

**THE EMERGING IMPORTANCE OF THE
U.S.-CENTRAL ASIA PARTNERSHIP**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC AND
THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
OF THE
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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THE EMERGING IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S.- CENTRAL ASIA PARTNERSHIP

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC
AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:35 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eni F.H. Faleomavaega (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. This is a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment. The topic for discussion and dialogue this afternoon is the emerging importance of the U.S. and Central Asia partnership. My good friend, the ranking minority member, at this point in time at least, is on his way. And I would like to preface my remarks in terms of this being the last hearing that I am going to chair in my capacity as chairman of this Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment. And I wanted, especially, for my good friend, the gentleman from Illinois, to be here so that I could have some choice words to say about our great relationship over the years he has served as the ranking member of this subcommittee, my good friend Congressman Don Manzullo from Illinois.

So, as you know, there are a lot of things that have happened in the course of the past couple of weeks. I do offer my congratulations. This is how beautiful democracy is. We didn't have to go through a revolution or state of war, or whatever it is to change government, at least in this important body. The makeup of our democracy means that my good friends on the other side of the aisle have regained the majority of this House and accordingly, they will also control the various aspects of how this institution is going to be administered and how it's going to be operating.

So I do want to offer my sincere apologies to Assistant Secretary Blake and Mr. Sedney from the Defense Department for your patience and forbearance in bearing with us and the problems that we have had with this afternoon's schedule. As you know, we had a little Democratic Caucus organizational meeting this morning, and we have just completed that meeting. And I do thank you for taking the time to be with us here this afternoon.

I want to say that it has been my privilege to work closely with my good friend, who I believe will be the new chairman of this subcommittee when they reorganize. And that, again, is my good

friend, Mr. Manzullo, who will take up the chairmanship of this subcommittee. I want to say that even though we have not agreed on all of the issues that have been discussed and debated in this subcommittee, I have the utmost respect for his opinions and the positions he has taken on some of the issues we have engaged on. This is what makes this democracy so beautiful: That we are free to engage in dialogue and express differences of opinion about given issues, how they impact our national policies, and most important of all, provide for the welfare of our fellow Americans.

Being a member of this committee now for almost 22 years, it is one of the most enriching experiences of my life.

And I am going to begin our hearing this afternoon by giving this opening statement that I have prepared for the past 100 years. So please bear with me, Mr. Secretary and Mr. Sedney, since this is my last hurrah, I sincerely ask you, you might make some points out of it.

But anyway, this is the final hearing to be held by the subcommittee of the 111th Congress during my tenure as chairman. I am especially pleased to welcome U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Robert Blake, who will testify today about the emerging importance of the United States and Central Asian partnership.

I admire Assistant Secretary Blake and the work he is doing to strengthen our relationship with Central Asia, and I am appreciative that he served as our keynote speaker last year in November, when Ranking Member Buck McKeon of the Armed Services Committee and I kicked off the Congressional Caucus on Central Asia, which we established to highlight the importance of Central Asia to U.S. security, energy, and economic interests.

I was first introduced to the challenges facing Central Asia through my friendship with His Excellency, Kanat Saudabayev, who now serves as the foreign minister and Secretary of State for the Republic of Kazakhstan as well as the chairperson-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, but who once served as Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United States for more than 6½ years.

My friendship with Foreign Minister Saudabayev has spanned almost a decade now, and because of him, I have come to appreciate President Nursultan Nazarbayev's leadership in championing nuclear disarmament among possessor states and preventing proliferation to new states.

From 1949 to 1991, the former Soviet Union conducted nearly 500 nuclear tests in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, and exposed more than 1.5 million Kazakhs to nuclear radiation. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan was left with the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal and the world's second largest nuclear test site.

While Kazakhstan could have emerged as a nuclear superpower and used its position to resolve the financial problems of a new and struggling nation, President Nazarbayev was among the first to recognize and neutralize the dangerous threat posed by the nuclear arsenal Kazakhstan inherited from the former Soviet Union.

Despite threats from the Kremlin, President Nazarbayev supported the Nunn-Lugar program in its infancy, and voluntarily dis-

mantled a nuclear arsenal which was larger than the combined nuclear arsenals of Great Britain, France, and China.

As a Pacific Islander, I have a special affinity for the people of Kazakhstan because from 1946 to 1958, the United States detonated 67 nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands, including the first hydrogen bomb—what was then known as the Bravo shot in 1954—which was 1,300 times more powerful than the bombs we dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The nuclear testing program exposed the people in the Marshall Islands to severe health problems and genetic abnormalities for generations to come. The U.S. nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands also set a precedent for France to use the islands of the Pacific for its own testing programs. Oh, no. Don't test it in France—not in Paris. Take it where there are a bunch of natives sitting out in the middle of nowhere in the Pacific to do their nuclear testing.

And for some 30 years, the French Government detonated approximately 218 nuclear bombs in the air, on the surface, and below the surface of these atolls known as Moruroa and Fangataufa. And these atolls are about a couple of hundred miles away from the main island of Tahiti in French Polynesia.

In Kazakhstan, the cumulative power of explosions from nuclear tests conducted by the former Soviet Union is believed to be equal to the power of 2,500 explosions of the type of bomb dropped in Hiroshima, Japan in 1945.

Six years ago, I felt a deep sense of obligation as a Member of Congress who had visited the nuclear test sites in the Marshall Islands and Tahiti to also visit the Semipalatinsk test site in Kazakhstan. During my visit and at the invitation of President Nazarbayev, I learned that I was the first American legislator to set foot on ground zero in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan. And to this date, ground zero is still radioactive.

During my time in Semipalatinsk, I also met and visited with the bed-ridden victims of nuclear testing, and I continue to be haunted by their suffering. However, I am grateful to my colleagues who stood with me during the 109th Congress in passing House Resolution 905, which called upon the U.S. administration to establish a joint working group with the Government of Kazakhstan to assist in assessing the environmental damage and health effects caused by the former Soviet Union's nuclear testing in Kazakhstan. And I am hopeful that the Obama administration will follow up on this resolution and establish this long overdue working group.

Currently the Obama administration has listed five objectives for enhanced U.S. engagement in Central Asia. These objectives include maximizing cooperation for coalition efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan with increased emphasis on the use of air bases and the transit of troops and supplies to Afghanistan along the northern distribution network; increasing the development and diversification of the region's energy resources; promoting good governance and respect for human rights; and fostering competitive market economies, and preventing state failures in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan by enhancing food security assistance.

Signs of this enhanced engagement includes a recent meeting between President Obama and President Nazarbayev at the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, DC, in April of this year, and

U.S. support for the OSCE summit which will be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on December 1st and 2nd, next month, of this year.

Three years ago, under the Bush administration, my colleagues and I spearheaded an effort in Congress calling upon the United States to support Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE, and I am including this September 17, 2007, letter to the U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for the record. Recognizing, as David Wilshire, head of the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, noted, that building democracy is a long and hard task. I felt that the U.S. could and should offer a gesture of goodwill by assisting Kazakhstan in its bid to chair the OSCE considering that Kazakhstan voluntarily worked with the U.S. to dismantle the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal and has been a key ally in the war against terrorism.

I am pleased that the U.S. finally supported Kazakhstan's bid for 2010. And while there will always be critics intent on criticizing Kazakhstan in its attempt to move the OSCE forward, member states unanimously voted in favor of Kazakhstan's chairmanship. I believe they did so in recognition of the bold steps President Nazarbayev has taken to bring Kazakhstan out from under the yoke of communism.

Of course, there is work left to be done, but according to polling data from an independent firm hired by the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan during the Bush administration, 90 percent of the people of Kazakhstan support President Nazarbayev and are pleased with the work he is doing. And more than 63 percent of the people of Kazakhstan have a favorable opinion of the United States.

Since 9/11, and regarding U.S. coalition operations in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan has allowed overflight and transshipment to assist U.S. efforts. U.S.-Kazakh Accords were signed in 2002 on the emergency use of Kazakhstan's Almaty airport and on other military-to-military relations. The Kazakh Parliament approved sending military engineers to Iraq in May 2003.

And in his April 2010 meeting with President Obama, President Nazarbayev agreed to facilitate U.S. military air flights along a new transpolar route that transits Kazakhstan to Afghanistan. Now Kazakhstan is the first post-Soviet, the first predominantly Muslim, and the first Central Asian nation to serve in the top leadership role of the OSCE, an organization known for promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

As chair of the OSCE, Kazakhstan will also host the Astana Summit. The Astana Summit, like Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE, is historic. It is historic.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I spearheaded an effort calling upon the United States to stand with Kazakhstan in support of an OSCE summit. And I will also make this January 27, 2010, letter to President Obama part of the record, while expressing my appreciation to the Obama administration, and especially to U.S. Secretary of State Clinton and Assistant Secretary of State Blake, who are expected to represent the United States at the Astana Summit. It is my hope that I might also be there to witness this historic occasion.

The Astana Summit has been organized at the initiative of President Nazarbayev, and will be the first OSCE meeting of heads of

state to take place in more than 10 years. It has been 10 years since the OSCE held a security summit, and the world has changed drastically since then as a direct result of 9/11.

While I have serious reservations about U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan aims to use the OSCE chair and summit to press for a resolution of the conflict in Afghanistan, and for this reason, I am pleased that the United States is supporting the Astana Summit. However, given the serious importance of the summit to U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, I hope President Obama will make it his top priority to attend. His presence will send the right signal to our allies in Central Asia who are also putting their lives on the line for us.

At this time I want to commend Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Latvia for providing supply routes to support U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan. Known as the Northern Distribution Network, these operations are critical to coalition efforts. Simply put, without the support of Central Asia, we have no hope in Afghanistan.

But I would hope that our partnership with Central Asia would extend past the war in Afghanistan in both breadth and depth. For over 100 years, the people of Central Asia have lived without basic freedoms. In my humble opinion, based on meetings with the people and leaders of these countries, they, like us, want to continue their march toward democracy, and it is my sincere hope to do what I can in my capacity as a Member of this great institution.

