certainly ahead of the game when compared with Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan on the issue of press freedom.

Strong presidency. The Constitution of Kazakhstan concentrates power in the presidency; President Nursultan Nazarbayev is the dominant political figure. The President, while not a democrat, can neither be described as an absolute autocrat. He comes out of a system where dissent was unknown and is clearly not entirely comfortable with the practices of a modern democracy. He is realistic enough to tolerate, however, the trappings of democracy, as well as some of its give and take, in order to attract Western investment and political acceptance. The Constitution, adopted by a 1995 referendum marred by irregularities, permits the president to legislate by decree and dominate the legislature and judiciary; it cannot be changed or amended without the president's consent.

Weak parliament and judiciary. Presidential elections originally scheduled for 1996 did not take place, as President Nazarbayev's term in office was extended to 2000 in a separate 1995 referendum, also marred by irregularities. The 1995 Constitution limited parliament's powers, although members of parliament have exercised their right to introduce legislation. The judiciary remains under the control of the president and the executive branch and its lack of independence has made it difficult to root out pervasive government corruption. Judges reportedly can be bought and may even solicit bribes for favorable rulings. However, the October 13 appointment of new Justice Minister Bayurzhan Mukhamedmetov could improve the situation. Mukhamedmetov is well-respected and committed to fighting corruption. He also wants to restructure the Kazakhstani judiciary on the U.S. model.

Basic human rights. Government respect for the basic human rights of its citizens is uneven. Citizens enjoy in theory -- and more often than not in practice -- basic rights of freedom of religion, speech and assembly. Kazakhstan is in the process of reforming its legal system and legislators have adopted a new criminal code. Human rights observers nevertheless assert that the legal system remains riddled by corruption. Law enforcement officials often exploit minor infractions of the law to arrest and detain government opponents. Members of the security forces

often beat or otherwise abuse detainees; arrests can be arbitrary; and prolonged detention without charge is a problem.

Right to privacy. The government sporadically infringes on citizens' rights to privacy. Kazakhstani authorities are suspected of tapping phones and monitoring the correspondence of some members of the political opposition.

Media self-censorship. While the government generally tolerates independent media, the media practices self-censorship, particularly when reporting on Nazarbayev. Freedom of assembly is sometimes restricted; organizations must apply for official permits prior to staging a demonstration (most are granted) and some organizers of unsanctioned demonstrations have been arrested and fined or imprisoned. Freedom of association, while generally respected, is sometimes hindered by complicated registration requirements for organizations and political parties.

Discrimination against women and minorities. The government discriminates in favor of ethnic Kazakhs and against women, the disabled and ethnic minorities. The government has tried to limit the influence of independent trade unions, both directly and through its support for state-sponsored unions, and independent trade unions have been harassed.

KAZAKHSTAN - ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Ethnic diversity. Kazakhstan's population of about 16 million consists of approximately 45 percent ethnic Kazakhs, 35 percent ethnic Slavs (principally Russians), as well as numerically significant German and Asian minorities. In May 1997, for what appears to be political reasons, the government announced that ethnic Kazakhs accounted for 51 percent of the population; most observers agree that this is not yet the case.

Exodus of non-Kazakhs. The government's announcement may have heightened the anxiety felt by Kazakhstan's non-Kazakh peoples -- and particularly ethnic Russians -- who perceive continuing governmental preferences for ethnic Kazakhs. Indeed, in the first year of independence, the government's "Kazakhification" program almost certainly accelerated an exodus of ethnic Russians, although lack of opportunity as Kazakhstan's economy collapsed served as the principal impetus for emigration. Recognizing that the "brain drain" of well-educated ethnic Slavs was detrimental to at least its short term interest, the government has backed away from "Kazakhification" and President Nazarbayev has publicly emphasized that all nationalities are welcome in Kazakhstan.

Continued ethnic discrimination. While ethnic Russian outflow has slowed, it has not stopped. The government continues to discriminate in favor of ethnic Kazakhs in government employment, as well as in education, housing, and other areas. Many observers interpret Nazarbayev's decision to move the capital to Akmola as a means to more closely anchor northern Kazakhstan, with its majority ethnic Russian population hugging the border with Russia, to Kazakhstan.

Language issue. The government has also accepted a significantly watered down law on languages that was intended to strengthen the use of Kazakh as the official state language. In fact, the new law slightly strengthened the status of Russian, recognizing it as equal with Kazakh in "organizations and bodies of local self-administration." Because of budgetary constraints, the government has also put off plans to require teaching in elementary and secondary schools in the Kazakh language only. However, the fact is that barely half of ethnic Kazakhs speak Kazakh fluently. For the immediate future, Russian will continue as Kazakhstan's lingua franca.

Ethnic tension not paramount issue. In short, tension between ethnic Russians and Kazakhs is real, but by no means approaches in importance day-to-day pocketbook concerns, including pessimism about the economy, a perception of widespread corruption, and across the ethnic board dissatisfaction with government. In a

1996 public survey conducted by the respected International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), current ethnic relations between Kazakhs, Russians, and other minorities were judged to be fairly relaxed, with no expectation of dramatic change.

Religious practice. Perhaps more so than its Central Asian neighbors, Kazakhstan accepted official Soviet atheistic doctrine; religious practice does not have deep roots in Kazakhstan. The government takes a tolerant view of religious observances and fully respects the right of its citizens to worship freely without government interference. The Constitution does require that the appointment by foreign religion centers of the heads of religious associations be conducted "in consultation" with the government, but in practice the government does not interfere in appointments.

Religious diversity. Islam is the faith accepted by the majority of those ethnic Kazakhs who worship regularly, but religious denominations of all kinds are active in Kazakhstan. Evangelical Protestants have alleged some low-level government harassment, generated by complaints from Russian Orthodox and Muslim Kazakhstanis who resent their activities. Some Jehovah's Witnesses have also claimed persecution because of their refusal to enter the Kazakhstani military, but the government backed away from arrests after protests by international human rights groups. Kazakhstan's small Jewish community has experienced no difficulty working with government officials, although there have been sporadic instances of anti-semitism.

KAZAKHSTAN: EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ISSUES

High literacy. Kazakhstan has a highly educated population and a literacy rate of 97 percent as a result of the strongly centralized system of education put in place by the former Soviet Union. Strong in natural sciences and mathematics, the curriculum is weak in the subjects now necessary for the education of a new generation facing market reforms and a move toward democracy.

Soviet structure. Formerly, academicians and teachers were highly respected by society and were well compensated for their work. Education was divided into three main groups--pre-school/day care; middle school (that included elementary through high school) and higher education (that included everything from technical schools through advanced graduate work). Schools were well funded and, although totally centralized, well organized and well-attended.

System deteriorating. Today, while the structures remain the same, education is not adequately funded by the government. Salaries for teachers and professors are seldom paid, the physical plant of the schools is deteriorating, and the government is spending little to no money for materials, books, or curriculum development. Parents are expected to pay for books and materials even in public elementary and secondary schools, and teachers do not have access to even the most basic supplies, such as chalk, copy-machines and teaching materials.

Low government spending. The average salary of a secondary school teacher is \$60.00 per month, but in most schools salaries have not been paid in months or have been paid in bartered goods, like potatoes or glassware. The proposed 1998 budget includes a 21 percent increase in spending for education, but the percentage of the budget spent on education remains at about 6 percent. The majority of teachers who continue to stay in public schools are of retirement age or are pensioners who have returned to work. Innovation and new curricula are basically unheard of given resource and incentive problems.

Universities. There are 61 state universities with a total of 255,000 students, and 26 private universities with approximately 12,500 students. State universities may now charge tuition in order to support themselves. The new Minister of Education openly supports private education. In his former capacity as a deputy prime minister, he encouraged reforms that allowed for the registration of private institutions. This decree put private institutions on the same footing as public institutions, and gave

them legal protection from arbitrary closure or other punitive measures by the Ministry of Education.

Financial crunch. Since payment of university salaries are also behind schedule, teachers at universities must take other measures to support themselves. University teachers have become "nomads," moving from university to university to teach courses on an hourly basis. They also work part-time in private businesses to help make ends meet. Teachers overburdened with teaching hours or with outside employment have a negative impact on the quality of education. Corruption regarding testing and grades has become almost routine, as teachers accept payment from students or parents to ensure passing or even good grades.

Continuing decline? According to key leaders in the field of education, without a commitment of real funds from the government, the quality of education in Kazakhstan will, continue to deteriorate at an alarming rate. Over the long term, experts fear a decrease in the literacy rate and a prolonged crisis in the education sector.

KAZAKHSTAN: WOMEN'S ISSUES

Demographics of women. Kazakhstan has a population of nearly 16.7 million, of which 8.8 million are female. In 1995, 4.5 million Kazakhstani women were between 15 and 49 years of age; this figure is expected to rise to 5.1 million by 2015. Life expectancy for women is 70.4 years and the fertility rate is 2.5 births per woman. The literacy rate for Kazakhstani women in 1990 was 96 percent, compared with 97.5 percent for the general population. Women have unrestricted access to higher education.

Political participation. There are no legal restrictions on the participation of women in politics. The Constitution bars discrimination on the basis of sex, but the persistence of traditional attitudes means that few women hold high office or play active parts in political life. There is one female federal minister (of 14), but no female provincial governors (Akims). In the parliament, of 47 senate members, five are women; of 67 lower house members, nine are women. Kazakhstan's UN permanent representative, Akmaral Arystanbekova, is a woman.

Employment issues. Employment of women is growing and in January 1996, women made up 48 percent of workers. The majority of Kazakhstani women work in the education, health care, and business sectors. Since independence, more women have moved into business. In 1995, 30 percent of those involved in small businesses were women. There is no legal discrimination against women, but women are seriously underrepresented in high-level positions in state enterprises and over-represented in low paying and some menial jobs. Women seem to be more susceptible to labor market changes than men. In 1995, more than 60 percent of the 95,700 workers who reported to the government that they had lost their jobs were women, many with higher or specialized secondary education and more than ten years work experience. Working women are also responsible for running the household and child care. Wider availability of contraceptives has given women more choice in seeking professional careers.

