

NURSULTAN A. NAZARBAYEV  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

KAZAKHSTANI-RUSSIAN  
RELATIONS

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President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

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Reports, speeches, and articles  
from the years 1991-1998

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## **I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN COMMON SENSE**

SPEECH AT THE MEETING OF HEADS OF ELEVEN  
SOVEREIGN STATES AT ALMATY

ON 24 DECEMBER 1991

Dear friends!

I think I have the right to address you so, and not only in view of the vast historical heritage of traditional friendly links that have evolved between our peoples. In greeting you here on Kazakhstan's soil, I would first of all like to express my conviction that underlying future relations between sovereign independent states will be spiritual unity of our nations nurtured by numerous generations of our forefathers. I believe that it will be this unity, which is so dear to all people who traditionally feel themselves to be the sons and daughters of one great Motherland, that will in the future be the main link uniting our new Commonwealth.

Undoubtedly the collapse of the former totalitarian state system was not an easy process for us. This extremely painful process, aggravated by the economic crisis and a number of bad political blunders of the central leadership, set in motion the fly-wheel of centripetal forces, bringing the degree of ethnic tension in some regions of the former Union to an extremely dangerous point. But I have always believed in common sense, I have always believed that sooner or later we will have to return to the mainstream of modern civilization. The main fairway of world development does not pass through disunion and isolation but

rather through integrative, unifying processes. Our meeting today is convincing proof of a common understanding of this important truth.

There is, however, a long and thorny path leading from an idea, however correct it might be, to its implementation. We have gathered together on more than one occasion to discuss various projects for our coexistence. I will admit that I sometimes had the impression that the necessary formula was at last found, that unification on an equal footing and mutually advantageous basis is just round the corner. But real life introduced amendments of its own, compelling us to search more thoroughly and deeply for the only correct and the only possible scenario that would be in keeping with life's objective realities.

As I look back today, as I assess the path we have traversed and recall its principal landmarks – the numerous projects for the Union Treaty, the Novo-Ogarevo Accords, the first meeting in Almaty, and a great deal else — I cannot say that all of this was a waste of effort. On the contrary, each of us individually and we all of us collectively have gone through a fine schooling in terms of political, democratic, and moral maturity, in terms of great responsibility for the destiny of the peoples that entrusted their future to us.

With the experiences we have absorbed, we seem to have been able to achieve an important breakthrough to a completely different level of understanding of present-day tasks of the development of statehood and inter-state relations. The main thing is, in my view, that we have managed to avoid pernicious divisions on ethnic, religious, and other criteria which inherently carry the seeds of confrontation and mistrust. By linking in a friendly handshake the hands of East and West, we have given a reply to the most burning question of millions of people of various nationalities watching with great concern the development of events. I believe that many of them will now heave a sigh of relief and hope.

I would particularly like to stress, with great satisfaction, that we made a step toward each other without any prompting "from above," without some "authoritative uncle" from the Center pointing a habitual finger in the right direction. The constituent members of the future Commonwealth became the true initiators of the present meeting. This is yet another proof of the goodwill of all of us sitting now at this round table, of our sincere desire to live in peace and good-neighborly atmosphere, collaborating in the name of our peoples' prosperous life.

It is gratifying that, judging from the documents recently adopted and the statements of leaders of sovereign republics, we adhere to a common standpoint on the issue of unified control over nuclear weapons and setting up a unified command of the armed forces of strategic containment. Unified control over nuclear weapons, rejection of proliferation of these weapons, compliance with the norms of the International Atomic Energy Agency and cooperation of the new independent states with Western countries on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are the necessary conditions of our recognition by the world community.

I would like to stress that, as far as Kazakhstan is concerned and, most likely, not only Kazakhstan – acquiring the status of an independent state and becoming a member of the United Nations by declaring its territory a nuclear-free zone in the future is preferable to trying to achieve international recognition as a nuclear power.

The next important aspect concerns the legal basis of the Commonwealth. The uncertainty surrounding the future fate of the disintegrated USSR is becoming more and more unbearable, as radical economic reforms and integration of republics in the world community are hampered. Everyone will most likely agree, however, that the integration process must develop on a solid legal basis.

