



Transcript of the Foreign Policy Centre Event: Kazakhstan at a Crossroads

Date: Tuesday February 2nd, 6pm-7.45pm

Venue: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Room, Houses of Parliament.

Speakers included:

- **Chris Bryant MP, Minister for Europe**
- **Iva Dobichina, Director of Central Asia Programmes, Freedom House**
- **Bakhytzhan Ketabayev, Head of K+ Satellite TV Channel, and member of the Civil Activity Fund**
- **Vera Tkachenko, Director, Legal Policy Research Centre**
- **Mike Gapes MP, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee (Chair)**

Chair: Mike Gapes MP, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee (Chair)

There is a remarkable interest with which I am very pleased. I have to say, I am not an expert on Kazakhstan. I am simply chairing the meeting. I think it is very important that we are having a meeting in the House of Commons today, because Britain historically has not given sufficient attention to Central Asian part of the former Soviet Union. And as such, I think it is particularly important that we do so this year given the role that Kazakhstan has in terms of growing economic and political significance of the country. We have a number of experts here today. Bakhytzhan Ketabayev, Head of the K+ Satellite TV Channel, and member of the Civil Activity Fund, Vera Tkachenko, Director of Legal Policy Research Centre and Chris Bryant MP, Minister for Europe. Whenever I come across Chris, he seems to be dealing with Latin America, but one of his other roles is as Minister for Europe.

We have four speakers today, and we are going to begin with Iva Dobichina, who is the Director of Central Asia Programmes for Central Asia in Freedom House.

First speaker, Iva Dobichina

I am really delighted to be able to address to such a distinguished audience and I am also very glad that Kazakhstani OSCE chairmanship attracts so much attention. At the Ministerial Council meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Madrid in November 2007, the OSCE participating States chose Kazakhstan to serve as the Organization's chairman in 2010. In making their case for the chairmanship, Kazakhstani officials argued their country was well placed to heal the rift within the OSCE between countries located to the East and West of Vienna. Critics argued that granting the chairmanship to a country that falls far short of its OSCE human dimension commitments would strike a serious blow to the organization's reputation as a leading regional human rights organization and to its work promoting human rights and democracy throughout the OSCE space. Critics also wondered aloud how Kazakhstan would react as OSCE Chairman to anti-democratic events in other participating States.



Due to all these concerns on the eve of making the important decision of Kazakhstan becoming the chair of the organisation, the then foreign minister Tazhin made several commitments. First of all, that his country will support fully the activities of the OSCE in the field of the human dimension. He also made specific commitments on behalf of his government to conduct significant reforms in 2008 of legislation in the areas of government regulation of the media, elections, political parties and local government, and to do so in consultation with Kazakhstani civil society and the international community I must say that indeed Kazakhstan reformed and changed its legislation on media, political parties, elections and local government, however these laws still do not meet the OSCE standards, nor do they take into consideration the recommendations of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

On the positive side, I have to say that Kazakhstani government has made progress in some human rights areas. For instance, Kazakhstan did ratify the UN option of protocol to ICCPR; they did ratify the option of protocol to the convention against torture, and made declaration to the Article 21 and 22 of the same convention. Kazakhstani officials did become more open to NGOs and had established several committees within the Ombudsman Office, the Ministry of Justice, etc. Another positive action of the Kazakhstani government was the development of two important documents that were produced in 2009 - the National Action plan for human rights and the government's legal policy strategy for 2010-2020. These documents do contain commitments for reforms; unfortunately, we cannot say that these reforms were implemented also because these documents are far reaching in timescale. However, I need to stress that the national action plan on human rights does not contain commitments to reform legislation in the field of freedom of the media.

In a worrying development for Freedom House and local civil society groups in 2009 the Kazakhstani government adopted an Internet legislation, a very restrictive Internet legislation, despite the calls of international organisations, local human rights groups and the OCSE representative of freedom of the media who made an analysis of that legislation, and concluded that the legislation does not meet the OCSE standards.

I know that you know these things but I am just trying to give a little bit of context.

Another important development is the increasing harassment of religious groups. There were several trials of religious organisations in 2009, both registered and unregistered. Trials against journalists have increased in 2009. According to the monitoring of probably the biggest media NGO in Kazakhstan Adil-Soz and my colleague Tamara Kalieva who is now in the audience, the criminal trials against journalists in 2008 were 20, and in 2009 - more than 40. Several opposition or independent newspapers have faced trials in 2009.