Domestic violence. According to human rights groups, there is considerable domestic violence against women. A local NGO, the Feminist League, estimates that hundreds of thousands of Kazakhstani women are the victims of spousal abuse. Police are often reluctant to intervene, considering it to be the family's business, unless they believe the abuse is life-threatening. The maximum sentence for wife beating is three years, but few such cases are prosecuted. The government has not specifically addressed the problem. Law enforcement authorities reported 1,905 cases of rape in 1996. The punishment for rape can range from four to fifteen years. Most cases of rape go unreported. There is very little coverage of rape in the press.

Women's rights. There is some activity in the non-governmental sector to address women's rights. The Almaty Women's Information Center, for example, conducts seminars on women's rights, provides legal consultations for women, publishes and informational bulletin, and conducts national and international conferences on women.

Fourth World Conference on Women. Ms. Roza Kenzhetaeva, head of the Social-Political Department of the Administration of the President, led the Kazakhstan delegation to the Fourth World Conference on Women. Ms. Sara Nazarbaeva, President of the Republic's "Bobek" Foundation, and wife of the President, was the honorary head of delegation. At the Conference, Kazakhstan did not announce any actions it planned to take to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

KAZAKHSTAN: POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING

Ethnic mix. Kazakhstan has a population of 16.7 million and a diverse ethnic make-up -- about 45 percent of the population are ethnic Kazakhs (originally Turkic nomads), 35 percent are ethnic Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, others), and about 20 percent are of other ethnic origins.

Age breakdown. In Kazakhstan's population as a whole, children and teenagers comprise 33 percent; working-age people 55 percent; and people older than working age 12 percent. In 1990, the average Kazakhstani life expectancy was 66.8 years. According to the UN, Kazakhstan's population is getting older; the aged portion of the population has increased by four percent since 1990, while there have been small decreases in the other population groups. More than 44 percent of the population is rural.

Labor force. Kazakhstan's labor force is estimated to be more than nine million; only one percent of the population is officially registered as unemployed. However, hidden unemployment is estimated to be more than ten percent.

Population decline. Over the past few years, Kazakhstan's population has declined due to a drop in the birth rate, an increase in mortality figures, and emigration. Fertility in Kazakhstan has declined over the past five years from a rate of 2.9 births per woman in the late 1980's to one of 2.5 births per woman in 1995.

Strategy to grow the population. Recently, the government's strategic planning agency drafted a strategy to increase the population. International donors have expressed concern that the strategy appears to be a throwback to centralized state planning. Policies under consideration range from tax incentives for having large families, to tax penalties for choosing not to have children, to prohibition of abortion. The government does not appear to have considered that increases in population growth would also have budgetary and other resource implications for all other sectors.

Birth control. Knowledge of contraceptive methods is virtually universal among Kazakhstani women. According to the 1995 Kazakhstan demographic and health survey, 59 percent of women of reproductive age are using contraceptives. As was the case during the Soviet period, abortion remains a primary birth control tool. Kazakhstani women are estimated to have had an average of two abortions in their lifetimes.

Some success. Demographic and health data show a link between the use of contraception and a decrease in the abortion rate. Over the last five years, the use of the pill and the intrauterine device increased by 32 percent; the abortion rate dropped by 15 percent. This data is clear and convincing evidence that contraceptive use has been a substitute for abortion. The U.S. can take much credit for this success through the work of the USAID reproductive health services expansion program for Central Asia.

KAZAKHSTAN: CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Deteriorating conditions. Thirty percent of Kazakhstan's population is under the age of 15. Like all segments of the population, children have been affected by the economic hardship Kazakhstan has experienced in the transition to a market-oriented economy. Almost half of all kindergartens and day nurseries in Kazakhstan were closed between 1991 and 1995. In addition, orphanages have had difficulty maintaining adequate living conditions and meeting basic nutritional requirements. Children's health care has also suffered in the transition period -- sixty-nine percent of children under the age of three suffer from anemia, and respiratory and diarrheal diseases remain major killers of young children. Infant mortality in Kazakhstan is about 40 per 1000 births, a high figure.

Aral Sea disaster. Children in the Aral Sea ecological disaster zone have suffered disproportionately in the transition period. Although infant mortality in the zone has decreased in recent years, it remains higher than the national average. The United States government acted quickly in 1994 to help implement Vice President Gore's \$22 million Aral Sea initiative. The initiative's goal was to bring potable water to the people of the Aral Sea region. This program has changed focus from local engineering projects to multilateral efforts to address water sharing and resource management issues. Since 1992, over \$130 million in humanitarian assistance has been provided to Kazakhstan, much of which went to children's hospitals or institutions working with children.

Vaccination rates. With the help of U.S. technical assistance programs, childhood vaccination has become more common: 72 percent of children are routinely inoculated against measles, 98 percent have begun a DPT series, and 100 percent are inoculated against polio.

Disabled children. Local non-governmental organizations have been strengthened to provide services to children with physical and mental disabilities (including the 16 percent of children with stunted growth and the 3 percent of emaciated children). Last year one of these organizations was instrumental in having legislation introduced specifically to assist persons with disabilities.

Adoption. At present, there are no clear laws governing the adoption of Kazakhstani orphans by foreigners and each locality sets its own procedures. Approximately 25 adoptions by U.S. citizens took place over past year. Kazakhstan is not a party to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child

Abduction. Hence, cases of children abducted to or from Kazakhstan must be handled in the family courts of the country to which they have been taken. The State Department is not aware of any child abduction cases pending in Kazakhstan.

Child labor. Abuse of child labor is generally not a problem, although child labor is routinely used in agricultural areas, especially during the harvest season. Children under the age of 16 may work only with the permission of the local administration and the trade union in the enterprise in which the child would work. Such permission is rarely granted.

KAZAKHSTAN - HEALTH ISSUES

Deteriorating health conditions. Kazakhstan's Soviet-era health care system has deteriorated drastically since independence in 1991, leading to a dramatic decline in the health of the population. Life expectancy has steadily fallen, and now stands at 59.3 years for men and 70.4 years for women. The rates of infant mortality (40 per 1,000 births) and maternal mortality (77 per 100,000 live births) remain very high, although there are signs that they are beginning to drop. Kazakhstan has one of the world's highest reported incidence rates for tuberculosis (70 cases per 100,000 persons).

Declining government spending. Annual health care spending has plummeted since independence to less than ten dollars per capita as Kazakhstan has begun the difficult transition to a market economy. This funding shortfall has led to a dearth of basic medicines, supplies and equipment throughout the country. Although the government guarantees universal health care free of charge to all citizens, in fact an informal fee-for-service system has arisen, with patients responsible for providing the medication and supplies for their treatment.

Smoking and alcohol. Lifestyle behaviors such as heavy smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and a high fat diet have also contributed to the decline in life expectancy. The government would like to improve public education but is constrained by a lack of funds.

Environmental health issues. Certain segments of the population are also endangered by environmental pollution (primarily around the Aral Sea in central Kazakhstan) and the long-term effects of radiation exposure from Soviet-era nuclear testing programs (near Semipalatinsk, in northern Kazakhstan). In the Aral Sea region, U.S. and international assistance is focused on providing access to potable water for the local population. In Semipalatinsk, U.S. humanitarian assistance has provided medical equipment and expertise to help treat the high rates of cancer, leukemia and birth defects caused by radiation exposure.

Tuberculosis. Kazakhstan's tuberculosis incidence rate is among the highest in the world, and over ten times the rate in the U.S. The problem is particularly acute in prisons, where government officials estimate as many as one-third of all prisoners suffer from tuberculosis.

Reform efforts. With assistance from the U.S. and other donors, Kazakhstan has begun to take inexpensive steps to reform its health care system to provide broad access to affordable care. ✓

These include decentralizing health care management to the local level, introducing compulsory health insurance, streamlining infrastructure by closing hospitals that are no longer viable, introducing privatization of selected health care facilities, and privatizing the pharmaceutical sector.

KAZAKHSTAN: OVERVIEW OF U.S. MISSION

Staff. The U.S. mission in Almaty includes 64 U.S. government employees and about 250 local nationals. The Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce; the U.S. Agency for International Development; the U.S. Information Agency; and the Peace Corps (approximately 100 volunteers) are represented at post. The USAID regional office manages assistance programs in all five Central Asian states.

Goals. The mission is structured to pursue four key goals:

- Promote U.S. participation in the commercial development of Kazakhstan's petroleum resources;
- Enhance Kazakhstan's ties to Western security structures and commitment to non-proliferation;
- Encourage market reforms that create a favorable trade and investment climate and reduce corruption;
- Promote the development of democratic institutions and encourage respect for human rights and rule of law.

Activities. The mission provides support and advocacy for more than 35 U.S. companies resident in Kazakhstan. Embassy Almaty works to support increased military-to-military ties and regional security cooperation. It provides technical assistance to help Kazakhstan make the transition to a market economy. Peace Corps volunteers teach English and business management skills throughout Kazakhstan. All agencies work together to encourage political reform and the development of a civil society governed by the rule of law.

Key Embassy Officers

Ambassador A. Elizabeth Jones
Deputy Chief of Mission Jon Purnell
USAID Director Patricia Buckles
Public Affairs Officer Michelle Logsdon
Defense Attache Col. Ralph Bruner
Political/Economic Section Chief Lee Litzenberger
Senior Commercial Officer Michael Lally
EMO Nora Logsdon
Regional Security Officer George Nutwell III

KAZAKHSTAN: ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The USG has provided Kazakhstan approximately \$518 million in humanitarian, technical, and investment promotion assistance since FY 92. Kazakhstan is by far the largest recipient of USG assistance in Central Asia. The USG budgeted \$43 million for programs in Kazakhstan in FY 97. This high level of funding reflects strong cooperation between the USG and Government of Kazakhstan (GOK) in pursuit of market economic restructuring, democratic reform, and elimination of nuclear weapons. The USG has contributed an additional \$16.6 million to the UNHCR and International Organization of Migration's 1997 Joint Appeal for CIS Migration Conference follow-up for programs in Kazakhstan, as well as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

USAID assistance. USAID is leading an economic restructuring program that reflects the GOK's commitment to economic reform. USAID has nearly completed its programs on short-term stabilization measures to rein in government spending and inflation and on support for privatization of small and medium-sized enterprises. During FY 98, USAID will redirect its efforts toward the development of financial markets and a commercial legal infrastructure.