I hope that we will be able to justify the expectations of

millions of people who have faith in the political experience and wisdom of the participants in the present meeting, in our ability to achieve positive results despite all difficulties, objective and subjective. Let me say, without exaggeration, that today the attention of the world community is also riveted to Almaty, as it is seriously concerned with the situation taking shape on one-sixth of the globe. In deciding the fate of our Commonwealth, we largely determine the political, economic, and moral climate of the planet that expects us to take a responsible, truly democratic and civilized approach to the solution of difficult but, in my view, far from hopeless problems. I call on you, dear friends, to show a maximum of patience, mutual understanding, and political flexibility in the achievement of the compromise that we need today so badly.

## **FROM AN IMPERIAL UNION TO A COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES**

The term “breakpoint” is a precise and graphic description of the present condition of the independent states of the former Soviet federation. With its medical undertones of breaking bones, politicians use it to refer to a painful situation of transition from the old to the new in all spheres of people’s vital activities, their views and fates.

Indeed, while the situation has not yet stabilized after the upheavals that occurred in Europe in 1989 and 1990, the world’s resistance to political earthquakes is already being tested again. This time it is not a question of disappearance of political regimes or of certain social institutions but of changes in the geopolitical balance of forces – changes that may have serious consequences for the development of the global international situation.

The scope of the consequences of such political upheavals become especially clear if we take into account that its epicenter, located on the Eurasian massif, covers two most important international political systems, Euro-Atlantic and Asian-Pacific.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union new independent republics have emerged on the political map of the world. The Commonwealth incorporating eleven of them is neither a state nor a supra-state structure.

The search for a new form of political union to replace the rotten imperial alliance was truly dramatic, not just difficult. It seemed at times that the necessary formula had been found and the signing of a new Union Treaty was just round the corner, but

each time it proved just another mirage of a thirsty traveler in a desert.

Millions of people are now asking this question today: What has happened to us? Who is to blame for the disintegration of the state which has until recently been everywhere referred to as one of the two world superpowers? What affected the course of events more, the objective development of history or the subjective influence of politicians? Was the latter planned and goal-directed, or did the powers that be just grope ahead, trusting to luck without a clear idea of where the reforms which they initiated would lead?

I believe that the present-day sociopolitical situation is the result of the action of both objective factors (such as the disintegration of multinational empires) and subjective ones. The cause of situations of conflict and of difficulties which we are encountering today is largely a consequence of the fact that the state leadership which initiated the country's radical transformations did not have a consistent concept of these transformations, acting without any consideration for social analysis and prognosis. The leitmotif of the activities of reformists in the second half of the 1980s was the slogan "We can't go on living like this," but this realization could not by itself direct developments along a safe channel and guarantee against failures and errors.

A natural consequence of the democratization of society was the process of national revival; in a situation of economic ruin it entailed a sharp increase in centripetal tendencies. It should be stressed that, according to the Constitution then in effect, the republics of the Soviet Union had for decades had the status of sovereign states. But it was merely a fine constitutional formula which concealed the true essence of the unitary state system which, with its reliance on total centralization, controlled all spheres of society's life without exception. There could be no question of real sovereignty of the republics, for the federal center's purview included not only basic issues of the economy, for-

eign policy and finances but also the utilization of the national natural resources and even the establishment of the general principles of the organization and activities of the local authorities.

The need for an early abandonment of the unitary state structure was clear to any rationally thinking person, but the ossified Center failed, for the umpteenth time, to make an objective assessment of the situation and take the proper timely decision when the Baltic trio called in 1988 for a new Union Treaty that would extend the independent authority of the Union republics. As a result of this unforgivable political shortsightedness the chance to achieve a radical renovation of the totalitarian alliance while retaining all the constituent republics of the former federation was irredeemably lost. After three years of chilly misunderstandings, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became foreign states, first *de facto* and then *de jure*.

The Center's conservatism and indecision in implementing vital reforms of the unitary state was a most important but not the only cause for an acceleration of centripetal tendencies. Their principal source was the area of ethnic conflicts in which Stalin's "policy of the merging of nations" (which in practice meant Russification and suppression of national self-awareness) became an erupting social volcano ready any moment to explode, with the most destructive consequences. Separatism, which became an obsession with many politicians, also flowed from the erroneous conviction that it would be easier to overcome the economic crisis by going it alone, with their republic leaving the Union immediately. The hope in this case was clearly for immediate aid from Western countries, based on the strange conviction that the latter would welcome the disintegration of the Soviet Union and render states that split away from it free financial and technological assistance.