Again, it is my honor to welcome our witnesses, including the Honorable Robert Blake, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, and Mr. David Sedney, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia. I do want to thank them both for their service to our country, especially to all of the men and women in our Armed Forces and I also will always extend to them my highest regards. As a Vietnam veteran, I cannot say enough about the sacrifices that the families of our men and women in uniform make for our Nation. And I think at times we don't say enough to express how much we appreciate what they do and the service they render to our country.

I am so happy and very honored that I have my good friend and ranking member of this subcommittee, whom I sincerely hope will be the chairman of the committee in the coming weeks, my good friend, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Manzullo.

I want to say, before giving him the time for his opening statement, I just want to state for the record that it is indeed my personal honor to have worked with you for all of these years, and as I said earlier in my remarks, we have not always agreed on the issues we have discussed and debated on, but the mutual respect for each other I want to say is second to none. And I want to thank you, sir, for all of the help in the times that we went through, up and down, whatever way. It has always been my honor to work with you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Faleomavaega follows:]

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515**

**STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA
CHAIRMAN**

**before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC AND THE
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT**

“The Emerging Importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership”

November 17, 2010

Since this may be the final hearing to be held by the Subcommittee during the 111th Congress and during my tenure as Chairman, I am especially pleased to welcome U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert O. Blake who will testify today about the emerging importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership. I admire Assistant Secretary Blake and the work he is doing to strengthen our relationship with Central Asia, and I am appreciative that he served as our key note speaker last year on November 18, 2009 when Ranking Member Buck McKeon of the Armed Services Committee and I kicked off the Congressional Caucus on Central Asia which we established to highlight the importance of Central Asia to U.S. security and energy interests.

I was first introduced to the challenges facing Central Asia through my friendship with His Excellency Kanat Saudabayev, who now serves as the Foreign Minister and Secretary of State for the Republic of Kazakhstan as well as the Chairperson-in-Office (CiO) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), but who once served as Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the U.S. for more than 6 ½ years.

Our friendship and association has spanned almost a decade and because of him I have come to appreciate President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s leadership in championing nuclear disarmament among possessor states and preventing proliferation to new states. From 1949 to 1991, the Soviet Union conducted nearly 500 nuclear tests in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan and exposed more than 1.5 million Kazakhs to nuclear radiation. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan was left with the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal and the second largest nuclear test site.

While Kazakhstan could have emerged as a nuclear superpower and used its position to resolve the financial problems of a new and struggling nation, President Nazarbayev was among the first to recognize and neutralize the dangerous threat posed by the nuclear arsenal Kazakhstan

inherited. Despite threats from the Kremlin, President Nazarbayev supported the Nunn-Lugar program in its infancy and voluntarily dismantled a nuclear arsenal which was larger than the combined nuclear arsenals of Great Britain, France and China.

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In Kazakhstan, the cumulative power of explosions from nuclear tests conducted by the former Soviet Union is believed to be equal to the power of 2,500 explosions of the type of bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan in 1945. In August 2004, I felt a deep sense of obligation as a Member of Congress who had visited the nuclear test sites in the Marshall Islands and Tahiti to also visit the Semipalatinsk test site. During my visit and in later discussions with President Nazarbayev, I learned that I was the first American legislator to set foot on ground zero in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan.

During my time in Semipalatinsk, I also met and visited with the bedridden victims of nuclear testing and I continue to be haunted by their suffering. However, I am grateful to my colleagues who stood with me during the 109th Congress in passing House Resolution 905 which called upon the Administration to establish a joint working group with the Government of Kazakhstan to assist in assessing the environmental damage and health effects caused by the USSR's nuclear testing in Kazakhstan and I am hopeful that the Obama Administration will follow up on this Resolution and establish this long overdue working group.

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Signs of this enhanced engagement include a recent meeting between President Obama and President Nazarbayev at the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington DC on April 11, 2010 and U.S. support for the OSCE Summit which will be held in Astana, Kazakhstan on December 1-2, 2010.

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I believe they did so in recognition of the bold steps President Nazarbayev has taken to bring Kazakhstan out from under the yoke of communism. Of course there is work left to do but, according to polling data from an independent firm hired by the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan during the Bush Administration, 90% of the people of Kazakhstan support President Nazarbayev and are pleased with the work he is doing and more than 63 percent of the people of Kazakhstan have a favorable opinion of the United States.

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The Astana Summit has been organized at the initiative of President Nazarbayev and will be the first OSCE meeting of Heads of State to take place in more than a decade. It has been 11 years since the OSCE held a security summit and the world has changed drastically since then as a direct result of 9/11. While I have serious reservations about U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan aims to use the OSCE Chair and Summit to press for a resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan and for this reason I am pleased that the United States is supporting the Astana Summit. However, given the serious importance of the Summit to U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, I hope that President Obama will make it his top priority to attend. His presence will send the right signal to our allies in Central Asia who are also putting their lives on the line for us.

At this time, I want to commend Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Latvia for providing supply routes to support U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan. Known as the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), these operations are critical

to coalition efforts. Simply put, without the support of Central Asia, we have no hope in Afghanistan. But I would hope that our partnership with Central Asia would extend past the war in Afghanistan in both breadth and depth. For over 100 years, the people of Central Asia have lived without basic freedoms and, in my meetings with the people and leaders of these countries, they, like us, want to continue their march towards democracy and it is my intent to do what I can to help them as they move forward.

Again, it is my honor to welcome our witnesses including the Honorable Robert Blake, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, and Mr. David Sedney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia. I thank them for their service to our country and especially our military men and women, and I extend to them my highest regards.

Mr. MANZULLO. This is not a farewell party. But I have tremendous respect for my chairman and look forward to working with you. And I commend you for having a hearing on countries that have essentially been forgotten but are absolutely critical to the future of not only of our country, but the stability of the entire region and I look forward to testimony of the witnesses.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I thank the gentleman from Illinois.

I would like to now introduce our distinguished witnesses this afternoon. Assistant Secretary Blake, who is a senior officer with the Foreign Service, served previously as Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Also Deputy Chief of Mission to New Delhi, India. He served also in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and Nigeria.

Mr. Blake earned his degree at Harvard, also a master's degree at Johns Hopkins University, and has been appointed now as our Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs since last year.

Also with us is Mr. Samuel Sedney, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs. Mr. Sedney has been Deputy Assistant Secretary for 2 years in this capacity. Before serving in the Department of Defense, he spent 5 years as a house husband in Bern, Switzerland. Wow, that's a real tough task for Mr. Sedney to do. A graduate of Princeton University and Suffolk School of Law. He attended Louisiana State University's School of Law where he studied law. And a very distinguished career for both of these gentlemen. And again, I want to say how much I appreciate both of you making the effort to come and testify before the subcommittee. The staff has just given me a note.

Well, why don't we start with Secretary Blake. We still have time. I will tell you when it's 4:30, Mr. Sedney. We can do that. Thank you, Mr. Blake, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT O. BLAKE, JR., ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO SRI LANKA AND MALDIVES)

Ambassador BLAKE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate all of your opening remarks. And let me, at the outset,

thank you so much for your leadership of this subcommittee while I have been Assistant Secretary. It has been a real pleasure to work with you. And I can tell you everybody at the State Department and the Obama administration appreciates the energy and dedication that you have brought to helping to enhance our cooperation and our engagement with Central Asia.

You mentioned your leadership in establishing the Central Asia Caucus, but you have also been a frequent traveler to the region and have really helped to raise the profile of this very important country, and of course, we wish you well and look forward to continuing to work with you, and of course, Mr. Manzullo and his colleagues as they enter into the majority.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. We're not leaving.

Ambassador BLAKE. I have a longer statement for the record. With your permission—

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Without objection, both of your statements will be made part of the record, and if you have any related materials that you want to submit for the record, they will be.

Ambassador BLAKE. Thank you so much. Mr. Chairman, Central Asia, as you say, lies at a very critical, strategic crossroads bordering Afghanistan, China, Russia, and Iran, which is why the United States wants to continue to expand our engagement and our cooperation with this critical region.

We have identified five main priorities for our engagement in Central Asia. First, to assist coalition efforts in Afghanistan; also to increase the development of the region's energy resources and diversification of supply routes; encourage political liberalization; enhance respect for human rights; to foster competitive market economies and openings for businesses; and also increase the capacity of states to govern themselves effectively and serve the needs of their citizens.

Mr. Chairman, we don't see ourselves in competition for influence with any other country, nor do we accept that the five central Asian countries constitute an exclusive zone of interest for any country. To the contrary, we want to cooperate more with Russia, China, and others to address the critical challenges and produce a more durable stability and more reliable partners for everyone.

Central Asia has, in fact, been an area of common ground for us to engage with Russia and to further the reset of our relations with Russia, especially regarding Kyrgyzstan, where they have been key partners.

In order to pursue our goals, we have developed in partnership with countries in the region structured annual bilateral consultations that I lead to elevate, enhance, and energize our dialogue with each of the countries of Central Asia. So let me highlight some of the key issues of these countries.

Starting with Kyrgyzstan, the situation in the Kyrgyz Republic remains a vital interest to the United States. As you know, Mr. Chairman, on October 10, the Kyrgyz Republic held Central Asia's first truly free parliamentary elections in which the outcomes were not known in advance. And we are now encouraging the leaders of the five parties there that qualified for seats to cooperate and form an inclusive and representative government.

The United States played a very active role in facilitating this Democratic achievement through our assistance programs and grants to the Kyrgyz Government and civil society and our participation in the election monitoring mission.

At the same time, we are supporting the International Commission to investigate the violence that took place in June in southern Kyrgyzstan. This commission is headed by Kimmo Kiljunen, a member of the Finnish Parliament.

We are also continuing to support an OSCE initiative to improve public security, particularly in the south, to assist in the urgent task of restoring mutual trust and preventing further conflict in that important country.

Kyrgyzstan also remains an important partner in our efforts in Afghanistan. The Manas Transit Center represents a key contribution by the Kyrgyz Republic to the efforts of the International Coalition to provide security for the Afghan people.