Treasury assistance. The Department of the Treasury has also provided the GOK a resident advisor on government debt during the past two-and-a-half years. The Treasury advisor has focused on core questions of security market development, including drafting an external debt law and issuing a successful Eurobond.

Central Asian Enterprise Fund. The Central Asian-American Enterprise Fund is also supporting the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises in Kazakhstan, (as it is in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan), through its equity investments and micro-lending services. The USG has budgeted \$16 million for fund activities in Kazakhstan since FY 92. The Fund has invested \$13.37 of these funds in food processing, manufacturing, printing, transportation, and other service businesses.

Democratic Reform. The USG has budgeted approximately \$18 million for democracy building programs in Kazakhstan. Much of this effort has focused on developing non-governmental organizations, including legal and business societies, as a way to lay the basic foundation of a civil society. Our programs have also sought to strengthen the Kazakhstani Parliament as an independent political institution, and assisted that body's legal reform efforts. Another key focus of USG assistance has been support for independent television stations across Kazakhstan.

Health. USAID support for the Reproductive Health Services Expansion Program in Kazakhstan seeks to reduce the rates of maternal mortality and abortions through the use of modern contraception. USAID also funds a hospital partnership between

Almaty and Tucson. The partnership has established an innovative baccalaureate program in nursing in over a dozen colleges in Kazakhstan, as well as a toxicology center at a hospital in Almaty. USAID is also introducing a health care reform program that seeks to improve the efficiency and quality of health services by emphasizing cost effective primary care over more costly hospital-based systems.

Environment and Energy. The USG has provided over \$26.5 million since FY 92 for projects based in Kazakhstan that aim to reduce regional economic and political tensions generated by transboundary environmental and energy issues. USAID has completed potable water and water management projects in the Aral Sea disaster zone, and is now encouraging regional cooperation through water sharing agreements among all five Central Asian republics which share the Aral Sea Basin. USAID is also working with the GOK to establish a legal and regulatory framework for Kazakhstan's oil and gas industries. These projects aim to attract investment to the oil and gas sector and to promote cleaner burning energy systems such as natural gas and hydroelectricity.

Security Issues. Kazakhstan has received over \$173 million since FY 92 under the Defense Department's Cooperative Threat Reduction (or Nunn-Lugar) Program. Specific projects in Kazakhstan have included dismantlement of missile silos, closure of nuclear testing tunnels, elimination of biological weapons (BW) production infrastructure, retraining of BW scientists, and provision of six patrol boats to the Kazakhstani Navy for export control operations on the Caspian Sea.

Humanitarian Assistance. Although humanitarian assistance is no longer a major focus of assistance programs in Kazakhstan, the USG did deliver \$28 million in medical equipment, medicines, and various other commodities donated by the U.S. Department of Defense and private voluntary organizations in FY 97.

Training and Exchanges. USIA runs a full range of programs in Kazakhstan including the Fulbright Program, the Bradley High School Exchange, the Muskie Graduate Program, and the International Visitors Program. USAID also supports farmer-to-farmer programs that bring volunteers from the U.S. to Kazakhstan to advise Kyrgyzstani farmers' on access to credit, enterprise start-up, business planning, and product distribution/marketing. In addition Kazakhstani managers and scientists participate in the U.S. Department of Commerce's Special American Business Internship Training Program, which provides for 3-6 month internships with private U.S. companies.

KAZAKHSTAN: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Kazakhstan shares the same array of environmental problems faced by other former Soviet bloc countries: nuclear waste, unsustainable agriculture and the aftermath of uncontrolled industrialization. In addition, Kazakhstan contains portions of the Aral Sea and borders on the Caspian Sea.

Soviet nuclear waste. Significant segments of the Soviet nuclear weapons complex were located in Kazakhstan and pockets of severe contamination are widespread. While the U.S. has been providing technical assistance on nuclear clean-up, the issue is really one of money, and neither the U.S. or Europe has been able to provide adequate financial support for such a massive clean-up effort.

Agricultural practices. While industrial waste and toxic pollution are of immediate concern, the biggest long-term threat to the environment in Kazakhstan is agricultural practices that degrade soils and disrupt watersheds. Such practices are largely responsible for the demise of the Aral Sea as a viable ecosystem. In particular, great damage has been done through irrigation of lands that are not suited for intense cultivation. Unfortunately, the immediate cash flow from such practices continues to override development of sustainable practices.

Environment and economic development. The natural resources of Kazakhstan, in particular oil and gas, but also its fisheries, present the earliest opportunity for economic development. Not surprisingly, the development of these resources involve environmental risks, in particular in and around the Caspian Sea. While it is possible to conduct such development in an environmentally sustainable manner, it will require more attention than it was given in the past. The collapse of the Caspian Sea sturgeon fisheries is a classic example of depletion of a regional resource through the inability of the nations sharing the resource to regulate their own usage.

USG activities. The U.S., under the leadership of Vice President Gore, conducts a joint commission with Kazakhstan which, among other things, has worked on these environmental issues. However, resources have been limited.

KAZAKHSTAN - ALMATY SCENESETTER

Early history. Almaty stands on the site of the Silk Road oasis of Almatu that was besieged by the Mongols and destroyed in the 13th century. The Russians built the frontier post of Verney on the site in 1854 and settled Cossacks (Slavs from western Russia and Ukraine) and Siberian peasants around the fort. By 1877, Verney's population was 12,000. The town was flattened by earthquakes in 1887 and 1911. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the city was a place of exile for many dissidents in the Russian empire, including Leon Trotsky.

Soviet history. The city was renamed Alma-Ata ("father of apples") in 1921 and became the capital of Soviet Kazakhstan in 1928. The city was connected to Siberia in 1930 by the Turkestan-Siberia railroad. Alma-Ata grew quickly during World War II when factories were relocated there from the Nazi-threatened western USSR; many Slavs joined in the exodus and came to Kazakhstan to work in Alma-Ata's factories. Entire communities of ethnic Koreans in the Far East and ethnic Germans in the Soviet Volga German republic were forcibly resettled to Kazakhstan during the war due to Stalin's paranoia that they would sabotage the Soviet war effort. Most remained in Kazakhstan after the war. Ethnic Kazakhs (the Turkic nomads who inhabited the territory of Kazakhstan) submitted quietly to Soviet rule, in spite of the deaths of millions of people during years of famine caused by Stalin's forced collectivization of the Kazakhs in the 1930's.

Riots in 1986. In 1986, thousands in Alma-Ata protested Moscow's replacement of an ethnic Kazakh by an ethnic Russian as the head of Kazakhstan's Communist Party. Riots ensued and police killed several students and injured hundreds. In 1989, Alma-Ata was the center of a successful campaign to stop Soviet nuclear testing at the Semipalatinsk test range in northern Kazakhstan. The city was renamed Almaty after independence in 1991.

Move to new capital. In 1994, President Nazarbayev decided to move the country's capital to the northern city of Akmola, the former Soviet provincial city of Tselinograd and center of Khrushchev's ill-fated virgin lands program that was intended to turn Kazakhstan's northern steppes into the breadbasket of the USSR. The official opening of Akmola as Kazakhstan's capital, originally scheduled for late-October, has been rescheduled for early December. Almaty is expected to remain Kazakhstan's commercial and cultural capital. In reality, much of the government will continue to function in Almaty until the necessary infrastructure can be constructed in Akmola:

City's setting. Almaty is a pleasant city, with wide tree-lined streets, large parks and lots of green space. Almaty does suffer from smog from coal-fired heating plants and automobile traffic, sometimes obscuring the view of the spectacular Tien Shen ("heavenly") mountains that rise majestically along the city's southern fringe. Most of the city's architecture is low-rise, due to the danger of earthquakes.

City's population. Almaty's population of 1.3 million reflects the country's diverse ethnic make-up -- about 45 percent are Kazakhs, 35 percent are Slavs, and 20 percent are of other ethnic origins. The overwhelming majority of Almaty's citizens speak Russian as their first language, although Kazakh is increasingly heard on the streets of the city. Very few people speak English. All professions are represented in Almaty, but the majority of the population works in government, service industries, businesses, or education.

Foreign population. Almaty's new Western businesses and growing expatriate community give the city the feel of a boom town. There are more than 3,500 U.S. citizens resident in Kazakhstan; of whom over 2,400 live in Almaty. More than 80 U.S. firms have resident offices in Almaty. Most American businesses in Almaty are involved in the oil and gas or the minerals sector, but an increasing number of service industries (banks, accounting firms, and law firms) and retail businesses are opening.

KAZAKHSTAN - ARRIVAL STATEMENT

- I am so pleased to begin my visit to Central Asia here in Kazakhstan, a multi-ethnic nation of vast spaces and vast promise for the future.
- Kazakhstan is in the midst of remaking itself, its people set firmly on the road to economic and democratic reform, and to reestablishing strong ties to the world at large.
- On reflection, this is certainly not surprising. Almaty was an important oasis on the old Silk Road, and the trade of goods and ideas is intrinsic to Kazakhstani culture.
- Like Kazakhstanis, Americans love the challenge and excitement of intellectual and commercial exchange. We are working together to help Kazakhstan manage its tremendous energy resources, develop a free market economy, and cultivate democratic institutions.
- Our two nations share as well the common goals of peace and prosperity for Central Asia, a region coming into its own as we move together into the next century.
- Over the next two days, I look forward to meeting not only with President and Mrs. Nazarabyev, but also with a variety of individuals and organizations representing the broad spectrum of Kazakhstani culture.
- This is an exciting time for Kazakhstan and I happy to be able to share in the experience and in helping to build strong, friendly ties between the people of the United States and Kazakhstan.