I believe that any discourse on the aspiration of the Soviet Union's republics for acquiring state independence must take into account the changes in the international situation of recent years,

in which the danger of armed expansion decreased significantly. This gave minor states a chance to give up, without much risk, the patronage of powerful protectors and pursue the goal of fully independent foreign policy.

We should apparently sincerely admit that it was very hard to predict the kaleidoscopic changes in the USSR's political arena in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when almost all of its chief protagonists were replaced. The center of political life shifted to the Union's constituent republics – a change that may have been unexpected but was far from accidental. The idea of assertion by the nations of their state sovereignty pushed into the background both class and party interests.

The destructive approach of the leadership of the USSR and the CPSU toward the signing of a new Union Treaty, and the consequent collapse of economic ties, forced the republics to assume initiative. The natural step here was the signing of horizontal treaties. The accords reached in 1989 in Almaty between Kazakhstan and the republics of Central Asia gave an impulse to subsequent establishment on a contractual basis of bilateral economic ties with Belorussia, the Ukraine, and Russia. Initially, the Center's reaction to this policy was sharply negative, while the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation dubbed it "memorandums of understanding." But, despite these "far-sighted" forecasts, the new type of cooperation became a sort of insurance against economic chaos, laying the foundation for the formation of the Soviet Union.

The promulgation of declarations of sovereignty by the republics of the former Soviet Union became a historical stage in the life of their peoples. These declarations started the process of assertion of their real independence and self-reliance. At first they were often treated by the proponents of the command-administrative system as manifestation of ambitious regionalism and a desire to substitute regional dictatorship for that of the Center. I would not like to go into lengthy generalizations here, bearing in

mind that there are no rules without exceptions, but I will insist that the only goal of the leadership of Kazakhstan in its fight for sovereignty has always been to secure proper political, social, and spiritual development of all the peoples of the republic and the creation of a decent standard of living for its citizens.

This goal could not but find a response among the whole people: The project of the declaration was discussed with interest and enthusiasm by people of various ages, nationalities, professions, and social status. It was precisely the support for the idea of republican sovereignty by the whole people that predetermined the possibility of its adoption. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this document, which embodies an integral conceptual groundwork for democratic, legal, socioeconomic, and cultural transformations in Kazakhstan. However, it should be taken into account at the same time that the declaration is merely a program of which the implementation will require many years of hard work.

It may now be said with full justification that the constituent republics of the former Soviet federation, even with all the pressure from the unpredictable, spontaneous socioeconomic and sociopolitical developments in the country, despite the conflicts among politicians and inconsistency in the implementation of reforms, have persistently pursued their own policy that is in keeping with the interests of the republic's peoples.

In accordance with their declarations of sovereignty they began to implement independent foreign policies, establishing direct political and business cooperation with foreign states. Thus Kazakhstan significantly extended its intergovernmental and business contacts with the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, Japan, Singapore, and Italy. We have established particularly close relations with the Turkish Republic, the Republic of Korea, and the Sezuang-Uigur Autonomous District of the Chinese People's Republic.

In December 1990, when work on the new Union Treaty

essentially ended up in a blind alley, four republics – Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan – first proposed the setting up of a Union of Sovereign States. The Center's non-constructive policy forced us to tell Mikhail Gorbachev outright that if the signing of the treaty was delayed much longer, we would conclude the Treaty without the Center.

This made the president of the country revise his position on the content and speed of the integration process. Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to London and the results of his negotiations with G-7 leaders warranted a more optimistic outlook at the prospects for our economic revival, and the Novo-Ogarevo Accords revived the hope for a speedy conclusion of a new Union Treaty, the text of which was practically ready for signing. But the attempted coup of August 1991 significantly changed our value orientations.