Turning to Kazakhstan, I appreciate your comments on Kazakhstan, Mr. Chairman. As you say, our relations with Kazakhstan are probably our deepest and broadest of any in Central Asia. And since you have mentioned it, I would like to particularly recognize the recent completion of the long-term effort to safely shut down Kazakhstan's BN 350, plutonium production reactor, secure the spent fuel that it produced, and then to transport that fuel to a secure facility. That process has now been completed and marks a real milestone in our nonproliferation cooperation, and I commend Kazakhstan for that.

As you say, Mr. Chairman, Kazakhstan also has been a strong supporter of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. But really the spotlight is right now on Astana for another reason, because it is the chairman and office of the OSCE, and Kazakhstan is about to host the first OSCE summit in 11 years in Astana on December 1 and 2.

We think that Kazakhstan has done a very credible job as OSCE chairman-in-office, especially dealing with the situation in Kyrgyzstan, where the OSCE has really been at the forefront of efforts to promote peace, democracy, and reconciliation.

We are also pleased that Kazakhstan has agreed to follow the example of past summits and allow full access by NGOs and permit NGOs to organize a parallel event on November 28 and 29.

We also encourage Kazakhstan to continue improve its human rights record and to uphold the commitments it made in taking on this chairmanship.

Mr. Chairman, Secretary Clinton plans to lead the U.S. delegation to the OSCE summit. And we hope it to be successful. The summit should produce two key documents. First, a Helsinki Final Act 35th anniversary statement that reaffirms all of those commitments, and also an ambitious substantive action plan to guide future work of the OSCE. And of course, Mr. Chairman, we would be delighted to welcome you as part of the U.S. delegation in Astana.

Turning to Uzbekistan, as with other countries, the United States has also increased our engagement with that important country. We have a very full agenda of security, economic, and human rights issues that we are working with them on. Uzbekistan is a particular key partner for the U.S. effort in Afghanistan for

providing electricity to keep the lights on in Kabul; it has facilitated transit for central supplies for coalition forces, and it has helped to construct a very important rail line inside Afghanistan.

So we have seen an improved relationship with Uzbekistan, but some challenges remain. We continue to encourage the Uzbeks to address significant human rights concerns, such as ending forced child labor, opening up the media environment, and demonstrating greater tolerance for religious activities.

In Tajikistan, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, is one of the poorest countries in the world, and a fragile state in a volatile neighborhood. Recent skirmishes between the government and the formal civil war combatants, as well as security threats, such as the August 25 prison break, really reflect the continued tensions in that country. The United States is working to strengthen law enforcement, border security, increase food security, as you mentioned, strengthen health, health and education, and encourage respect for human rights—particularly religious and media freedom.

Last but not least in Turkmenistan, we continue to make progress in facilitating Turkmenistan's gradual opening up and its efforts to move toward reform and greater respect for human rights. We also appreciate Turkmenistan's humanitarian help in neighboring Afghanistan through its provision of discounted electricity.

As part of our first ever annual bilateral consultations in Ashgabat in June, I led the first ever U.S. business mission to Turkmenistan, and this strengthened an important commercial partnership with the nation that now holds the world's fourth largest natural gas reserves.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, this administration considers Central Asia to be an important pillar of our security policy and regional U.S. interest. We recognize that the pace of change is often slow, and that our programs should focus on long-term, meaningful results. But through our invigorated policy dialogue and our engagement, we aim to strengthen our ties with these important countries and their people, and thereby advance U.S. interest in this strategically important region.

And again, I thank you for your personal engagement.

Mr. FALCOMVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Blake follows:]

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND THE GLOBAL
ENVIRONMENT

ROBERT O. BLAKE, JR.
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
BUREAU OF SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS
NOVEMBER 17, 2010

Chairman Faleomavaega, members of the committee: Thank you for inviting me, I welcome the opportunity today to speak with you on “The Emerging Importance of the U.S.- Central Asia Partnership.”

Why is Central Asia important to the U.S.?

Central Asia lies at a critical strategic crossroads, which is why the United States wants to continue to expand our cooperation with each of the five Central Asian states in a wide range of areas. The Obama Administration has worked closely with the governments and the people of the region to create a broader atmosphere of trust and strengthened relations.

The United States has an important interest in promoting a stable, secure and prosperous Central Asia integrated into the global economy and respecting internationally recognized human rights. Both economic growth and democratic political development in Central Asia are necessary to increase stability and provide more reliable partners for the United States in addressing common yet critical global challenges, from Afghanistan to non-proliferation to counter-narcotics to energy security. Longer term, Central Asia could be the center of a reinvigorated Silk Road that links the economies of Western Europe and Russia, and the oil and gas supplies of Central Asia, with the large and growing economies of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, bringing important benefits to Afghanistan.

Shortly after President Obama's inauguration, the administration undertook a full review of our policy toward Central Asia and defined five main priorities, which we actively pursue in our engagement with the region. First, we seek to expand cooperation with Central Asian states to assist Coalition efforts in Afghanistan. Second, we want to increase the development of the region's energy resources and diversification of supply routes. Third, we encourage political liberalization and enhanced respect for fundamental human rights. Fourth, we plan to foster competitive market economies and economic reform. And fifth, we help to increase the capacity of states to govern themselves effectively and serve the needs of their citizens. We assess our progress regularly through the interagency process, and will adjust these priorities as necessary.

While the United States has significant interests in Central Asia, there is no longer any "Great Game" – we are not in competition for influence with any other country, nor do we accept that the five Central Asian countries constitute a "zone of privileged interest" for any country. To the contrary, we want to cooperate more with Russia, China and others to address critical challenges and produce a more durable stability and more reliable partners for everyone. Central Asia has in fact provided an area of common ground to further the "reset" of America's relations with Russia, especially regarding Kyrgyzstan where we have been key partners. Other areas of cooperation include the upcoming OSCE Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, counternarcotics and counterterrorism, and our engagement in Afghanistan and the Northern Distribution Network.

Central Asia's assistance in Afghanistan

Central Asia plays a vital role in our Afghanistan strategy. Just look at a map of the region. Three of the five Central Asian states border Afghanistan. A stable future for Afghanistan depends on the continued assistance of its Central Asian neighbors-- just as a

stable, prosperous future for the Central Asian states depends on bringing peace, stability and prosperity to Afghanistan.

While acknowledging the significant contributions of the Central Asians to Afghan stabilization efforts, we want to facilitate and encourage broader bilateral and regional support to include cooperation on border security, counter-narcotics, trade, and reconstruction.

We appreciate the assistance of all our partners along the Northern Distribution route, from Latvia to Afghanistan, for their cooperation and support of our efforts in Afghanistan. The Northern Distribution Network is an important route for getting supplies into Afghanistan for coalition forces. This year we focused on expanding the capacity of the Northern Distribution Network. We signed an enhanced transit agreement with Kazakhstan, and are also working with Uzbekistan on NDN enhancements. But our relations with Central Asia are by no means limited to cooperation on the NDN or on security issues – we have a broad agenda encompassing everything from counterterrorism and counternarcotics to democracy and human rights.

Annual Bilateral Consultations

In order to pursue these critical priority areas, we developed, in partnership with each of the countries of the region a structured, annual dialogue on all key priorities and on practical steps our countries can take to advance each of our goals. The first of these Annual Bilateral Consultations took place with Uzbekistani Foreign Minister Norov leading a delegation to Washington in December 2009. We launched similar annual consultations with Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, and plan to hold an ABC with Kyrgyzstan once a new government is formed. In every country in Central Asia, we are moving from words to actions. After holding several midyear reviews over the summer, we look forward to embarking on the second

round of these ABCs this coming winter. I will now briefly highlight key issues in our relations with each country.

Kyrgyzstan

The situation in the Kyrgyz Republic remains of vital interest to the United States. The end of the Bakiyev regime opened new opportunities for engagement and democratic progress. The events of last April and June could have led the Kyrgyz Republic down the road of instability, but the interim government was able to chart a course that led to historic parliamentary elections on October 10, 2010 that resulted in a multiparty parliamentary system of government – a first for Central Asia. We are encouraging the leaders of the five parties that qualified for seats in Parliament to work together in the public interest to form an inclusive, representative government, which will support a functioning and competitive market economy to provide economic opportunity and progress for the people of the Kyrgyz Republic.

While election observers reported some flaws and irregularities in the voting process, as President Obama noted, the elections "demonstrated important and positive attributes of a genuine democracy." The United States played an active role in facilitating this democratic achievement through our assistance programs and grants to the Kyrgyz government and civil society, and our participation in the election monitoring mission. Other recently announced U.S. assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic includes the signing of a \$20 million Joint Economic Development Fund Agreement and a \$15.8 million program for stabilization in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan. We have also responded to President Otunbayeva's request for food assistance with an additional \$3.2 million of food security assistance through Food for Education and a \$3.2 million grant to the World Food Program.

At the same time, we continue to support the international commission to investigate the violence in southern Kyrgyzstan in June, headed by Kimmo Kiljunen, a member of the Finnish Parliament and Special Representative on Central Asia for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. We also continue to support an OSCE initiative to improve public security to assist in the urgent task of restoring mutual trust, preventing further conflict and working towards reconciliation in the wake of the tragic events of June 2010.

Kyrgyzstan remains an important partner in our efforts in Afghanistan. Since 2001, the United States and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic have successfully cooperated in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Manas Transit Center represents an important contribution by the Kyrgyz Republic to the efforts of the international coalition to provide security to the Afghan people and work towards a more prosperous and stable Afghanistan. The United States recognizes and greatly appreciates the contribution of the Kyrgyz Republic to that effort. The Manas Transit Center also contributes to the economy of the Kyrgyz Republic by improving employment for, and purchasing local goods from, local communities. We are prepared to discuss the future of Manas with the new government.

While encouraged by the peaceful outcome of the elections, areas of concern remain. We are monitoring the potential for renewed ethnic violence, such as those that erupted in the south in June. Attacks on human rights defenders are likewise troubling. In our interactions with the new government, we will continue to encourage accountability, equal access to justice, and ethnic reconciliation. We will continue to do our utmost to help the people of the Kyrgyz Republic consolidate their democracy, jumpstart their economy, and maintain peace and security.