KAZAKHSTAN - DEPARTURE STATEMENT

- My visit to Kazakhstan has been all I had hoped it would be. I had so many opportunities to meet and talk with Kazakhstanis from all walks of life, all working selflessly to build their nation.
- I want to thank President and Mrs. Nazarbayev for their generous hospitality and the warmth of their greeting, a kindness of spirit I felt in each Kazakhstani I was fortunate to meet.
- My thanks go out as well to the fine team at the American Embassy. Ambassador Jones and her colleagues made us feel at home and worked very hard to ensure that this was a productive and pleasurable visit.
- It was my special pleasure to address the LIANA-sponsored Central Asian Conference on "Women in Politics." It is truly gratifying to see Kazakhstan's women playing an integral, leading role in Kazakhstan's political and economic life.
- I was also very happy to meet the representatives of the Kazakhstani Association of Youth Leaders. To see Kazakhstan's young people and future leaders so caught up in striving to make Kazakhstan a better place certainly bodes well for the future.
- My visit has made it all the more clear that Kazakhstanis share with Americans a positive sense of what can be accomplished with hard work and dedication to principles of equality and fair play.
- Kazakhstan has tremendous natural resources that will serve as an important foundation for the nation's future prosperity.
- But I leave here convinced that it is the Kazakhstani people who are its most important resource. The American people look forward to continue working together with our Kazakhstani friends in their efforts to build a strong, prosperous, and democratic Kazakhstan.
- Thank you again for the wonderful visit.

EVENT PAPER - MEETING WITH PRESIDENT AND MRS. NAZARBAYEV

Scenesetter

Your meeting with President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his wife, Sara Nazarbayeva, will serve as your official welcome to Kazakhstan. Nazarbayev himself will be meeting President Clinton in Washington on November 18 in connection with the annual session of the U.S.-Kazakhstan Joint Commission, chaired by Nazarbayev and Vice President Gore. Nazarbayev will also visit Houston, San Francisco and New York. ✓

Your meeting will take place in a room adjacent to President Nazarbayev's office, in the presidency building. You will be met outside the entrance to the building by one of the Kazakhstani protocol officers and a presidential security officer, who will escort you up a marble staircase to elevators that will take you to the meeting room.

Alternatively, you may be met personally by President and Mrs. Nazarbayev and given a guided tour of the presidency's museum and meeting rooms prior to your actual meeting. You should expect to be invited to make a few remarks to waiting press after the meeting in a large reception area near the meeting room; President and Mrs. Nazarbayev are unlikely to join you for the press event. The meeting and the press event will be conducted in Russian and will be interpreted sequentially.

Background

The presidency is a modern glass and white marble edifice that occupies an impressive site overlooking Republic Square. The Tien Shen mountains provide a stunning backdrop. The building was originally designed during the Soviet era as a Lenin museum, but President Nazarbayev transformed it into a presidential office building after independence in 1991. The building houses a museum and several ornate meeting rooms, and is the workplace for the president's personal staff and key advisors.

EVENT PAPER: LUNCHEON WITH LEADING WOMEN OF KAZAKHSTAN

Scenesetter

We are arranging a lunch in your honor at the Ambassador's residence. The lunch is designed to give you an opportunity to speak in some depth with leading women in the Kazakhstani government, business, media, and NGO communities about the challenges they face unique to Kazakhstan. You will enter the Ambassador's residence through the front door, where you will be met by Ambassador Jones. She will introduce you to the other guests while standing in the living room, and then you will all proceed into the dining room, directly to your right. The lunch will last approximately 45 minutes. Some of the participants may present you with gifts or informational material about their organizations during the lunch.

Background

The Ambassador's residence is a newly-built two story home at the southern end of Almaty. Construction of the residence was completed in summer 1996, and the Ambassador moved in August. The residence is in a gated compound with two other homes, one of which is the Australian Ambassador's residence. The embassy is completing negotiations for the purchase of the residence.

Guest list

The lunch will be attended by no more than 20 people. Many of the Kazakhstani invitees speak and understand English. The Kazakhstani invitees include:

Valentina Sivryukova, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Protection; Zinaida Fedotova, Senator; Raisa Sher, Member of Parliament; Liyazat Ishmukhamedova, President, Association of Single Mothers; Maisiya Kaipozarova, Director, United Nations Gender Center; Irina Katseyeva-Chernolovskaya, independent journalist; Saule Abdigapparova, President, Association for Youth Assistance; Olga Bakhareva, President, Almaty Special Olympics Federation; Raushan Sarsembayeva, President, Association of Businesswomen of Kazakhstan; and Svetlana Sinitskaya, President, Association of Women Journalists of Kazakhstan.

EVENT PAPER: STUDENT LEADERS ROUNDTABLE

Scenesetter

You will meet approximately twenty local student leaders from the Kazakhstan Association of Youth Leaders (KAYL) for a roundtable discussion at a local school. The roundtable would give you the opportunity to interact with young people as they confront an issue of concern, discuss its ramifications, and plan an activity to get students involved in addressing the problem. The roundtable discussion will be in Russian with translation. The setting will be a casual circle of chairs in a school meeting room. The student leaders will begin with introductions and then ask you to make a few remarks. A general discussion will follow.

The event will take place at Almaty school number 55 -- two of the school's classrooms serve as KAYL's headquarters. The school is an attractive older building constructed in the 1950's near the Almaty city center and has been recently renovated. It is both a primary and secondary school with all classes conducted in Russian.

Background

KAYL is based on a California leadership training model for students and follows the motto "Youth Teaching Youth". The group concentrates on leadership training and civic education. Natalya Bakmytova and Elena Vinogradova, both teachers by profession, are the group's adult leaders. KAYL's student president is 17-year old Alia Telemtayeva and its student leaders range from 15-22 years of age.

KAYL has proposed discussion of either human rights or the environment. Each year before the December 10 anniversary of the passage of the UN declaration of Human Rights, KAYL members discuss human rights in Kazakhstan and the world, and plan a related activity. You could lead off with some thoughts about the universal nature of human rights and would hear how Kazakhstani students view the subject.

Environment is an issue of particular relevance given the legacy of Soviet nuclear testing on Kazakhstani territory.

The students would discuss their concerns and plan a related activity. You would be invited to lead off the discussion with a few remarks on the global nature of environmental protection. (In April, KAYL and USUS co-sponsored an Earth Day clean-up of a popular Almaty picnic spot on the banks of the little Almaty river.) This discussion could be expanded to



include Kazakhstanis and Peace Corps volunteers involved in the global program.

EVENT PAPER: WOMEN IN POLITICS CONFERENCE

Scenesetter

You will deliver either the opening or the keynote address at the Central Asian Conference on Women in Politics at the main auditorium of the Academy of Sciences. Your speech will highlight the theme "Women as a Force for Political and Social Change".

You will enter the site at the main entrance and proceed upstairs to a holding room adjacent to the stage. You will enter stage left, deliver your address, and exit stage left. You will be introduced by Saule Kenesbayeva, the conference coordinator, who understands and speaks some English.

Background

The conference is organized by the women's association "LIANA" unquote and is sponsored by a small Embassy Almaty democracy grant. The conference will last three days, and is the third annual conference organized by LIANA. The Academy of Sciences is in the same building as the Ministry of Science. The Ministry and the Academy have both worked with the U.S. on a host of programs, most recently on a multinational nuclear nonproliferation conference that opened in Almaty in August.

Guest list/audience

You will be met by Saule Kenesbayeva, the director of the women's association, LIANA. The conference will be attended by approximately 120 women from all five Central Asian countries and the U.S. The audience will include political figures, media representatives, directors of NGO's and charitable organizations, business leaders, and academicians. There will be very few English speakers in the audience. Your speech will be translated simultaneously from translation cabinets on either side of the upper balcony of the auditorium.

EVENT PAPER: GOK-HOSTED RECEPTION

Scenesetter

At the conclusion of your official schedule, the government of Kazakhstan will host a reception in your honor. This will be a valuable opportunity to meet a broad spectrum of Kazakhstani political and social leaders. Some of the guests are likely to accompany President Nazarbayev on his trip to Washington November 15-18 for the U.S.-Kazakhstan Joint Commission meeting.

The government has not yet chosen a site for the reception. There are a number of suitable sites that are often used for official receptions, including the Ankara hotel (a Turkish-owned five-star hotel in the city center); the House of Receptions (Dom Priyomov), the reception hall for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs); or Friendship House (Dom Druzhbi), a reception and conference hall situated next to the Dostyk hotel in the city center. The reception will last 60-90 minutes.

Guests

The reception will likely be attended by most of the senior members of the government, including President and Mrs. Nursultan Nazarbayev; newly named Prime Minister Nurlan Balgimbayev; Foreign Minister and Mrs. Kasimzhomart Tokayev; Chairman of the State Committee for Investments Akhmetzhan Yesimov; Yerzhan Utembayev, the Director of the Agency for Strategic Planning; Defense Minister Serik Altynbayev; Economy Minister Umirzak Shukeyev; Omirbek Baigeldie, the Chairman of the Senate; and Marat Ospanov, the Chairman of the Parliament.

EVENT PAPER: CENTRAL MUSEUM VISIT

Scenesetter

Your trip to the Central Museum will be your primary exposure to Kazakhstani culture. You will be met outside the museum by museum director Yermek Zhangeldin and escorted through the main doorway into the central foyer to view an exhibition of Kazakhstani music and dance by performers in native costume. You will be presented with flowers at that time by one of the performers, usually a young girl (five minutes).

Your tour will start inside a ceremonial yurt (nomadic tent) in the main foyer, where a guide will describe Kazakhstani traditions and life on the steppe in English (three minutes). You will then exit the yurt and proceed to hall number two, which houses the museum's main collection of Kazakhstani cultural artifacts (30 minutes). After the tour, you will be asked to sign the guest registry in the main foyer. You may be presented with gifts here (traditional robes, rugs, or books).

Background

The Central Museum is located directly across from the presidential palace. It is the main cultural and historical showcase for Kazakhstan. In October, the museum submitted an application to participate in an international partnership program with the University of Pennsylvania. The program allows participants to collaborate on exhibition planning and collection management, and provides for exchanges of curators and other museum personnel. The program is supported by the American Association of Museums.