It seemed like the government is sending targeted messages to civil society groups. As I said, media, religious groups, and the NGOs with the imprisonment of the country's most prominent human right defender, Mr. Yevgenii Zhovtis, whose trial, according to the reports of all observers, all International organisations that were monitoring the



trial, local groups and diplomatic missions, had serious procedural violations. And violations of the ICCPR standards as well.

Now, nobody wants to sabotage Kazakhstan or the Kazakhstani chairmanship, and we are here to provide advice and to express our wish and hope that Kazakhstani government will indeed introduce meaningful reforms during its chairmanship and beyond.

I will quickly go to second point: on what can we do to preserve the OSCE as an important human rights organisation and to encourage Kazakhstan to introduce democratic reforms.

Kazakhstan is a very important security partner. Its strategic importance with regard to Afghanistan has been recognised. However, human rights and democracy are a cornerstone of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. All OSCE States have agreed that lasting security cannot be achieved without respect for human rights and functioning democratic institutions. They have committed themselves to a comprehensive catalogue of human rights and democracy norms. These form the basis of what the OSCE calls the human dimension of security. As I said, OSCE is a peer-review organisation, and I hope that all of us will continue to be **critical friends of Kazakhstan** and continue *reminding* Kazakhstan of its OSCE human dimension commitments, both in formal meetings, in public and of course, behind closed doors. Hopefully, more in public than behind closed doors, because our counterparts, local civil society in Kazakhstan are expecting more visibility. All spotlights will be on Kazakhstan. And we have the right to criticise Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan has the right to criticise us. And that is ok, that is what open society is all about; and I really hope that we will continue this and have more opportunities to express our views in such forms and within the OSCE.

When announcing its Chairmanship priorities Kazakhstan stated that it will focus on the dialogue on the future of European security, also known as the Corfu Process. It will be a key responsibility of the Chair to take this forward. However OSCE members' states should continue insisting that the Corfu Process should involve work across the three OSCE dimensions: human, political/military, and economic/environmental.

Kazakhstan has also announced its idea and is asking for support to hold an OSCE summit during its chairmanship. I hope that we can urge Kazakhstan to make, before discussing the summit, to make some significant progress, to show some commitments for reforms in the field of human dimension. Freedom House in Kazakhstan is supporting the work of local civil society activists coalition called OSCE 2010. They have developed some very specific and concrete recommendations that are easy to achieve. For instance, one specific step that will show commitment would be the decriminalisation of libel. This is something that is under discussion in Kazakhstan in the last five, six, or more years. This is something that was part of the Madrid commitments and this is something that can be done easily. Also, such a specific



recommendation in the case of Mr. Zhovtis who has already appealed to the Supreme Court would be to review the procedural violations made during his trial.

Another important thing to do for the OSCE member states is when sending official delegations to Kazakhstan to make visible meetings with civil society and to show clearly that the international community considers the civil society a partner, just like the government.

In a situation when we do not have a strong opposition and when the media is not free, I think we should think of the increasing the support for civil society in providing policy alternatives to the government and independent information.

The chairmanship has announced a very light agenda far from addressing core human rights issues and concerns. However, there is still time to do more. There are two human dimension events which have not been yet announced by the chairmanship, so the OSCE member states should insist for these two events to focus on core human rights issues like freedom of the media, as well as the Copenhagen event, which should become a real mechanism for peer review of human dimension commitments not only for Kazakhstan, but for all participating states.

OSCE member states should urge the Kazakhstani government to allow the access of NGOs and civil society to the OSCE events. It very much depends on the chairmanship; and I was really delighted by the Greek chairmanship that allowed NGOs access to the ministerial council meeting; and should a ministerial council meeting happen, I hope the Kazakhstani government will do the same. Thank you.

Second speaker, Bakhytzhan Ketabayev

I want to thank everyone for the interest in our discussion. And individually, HE the Kazakhstani Ambassador. Because only when you are in London can you discuss with the government and with the political opposition and the representatives of the mass media all the issues in peace in calmly. Thank you.

I believe that this coming year is critical for the European and British policies with regard to Kazakhstan. And to great extent, with regard to entire Central Asian region, because via Kazakhstan these policies are spread across Central Asia.