Kazakhstan and the OSCE Summit

Our relations with Kazakhstan are perhaps our deepest and broadest in Central Asia, with areas of cooperation in fields as diverse as non-proliferation, Afghanistan, and agriculture. Kazakhstan is a regional leader in the fields of energy, education and science and technology. Kazakhstan has also been a strong supporter of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. But the spotlight is currently on Astana for another reason: as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Kazakhstan is about to host the first OSCE Summit in 11 years in Astana on December 1-2, the first ever in Central Asia. We hope that this event will shine a light on positive developments in Central Asia, and the role that the OSCE has played, and can play in the future, in promoting its principles throughout the OSCE region.

We think that Kazakhstan has done a very credible job as OSCE Chairman-in-Office, especially in dealing with the situation in Kyrgyzstan, where the OSCE has been at the forefront of efforts to promote peace, democracy and reconciliation. In offering to host this Summit, Kazakhstan has agreed to follow the example of past summits and allow full access by NGOs and permit NGOs to hold a parallel event on November 28-29. Within this framework, we continue to push Kazakhstan to better its human rights record and to uphold the commitments it made well past its chairmanship and the Summit.

Secretary Clinton plans to lead the U.S. delegation to the OSCE Summit. To be successful, the Astana Summit should produce two documents: a Helsinki Final Act's 35th Anniversary statement reaffirming all prior commitments, and an ambitious, substantive action plan for the future work of the OSCE. Because of the profound impact of instability in Afghanistan on regional security in Central Asia, the OSCE can and must make significant additional contributions to national, regional, and international efforts to ensure Afghanistan is

on the path to long-term security and stability. Therefore, we specifically proposed that the Action Plan include projects that will promote improved border management between Afghanistan and Central Asia, and within Central Asia, to counter illicit trafficking activities and to promote legitimate commercial trade and economic development.

Uzbekistan

As with the other Central Asia countries, the Obama Administration has increased its engagement with Uzbekistan on a full agenda of security, economic and human rights issues. In the regional security field, Uzbekistan has become a key partner for the United States' effort in Afghanistan. Tashkent provides electricity to keep the lights on in Kabul. It has facilitated transit for essential supplies to Coalition forces and constructed an important railroad line inside of Afghanistan. Through this increased engagement, we have seen an improved relationship with Uzbekistan, but many challenges remain.

We continue to encourage the Uzbek authorities to address significant human rights concerns such as ending forced child labor, opening up the media environment, and demonstrating greater tolerance for religious activities. We are also encouraging building an investment-friendly business environment to enhance economic opportunities for American businesses and for the benefit of the Uzbek economy. Last week I traveled to Tashkent to discuss with the Government a number of these matters. In addition to raising human rights concerns in my discussions, I also met with Voice of America stringer Mr. Abdumalik Boboev, whose conviction and fine for libel for his work for Voice of America was recently upheld.

Tajikistan

One of the poorest countries in the world, Tajikistan is a fragile state in a volatile neighborhood. Recent skirmishes between the government and former civil war combatants as

well as security threats such as the August 25 prison break and first suicide car bombing in Tajikistan on September 3, reflect continued tensions in the country. U.S. policy is to support Tajikistan in maintaining stability and creating the conditions for economic and democratic development. We work to strengthen law enforcement and border security, increase food security, strengthen health and education, and build good governance.

Tajikistan is our partner in these efforts and the United States is putting significant resources into our relationship with Tajikistan. As our public reports on human rights, the investment climate, and on religious freedom have made clear, we have concerns about the pace and direction of political developments as well as religious and media freedoms in Tajikistan.

Turkmenistan

In Turkmenistan, we continue to make progress in facilitating Turkmenistan's gradual opening and its efforts to move toward reform and greater respect for human rights. We also appreciate Turkmenistan's humanitarian help to its neighbor Afghanistan, through assistance such as the provision of discounted electricity. Alongside the first Annual Bilateral Consultations that we held in June in Ashgabat, I led the first-ever U.S. business mission to Turkmenistan. This strengthened an important commercial partnership with the nation that holds the world's fourth largest natural gas reserves.

Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Michael H. Posner accompanied me on the Annual Bilateral Consultations. Together we held a frank dialogue with the Government of Turkmenistan regarding our human rights concerns. We continue to encourage the Turkmen authorities to take concrete steps to fulfill its international obligations on human rights and have offered assistance to Turkmenistan's stated goals of developing a

democracy. We recognize this is a long term goal, but through engagement we feel we can make measurable progress.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, this Administration considers Central Asia to be an important pillar in this vital region. We see a future in which the United States and the countries of Central Asia work together to seek peace, security, economic development and prosperity. We seek democratic values and human rights that unite free nations in trust and in respect. We seek a region in which relations prosper between neighbors, between Russia and China and Afghanistan and all others in the region and of course with the United States.

We recognize that the pace of change is often slow and that our programs should focus on long-term, meaningful results. But through our invigorated policy dialogue and engagement, we aim to strengthen our ties with these important countries and their people and thereby advance U.S. interests in this strategically important region.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Sedney.

STATEMENT OF MR. DAVID S. SEDNEY, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR ASIAN AND PACIFIC SECURITY AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. SEDNEY. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Manzullo, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak with you regarding Central Asia policy.

Assistant Secretary Blake has laid out for you the over-arching goals and the efforts to achieve them on the part of the administration's Central Asia policy. I will focus my remarks briefly on the defense and security aspects of this relationship.

As you said, Mr. Chairman, the focus of the Department of Defense's efforts in Central Asia today in the short-term are the transport of goods and equipment and personnel through the ground and airline of communication through Central Asia. As you said, these are critical to support the efforts of our men and women in Afghanistan who are engaged in the vital effort that is necessary as we all work together to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda, prevent its return to Afghanistan and ensure the success of Pakistan as well.

The Northern Distribution Network that you mentioned, in addition to which is purely commercial, additionally the Department of Defense conducts military overflights over most countries in Central Asia. We have close relations with each transit country and

are working to increase the overflights and the ground lines of transportation.

You referenced the agreements with Kazakhstan, that agreement with Kazakhstan that will allow in the near future to take advantage of the overflight, transport overflight that you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, as a major step forward and we appreciate that.

Also importantly we have access to the Manas Transit Center in Kyrgyzstan through which virtually all of our combat troops and many of our allies transit on their way into and out of Afghanistan.

We greatly appreciate the willingness of the Kyrgyz Government and Kyrgyz people to continue their support in our common struggle, and we look forward to maintaining this important link in our logistical network. It is through such cooperation that we are able to make not just Afghanistan more stable and Pakistan safer, but also Central Asia more secure and protect the American homeland and the safety and security of our allies around the world.

But beyond our focus on the immediate goals in Afghanistan, we also have long-term security assistance goals in Central Asia. Our security assistance focuses on the professionalization of the military border guards, counternarcotics forces and counterterrorism forces. We have seen a great deal of progress in this area.

The George Marshall Center in Germany has trained close to 1,000 Central Asia security professionals to date, for example. Similarly, our National Guard State partnership program has used our citizen soldiers to help work on civil-military relations throughout Central Asia.

Through the provision of the training that I mentioned, we are helping to build modern counterterrorist peacekeeping and demining capabilities as these countries continue in moving beyond the Soviet era of military norms.

We also work in the areas of humanitarian assistance to help to enhance the capacity of the local governments in Central Asia, working closely with our partners in the State Department, USAID and the NGO community. Humanitarian assistance programs from the Department of Defense has included such things as a deworming program for Kyrgyz citizens, renovating schools and orphanages, donating buses and school supplies, to name a few.

We also have regular high-level consultations, both on the civilian and military side of the Department of Defense. Most recently, General Mattos, the CENTCOM commander, was in Central Asia, and he is still in the region as we speak. Our TRANSCOM commander has also visited multiple times. The Department of Defense joins in and supports and participates in the annual bilateral consultations that Assistant Secretary Blake chairs. We think that is a key effort in moving our relationships with the Central Asian countries forward across the board.

Central Asia, as both you, Mr. Chairman, mentioned is part of a larger region that includes Afghanistan and Pakistan. The growth of the Northern Distribution Network offers the prospect of a continuing economic and commercial foundation that will help the growth and trade and investment across national boundaries and holds the prospect of helping those countries move into the mainstream of world trade and commerce.

While that is not the purpose of what we are doing at in the northern distribution network, it holds the prospect of doing that in the future.

I would like to close by echoing your comment, Mr. Chairman, regarding the sacrifices of our men and women.

I was just in Afghanistan visiting many of our troops. They depend on the goods and services that are provided through the Northern Distribution Network through the partnership of our Central Asian countries, and we are committed to continuing that effort and expanding it in the future.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sedney follows:]

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

DAVID SEDNEY
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, AND CENTRAL ASIA

NOVEMBER 17, 2010

Chairman Faleomavaega, Ranking Member Manzullo, distinguished members of the committee: thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the Department of Defense's Central Asia policy.

Assistant Secretary Blake has outlined for you the broad U.S. goals for Central Asia, which are strongly shared by the Department of Defense. I will focus my comments on the defense and security aspects of U.S. policy toward the region.

Much of the Department's current activity in Central Asia is being driven by our efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and defeat extremism in the region. We provide this support in two ways. First, we use a network of air and ground routes, known as the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), to ship supplies through Central Asia to U.S. and coalition troops and Afghan national security forces in Afghanistan. Second, we assist the sovereign countries of Central Asia in maintaining their own security in the face of extremism, and we support the growing professionalism of their armed forces in the furtherance of democratization in the region.

To achieve both goals, we must increase our engagement with Central Asia at all levels—working in the short term to expand logistical flows and, in the long term, expanding and deepening our relations from a DoD perspective, particularly in the security sector. Such engagement will help give our partners in Central Asia the support they need as we all work to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda.