EVENT PAPER - U.S. COMMUNITY MEET AND GREET

Scenesetter

You will be given an opportunity to meet with the official Embassy community and express your appreciation for the work performed on behalf of the U.S. government. Foreign Service nationals, USAID contractors and private American business people (plus their families) will also be invited.

You will be escorted by the Ambassador from Furmanova Street, passing through the Embassy front entrance and lobby, then exiting into the Embassy courtyard. A podium will be installed under the courtyard canopy. You will be introduced to the assembled community by the Ambassador and then deliver some prepared remarks. Following your remarks, you will be escorted by the Ambassador to greet the community members who will be lining the sidewalks and parking lot of the courtyard. Photographs may be taken as you are speaking and as you pass through the audience.

At the conclusion you will be escorted by the Ambassador back through the main lobby to the front entrance.

Background

The U.S. Embassy opened in February 1992 and moved to its present site in October of that year. The chancery was built at the beginning of the century as a merchant's residence and later became a medical museum. The two-story building and its adjoining annex are located at 99/97a Furmanova Street in central Almaty. The main chancery building now houses the offices of the Ambassador, political/economic section, the defense attache office, the information programs center, and the regional security office; the annex houses the consular section, administrative section, the regional medical office, the foreign agricultural service, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The U.S. Information Agency, the Peace Corps, and the Foreign Commercial Service are located at other sites in downtown Almaty.

Participants

The Ambassador, U.S. mission employees (both American and Kazakhstani), USAID contractors, and the American business community. Family members are also invited

EVENT PAPER: WOMEN'S WELLNESS CENTER

Scenesetter

The Women's Wellness Center is one of thirteen such centers being established in the New Independent States through U.S.-funded medical partnerships. The Almaty Women's Wellness Center is based on a model created by the American International Health Alliance's women's health task force and the Almaty-Tucson, Arizona hospital partnership.

Your visit marks the official opening following major renovations this summer made possible by USAID and medical personnel from Tucson.

Your motorcade will drive through the gates to the hospital grounds. This is a narrow roadway. The motorcade will proceed to the entrance of the Center. You will walk from your vehicle up approximately 10 stairs to the entrance. There are two doors, one single, one double, separated by a very small foyer. You will enter the reception/waiting room where the ribbon-cutting will take place. The corridor from that point leads directly to the education room, which is the last room on the right. There you will have an opportunity to meet with participants in a class on pre-natal care.

Background

The goal of the Women's Wellness Center is to provide comprehensive health care to women of all ages. This includes ~~clinical prevention services, screening, and counseling~~. A key component of these centers is raising women's awareness of the important link between health and such behavioral risk factors as the use of tobacco and alcohol and poor nutrition.

Building upon four years of work in maternal and child health, the center began offering services in the summer of 1997 in the areas of sexually transmitted disease prevention and screening, breast and cervical cancer screening, family planning, and education/counseling services for women in all stages of the reproductive health cycle, from puberty through menopause. Unlike traditional family planning oriented centers, the Almaty Women's Wellness Center focuses on the whole woman; the center is not restricted to serving only the reproductive health needs of women, but includes general health services as well.

The center is designed as an adaptation of a Western women's services and education clinic and comprised of eight well-lit rooms: a registration and waiting area, two examination rooms, a procedure room, an operating room, an office for the director, a

separate office for nurses and midwives, and a health promotion/education room.

The Almaty Health Administration is responsible for all operating costs of the Center. In its initial year, the Center is expected to see approximately 100 clients per week.

Participants

Your official host will be Dr. Tamara Kurmangalievna Chumakova, director of the Center. Others likely to be present include Dr. Zhamilya Nugmanova, Central Asia Regional Director for the American International Health Alliance, and other Kazakhstanis who have played leading roles in health reform.

Personalities Likely To Meet The First Lady, By Site:

Site: Women in Politics Conference

Personalities: Saule Kenesbayeva, Director, LIANA women's association.

Site: State Museum of Kazakhstan

Personalities: Yermek Zhangeldin, museum director.

Site: Women's Wellness Center

Personalities: (a) Zhamilya Nugmanova, Regional Director, American International Health Alliance (Central Asia), (b) Tamara Chuvakova, Chief Neonatologist, Ministry of Health.

Site: Kazakhstan Association of Youth Leaders

Personalities: (a) Natalya Bakmutova, Executive Director, Kazakhstan Association of Youth Leaders, (b) Yelena Vinogradova, Coordinator for Civic Education, Kazakhstan Association of Youth Leaders, (c) Alia Telemtayeva, President, Kazakhstan Association of Youth Leaders

Site: GOK-hosted reception

Personalities: (a) President and Mrs. Nursultan Nazarbayev. (b) prime minister Nurlan Balgimbayev, (c) Foreign Minister and Mrs. Kasimzhomart Tokayev, (d) Chairman of the State Committee for Investments Akhmetzhan Yesimov, (e) Yerzhan Utembayev, Director, Agency for Strategic Planning, (f) Defense Minister Serik Altynbayev, (g) Economy Minister Umirzak Shukeyev, (h) Omirbek Baigeldy, Chairman of the Senate, (i) Marat Ospanov, Chairman of the Majilis (lower house of Parliament).

Site: Luncheon at Ambassador's Residence

Personalities: (a) Valentina Sivryukova, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Protection, (b) Zinaida Fedotova, Senator, (c) Raisa Sher, Member of Parliament, (d) Liyazat Ishmukhamedova, President, Association of Single Mothers, (e) Maisiya Kaipozarova, Director, United Nations Gender Center, (f) Irina Katseyeva-Chernolovskaya, independent journalist, (g) Saule Abdigapparova, President, Association for Youth Assistance, (h) Olga Bakhareva, President, Almaty

Special Olympics Federation, (i) Raushan Sarsembayeva, President, Association of Businesswomen of Kazakhstan, (j) Svetlana Sinitskaya, President, Association of Women Journalists of Kazakhstan.

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PUBLIC EVENT: SPEECH BUILDING BLOCKS

Edwin
Cochet

Address to Central Asian Conference on "Women in Politics"

Building democracy is a slow and complicated process--but to build democracy all members of society must be active participants. As we approach the new century, we know that we cannot build the kind of future we want without the contributions of women

ohr utom

I am pleased to see participants from all over Central Asia here today. I am gratified to see that among women ~~there is an~~ understanding that the equality for all citizens is essential for a successful move into the new century.

Women are particularly active in Central Asia in starting NGO's, in founding small business, and in teaching future generation about their role in democracy. For example, the Kazakhstan Association of Youth Leaders was founded by two women, former teachers, and is led by a 17-year-old woman. The Association teaches students how to become leaders, and promotes civic education projects.

Women are beginning to play a more active role in founding small businesses in Central Asia. In Kazakhstan, women have founded the Association of Businesswomen and, through this Association, have set up a "market economy training center for women" that introduces women to skills essential for success in this newly-emerging market economy.

NGO's play an important role in building democracy. It is heartening to see that of approximately 300 registered NGO's in Kazakhstan, 148 are headed by women. It is clear that women are already playing a significant role in building democracy from the grass-roots up in Kazakhstan.

Getting the word out through the media is an essential aspect of getting women fully involved in the political process. In Kazakhstan, women journalists just recently joined together to form an association whose goal is to support and explain efforts by women to improve society, and to educate women journalists about their rights.

In some countries, "women's rights" is a catchphrase that men fear. While this should not be so, neither should women shirk from making clear that they will no longer accept harassment in the workplace, or know that a man will be hired in place of a woman when the woman is more qualified. Your government and your newly-founded NGO's have a lot of work to do, not only to educate

Mr. Cochet

women about their rights, but to educate men that these discriminatory practices are unacceptable.

Women are becoming more and more active in politics, but more needs to be done to teach women how to break into the political arena. There are currently five women senators and nine women members of the lower house of parliament in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan appointed its first female Cabinet minister in 1996 (note: Natalya Korzhova, Minister of Labor and Social Protection), and hundreds of women serve at various levels in local and regional government. However, women need to serve not only at the "deputy" level, but at the topmost levels of government, academia and business.

But qualified

Three women in Kazakhstan just formed a new NGO to provide political consulting for women candidates. They call themselves "image makers" but their goal is to enable women to become successful in running for political office.

the way

The critical element of success is: taking the initiative, taking responsibility. No one will hand us power or authority. We must identify the issues of importance to us. We must persuade women, and men, of their importance. We must work together to create the strategies to bring about the changes in our societies that benefit women, and all citizens.

Democracy is fertile ground for women. But we can make things grow in that fertile ground only if we are activists, only if we speak out, only if we work together for responsible growth and change.

opening →

and a great natural resource.

But not.

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k. must use the people, all
the people, if we have
to be democratic.*

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

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Divider Title: **C - Almaty, KZ**

First Lady's November Trip to Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan,
Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan

KYRGYZSTAN

Background Papers

- Main Issues in Bilateral Relations
- Political/Social Overview
- Economic/Commercial Overview
- Human Rights Overview
- Ethnic and Religious Issues
- Education System and Issues
- Women's Issues
- Population and Family Planning Issues
- Children's Issues
- Health Issues
- Overview of U.S. Assistance Program
- Environmental Issues
- Overview of U.S. Embassy

Other Materials

- Biographies
- Updated Background Notes/Fact Sheets

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: MAIN ISSUES IN BILATERAL RELATIONS

Economic and political reform. Overall, U.S. relations with Kyrgyzstan are close and cooperative. In a region that has not enjoyed a good reform record, Kyrgyzstan is often described as an example for other Central Asian states in terms of political and economic reforms. However, the reforms remain tenuous. While the Kyrgyz Republic leads the Central Asian states in terms of political and economic reform, the U.S. continues to press for democratic institution building.