The events of that August proved to be a desperate attempt by reactionary forces to divert at any cost the objective course of history, to get back what they had lost, and to revive the rotten imperial totalitarian regime. The putschists failed to achieve their objectives, but the centripetal tendencies naturally intensified. The republics' desire for complete state independence now reflected not only a rapid growth of national self-awareness but also a firm desire to protect themselves from the revival of the totalitarian Center.

These few days transformed the results of the Novo-Ogarevo process, which looked already like a building already erected, into the foundations of a completely different structure.

The determining tendency in the development of the former Soviet Union was now the republics' desire for an even greater state sovereignty, including the pursuance of an independent foreign policy as free agents under international law.

The centripetal process assumed quite a different shape. The pragmatists began to defend the formula for a union based on confederation principles, while the radicals, invoking the idea

of national security, raised high the banner of uncompromising separatism. In that situation, it was Kazakhstan which continued to defend, consistently and unwaveringly, the idea of preserving a unified economic space in the critical transitional period, on condition, of course, that the republics' sovereignty is recognized. On behalf of the participants in the Novo-Ogarevo process, I made a statement at the Extraordinary Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR proposing to radically transform the system of state government by forming a new union on a confederation basis.

However, centripetal tendencies prevented the realization of this plan. It so happened that the pendulum of democracy swung far to the right. In a state of euphoria following the triumph over reactionary forces, certain Russian leaders again began to entertain the fallacious idea of Messianism, reverting to the imperial, great-power mentality of old under the flag of democracy. This was revealed in particular in certain territorial claims of the Russian Federation on its neighbors. It was this that made certain republics, above all the Ukraine, to speed up the declaration of their state independence.

An entirely new situation arose in which our republic again assumed the role of peace-maker. Great efforts had to be made to organize and successfully conduct the first meeting in Almaty in October 1991, as a result of which the Treaty on Economic Commonwealth was signed. I would like to stress again that at that time it was the most acceptable solution in terms of preserving a unified economic space.

Alas, in this situation, too, the Center did not react to the developments promptly enough. At a session of the State Council on November 14, Mikhail Gorbachev again refused to listen to the unanimous opinion of the leaders of the republics, stating that he could not conceive of an economic union without a political one and therefore insisted on the need for a centralized state structure. The president even threatened to resign if should his

proposal be rejected. As a result, the next session of the State Council on November 30 ended up in a blind alley. The consequences of the December referendum in the Ukraine proved a graphic illustration of this fact. Pursuing the policy of achieving state independence but not meeting with an adequate response from the Center, that republic practically dropped out of the overall integration process.

Perhaps not all people have a clear idea of what that means. Let me explain, without going into too much detail: Ukraine's departure would signify an almost total paralysis of the Soviet federation's economy, something that could not be permitted under any circumstances. This may explain the haste with which the Minsk decisions were taken. I have already commented on the fact that the signing of the Brest documents was quite a surprise for to me and other leaders of the Central Asian republics.

After studying the accords I came to the conclusion that they were on the whole of a positive nature. Suffice it to say that they guaranteed equal rights to all the peoples and ethnic minorities living in the republics and declared a desire for broad cooperation. All these ideas were approved by representatives of the other states of the former federation. I believe that, had the leaders of the other republics been invited to Minsk, the Commonwealth in its Almaty format would have been born much earlier.

Meantime the reaction to the Belovezhye meeting was far from unambiguous. Some people eagerly used the idea of a Slavic state structure as a trumped-up pretext for proposing an immediate "Turkistan Confederation" as a counterbalance to it. It's awful to contemplate even what would have happened had we succumbed to this provocation by people who wished to divide our peoples on ethnic and religious criteria. At a meeting in Ashkhabad, the leaders of the five independent states categorically rejected the idea of setting up an alternative bloc, displaying a rational and balanced approach to the current realities. A statement, preliminary amendments, and proposals on the CIS accords

signed in Minsk were adopted. The heads of states of Kazakhstan and Central Asia stressed that they fully understood the desire of the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus for setting up independent, law-based states in place of the former republics which had no rights at all, and that they were satisfied with the return of Ukraine into the integration framework.

The leaders of the five republics paid special attention to legal aspects of the setting up of the new Commonwealth, inasmuch as the declaration of the leaders of the three states on the cessation of the existence of the Union of SSR as an agent of international relations was regarded by many people as having no authority. We know that passions on this count only subsided when the decision of the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus were ratified by the parliaments of these republics.