Shipping and Transit

The Northern Distribution Network (NDN)

The NDN is a network of commercial air and ground routes through which we ship supplies to Afghanistan. It represents a major accomplishment of interagency and intergovernmental cooperation: since November 2008, we have worked with Central Asian governments—along with Russia, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan—and in cooperation with the State Department and U.S. Embassy teams to build a robust transit network that supports our shared fight against the threat of extremism.

With the help of our partners, we are steadily increasing traffic on the NDN and overcoming impediments that hinder the network's efficiency. We are increasing shipments while decreasing processing time both in the air and on the ground. From 20 containers per month in January 2009, we can now ship over 1000 containers per week, and we expect to increase this figure even further in the coming months. Additionally, we support infrastructure projects in the region that expand the NDN's capacity. For example, the recently completed Hairaton to Mazar-e-Sharif railroad—a \$170 million joint Uzbek-Asian Development Bank (ADB) project—now connects Afghanistan to rail systems of Central Asia and beyond.

As part of the NDN we are also continuing to implement the Central Asia local purchasing program. We could not have implemented this program without Congress' addition of the necessary provisions to the National Defense Authorization Act. We thank you for this critical support. This program works with Central Asian businesses to purchase local materials for use in Afghanistan, which is to the benefit of both sides: we save money on shipping, while local economies benefit from increased trade. We help drive greater economic cooperation in the process, as local governments cooperate to keep transnational transit routes open and local economies rise to meet international purchasing standards.

The NDN holds the potential to help Central Asia connect the region to the global economy to a greater extent than ever before. By expanding trade linkages, the NDN has the potential to one day reconnect Central Asia to India, Pakistan, and other formerly closed markets, in a direct land route from the heart of Asia to the heart of Europe. For instance, the most direct route from Lahore to Berlin cuts directly across Afghanistan and Central Asia. Ancient traders knew this. Today's airlines, which fly this route every day, know it as well. With the NDN, we can help ground transit to do the same.

Most importantly, the NDN is an effective (as well as cost-effective) means to resupply our warfighters and provide capacity and redundancy to complement our heavily-burdened lines through Pakistan. This is particularly important as we sustain an elevated level of 98,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Additionally, the recent closure of the Torkum border station in Pakistan highlighted the importance of diversifying our supply routes. Since its inception 22 months ago, we have shipped over 25,000 containers along the NDN. We will expand this number in 2011 to meet the elevated demand. This will continue to support our effort to defeat al Qaeda.

Military Transit Routes

In addition to the NDN, which is purely commercial, DoD conducts military overflights of most countries in Central Asia. We have close relationships with each transit country and are working to increase overflights and open new flight paths. For example, we have just signed a new overflight agreement with Kazakhstan that, in the near future, will allow us to take advantage of new Russian overflight permissions.

Importantly, we also have access to the Manas Transit Center (MTC) in Kyrgyzstan, through which virtually all of our combat troops transit on their way to and from Afghanistan. We greatly appreciate the willingness of the Kyrgyz government and the Kyrgyz people to continue their support in our common struggle, and we look forward to maintaining this important link in our logistical network. It is through such cooperation that we are able to make not just Afghanistan more stable, but also Central Asia more secure.

Stabilizing Local Governments

The threat of Islamic extremism continues in Central Asia. The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) conducted a suicide bombing in Uzbekistan in 2009, and, throughout the summer, local governments fought with suspected extremist cells in the Ferghana Valley. In 2010, Tajikistan experienced a number of security challenges that the government told us originated with extremist elements. Central Asian governments share our concern about extremism, and we cooperate with them to address this shared threat in two areas: security assistance and humanitarian relief. Unrelated to extremism, we also saw the recurrence of ethnic violence in southern Kyrgyzstan in June.

Security Assistance

Our security assistance in Central Asia focuses on the professionalization of local militaries, border guards, counternarcotics forces, and counterterrorism forces. So far we have seen great progress. For example, the George Marshall Center has trained close to 1,000 Central Asian security professionals to date, creating a cadre of professionals aware of the need for modernization and reform. Similarly, our National Guard State Partnership Program uses citizen-soldiers to teach civil-military relations.

With the help of DoD training, our partner governments are building modern counterterrorist, peacekeeping, and demining capabilities, and they continue to engage us in their efforts to move beyond Soviet-era military norms. Through this engagement, we are working together to create stable governments, peaceful societies, and a secure zone to the north of our stabilization effort in Afghanistan.

Humanitarian Assistance

Our humanitarian assistance seeks to enhance the capacity of local governments. DoD works closely with our partners in the State Department, USAID, and the NGO community to implement programs that improve government-civilian interactions, removing incentives for extremist support. Humanitarian assistance programs have included de-worming programs for Kyrgyz citizens, renovating schools and orphanages, donating busses, and school supplies, to name a few.

Engagement

DoD carries out regular high-level consultations with our Central Asian partners. For example, CENTCOM commanders visited Central Asia seven times in the past three-and-a-half years, and CENTCOM Commander General Mattis is visiting the region as we speak. In addition, the TRANSCOM commander has visited the region three times in the past three years. DoD also participates in the Annual Bilateral Consultations (ABC's) described earlier by Assistant Secretary Blake. In Uzbekistan, which is a keystone of the NDN with 98 percent of ground cargo transiting through the Termez-Hairaton land port, we have undertaken efforts to expand our bilateral security ties. DoD led a Special Working Group visit to Tashkent in March of this year to discuss enhancing our military-technical cooperation. These efforts help build the stable, cooperative relationships necessary to achieve our goals in Central Asia.

Regional Actors

Regional powers realize that, as President Obama has said, "This is not just America's war." Russia, China, and Turkey share our desire to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda, which is why they support our efforts in the region, such as Russia's decision last year to allow DoD unrestricted transit. It is also why our assistance packages often complement one another in Central Asia (often to mutual benefit). For example, a container traveling on the NDN may travel on Russian-built rails, Chinese-built roads, and an American-built bridge before reaching Afghanistan. Regional powers recognize that cooperation is the best way to defeat the threat of violent extremism.

This is particularly true in Pakistan. Just as success in Pakistan drives success in Afghanistan, it is also key to a stable Central Asia. The IMU fighters captured in Central Asia last summer did not only come from Afghanistan—they also came from training grounds in Pakistan. Central Asians know that a stable, prosperous Pakistan holds the prospect for increased trade through Central Asia. This is one reason that they support our efforts to stabilize Pakistan.

Long-Term Strategy

Assistant Secretary Blake has already outlined America's long term strategy in Central Asia. DoD's engagement in Central Asia has enhanced security, diplomatic ties, and trade, and accelerated the achievement of our long-term strategic goals. While some of our actions are driven by short-term concerns, we believe that their benefits will be long-lasting.

The Way Ahead

In Afghanistan, President Obama has asked the Department of Defense to "use the instruments of war to preserve the peace." Central Asians understand that they will be the first beneficiaries of this strategy and are eager to help America win the war in Afghanistan. We must take advantage

of their interest in closer cooperation, and work together to defeat violent extremism and establish a stable peace. In logistics, in security assistance, in political support—we must come together in order to succeed.

Mr. FALCOMA. I appreciate your statements and observations on some of the issues.

Because you have got a schedule problem, Secretary Sedney, I had some things I wanted to check with you about.

I think it seems our policy toward Central Asia seems to be focused entirely on our current efforts, and our involvement in the war in Afghanistan, and so it is for security purposes primarily. Am I correct on that?

Mr. SEDNEY. From a Department of Defense perspective, that is our number one priority. In terms of our overall relationships with Central Asia, they go much beyond the security area. And as Assistant Secretary Blake laid out, we have a wide range of enduring interests. I'll defer to Assistant Secretary Blake to do that. But it is true, from the Department of Defense perspective, that our focus is on the support for the effort in Afghanistan, but that is accompanied by the longer-termed security assistance projects and including a variety of training efforts in areas from counterterrorism to counternarcotics that are building capabilities in those countries that are important for reasons well beyond Afghanistan.

Mr. FALCOMA. We all know that these countries were formerly basically colonies of the Soviet Union for some 100 years before they got their freedoms and separated into sovereign entities. And I know when we talk about Central Asia, I would say 95 percent of the American people don't know where it is located, simply because they have all been part of the Soviet Empire. And there really has been hardly any engagement process, economically, socially, or anything.

And I just wanted to know the latest problems that we are faced with in our current policy. And I realize that our reason for being in Afghanistan is to prevent the Taliban or al-Qaeda from coming to our shores and killing our people. Is that basically the reason we are fighting this war?

Mr. SEDNEY. Exactly, Mr. Chairman. As the President has said, our national goal is to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda, and to prevent its return to safe havens in Afghanistan.

Mr. FALCOMA. And in the process, we have only had a real sense of expertise or even understanding of the region in a very, very limited way. I say that maybe only 20 years or 30 years of experience of engagement with these countries that we know very little about. Now, we can all claim expertise, but this is the same problem we had when we got involved in Vietnam. I would say that probably 99 percent of the American people never knew that countries like Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia were colonies of the French. And the policies that we enunciated, what we did, boy, it was a real jumble there sending 500,000 of our soldiers, with 60,000 dead as a result. And that policy can be debated to this day.

My concern is whether they have we learned any lessons from Vietnam—whether sending the military is really going to solve some of the more fundamental issues and problems that we face in countries like Afghanistan, or even in Pakistan, for that matter.

Mr. SEDNEY. In terms of Afghanistan and Pakistan, Mr. Chairman, I can assure you as we are working to achieve the goals the President has laid out, our strategy is very much a combined civil/military whole of government strategy. And both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, our partnership with the Department of State, the other agencies of the United States Government, and the wider international community are key parts of that. It is not just a military solution.

And I would point out to you that the Government of Kazakhstan, for example, has made a major commitment to educate a large number of Afghans in Kazakh universities, and it is something we very much appreciate. It is a kind of thing that is necessary as we move forward with the military effort and bringing security in Afghanistan is key.