European policy, after the period of time being torn between its own interests and moral principles, morality eventually formulated this approach as follows: 'let's first do business, and talk about civil rights and morality later'. This is very similar to our president Nazarbayev's formula or approach: 'Economy first, and politics - second'. This is a very pragmatic approach. And this did work for a long time. Of course, there were some unpleasant incidents like opponents committing suicide with three shots through the body and through the head, but after certain clarifications everything was settled down and business carried on as usual. For example, British companies make substantial sponsorship contributions to Kazakh-British Technical University whose board director is headed by Dinara Nazarbayeva, who is now Dinara Kulebayeva.



And these companies reach an understanding with Nursultan Nazarbayev concerning the allocation of oil and setting up companies and businesses in Kazakhstan.

So, what has changed? Why do I regard this year as a critical year? Because there are competitors now, competitors to European and British businessmen. Competitors who have money and lack morals. They have been around for a while, but now it has become obvious. I would say, that they have less morals, but more money. For example, very recently, some concerning documents surfaced from which it became clear that President Nazarbayev's son-in-law, husband of Dinara, who has already been mentioned, Timur Kulibayev was involved in the sale of 25% share in the oil field in Aktobe by Munai Gaz. No one can be condemned before the trial. But there ought to be a trial. Today, people who tried to launch a petition to the Parliament concerning this business were arrested. I mean that 11 people, who tried to bring these documents to the Parliament, were arrested by thirty Special Forces policemen.

I do not know what the outcome of this incident would be, but I suspect that there will be an accusation that they have held an illegal meeting or unauthorised demonstration.

How are the European companies going to carry on the business?

They would have to be even more pragmatic, than their competitors. And also, the market is contracting. Let us imagine for a second that there is a conflict between a British investor and a Kazakhstani government. Could a Court in Kazakhstan be a fair arbiter in this conflict between the investor and the government? Can the Kazakhstani Parliament set up an independent commission and investigate raid or raids on British company? Could the Kazakhstani mass media, tell us in an independent and objective manner what is going on?

I believe that my opponents may say that it is Nursultan Nazarbayev who is the guarantor of stability in the country and protection for the Western investment. The only thing that we need to have is that Nazarbayev to stay in power as long as possible. Moreover, according to our constitution, which is a bit of a surprise for the chair of OSEC, Mr. Nazarbayev is the only citizen of Kazakhstan who has the right to be re-elected as a president any number of times. The problem is, that Mr. Nazarbayev is a mortal. Once he is gone, this structure will collapse. Who is then will be to guarantee the safety of Western investor?

The thing is that while the West was doing a good business in Kazakhstan and closing its eyes on what was going on in the country, a lot did go on in along all dimensions. I will mention just some of the facts that have happened over the recent time.

An Internet law has been passed introducing the censorship, which means that bloggers now have the same liability as journalists, as mass media. And many Western blog sites are blocked in Kazakhstan. Even Mr. Nazarbayev's ex son-in-law, who is a blogger on the Live Journal website, is unable to send a letter to Mr. Nazarbayev.



A private life law has been passed. This means that those journalists, that used to write canards, have been jailed. We can imagine, what would happen to Kazakhstani journalists who would raise attention to a major bribe.

Ramazan Yesergepov, the chief editor of the independent newspaper of Almaty News was jailed; Yevgeny Zhovtis, known to the entire world, has been took into jail in a quite spectacular manner. To give you another, different example: recently, a young man from a very good family, driving his Porsche at a very high speed while drunk, killed three people. To the police he explained that he actually allowed a stranger, whom he just met at the restaurant, to take the wheel. So he allowed a stranger to drive his more than 100 thousand dollar Porsche. While the police was very trusting and believed his story, the young man left the country. He did not stop with his victims, as Mr. Zhovtis had done; also, the young man was drunk. He was driving along a central street, which was very well lit, and not along the countryside and in the dark, like Mr. Zhovtis; and run over a man who was in the middle of the road. He [the young man] actually crossed the street with the red [traffic] light on. Now, Mr. Zhovtis is in prison. The young man is abroad.

I will not mention any more facts, as there are many facts. Nursultan Nazarbayev is 70 this year, and may he live long and happy. What will happen to Western investment in a country where the civil society is destroyed, with corrupt elite, with the freedom of speech suppressed if what needs to happen will happen sooner or later.