Taking into account the proposal by the founders of the CIS to consider the text of the accords as an initiative for a new political union, the Presidents of the five republics gave their colleagues to understand that they were ready to search for a consensus and to sign a document on an equal footing as High Contracting Parties.

Wishing to comply with the legal basis of the integration process, we proposed that the official delegations that had arrived in Almaty consider an act that we tabled on the cessation of the existence of the Soviet Union and its institutions at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or at a session of the Council of the Republics. Unfortunately, that proposal was not supported by the initiators of the CIS.

I will make so bold as to insist that the setting up of a new Commonwealth based on the former Soviet republics' free choice was, in the situation as it then existed, the only intelligent solution to speedily achieve the necessary compromise in the name of our common future. Kazakhstan always strove to achieve as much as possible at any given moment; it always endeavored to prevent a chaotic disintegration of the country.

In the event, even more than had been expected was accomplished in Almaty. Eleven states endorsed the decision to form a union within a qualitatively new structure that is neither a state nor a supra-state structure. With the setting up of the CIS the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ceased to exist, its sixty-two-year long history sank into oblivion. I believe that the success of the Almaty meeting was largely determined by the fact that the union of young independent states took place at their own initiative, without anyone from the top pointing in which direction to go or exerting any pressure.

Probably one of the most important result of the accords concluded in Kazakhstan was the agreement signed by the four nuclear republics "On Joint Measures Concerning Nuclear Weapons." It confirmed our resolution to take measures against non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, our obligation not to be the first to use it, our common desire to see all nuclear weapons destroyed, as well as the desire to make an all-out contribution to the strengthening of international stability.

The Commonwealth of Independent States has been formed, but I am far from painting its future in shades of pink only. The very first steps of the CIS have shown how difficult it is for its members to agree even on such insignificant issues as, say, the setting up, on an equal rights basis, of a coordinating service operating on a permanent basis primarily consisting of technical workers and experts.

The image of the Commonwealth will only become clear with time, when it has passed a serious survival test solving a whole series of complex, long-term problems. Some of the most important of these were discussed at the January meeting of CIS leaders in Moscow, and time has shown that signing a treaty is not enough – an accord that has been achieved must be strictly complied with, otherwise it will quickly turn into a farce. For the time being, though, some independent states regrettably regard themselves as free from recently assumed collective obligations.

It was this that made us sign in February the Minsk declaration "On Compliance with the Principles of Cooperation Within the Commonwealth of Independent States," which, in terms of procedures accepted throughout the world, is a sort of "contractual appendix," a completely unnecessary act.

It may be assumed that the orientation of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus toward Europe will continually increase. In my opinion, this idea has gripped the leaders of these republics to such an extent that it has eclipsed all the other ideas, becoming isolated from the entire range of interconnected problems of the Eurasian massif.

Today, the idea of preserving the existing status quo prevails in the Commonwealth; the proponents of this idea regard the CIS as the most convenient and easy method of transition to "pure independence." This state of affairs naturally has an objective basis. That basis consists in the natural strengthening of the centripetal tendency in states which have freed themselves from the fetters of a unitary alliance and which are afraid of again ending up in a subordinate position. It is no accident that the word "union" itself provokes such a violent allergic reaction in most participants in the unification process.

History unfortunately does not always develop according to the dictates of common sense, but I still continue to hope for consolidation of CIS countries and for a setting up of supranational coordinating structures in the Commonwealth on the analogy of corresponding structures in the EU. Without them, the Commonwealth will remain no more than an empty husk, just fine form without real content.

History has shown that disintegration of empires is an objective process, but attempts to interfere with a deepening integration of the world community are tantamount to trying to turn back the course of history.

Economic coordination still remains a top priority for the Commonwealth, as it will be extremely difficult to overcome our

backwardness and gradually join the mainstream of modern civilization without the formation of a common market of a new type. The backwardness of and the crisis in our national economy, the obvious economic pressures, and the unprecedented role of the time factor necessitate the creation of the market of an open type involving Western businesses on a wide scale and in a great variety of forms.