But the follow-on efforts to build capacity, to educate the population, are vital to ensuring that Afghanistan does not again become a safe haven. And the prospects for that require a regional approach.

So we are working with the countries of Central Asia. The countries of Central Asia recognize the need to work. I have been visiting Central Asia and working on Central Asia for over 15 years, and every time I travel through the Central Asian capitals, I find that the issue of helping Afghanistan succeed is very high on the agenda, and the partnership we have with those countries, even despite their limited resources, as Assistant Secretary Blake said, the Government of Kazakhstan is working with us in Afghanistan, and we look to continue to increase that partnership.

Mr. FALCOMA. I make this observation—and I never claim expertise in military tactics—but I have also read something to the effect that Afghanistan has been known as a “graveyard for empires.” Alexander the Great could never conquer Afghanistan, and neither could the British. The Soviets were there for 10 years. They got kicked out of Afghanistan.

So I am trying to get into the psychology of this whole thing. There are 12 million Pashtuns who live in Afghanistan. And within that 12 million population, we have about 100,000 soldiers in Afghanistan to fight the Taliban who are supposedly our enemy.

But what makes it even more complicated is that at the so-called borderline between Pakistan and Afghanistan, there are 27 million more Pashtuns who live in Pakistan. And I don't think you have to be a rocket scientist to figure out why we wouldn't get Osama bin Laden for all these years—simply because of the Taliban being able to protect him. He travels freely between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

And whatever failures in our policies, the most powerful nation in the world could not even capture Osama bin Laden for almost 10 years. So I am a little frustrated to the extent I want to define exactly if we are going to put our men and women in harm's way, I would like to believe that this is the only option remaining for our country to do this and finding if there could be any other options or any other possibilities, and the involvement of these Asian countries that I have felt in the years that I have had to travel to these countries, it is a totally different psychology in how we look and say that these 27,000 Taliban and a couple hundred al-Qaeda is the very reason we are involved in this area.

And please, I am not putting any personal thing against you. I just want to get a better understanding of what, \$30 billion we are about to expend for having our military forces in Afghanistan.

How does this relate to, in a broader picture, how we deal with Central Asia? We are using these countries mainly to make it more convenient for our security forces to get what they need, resources, our soldiers and all of that. But is it just that only, or are there

programs on how we can better develop an economic, social, educational, all of these things, that these Central Asian countries really have a need for?

Mr. SEDNEY. Mr. Chairman, on Afghanistan there is a fundamental difference between the empires that you mentioned and the United States of America. We are not an Empire. We are not seeking to conquer Afghanistan. We are working with Afghanistan to build up an independent, sovereign Afghanistan, and sufficient security forces for Afghanistan to be able to protect itself, defend its sovereignty and prevent itself from becoming a safe haven for the Taliban—for al-Qaeda as it was before September 11, 2001.

To that end, the key focus of our effort in Afghanistan is building up the Afghan security forces, the Afghan National Army. Over the last year we have had extraordinary success in building up the Afghan National Army. In the recent military operations around Kandahar, over 60 percent of the forces have been Afghan national army forces, a sharp increase, even from the operations in Helmand earlier this year.

As President Obama has said, the United States is going to start a transition in the summer of 2011, and as President Karzai has said the objective is to have Afghan forces in the lead in the security area in all areas of Afghanistan by 2014. We are committed to that. We are not building an empire. We are working with our partners.

You made some points about the Pashtuns. I have worked in Afghanistan for many years. I have worked on Afghanistan. I have many, many close friends and colleagues who are Pashtuns. There are many Pashtuns in the Afghan national army. According to both anecdotal and polling evidence, over 90 percent of Pashtuns do not want the Taliban to rule them.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Please restate that again because most of the American people don't know this.

Mr. SEDNEY. Over 90 percent of the Pashtuns don't want the Taliban to rule them. Pashtuns, from President Karzai, who is a Pashtun, to Minister Wardak who is a Pashtun, and the Minister of Defense throughout the Afghan Government, to Governor Weesa of Kandahar, who I just met a couple of weeks ago down in Kandahar, these are Pashtuns who are putting their lives on the line, the lives of their family, the lives of their children, because they know what the Taliban will bring back is oppression to Afghanistan and terrorism behind it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Would it be safe to say that, as far as the Department of Defense is concerned, the involvement of these Central Asian countries is very, very critical?

Mr. SEDNEY. To the success of our operation as you said, sir, and thank you for saying, is very critical to the success of our operations to defend the American homeland.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Sedney, I know you have a schedule, so if you need to leave.

Mr. SEDNEY. I apologize for that. I can stay for another 10 minutes.

Ambassador BLAKE. Mr. Chairman, let me just jump in on your question of are we only focusing on Afghanistan. I would just like to assure you that that is really not the case. As I say, the purpose

of these annual bilateral consultations that we set up is to engage each of these countries on the full range of interests—on both our agenda and on their agenda—and to do so in a very comprehensive way and in a very practical way to set concrete targets for moving and making progress.

So with each of these countries we have 2 days of talks. You know, that is basically over 16 hours of talks that goes through every single thing in our agenda and very, very practically oriented.

The other thing we are doing, Mr. Chairman, is we are setting up civil society and business components to these as well. So that to the maximum extent possible, our government-to-government talks are informed by the American people and our various constituents who care about these issues.

The other point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is the Central Asians themselves welcome this increased engagement by the United States. As you say, the Russians have always had the predominant influence in Central Asia, but that's beginning to change. And I think with this reset of relations between the United States and Russia, that has opened up a little bit of space for the Central Asians to do more with us as well. They have really jumped into that space and I think have welcomed that engagement.

I would also like to say the Russians themselves have welcomed a greater U.S. engagement. I think one of the real hallmarks of our efforts over the last year has been improved cooperation and coordination with the Russians, and you saw that in Kyrgyzstan, but you are going to see that more on things like counternarcotics and indeed in Afghanistan.

Mr. FALCOMA. One critical area in my experience in visiting and meeting with leaders of these Central Asian countries, Mr. Secretary, is education. We currently have in the United States 690,000 foreign students attending American colleges and universities. And I am curious how many students attend American colleges and universities from Central Asia at this point in time?

Ambassador BLAKE. I don't have the figure off the top of my head but it is small.

Mr. FALCOMA. I hope my good friend from Illinois will take note of this, is that if it is their intention to cut the budget on our foreign assistance program, this is one area that I sincerely hope—to me, in my discussions with the leaders of these Central Asian countries, Mr. Secretary, I always believe that education is the salvation of these people and their leaders. And if they are limited in their capacity to provide a young generation of up-and-coming members of these different countries to come to our country, get a good education, then I think we are going to be in for a long haul. And I really believe it is the kind of investment that I always feel the greatest contributions that the United States can give and share with the good people of these countries is educational opportunities for these young people.

Ambassador BLAKE. I couldn't agree with you more, Mr. Chairman. I think part of the reason—there are several reasons there aren't more Central Asians. First of all, there is the language barrier where many of them don't speak sufficiently good English to be able to compete and qualify for American universities. Also

there is, of course, the distance, and it is expensive to travel and to go to school in the United States.

But also, in some cases, there are restrictions on the ability of people to travel in places like Turkmenistan, and we are working with those governments.

But we are also working inside these countries, Mr. Chairman, to expand English language training, because we think that is something has a huge and broad positive impact across the entire relationship. We are also working on programs like FLEX that provide more high school students with an opportunity to go to the United States for shorter periods of time, be exposed to the United States.

And we are helping to develop English language universities inside Central Asia. A very good example of that is in Kazakhstan where there is a new full-time English language Kazakh university that has been set up, and it has cooperation with I think seven different American universities right now.

So that is another terrific way to sort of build the American educational ties and eventually expose those students to our way of thinking, and also hopefully encourage them to do more studying in the United States.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And especially also, given the fact that we only established diplomatic relations with these countries in the last 20 years. So it is an entirely different challenge, not only for the State Department, but even for the American people to understand. And we should know that so many great civilizations have come from this region—in fact, when I first met Ambassador Kanat Sadarbayav he thought I was a Kazakh. I said no, I am not a Kazakh. I am a Polynesian. Whatever that means. Some idiot defined us as Polynesians, and supposedly we come from many islands.

I want to say that my given experience and being exposed and having to travel to these countries, I couldn't find people more caring and more interested and wanting to know more about America. They have tremendous potential for mineral resources contained, but they don't have the technology, the ability to transition themselves from being Communists. And sometimes I think some of our own colleagues in the United States demand that these people have to be full democracies like America.

It took us over 150 years to give African Americans the right to vote, and yet we expect these countries to be right up to par with what democracy should be. I have always said I think we need to be a little more circumspect about the difficulties that these people are confronted with.

The situation in Tajikistan. I know there has always been a little rivalry between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. One has electricity and the other one has the water. Are we trying to make any efforts to resolve this problem which always seems to be—I would think that with our resources, we should be able to give assistance.

Can you comment on this?

Ambassador BLAKE. Sure, we are making quiet efforts, Mr. Chairman. I would say one the biggest differences between those two countries is on this issue of water, and specifically, on the question of the Rogun hydroelectric facility in Tajikistan, which the

Uzbeks have a great many concerns about. They are fearful that this is going to be built in a seismically active zone. As a downstream country they are worried about potential arbitrary actions by Tajikistan that cut off their water.

So we have supported an effort by the World Bank to undertake a feasibility study of this. To do it in a very fair and balanced way, to look at all these different equities, and to make some recommendations about how to move forward on this. And I think the World Bank has a lot of very good experience in this area. As you know, they have been very active in the whole water area as well between India and Pakistan. They run the dispute resolution mechanism that has been successful for 50 years. So I think their experience will be very valuable in helping to find a way forward on this.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I made the emphasis in my statement about our involvement. And it appears to be the most progressive in terms of its advancements in so many areas now, and the leadership and all that they have done. And I realize at times it gets to be a little competitive in wanting to know who is better than the other. But my sincere apologies, I just was not able to visit Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. One thing that I know with interest is the fact that there is no such thing as an Afghan. There are a couple of million Tajiks living in Afghanistan and about 3 million or 4 million Uzbeks living in Afghanistan.