U.S. Assistance. U.S. assistance to Kyrgyzstan in 1996 totaled approximately \$58.3 million and covers a broad spectrum, including health, education, democratic reforms, agriculture, economic restructuring and law enforcement. The Kyrgyzstanis are seeking additional U.S. assistance in the following areas:

a) *Kyrgyz-American University.* During President Akayev's July 1997 visit to the U.S., he met with George Soros and the Open Society Institute to discuss transforming the Kyrgyz American Faculty (currently a department of the Kyrgyz National University, established in 1993 with USG funds) into an independent American university. Soros promised a donation if the U.S. government would match his commitment. President Akayev also raised the issue with Vice President Gore, who promised to consider it. The U.S. government supports an independent university, building on the Kyrgyz-American Faculty's strengths in business, law, journalism and English language.

b) *Radioactive waste removal.* Radioactive contamination from old Soviet mines, and uranium mining equipment stored in crumbling storage facilities along the Kyrgyz river system, threaten fresh water supplies.

c) *Border guards/Customs training.* Kyrgyzstan has asked for U.S. assistance to remodel its border guard and customs services to function effectively and independently of Russian support.

d) *Mountain rescue.* During his July 15 meeting with Vice President Gore, President Akayev requested U.S. assistance in establishing a mountain rescue specialty unit within the Kyrgyzstani military.

e) *Joint seismic center.* Also during that July meeting, the U.S. offered up to \$250,000 in funding to support the startup and first year's operation of an international geodynamics center in Kyrgyzstan.

f) Afghanistan. Like other Central Asian states, Kyrgyzstan sees the continued conflict in Afghanistan as destabilizing to the region. In August, President Akayev wrote to President Clinton requesting support for his initiative to hold a peace conference in Bishkek. Acting Secretary Talbott replied on behalf of the President, noting our commitment to finding a lasting peace within a UN framework. During his October visit to the U.S., Foreign Minister Imanaliyev discussed President Akayev's proposal, emphasizing that Kyrgyzstan's priority is that a peace conference be convened, regardless of venue or auspices.

More attention at higher levels. The Kyrgyz government places great value on high level meetings as an endorsement of its political and economic reform efforts. President Akayev was disappointed that President Clinton was unable to meet with him during his mid-July visit to the U.S., and due to a scheduling conflict, Kyrgyzstani Foreign Minister Imanaliyev did not have a chance to meet with the Secretary of State during his October 5-7 visit for the UNGA. We are examining possibilities for a high-level meeting in 1998.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW

Political freedom. The Kyrgyzstani people enjoy more political freedom than citizens of the other Central Asian states. President Akayev is the only Central Asian president who has not extended his term by means of referendum and who allows political opponents a relatively active role in Kyrgyzstani politics. Kyrgyzstan has several independent political parties that competed in the 1996 parliamentary elections. However, democratic reform and institution building remain fragile and need continued reinforcement.

Presidential elections. In December 1995, Presidential Akayev was reelected in the first multi-candidate presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan. The conduct of the elections was generally free and fair, but in the pre-election period, many candidates had trouble getting needed signatures certified and three candidates were de-registered by court order after being accepted by the Central Election Commission. Two candidates ran against Akayev, although his strongest challenger was prevented from doing so at the last minute. Two opposition campaign workers were arrested just before the elections, held without trial for four months, and eventually convicted of libeling the president.

Consolidation of presidential power. A February 1996 referendum (in violation of the Constitution and the law on referendums) amended the Constitution to give President Akayev more power. The changes gave the president the power to dissolve parliament. It also removed the clause that parliamentarians be directly elected by universal suffrage. President Akayev has continued to strengthen the executive by expanding its staffing and purview, and by forming a personal cabinet within the presidential apparatus. For the most part, the parliament and judiciary tend to be subordinate to the executive, and the overwhelming majority of local government officials are appointed by the president.

Authoritarian tendencies. Akayev has said publicly that his more authoritarian approach is intended to speed implementation of economic reforms, but his discomfort with domestic criticism appears to have motivated him to take a tougher line toward domestic opposition and to backpedal on democratic reforms and human rights. Although Akayev has denied that he is planning to change the Constitution to allow him to run for a third term, or preparing a referendum to extend his second term, such high-handed action cannot be ruled out.

Parliament. Despite Akayev's attempts to strengthen presidential power at the expense of the legislature, the Parliament has demonstrated some independence from the executive branch.

Earlier this year, the legislature overruled a presidential veto and passed legislation to allow it to call for a no-confidence vote on any cabinet appointment.

Judiciary. Kyrgyzstan has also undertaken some steps toward the creation of an independent judiciary. In November 1996, the Constitutional Court ruled that the speaker of the parliamentary lower house had been unconstitutionally elected. The legislature accepted the court's decision and elected a new speaker.

Military. Kyrgyzstan is facing a formidable task in maintaining its 16,000 man armed forces. Reduced budgets have led to growing shortages in all areas of operation, training, maintenance and basic supplies. Kyrgyzstan has a conscription system with an alternative service option. A treaty with Russia allows Russian servicemen to serve in the Kyrgyzstani military on a contract basis. An estimated 4,000 border guards (virtually all ethnic Kyrgyz) still under Russian command are stationed in Kyrgyzstan to guard the Sino-Kyrgyzstan border. A Kyrgyzstani motorized company participated in the successful mid-September joint CENTRASBAT military exercises with Kazakh, Uzbek and U.S. forces.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL OVERVIEW

Kyrgyzstan is the most reformist of the Central Asian states, but also one of the poorest and most vulnerable due to its relative lack of natural resources. Kyrgyzstan's economic decline has bottomed out, however, and it is beginning to reap some rewards from its economic reform program.

Industrial decline. During the Soviet period, Kyrgyzstan's industries were heavily subsidized and not internationally competitive. Once Moscow's subsidies stopped and inter-republic trade collapsed, Kyrgyzstan's industry suffered. Between 1990-1996, industrial output fell 64 percent, while GDP fell 48 percent. The steepest declines were in the energy, machine building, construction, and chemicals sectors, where production fell by 80-90 percent. According to official statistics, in 1996, 43 percent of enterprises were losing money. Before industry can fully revive, much of Kyrgyzstan's obsolete industrial base will need to be rebuilt or replaced.

Economic reform. In 1993, Kyrgyzstan launched a bold program of economic reform which won the support of international financial institutions. The government introduced favorable laws on privatization, joint ventures, foreign trade and investment, free economic zones, and concessions to foreign investors -- all designed to facilitate the rapid development of a market economy. Also in 1993, Kyrgyzstan became the first republic in the region to introduce its own currency, the som.

Trade, legal and tax reform. Since then, the government has liberalized trade, introduced land rights, and launched a program to privatize large companies on a case-by-case basis. A tax code has been put in place and a new body of commercial law introduced. Kyrgyzstan has also applied for WTO membership, and hopes to accede next year, thanks in part to U.S.-funded technical advice.

Production. By 1995, the post-independence decline in output appeared to end. According to official statistics, GDP grew by 5 percent in 1996, and industrial and agricultural production rose by 11 percent and 13 percent respectively. These positive trends continued in the first five months of 1997. The operations of a large gold joint venture accounted for most of the increase in industrial production. Wheat production grew by 45 percent, and meat production also rose after several years of decline.

Monetary policy and inflation. Tight monetary policies and improved performance in collecting budget revenues has kept average monthly inflation at 5 percent or less since early 1994,

although there was some slippage in 1996 when the som's exchange rate depreciated by 40 percent. However, in 1997, average monthly inflation has totaled just over 2 percent and the som has appreciated slightly.

Income and wages. Official statistics indicate that income and wages in 1995 and 1996 have largely kept pace with inflation. Poverty, however, remains endemic. According to the World Bank, almost half of the population lived in poverty in the early 1990's and one-third of the population was considered severely impoverished. Unemployment remains a serious problem.

Privatization. The government has steadily advanced its privatization program and restructuring efforts by expanding the use of auction sales, targeting bankrupt enterprises for restructuring, and improving the legal infrastructure for private entrepreneurs and foreign investors. However, the results have been mixed thus far. According to official statistics, much of the construction and retail trade sectors has been privatized. In 1997, according to Western economists, 50 percent of GDP and over 90 percent of retail sales are expected to come through nonstate channels. State regulation has also been almost completely eliminated in agriculture, and the government has transformed most state farms into agricultural collectives; however, the privatization process is hampered by widespread corruption.

Foreign investment. According to EBRD statistics, Kyrgyzstan received only \$122 million in foreign direct investment between 1994 and 1996. Most of this went into a joint venture with a Canadian firm to develop the Kumtor gold mine. The signing of several other agreements with foreign mining firms to develop gold fields should fuel further growth in this sector.

Foreign assistance. Despite the difficulties of reform, government commitment remains strong, with leaders generally open to foreign advice and technical assistance. Donor assistance will remain crucial to the success of continued reforms.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: HUMAN RIGHTS OVERVIEW

Democratic progress. Kyrgyzstan is the most open, progressive, and democratic of any of the Central Asian republics. A tradition of consensus building among the Kyrgyz elite has fostered a modest amount of political pluralism and strengthened many democratic practices, despite President Akayev's domination of the government. Kyrgyzstani citizens have the right to free assembly and generally meet without government interference. Permits are required for public marches and gatherings, but have not been denied arbitrarily. The government also has not prohibited labor strikes.

Inconsistency in practice. While the government expresses support for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, in practice respect of these rights is uneven. Local elder's courts responsible for trying petty crimes and local disputes have committed a number of abuses as they have handed out harsher punishments than allowed under law.

Freedom of the press and speech. Press freedom and freedom of speech are more secure in Kyrgyzstan than elsewhere in Central Asia. Nevertheless, there have been incidents of repression including the closing of newspapers in 1994 and the conviction of two journalists for criminal libel against the president in July 1995. In 1997, repression against independent newspapers, journalists, and opposition members increased. In January 1997, opposition activist Topchubek Turgunaliyev was convicted of embezzlement, fraud and abuse of position: he remains in prison. Although independent newspapers and magazines continue to be published, almost all electronic media and a significant portion of print media operate under government control. Earlier this year, several journalists from the opposition newspaper Res Publica were arrested and convicted of criminal libel for insulting one of Akayev's advisors. Several of these journalists served jail time; however, most were freed immediately after conviction, probably in response to pressure from human rights groups and the international community.