If you really want to be pragmatic, there is absolutely no alternative for the state to act according to the democratic norms and morals. The most tactical, pragmatic approach now is the emphasis on civil rights of citizens of the entire region: freedom of speech, fair and independent court system, freedom of religion, freedom of gathering, and meeting and competitive elections. Everything that can protect Kazakhstani citizen, or British citizen, or British investment. It well known, than you can fool part of the people on the permanent basis, or you can fool all people for a short time, but to fool all the people all the time is impossible. And this contrives to the declaration of Western values. Alternatively, the disappointed nations of the Central Asia may eventually turn away from the West and its values in favour of the East. Thank you for your attention.

Third speaker, Vera Tkachenko

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a privilege for me to speak in this historic building before such a distinguished audience that is interested in the role of my country in contributing to European security.

In January, 2010, Kazakhstan received the OSCE chairmanship and that represents serious responsibility and considerable challenges both to Kazakhstan and to the OSCE. The issue is of a great importance to the civil society of Kazakhstan was and still is: can OSCE chairmanship do reforms in Kazakhstan? Will Kazakhstani OSCE



chairmanship have an impact on domestic situation in Kazakhstan? Today, my presentation will focus on the issues of observance of fair trial in Kazakhstan.

For the last few years, Kazakhstani government made some serious steps in putting ratification on the international government on civil and political rights. In the first optional protocol in 2008, after ten years of the ratification of the convention against torture, Kazakhstan recognised the competence of the UN committee against torture to receive complaints; and Kazakhstan also ratified the optional protocol to the convention against torture. These steps of the government of Kazakhstan were definitely welcomed by the civil society and the international efforts.

However, in recent years, the practice of justice in Kazakhstan has started to move further away from the international standards. Just to give some examples: the conviction rates, the conviction records of Kazakhstani courts demonstrates lack of basic independence of the judiciary. For example, only less than one percent of all the criminal verdicts are acquittals.

For the last several years, the national security services have also limited the rights of the accused to freely choose their defenders in a manner that has no basis in the law and that violates the cohesions of the ICCPR. The security services have declared that it was secret and refuse to allow attorneys to participate in these cases without the special clearance, and moreover the procedures of receiving of such kind of clearance are not public, and that is why it very difficult for attorneys and for the public to get acquainted with these procedures. Moreover, in addition, the number of these cleared lawyers is strictly limited, which is serious violation of the rights to freely choose a lawyer.

For the example, the editor in chief of the Almaty-info Ramazan Yesergepov, who has already been mentioned here today, was limited in his choice to a defence lawyer and then was convicted to three years of imprisonment in a closed trial. Before that, Mukhtar Dzhakishev, has been denied a right to receive a legal assistance from the team of lawyers whom he wanted and took recently the attorney who was appointed by the state, because the lawyer who presented him was sick for some time. Actually this lawyer was appointed by the state is not willing to provide any information about the course of the trial to the family of Mr. Dzhakishev. Of course, such practice contradicts with standards of the independent legal profession and the principles of the fair trial standards that are recognised by all the OSCE participating states.

Recently, law enforcement agencies have began to prosecute lawyers for carrying out their professional responsibilities. Thus, in Summer 2008, the financial police demanded that the Almaty City Bar Association revoked the licence of the well-known lawyer Musin. In Summer 2009, the security services demanded that Nurlan Yesekeev and Daniyar K., two other prominent lawyers of Kazakhstan restrict of their licences.

The reason for that, releasing the official letter from the National Security Committee was that taking into consideration that these lawyers participated in press conferences



and voice that National Security Committee violates international standards and national legislation; for such kind of freedom they should be restrict of their licences. Such kind of developments raise serious concerns and are quite alarming.

But today I would like to focus on the case of Yevgeniy Zhotis to whom I am a public defender and I have been involved in this case from the investigation. Yevgeny Zhovtis is the leading Kazakhstani human rights defender and he is very well known both inside the country, and internationally. Both because of the first instance and the appeal court refused to hear independent experts who could testify that evidence provided by the prosecution was plot and that Mr. Zhlovtsi could not have prevented the tragedy incident, as a result of which his driving killed the pedestrian Mr. Kanat Moldabayev, who was walking in the middle of the street of the highway during the night time. It was already mentioned, in the first trial there were representatives of the international intergovernmental organisations like OSCE and the EU who express serious concerns about the procedural violations that happened during the courts of Yevgeny Zhovtis .