Practical realization of this task requires political stability in society and the establishment of a corresponding system of legal guarantees for the operation of foreign businesses. Western business circles are clearly interested in making one-sixth of the earth's surface with a population of 300 million a sphere of application of their capital. But they do not want to rush in here and run the risk of losing everything; they have every right to find out for themselves just how solid is the foundation on which our bilateral and multilateral relations will be built.

As the Moscow conference on the human dimension has shown, increased reliability of the system of protecting human rights in the former USSR dampens the activity of the right-wing, conservative forces that interfere with the development of economic cooperation with the Commonwealth countries. However, politicians and businessmen are still concerned over confrontation among the republics and over ethnic conflicts, and one can but agree that this concern is no evidence of excessive caution.

Bearing this in mind, I sent a telegram to the presidium of the OSCE conference on the human dimension to say that Kazakhstan as a sovereign state regards itself as successor to the obligations adopted by the USSR on this problem.

I would especially like to stress in this respect, however, that I am not a supporter of the view, which has recently become quite fashionable, that a single nationality state offers the best opportunities for radical economic and democratic reform. In my view, the specificity of multinational Kazakhstan has its advantages, and it is this standpoint that we must proceed from.

The friendship of peoples is not only our unique heritage but also our faith and our hope.

We have only made the very first steps, but we have also committed quite a few errors. As we look back at our recent history, it is clear that economic rather than political reforms should have been our top priority. The assertion by some political scientists that the path from totalitarianism to democracy lies through enlightened authoritarianism also appears to be quite convincing. However, one would have to have an icy heart and brains of reinforced concrete to give the people freedom in little doses – freedom which they were totally deprived of for nearly seven and a half decades.

Democracy is not a medical inoculation against totalitarianism, it is not a medicine which a life-long invalid can take and be instantly healed. It would be naive to expect that everybody has this conscious desire for a democratic society and a market economy. The people want hunger-free stability. But in the West these come from democracy and the market, whereas here these pillars of world civilization are associated with economic crises and social anarchy.

Success and achievement will not come of themselves. While overcoming social apathy, we must unambiguously prepare the people for a situation in which difficulties will be inevitable over a number of years, but their conscious overcoming under conditions of political stability will necessarily bear the desired fruit.

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## **CHAOS AND ANARCHY DO NOT LEAD TO THE MARKET**

*Recently a conference of heads of administration and chairmen of regional Soviets of People's Deputies, attended by leaders of the state, scientists, and managers was held in Almaty. The conference discussed the program for "Urgent Anti-crisis Measures and Deepening Socioeconomic Reform." We asked the President of Kazakhstan to comment on the principal planks of the program and express his opinion of the CIS.*

When I read or hear that the CIS countries have already outstripped developed capitalist nations in terms of the number of stock exchanges and commercial banks, I ask myself this question: And how has it benefited the ordinary people? What effect did it have on their well-being? High rates of privatization, an increase in the number of associations, cooperatives, farms, various exchanges and banks do not of themselves bear evidence of success in the organization of market relations. After all, transition to the market is not the goal but a means to improve people's standards of living. That is why as long as there is no stabilization, followed by the people's rising prosperity, all talk about market economy successes is premature.

Why aren't there any success stories in the former Soviet Union? Why does the depression continue and the standard of

living of considerable portions of the population go down? What must be done to overcome the critical situation?

These issues were the focus of our attention as we prepared the program for "Urgent Anti-crisis Measures and Deepening Socioeconomic Reform." The program was prepared in a situation that was far from simple.

The fact is that the absence of proper coordination of economic processes in CIS countries and of state regulation inside these states destabilized the financial system and led it to the brink of bankruptcy. The issuance of money long went beyond permissible levels. Prices were rocketing. All this resulted in a mathematical-economic equation that has more unknown than known quantities.

What we had to do was, first, identify the basic causes of abrupt aggravation of the crisis and worsening of the economic situation; second and most important, take measures toward their liquidation, determine the strategy for the period of economic stabilization and transition to the market economy, and define concrete changes in organization and structure. After discussion and incorporation of rational amendments, the program will be put before the Supreme Soviet for debate and endorsement. In view of the program's considerable length, I can only elucidate some of its most fundamental propositions.