USG actions. The U.S. Embassy has actively monitored the progress of the Res Publica cases, and continues to press for greater press freedoms, including redefinition of libel as a civil, rather than a criminal, offense.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Ethnic and religious make-up. Among Kyrgyzstan's estimated 4.5 million people, 59.7 percent are Kyrgyz, 16.2 percent Russians, 14.1 percent Uzbeks. The remainder include a mixture of ethnic Germans, Ulgurs, and other Slavic groups. Non-Kyrgyz are often lumped together in the so-called "Russian speaking" minority. Growing Kyrgyz nationalism is prompting many minorities to emigrate. Kyrgyzstan is predominantly Muslim (reports indicate 80 percent of the population is Islamic), but religious practices are generally relaxed and there are no signs of a growth in Islamic fundamentalism.

Ethnicity in the government. Ethnic Kyrgyz continue to dominate government positions in far greater numbers than their representation in the general population. The appointment of ethnic Kyrgyz to key judicial positions has led to charges by non-Kyrgyz that the system is unfair and that the courts treat ethnic Kyrgyz more leniently.

Ethnic tolerance and tension. President Akayev has urged calm in ethnic relations and supports a policy of guaranteeing rights and freedoms to ethnic minorities. He has blocked laws that would discriminate against non-Kyrgyz ethnic groups and warned all anti-Russian political parties that such policies are not acceptable. Nevertheless, Kyrgyzstan has experienced ethnic friction -- particularly between Kyrgyz and Russians in Bishkek and between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the southern part of the country.

Religious freedom. The Kyrgyz constitution guarantees all citizens freedom of religion, and Kyrgyz authorities have respected this law for the most part. However, the formation of a state religious affairs commission in March 1996, which requires religious groups to register with the state, has raised concerns. Since its formation, Muslim leaders have complained that the commission has begun to make decisions about religious events without consultation. In Naryn province, a Baptist congregation was denied registration and there have been reported instances of Naryn police disrupting Baptist services. In addition, ethnic Kyrgyz Christian congregations and some Muslim congregations with foreign ties appear to face special barriers.

USG activities. The U.S. Embassy has been active in urging the GOK to prevent harassment of religious groups.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: EDUCATION ISSUE

Statistics. Krygyzstan has an estimated 97 percent literacy level. Education is compulsory for the first nine years. Approximately 60 percent of all children aged six to 23 were enrolled in schools in 1995. According to 1994 figures, women over twenty-five years of age had completed an average of 9.4 years of schooling and men over twenty-five, ten years.

Deteriorating conditions. Expenditure on public education rose from 4 percent of GDP in 1993 to 6.1 percent in 1995. However, the education system has suffered the same material and financial hardships as other social sectors following the breakup of the Soviet Union, and conditions continue to deteriorate due to an acute shortage of material resources. Teachers are poorly paid and the school system is under stress to maintain standards and quality. Construction of schools lags behind the growth of the school-age population. The number of pre-schools has dropped precipitously. Although there is a network of after-school institutions, only about 10 percent of children participate. In addition to funding shortages, there is a need to address the centralized decision-making process, and to revise and restructure curricula to fit the changed political circumstances.

Benefits from USAID. The educational sector benefits indirectly from USAID's market transition programs. It is also expected to benefit from USAID initiatives in the NGO sector, such as development of associations like PTA.

Kyrgyz American Faculty. In 1993, following a request from President Akayev to Vice President Gore, USIA provided \$635,000 to help establish the Kyrgyz American Faculty (KAF), a department of the Kyrgyz National University. USIA funding supported faculty and curriculum development, student exchanges, library and Internet access. KAF has been a notable success, offering bachelor degrees in business management, economics, journalism, and English as a second language. Recently, law courses were also added to the curriculum. The students of the first graduating class this past June found jobs in business and the public sector. USIA and the State Department are exploring ways for KAF to become a fully independent university. George Soros' Open Society Institute, has indicated an interest in assisting this endeavor.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: WOMEN'S ISSUES

Kyrgyzstani law gives equal status to women, but the dramatic drop in family incomes due to the economic transition has put tremendous pressures on the traditional family structure. Alcohol, drug abuse, unemployment, malnutrition, and the breakdown of support systems have all contributed to spousal abuse of women. Although media reports and hospital records tend to document these changes, law enforcement and government programs have not adequately met the increased need for intervention and services.

Women in the work force. Women represent 45 percent of industrial employees, 42 percent of small businesses employees and 36 percent of executives. However, according to the 1996 UNDP report, women appear to face higher layoff and unemployment rates. Every second unemployed person is a woman, and 18 percent of these are mothers with several children. In addition, women appear to have been disproportionately affected by non-payment of pensions. Women receive lower wages, have less access to employment and fewer years of schooling than men. On the other hand, women exceed men in absolute numbers in the population (2.4 million out of 4.6 total), life expectancy, and in secondary education enrollment.

Women in the household. Women generally spend many hours in unpaid household work, including child care. This situation has been exacerbated with the cut-back in government programs, such as free pre-school and after-school programs for working mothers. The Kyrgyz National Statistics Committee has determined that most working mothers cannot afford the fees charged by pre- and after school programs. In rural areas, women often fulfill the roles of homemaker, mother, and wife, not worker. Forced marriage of underage girls is becoming more common.

Legal and social status. In public life, one deputy prime minister, Mira Jangaracheva, (out of three) is a woman. Two ministers (Larisa Gutnichenko, Justice and Asylgul Abdurekhmenova, Labor and Social Welfare) out of eighteen are women, as is the head of the Constitutional Court, Cholpon Baekova. Women's rights are anchored in the Constitution and the legal codes. The Criminal Code provides for "freedom and dignity" of women, and protection against forced marriage or forced abortion. However, judicial enforcement of many of these protections has been weak. Also, social traditions sometimes mitigate against legal action as a redress of grievances.

Kyrgyz government programs. At the UN's Beijing Conference on Women, Kyrgyzstan committed itself to develop a women's program

and to create a comprehensive legal basis to achieve gender equality. With the support of UNDP, the Women's Bureau has set up women's resource centers in each of the regions. Among other things, the centers provide training in establishing NGOs and in grant-writing.

USAID assistance. USAID programs that have benefited women include FINCA (micro-lending, mostly to women traders, farmers, and entrepreneurs), CARANA (training in international accounting standards -- some 75 percent of accountants are women), IBTCI (bank and accounting training -- over half of bank executives are women), Aid to Artisans, and programs to create housing cooperatives, provide NGO training and improve health programs.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING ISSUES

Future population trends. Like several other former Soviet states, Kyrgyzstan saw its population fall in the mid-1990s due to ethnic Russian emigration and a rise in mortality rates. However, with 37% of Kyrgyz under the age of fifteen and high fertility rates, Kyrgyzstan's population--now at 4.5 million--is expected to almost double over the next fifty years.

Demographic statistics. Post-independence turmoil strongly affected the reproductive situation in Kyrgyzstan. Fertility was 4.1 births per woman as recently as 1985 but dropped to 3.3 by 1995. At the same time, contraceptives from Russia dwindled for several years, which may have exacerbated heavy reliance on abortion. A Bishkek clinic study of its abortion patients in 1995 showed that over 30% had had at least three prior abortions and 80% one or more. Repeated abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, and poor nutrition due to falling incomes all weakened women's reproductive health, causing infant mortality to rise.

Contraception and infant mortality. Kyrgyzstan's performance relative to some of the targets set by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo falls short in several respects. At just 30% in 1990, contraceptive usage sank to 21% at present, according to First Lady Mairam Akayeva. Most sources put Kyrgyz infant mortality at 30-40 per 1,000 live births, but the U.S. Census Bureau estimates it at 78 (the ICPD target is 50 or fewer). UN Population Fund (UNFPA) data show above-target maternal mortality as well.

Reproductive health. Reproductive health problems highlighted by First Lady Akayeva include retarded physical development among teenage girls, high mortality among mothers of large families, abnormally high births to women age 40-49, low body-weight infants (over 50%), prenatal disease and anemia, inadequate birth spacing, and unwed teenage mothers.

USAID assistance. Kyrgyzstan is one of the Central Asian republics included in USAID's regional Reproductive Health Services Expansion Program started in 1993. To strengthen and focus public policy planning, USAID personnel analyzed the policies and practices that impede modern contraceptive usage, ran strategic planning exercises with the Health Ministry and conducted service provider surveys. They assisted Health Ministry officials to update and distribute medical guidelines for reproductive health services and set up three sites to train several hundred clinicians, pharmacists and other service providers in contraceptive technology. Two demonstration family planning centers have been equipped and opened, and a

reproductive health communication campaign was developed and launched. Because of concerns about the viability of the commercial pharmaceutical sector, USAID trained pharmacists and physicians in customer focus before finally beginning the contraceptive social marketing campaign in Kyrgyzstan as an extension of the Kazakhstan program.

Kyrgyz government and international programs. The Kyrgyz government has mounted an active training and education program in family planning, focused in the south where infant mortality is particularly high. It is also redirecting efforts from the old health system to the nascent private sector and to NGOs for family health and reproductive services. Our embassy reports that Government and donor activities contributed to a decline in abortion rates to 330 per 1,000 by 1996 (from 610 in 1990). The Kyrgyz Ministry of Health is also working with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF on basic and reproductive health programs. The Japanese Government is funding a new children's hospital in Bishkek, and the Islamic Bank for Reconstruction and Development is assisting the state maternity hospital. American and other foreign NGOs are helping with clinical staff training and reproductive health campaigns for teenagers.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Bleak prospects. Six years after independence, the situation for children remains grim. Despite government efforts, the current socio-economic situation does not effectively guarantee decent living conditions for children. Too often, basic needs for shelter, food and clothing are not met. The rising cost of sending a child to school has raised drop-out rates.