On January 27, 2010 the defence team of Zhovtis submitted a complaint to the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan. Actually, we received this opportunity because of the recent amendments that were adopted in December last year and went into effect starting from January, 1 this year. Given the fact that numerous violations that happened during the trial, which was also mentioned by international observers . I think Kazakhstan now has a unique opportunity to scrutinise the case and check all the procedural violations in the compliance with international standards, and also with the national legislation.

And I think this again is providing opportunity for the civil society and international observers to monitor this case and to see whether the fair trial standards are implemented in reality.

Kazakhstan OSCE chairmanship and of course the unfortunate situation which is leaving human rights activist remain jailed. And it is important to persuade Kazakhstani authorities to scrutinise the process... The Supreme Court has one month to consider whether to review the complaint; and if they decides to review the complain they have only one month to rule on this complain. In this regard, it is important to mention that the NGO community, especially the NGO coalition that was established in 2008 and that consists of the leading Kazakhstani human rights organisations...This is an important issue. [There is a need] to ask Kazakhstani government to take some concrete steps, and to ensure that the procedural violations in criminal cases of Evgenii Zhovtis and Ramazan Yesergepov are dealt with properly; and the review of this criminal cases is launched by the judiciary. And secondly, taking into consideration that Kazakhstani foreign minister Saudabayev in his speech in the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna in January this year, mentioned in his presentation that the independence of the judiciary will be one of the issue Kazakhstani government will be closely looking at.



It is important to come back to the report of the US special report on independence of judges and lawyers that was issued in January 2005 and to implement the recommendations of this obvious report in the national legislation.

And I think that if these concrete steps are taken by the government of Kazakhstan, it will clearly demonstrate the political realm, it will clearly demonstrate to the international community, and also to the people of Kazakhstan that Kazakhstan is willing to comply to the fundamental values of the organisation that it chairs in 2010. That it is willing to introduce the meaningful reforms to contribute and to strengthen the independence of the judiciary in my country. Thank you.

Fourth speaker, Chris Bryant MP

Thank you very much. Zdravstvuite. That is my only bit of Russian. I have no Kazakh at all. I am struck sometimes when discussing Central Asia by how much ignorance there is in the UK about Central Asia; and may be a great deal of ignorance in Central Asia about the UK.

There is a story from a few years ago of Charlotte Church, a young Welsh singer. She went to the United States of America to sing for George Bush Junior when he was President. And at the end of the evening she was introduced to President Bush and President Bush says: 'Where are you from?' And she said: 'I am from Wales.' And he said: 'What state is that in?' On which she said: 'Terrible!' It was a great meeting of mine.

Sometimes I think that British understanding of Central Asia is very limited, and a few Brits will be able to tell you whether Kazakhstan was bigger or smaller than Turkmenistan. There are few Brits who will be able to tell you whether Kazakhstan is the 9th largest country, or the 90th largest country in the world. Probably, very few Brits will be able to tell you whether Kazakhstan is bigger than whole of Western Europe or smaller than Western Europe. I am probably in the room of people who know all these things, I am painfully aware that my lack of experience. My friend visited Kazakhstan, had a very good and successful meeting there are nice things were said on the both sides, which is important. And we continue to have a very important dialog with Kazakh ministers. Last week the Foreign minister was here for the Afghanistan conference and I would say on behalf of the British government, but also on behalf of the young British soldiers who have been fighting in Afghanistan, that it is really important that all the Central Asian countries, nearly all (one was missing) were represented here on the Afghanistan conference last week. And surely, there is regional stability, regional prosperity is absolutely vital to making sure that we get Afghanistan right. And I am grateful to the Kazakhstanis who came, I had a very good meeting, we had some discussions about OSCE, about whether there should be a summit, since it was very difficult for Britain to send a minister to the ministerial meeting, I had some anxieties whether we would be able to provide one for a summit, and sometimes I wonder whether we just had too many summits...I am not sure whether summits are always the best way of doing business, sometimes bilateral



meetings can be very effective and try to coordinate everybody's diaries could be difficult.