Ambassador BLAKE. And Turkmen.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. So this is what complicates what we are faced with in Afghanistan: There is no such thing as an Afghan. Pashtuns make up about 40, 45 percent of the entire population. So there is that complication to deal with.

Do the border lines between these Central Asian countries with Afghanistan cause any problems?

Ambassador BLAKE. You mean, are there border disputes? No.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. So the borders are very porous? I mean, they travel all the time?

Ambassador BLAKE. They do, and that's one of our very key priorities is to work on, to enhance border security between those countries. David, if you want to—

Mr. SEDNEY. We have a number of programs working with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on border security. And we appreciate very much the continued willingness of the Congress to appropriate money for those programs. The progress that those countries have made in border security over the last several years is important. However, the continuing efforts by the Taliban, the al-Qaeda and other extremist movements to mount operations across that border is something of a great concern to us when we are working with those countries to ensure that we cooperate along that border, along with the Afghan forces.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. You know what my dream is, gentleman, I just wish that perhaps even 1 billion out of that 130 billion that we are giving to do our military operations goes into all aspects of education and social programs for the Central Asia countries. You are talking about a population of about 65 million people total, and yet, the potential that is there, I just wish that there were re-

sources that we could provide as a long-term investment, as a partnership.

As you mentioned, Turkmenistan currently has the fourth largest reserves of natural gas. And I know these countries are filthy rich with minerals. And in all of this, I always say Central Asia is going to be another Middle East in years to come when these resources will become limited, oil, gas. They have it, and I sincerely hope that with our technology and programs, that the better-educated societies in these Central Asian countries, I think, will be a big help and something that certainly we can be proud of in our working closely with the leaders of these countries.

Ambassador BLAKE. Mr. Chairman, may I just—

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Please.

Ambassador BLAKE. My helpful staff here has just given me the exact figure of the numbers of the people who are studying. The largest number you would not be surprised to learn is from Kazakhstan, 1,936 students are studying in the United States; Kyrgyzstan has 274; Tajikistan, 288; Turkmenistan, 195; and Uzbekistan, 513. Obviously, we would like to do a lot more.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I deeply appreciate that.

Ambassador BLAKE. But I can tell you, the Secretary of State and also our Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Judith McHale, very committed to this education piece, and really want to do much more. And this is something that is a high priority for us in Central Asia.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I realize there are 1.3 billion people living in China and they say 100,000 students from China currently attend American universities.

Ambassador BLAKE. It is more now, it is 124,000.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. It is 124,000, and India is right next to it with nearly 100,000.

Ambassador BLAKE. A little more, yeah.

Mr. Secretary, Mr. Sedney.

Mr. SEDNEY. I apologize, Mr. Chairman, Representative Manzullo, that I have to leave. I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak before you and look forward to the opportunity to do so again in the future. And it has been a very useful and educational experience for me as it always is when I come over to Capitol Hill. So again, I appreciate that and my personal apologies for having to leave.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Well, I want to say that we deeply appreciate the services that you give to our country, Mr. Secretary. And we hope you will continue the good work for the American people. We appreciate it very. I have a couple more questions of Secretary Blake, so just make sure to keep an eye on our backs, okay?

Secretary Blake, I had mentioned in my statement about the importance of the summit. I will say again how much I deeply appreciate the administration's support and endorsement for having this summit to begin with. Something not only as a credit to you and Secretary Clinton, but especially also a credit to President Nazarbayev. And I think more than anything, if there is a sense of recognition to the world, to our country with the current problems that we are involved with in Afghanistan, how important Central Asia is. And so we must never forsake our being negligent in

our efforts in dealing with the good people that live in these countries.

Over the years, because I come from the other side of the world, I have been very critical of our policies toward the Pacific—which is zero, except for New Zealand and Australia. The 16 other Pacific Island countries always seemed like they don't exist. And I give that sense of concern because, as I said, the public and the American people are not very much aware of Central Asia or the fact that these people have just come out from under the yoke of communism, and they are struggling, as you are well aware.

And I sincerely hope that with the resources and the opportunities and the things that America can offer, the good people, the 65 million people living in these countries, that we should share the benefit and the resources that we have in such a way that Central Asia continues to grow and its countries become the kind of democracies that the people and the leaders there would like to have.

Ambassador BLAKE. Mr. Chairman, let me just comment on that briefly, let me say that I couldn't agree with you more. And I think that the fact that Kazakhstan will be the first country east of Vienna to ever host an OSCE summit is, in itself, a milestone for Kazakhstan and for Central Asia. And I think it will do a lot to publicize some of the important things that are happening in Central Asia, just the existence of this, and the fact that so many world leaders will be converging on Kazakhstan in early December.

Mr. FALÉOMAVAEGA. Unfortunately, I would hazard a guess that the vast majority of the American people do not know what the OSCE is. And for the record could you elaborate a little more, Mr. Secretary, as some kind of an organization that deals with security in Europe, or something like that, involving some 56 countries of which Kazakhstan is a member of.

Ambassador BLAKE. That is right.

Mr. FALÉOMAVAEGA. And I would like to ask you if you could elaborate for the record, what is the OSCE? And what does this have to do with America?

Ambassador BLAKE. Well, the United States has been one of those countries that, as you said, has been working actively with the OSCE for many, many years on all of the pillars that the OSCE works on. The OSCE has played a particularly important role recently in Central Asia, as I said, where they have been real leaders in working with the United States, with the European Union, with Russia, to help first to organize these very important elections. Around the Central Asia space, they are very active in helping all of these countries to organize elections, and then try to make sure that they conform to OSCE standards and help them provide in a technical capacity to do that.

But they have also been very active in other ways in Kyrgyzstan. I mentioned this International Commission. The OSCE played an active role in that to help to organize that Commission, to help investigate the crimes and the murders that took place there in southern Kyrgyzstan.

And then the OSCE now has been involved in helping to improve the police to upgrade their forces there to introduce community policing, to have an ethnic Uzbek component to that. So that the police forces themselves enjoy the trust of the people, and the con-

fidence of the people which, as you know, is so important and very important we have learned here in our own country.

So I think those are some of the examples of the very practical and important ways of the OSCE. It is not simply a talk shop, they are doing very important work on the ground in many of these countries.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Well, Mr. Secretary, again, I want to thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to come and testify at the last subcommittee hearing I will chair. I am about to terminate my services as chairman. And I will say, for the record, it has been my privilege to work with your office, and with you closely in discussing some of these issues that are important to the needs of the good people of Central Asia.

My deepest regrets, and the problem is I make too many presumptions. I just presumed that we were going to continue being in the majority. But the American people have spoken otherwise. So this is how our democracy operates and I look forward to working with our chairman-to-be. I don't even know how they are going to reorganize the committee. We may have fewer subcommittees, but that is their prerogative in being the majority party in the House, and we will respect that.

And we will just have to see what adjustments we need to make in the coming weeks. But again, Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for all that you do for our country and what you do for the good people of Central Asia. And if you have any questions or any more thoughts, I am about to hit the gavel if I can find it.

Ambassador BLAKE. Let me just, in conclusion, thank you again for your leadership, Mr. Chairman, and to say that just because you are moving into the minority doesn't excuse you from continuing to—

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Well, I am used to being in the minority, so a minority within a minority. How does that sound?

Ambassador BLAKE. And I hope that means we can get you out to Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I hope someday to take my cousins like Troy Polamalu and Jesse Sapolu, and Ma'ake Kemoeatu playing for the Redskins, who lost to the Eagles, a couple days ago, whatever. Tremendous athletes, athletic potential that we have there among the Central Asian countries. Our first love where I come from is rugby. I just hosted one of the rugby icons of the world, Michael Jones, one of the most famous rugby players from the New Zealand All Blacks. He was just here a couple days ago. And nothing like having good sports to promote friendship. Central Asian countries produce good wrestlers.

Ambassador BLAKE. They do.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And I have learned also how to appreciate how to prepare horse meat for breakfast, for lunch and for dinner. You wouldn't even know it is horse meat. But it is delicious, you should try it, Mr. Secretary.

Ambassador BLAKE. Oh, I have had it, I have had it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Yeah, I love it. But I will say, Mr. Secretary. I have a very, very strong affection for the people of Central Asia, and I, again, commend you for all that you do for them. And I sincerely hope that our Government and the American people will

show that we are a hospitable people too, if given the opportunity, and sharing with them our resources in such a way that our communities will mutually benefit. Again, Mr. Secretary, thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:50 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
Eni F.H. Faleomavaega (D-AS), Chairman

November 10, 2010

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building** **(and available live, via the WEBCAST link on the Committee website at <http://www.hcfa.house.gov>)**:

DATE: Wednesday, November 17, 2010

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: The Emerging Importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership

WITNESSES: The Honorable Robert O. Blake, Jr.
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs
U.S. Department of State
(Former United States Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives)

Mr. David S. Sedney
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HEARING MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC
AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

Day: Wednesday
Date: November 17, 2010
Room: 2172 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Start Time: 3:35 p.m.
End Time: 4:50 p.m.

Recesses:

Presiding Member(s): Chairman Eni F.H. Faleomavaega

CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING THAT APPLY:

Open Session
Executive (closed) Session
Televised
Electronically Recorded (taped)
Stenographic Record

TITLE OF BRIEFING: "The Emerging Importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership"

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ranking Member Manzullo, Rep. Watson

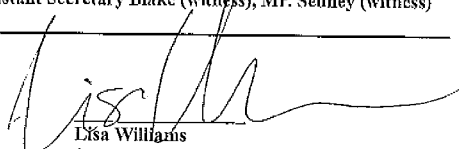
NONCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

BRIEFERS: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes No (If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

ACCOMPANYING BRIEFERS: (Include title, agency, department, or organization, and which witness the person accompanied)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record)

Chairman Faleomavaega, Rep. Watson, Assistant Secretary Blakc (witness), Mr. Sedney (witness)


Lisa Williams
Staff Director

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE ENI F.H.
FALEOMAVAEGA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM AMERICAN SAMOA

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 27, 2010

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to encourage the United States of America to support a Summit for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to be hosted by current OSCE chair nation, the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is the first post-Soviet, the first predominately Muslim country, and the first Central Asian country to chair the OSCE. It is a strategic U.S. partner and ally in Central Asia, and the Caspian Basin zone is a region with vast energy resources and a potential gateway for commerce and communications between Europe, Asia, and the United States. Kazakhstan has signaled its orientation toward, and commitment to, Western democratic values and a system of government in a region that is characterized by political instability, insecurity, and vulnerability. The Republic of Kazakhstan can and does play a role in ensuring a stable and secure Central Asia, an important strategic goal of the United States.