Infant mortality, vaccination and nutrition. In 1996, the U.S. Census bureau estimated Kyrgyzstani infant mortality at 78 per 1,000 live births. Among the serious problems affecting children, respiratory infections accounted for 48 percent of infant mortality, prenatal conditions 22 percent, and diarrheal diseases 13 percent. Immunization rates are quite high by world standards. However, after independence, vaccine-preventable diseases such as diphtheria, polio, and measles re-emerged. In 1994, the Ministry of Health cooperated with UNICEF, UNDP, DANIDA, USAID/BASICS and the International Red Cross in opening a children's immunization center. A range of serious nutrition-related problems affect a large number of children, especially in rural areas, due to large families, low incomes, and poor supplies of major food products.

USAID assistance. USAID has undertaken initiatives in immunization and prevention of child deaths from acute respiratory infections and acute diarrhea which cause 60 percent of infant mortality. The introduction of new training and treatment protocols are expected eventually to reduce infant mortality by half.

Inadequate social safety measures. Traditional social safety measures are unable to cope with the social pressures affecting families. In Bishkek, Osh and Jalalabad, children are regularly observed begging or selling cigarettes and other sundries in the streets, where they are often exposed to exploitation, abuse, and crime. Arrested children are frequently denied lawyers and are reportedly intimidated into confessions by being put in holding cells with adults. The law prohibits the use of child labor under age sixteen, but families frequently call upon their children to work to help support the family.

Orphans. The number of children in full-time institutional care is increasing. "Orphans" (over 15,000) do not necessarily lack parents, but often come from dysfunctional families, often with alcoholic parents. The number of handicapped children (nearly 7,000) is also rising. There are increasing reports of abandonment due to parents' lack of resources to care for children. In many cases, institutions have had to meet increased

needs with no additional funding. Although there is a law allowing international adoptions, Kyrgyzstan has not determined which children can be adopted by foreigners. In 1997, there were no adoptions by U.S. citizens.

NGO assistance. In 1996, the Danish organization "Save the Children" undertook to improve conditions for orphans and handicapped children. Also the "Meerim Children's Fund" (headed by First Lady Akayeva), and "SOS Kinderhof" organized village orphanages for abandoned children. Immediate needs are now being partially addressed, partly due to work by UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, Mercy Corps, Counterpart Consortium, Adventist Relief and France Liberte.

Child abduction. Kyrgyzstan is not a party to the Hague Convention on Child Abduction. Cases of children abducted to or from the Kyrgyz Republic must be handled in the family courts of the country to which they have been taken by local legal counsel. The Department of State is not aware of any pending cases in Kyrgyzstan.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: HEALTH ISSUES

Demographic indicators. The economic downturn in the six years since independence has had a large impact on the health sector. The death rate rose from a record low of 6.9 deaths per 1,000 in 1991 to 9 deaths per 1,000 in 1995. Major causes of mortality are cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, accidents, and tumors. Tuberculosis and sexually-transmitted diseases have increased significantly. The country's mortality rate from tuberculosis has doubled in the past five years. Other demographic indicators show an increase in maternal mortality to 80 per 100,000 live births. Nearly half of these deaths are preventable. Approximately 85 percent of Kyrgyzstani women suffer from anemia.

Services and facilities. Like all former Soviet systems, Kyrgyzstan's health system relies heavily on inpatient and tertiary (rehabilitative) hospital-based care. Although an infrastructure exists to provide primary health care, most health resources are directed at tertiary facilities. With a declining health budget, the government is attempting radical changes in its financing of health care services.

USAID assistance. As one of the major donors in the health sector, USAID has provided approximately \$6 million during the past two years to improve the efficiency and quality of health care services. USAID works closely with other donors, especially the World Bank and United Nations Fund for Children, on policy-related issues in health reform and service delivery. In addition, under USAID's hospital partnership program the Kyrgyz government has developed medical partnerships with U.S. hospitals to exchange and transfer technology. USAID has also initiated a new program to improve diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis.

Reform efforts. The government, with USAID assistance, developed an experimental model of health reform in the Issyk-Kul region to address the problem of health sector financing. The pilot model developed mechanisms to generate revenues through an insurance system, introduced new provider payment systems, and established family group practices to improve primary health care facilities. To date, 90 percent of Issyk-Kul residents have enrolled in a family group practice. With additional assistance from the World Bank and the Asia Development Bank, the government is seeking to expand the Issyk-Kul model nationwide.

KYGRYZ REPUBLIC: ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The U.S. government has provided Kyrgyzstan approximately \$340 million in humanitarian, technical, and investment promotion assistance since 1992. This is the highest per capita figure for any of the five Central Asian countries, and reflects the government of Kyrgyzstan's strong commitment to market economic and democratic reform.

Privatization and trade programs. USAID supported the Kyrgyzstan's voucher-based mass privatization program from September 1993 until that program's completion in September 1996. USAID is now focusing on privatizing "blue chip" state enterprises and developing Kyrgyzstan's capital markets. In addition, USAID advisors are assisting Kyrgyzstan develop a legal framework for trade and investment that will facilitate its accession to the World Trade Organization.

Treasury assistance. The Treasury Department funds a resident government debt advisor in Bishkek who counsels Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Finance and National Bank on the fundamental principles of a government-run securities market.

Small business assistance. The U.S. has budgeted \$12.5 million for the Central Asian-American Enterprise Fund's efforts to develop small and medium-sized businesses in Kyrgyzstan through equity investments and micro-lending. The Fund has committed \$3.7 million for four investments in food processing, light manufacturing, and real estate ventures.

Democratic reform. The United States has budgeted approximately \$8.7 million for democracy building programs in Kyrgyzstan since 1992. USAID focuses much of this effort on supporting the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). USAID funds programs run by the International Foundation for Election Systems, the National Democratic Institute, and the American Bar Association. These programs provide NGOs training on how to influence government policy and help build the legal foundation for NGO operations. Another major USAID project seeks to increase the autonomy and effectiveness of regional government structures.

Health and family planning. USAID funds a hospital partnership between Kansas University Medical Center and the Institutes of Obstetrics/Pediatrics and of Oncology/Radiology in Bishkek which focuses on nursing reform, neonatology, family medicine, management training and oncology. Since 1993, USAID has also provided funding for the Central Asia Reproductive Health Services Expansion Program, designed to reduce maternal mortality and decrease reliance on abortion through the use of modern

contraceptives. The program also helped the Kyrgyzstan State Medical Institute develop its family planning curriculum. Other USAID funded programs aim to develop consumer-oriented and cost-effective family group practices in rural areas, and to assist with the implementation of the GOKG's national health care insurance law.

Infectious disease. USAID and the U.S. Center for Disease Control are also operating training programs aimed at battling infectious diseases such as polio, diphtheria, and Kyrgyzstan's two major causes of child mortality -- pneumonia and diarrhea.

Environment and energy. The U.S. has provided over \$7.4 million since 19 92 for projects based in Kyrgyzstan to reduce regional economic and political tensions generated by transboundary environmental and energy issues. USAID is encouraging regional cooperation through water sharing and use agreements among all five Central Asian republics which share the Aral Sea Basin. USAID is also working with the government of Kyrgyzstan to establish a legal and regulatory framework for its oil and gas industries. These projects aim to attract investment to the oil and gas sector and to promote the use of cleaner burning domestic energy systems such as natural gas and hydroelectricity.

Humanitarian assistance. Although humanitarian assistance is no longer a major focus of U.S. assistance programs in Kyrgyzstan, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) did deliver \$13.65 million in food aid under its Food for Progress program in FY 97. The USDA also provided \$22.4 million in food and other commodities to private voluntary organizations operating in Kyrgyzstan in FY 96.

Training and exchanges. USIA runs a full range of programs in Kyrgyzstan including the Fulbright Academic Exchange, the Bradley High School Exchange, the Muskie Graduate Program, and the International Visitors Program for future leaders.

Agriculture exchanges. USAID has provided \$2.5 million to fund farmer-to-farmer programs that provide technical assistance in the agribusiness sector. These programs have brought 151 U.S. farmers and agricultural professionals to Kyrgyzstan as volunteers since FY 92 in an effort to increase Kyrgyzstani access to credit and to provide technical assistance on enterprise start-up, business planning, and product distribution and marketing.

Scientific and business exchanges. Kyrgyzstani managers and scientists also participate in the U.S. Department of Commerce's Special American Business Internship Training Program, which places business and scientific leaders with private U.S. companies for three-to-six month internships.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Kyrgyzstan's environmental concerns are centered on pollution reduction and resource protection.

Pollution. Kyrgyzstan's pollution problems are not as severe as those of most of the former Soviet republics due to its comparative lack of industry. However, the areas of Kyrgyzstan where industrialization has occurred have experienced significant environmental damage, including contaminated water supplies, toxic air pollution and hazardous solid waste pollution.

Soviet nuclear waste. Kyrgyzstan is burdened with radioactive waste deposits left by the former Soviet authorities and has been unsuccessful in its attempts to have Russia take responsibility for these deposits.

Commitment to environmental protection. Despite a lack of financial resources, Kyrgyzstan is trying to adopt environmentally sound domestic policies and seems committed to protection of the environment. It has, for example, joined the Globe program initiated by Vice President Gore with two schools in Bishkek now full participants in the program.

Economic pressures. Kyrgyzstan's desire for environmental conservation is at odds with its need for economic development. The country's lack of industrial development makes the exploitation of natural resources Kyrgyzstan's best source for sustaining economic growth.

USG activities. The Department of State has established a regional Environmental Hub in neighboring Uzbekistan to monitor environmental issues in Central Asia as part of the its Environmental Initiative.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: OVERVIEW OF U.S. MISSION

Embassy facilities and staff. The U.S. Embassy in Bishkek is located in a crowded interim facility in downtown Bishkek that formerly served as a kindergarten. A new U.S. Embassy Chancery is being built on an 11-acre site in the suburbs of Bishkek. Construction is well under way, with completion estimated for next August and occupancy in September.

Staff. The post has a small staff, with a total of 19 U.S. direct-hire employees, three personal services contractors, and 75 Kyrgyz nationals. Five U.S. government agencies are represented - State, USIA, DOD, AID and Peace Corps. There are approximately 80 Peace Corps volunteers in country.