This is a key year for Kazakhstan. Many people have already referred to the issues in relation to the chairmanship of the OSCE and I think this is a time when the world will look at Kazakhstan because of that chairmanship to see will you really comply with everything you have said will sign up to? Will you really take forward the reforms that would really not make you the dominant player in Central Asia, but also will make you a key player in relations with the EU and with the wider world? Will you take all of these challenges on board? And this is a year in which to do it. Because I think people will get very cynical and sceptical if lots of warm words are said this year but no action is taken this year, and then next year there is a relapse back to old ways of doing business.

That is not to say that there have not been many significant changes over recent years. It is good to see that there has been a change in a law on equality of gender that has been action taken on domestic violence. It is good to see a moratorium on death penalty; but as somebody who is passionately opposed to the death penalty in all cases, I would like to see an end to the death penalty. There has been a moratorium since 2003 that is now more than 5 years. Common, let us just say 'No' to the death penalty. And I know that you have limited the number of crimes that death penalty applies to, but let us just get rid of it. It does not act as a deterrent and it means that where you have a jury system, jury system is much less likely to convict, and in the end, when people are threatened by the death penalty, I think this is just a cruel practice. So, I think it is one of my challenges, I suppose.

I would say I fully understand Kazakhstan's desire for prosperity. Complicated to achieve prosperity in such a wide...when you have seventeen million people spread across such a vast territory. But I believe you can not have real prosperity, or certainly prosperity that is worth having without having a clean human rights record. And it is not prosperity, and then politics, it is prosperity and politics going hand-in-hand. And I know that Kazakh ministers have said that to me directly that is what they aspire to, that what they aim for. But we need to see actions.

So, for instance, the free media, that includes modern media like the Internet are absolutely vital. And we have be nervous about some of the changes that we have seen, in particular the attack on Respublica, when the 400 000 US dollars damages are for what is titled 'moral damages'. I find it difficult to see how that fits with an aspiration for an open society and the free civil society. We need to see a reliable legal system.

I am always cautious about to much preaching from the UK to other countries. I remember sitting here in the UK with British minister telling Iran that it was absolutely vital that they separated the religion from politics. I just want to point out very quietly to my British minister that actually Britain has a state Church as well. So, I think sometimes we have to be cautious about the way we preach other countries in world,



but I think the reliability of the justice system in Kazakhstan has been questioned regularly by NGOs and there are cases where we have taken a significant degree of concern. We already heard the reports of two of those that there was an appeal to the High Court on the seventh of January. I very much hope that that would be a fair appeal that is heard, and we will be watching very closely.

I know that Kazakhstan prides itself on the religious freedom. But you could go a step further and say that you would not have a current registration system...But nevertheless I think that you could just go that extra step. In terms of political parties, it would be good to see the law that not only allow the political parties to flourish, but encourage political parties to flourish, so that you have an open democracy. But it is difficult to do when you have a threshold for creating a party for such a long period and such a large number of members being needed. So I think in a whole series of different ways there are challenges for Kazakhstan this year.

I say all of these things as a critical friend. And I do not want to land more heavily on the word 'critical' or on the word 'friend'. Critical friend. We want Kazakhstan to be not only the key dominant nation in the region, we want it to have a key role in that relationship between East and West, we want to see it play a key role in that relationship between Russia and the EU, we want to see it play a key role in issues of energy security for the wide world and in particular for the EU. And in terms of security against terrorism and international terrorism and radical extremism and in Afghanistan.

So we see Kazakhstan as the key ally of us, but we hope and we aspire we have an ambition for you which will not go just because you have taken the LSCE challenges this year. We stand ready to help in whatever way we possibly can. I was doing a bit of reading myself about the earlier Kazakhstani writers; and I came across Abay Ibrahim Kunanbay-uly, there is a university named after him; and as I understand, Abay name means 'careful'.

He wrote his own poetry and also translated a lot of European literature into Kazakh. The work of Lord Byron, Pushkin, and Petr. And all I say is, what I take from that is that Kazakhstan can play a key role at the juncture between Russia and the West. But also as I understand from what he did, he was trying to say that the key to liberation from Russian colonialism was in education and literacy. And I think that that, in the end, is going to be the greatest challenges for Kazakhstan: advancing the literacy, education, so that everybody has an opportunity, a whole opportunity to share the growing prosperity of Kazakhstan. Thank you.

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