Mr. President, it has been 10 years since the OSCE held a security summit (in Istanbul). The security context that was defined in Istanbul was drastically altered after September 11, 2001. New security threats and challenges have emerged (post 9/11) that endanger not only Europe but the United States as well. An OSCE meeting, bringing together all member states, to discuss and come to solutions regarding the security of all nations will be beneficial to the United States.

A summit provides the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of various security organizations (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Collective Security Treaty Organization, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization). Summit participants could review conflict prevention, combat missions, humanitarian assistance, and post-conflict reconstruction. The summit also provides the opportunities to strengthen ties and develop cooperation among various organizations and states.

Success in Afghanistan will lessen the threat of terrorists by denying a safe haven for al

Qaeda and reversing the Taliban's momentum, key factors that are important to the United States. The OSCE is debating whether to deploy a mission to Afghanistan. The United States supports such a mission, yet many nations oppose such a proposition. The OSCE could provide significant support in training border patrols, police officers, and the national administration in Afghanistan. A summit would provide an opportunity for the United States to state a strong case for OSCE involvement in Afghanistan.


OSCE support for state-stabilizing efforts in Afghanistan—and a declaration that specifies the importance of Central Asia's role in securing the broader region and working with NATO allies—could help strengthen the ability to prevent radical Islamist threats. Without stability in Afghanistan, the Central Asian region is not stable. That instability certainly extends well beyond the region. Member states should convene to discuss and develop strategies that will strengthen this region, which has important implications to the United States and European nations as well.

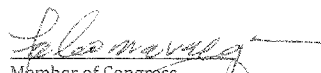
Kazakhstan aims to use the OSCE chair to press for a resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan and Foreign Minister Kanat B. Saudabayev has said that Afghanistan would be the main focus of the summit. The United States would do well to support Kazakhstan in its effort to hold a summit, standing to benefit most from the summit because if the OSCE does send a mission to Afghanistan, the burden would be shared by the member states, including Russia and Europe. This support would help to reduce the U.S. exposure in Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian country to have an Action Plan to assist in the reconstruction process in Afghanistan. In 2007-08 it provided \$3 million for social and infrastructure projects, humanitarian aid, and training for Afghan law enforcement and border patrol officers. In 2009 it committed an additional \$5 million to improve the water supply and for shipments of grain and other commodities. And most recently, Kazakhstan has announced a major education initiative for Afghanistan students, providing them opportunities to study abroad.

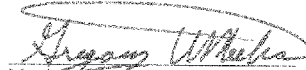
For these many reasons we ask you to give serious consideration to our request that the United States support an OSCE Summit in the coming year, and we look forward working with you and your Administration to toward this end.

Sincerely,


Member of Congress

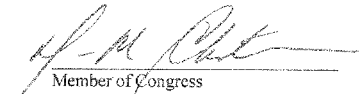

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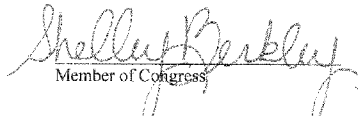

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Member of Congress

cc:
The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State
General James L. Jones, National Security Advisor

MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
Member of Congress (GU)

ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA
Member of Congress (AS)

EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
Member of Congress (TX)

GREGORY W. MEEKS
Member of Congress (NY)

DAN BURTON
Member of Congress (IN)

HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON
Member of Congress (CA)

DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN
Member of Congress (VI)

DARRELL ISSA
Member of Congress (CA)

MICHAEL M. HONDA
Member of Congress (CA)

SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member of Congress (TX)

SHELLEY BERKLEY
Member of Congress (NV)

SOLOMON P. ORTIZ
Member of Congress (TX)

KEITH ELLISON
Member of Congress (MN)

GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
Member of Congress (CNMI)

JUDY CHU
Member of Congress (CA)

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Member of Congress (HI)

LAURA RICHARDSON
Member of Congress (CA)

DIANE E. WATSON
Member of Congress (CA)

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20542

September 17, 2007

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary:

We are writing in support of Kazakhstan's bid to chair the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2009. While we are aware of the preliminary findings and conclusions of the International Election Observation (IEOM) issued on August 19, 2007 which noted progress and problems, we are also aware that in a period of 16 years Kazakhstan has made great strides towards democracy. As Senator Consiglio Di Nino, Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly delegation, stated, "These elections continue to move Kazakhstan forward in its evolution towards a democratic country." David Wilshire, Head of the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, also noted, "Building a democracy is a long and hard task," and we agree given the time it has taken the United States to build a democracy.

Today, 53 of the 56 members of the OSCE support Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE in 2009, and it is our understanding that only the U.S., Great Britain, and Canada have raised objections or expressed concerns. Considering that Kazakhstan has proven itself to be an ally of the U.S. and the European Union by voluntarily dismantling the world's 4th largest nuclear arsenal and allowing the use of its airbases in the war against terror, it seems that at a minimum the U.S. could offer a gesture of goodwill by assisting Kazakhstan in its bid to chair the OSCE.

More than goodwill, however, we are hopeful that the U.S. will stand by its own polling data. According to the U.S. Embassy in Astana, the U.S. State Department hired an independent firm to poll the people of Kazakhstan regarding their attitudes towards President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the U.S., Russia, China, and the region. The unclassified polling data showed that more than 90% of the people of Kazakhstan support President Nazarbayev and are pleased with the work he is doing. In fact, U.S. polling data regarding the recent elections held in Kazakhstan showed the President's party to

win by approximately 83% while Kazakhstan's official polls showed his party winning at 88%.

In other words, the results of Kazakhstan's elections are very nearly on mark and there seems to be little room for criticism. This is why we are disappointed by recent comments made by U.S. State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos who said that there were "serious shortcomings" in Kazakhstan's elections and that the election process "did not fully meet the international standards to which Kazakhstan has committed itself." Contrary to Mr. Gallegos' assessment, U.S. analyst Ariel Cohen of the Heritage Foundation stated in *The Washington Times* on August 21, 2007 that Kazakhstan held "a relatively clean election that demonstrates high popular support." Again, U.S. State Department polling data supports this assertion and, thus, it is troubling that the Department of State has chosen to remain silent on this point. Certainly if the U.S. State Department would use its data to confirm the outcome of Kazakhstan's recent elections, every member of the OSCE would support Kazakhstan's bid for 2009. We are also sure that dissemination of this data would lead to stronger U.S.-Kazakhstan relations as it would inform Congress that Kazakhstan is more democratic than we have been led to believe. It would also inform the region that, for all intents and purposes, Kazakhstan is holding free and fair elections.

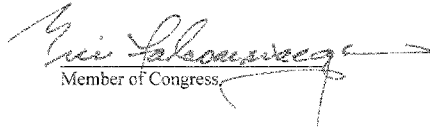
While we realize that it is difficult for the West to understand how a leader and his party could be so popular as to garner almost 90% of the vote, we only have to look at certain Congressional districts in the United States to see evidence of the same kind of popularity for public officials. Therefore, we should work with the countries and peoples of the former Soviet Republic and support their choice in leadership as they seek to establish democracy in one of the world's toughest neighborhoods. For now, the people of Kazakhstan have spoken and they have spoken overwhelmingly in support of President Nazarbayev and his party.

Also, according to U.S. State Department polling data, more than 63% of the people of Kazakhstan have a favorable opinion of the United States. We believe this is a direct result of President Nazarbayev's leadership. As you are aware, since 9/11 and in regard to U.S. coalition operations in Afghanistan, President Nazarbayev has allowed overflight and transshipment, and U.S.-Kazakh accords were signed in 2002 on the emergency use of Kazakhstan's Almaty airport and on other military-to-military relations. In regard to Iraq, the Kazakh legislature in May 2003 approved sending military engineers to Iraq. Today, approximately two dozen troops are training Iraqis in de-mining and water purification.

In every way, Kazakhstan has proven itself to be an ally of the U.S., the European Union, and democratic principles. President Nazarbayev has also proven himself to be the key to regional stability and the reason there is a favorable opinion of the U.S.

Hopefully, the U.S. State Department will return Kazakhstan's friendship and support its bid to chair the OSCE in 2009. For these reasons, we urge your support of our request.

Sincerely,

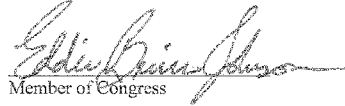

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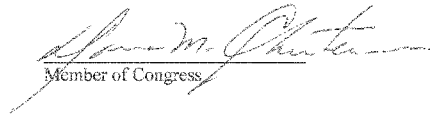

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Statement
Congresswoman Diane E. Watson
Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment
Wednesday, November 17, 2010
3:00 p.m.

“The Emerging Importance of the U.S.-Central Asia Partnership”

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this timely hearing on the importance of the emerging U.S.-Central Asia partnership. Central Asian nations are our partners in Afghanistan and it is important that we promote stable democracies that respect basic human rights in this region.

The recently announced Afghan exit strategy ends the combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014, contingent on conditions on the ground. This means that the State Department’s role in the Central Asia region must grow to stabilize not only Afghanistan, but also Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. I hope to hear from our panelists about how we will be strengthening these nations by strengthening our own organizations and programs. I am also curious to learn more about the international partners who have taken an interest in Central Asia.

I sincerely hope the President’s plan, along with the work of the Departments of State and Defense, will be able to infuse strength and stability in the region and allow Americans to return home.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