First, a few words on how the program was worked out. We carefully studied the experiences of market regulation in developed capitalist countries, China, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and a number of countries of the former Soviet Union. I must note that a great deal of the stuff I read about foreign experiences was, mildly speaking, far removed from reality. The authors carefully selected from foreign experiences everything that confirmed the propositions of their own market programs – and these programs are nowadays a dime a dozen. "Life is so varied," Gorky wrote, "that you can always find some facts to confirm any absurdity." For example, the supporters of shock therapy said and wrote a great deal about the achievements of Poland. They

listed examples of market structures being created, but the dynamics of the people's standard of living was left undisclosed. Why?

In the three years of transition to the market economy production in Poland dropped by 40 percent, national income fell by 25 percent, the unemployed numbered 2.5 million – more than 13 percent of the able-bodied population, while the population's real incomes decreased by a third.

We can thus say that, if success is taken to mean more than the fact itself of transition to the market, the Soviet Union's partners in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance have not been too successful. The only exception here has probably been China, where the development of market relations, involvement of foreign capital, and the setting up free economic zones under state control have resulted in higher living standards for the people.

As we analyze the experiences of China, the former socialist countries, and the CIS, the conclusion suggests itself that one of the principal causes of our failures has been premature total liquidation of state management and control over economic processes even before the necessary premises for market regulation were in place. As a result, the former socialist countries and the CIS are dominated by chaos and anarchy in industrial production, the same chaos and production that led in the late 1920s and early 1930s to a world crisis and took capitalism as a system to the brink of collapse. Only state regulation saved the capitalist system; moreover, capitalism got a new lease on life.

The well-known American economist John Galbraith made a noteworthy statement on the subject: "Changes in the countries of Eastern Europe are, on the one hand, rational in character, and on the other, whenever they are greater in number, they lead away from the truth, approaching a light mental disorder. Many talk, without hesitation, about a return to the free market of Adam Smith's times, but they are so wrong that their views may be regarded as a psychic derangement of clinical character. A free

market is something that we do not have in the West, something that we would not tolerate. Our life is made easier and constrained by the government. . .” [Translated from the Russian.—Tr.]

It would definitely be an understatement to call the chaos and anarchy in the CIS countries a “light mental disorder.” What is more, chaos and disorder actually lead to a market defined as “black.”

In the former Soviet Union, whether we accept it or not, a unified economic complex evolved characterized by the necessary division of labor and specialization, including production links with partners in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Within that complex, production and consumption of products required to provide life support for the population of one-sixth of the planet were balanced.

A great deal of justified criticism is now leveled at the former unified economic complex. It does indeed require radical transformation; the relations between the former republics, on the one hand, and former socialist countries, on the other, also require fundamental changes. And what has happened in actual fact?

First we destroyed, quickly and unanimously, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance; after that we destroyed, not as unanimously but even faster, the Union-level economic bodies – along with ministries running the individual industries, which had indeed outlived their usefulness. The mechanism for the coordination of a unified economic and technological complex collapsed. Because of the breakdown of economic links, not one state of the former Soviet Union has a proper balance of production and consumption of vital commodities and services. Each of them lacks something that is absolutely necessary for the population’s normal life support.

As one observes present-day processes, one is compelled to compare them with Stalin’s collectivization. The organization of collective farms, just as the transition to the market economy today, was carried out in a hurry, without any necessary conditions being created. But collectivization within the framework of

cooperative and collective-farm mode of ownership was then in keeping with the tendencies of world economic development. Beginning in the 1930s, the process of enlargement of farmers' properties went on apace: Small farms were as a rule ruined while other types became larger. In the period of 60 years, farms in different countries on average grew 5-11 times larger. Along with this, the process of creation of large agricultural companies went on. In some countries they account for a considerable part of foodstuffs production.

As for disintegration following the destruction of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and of the unified technological complex of the USSR, it contravenes the logic of technological progress. It would therefore be naive, practically as well as theoretically, to expect any successes from such processes. According to specialist analyses, this factor accounts for 50 to 80 percent of the decline in production in various CIS countries, the variation depending on the level of their integration in the unified technological complex.

Analysis shows that, lacking historical experiences in the building of democratic states with a mixed economy, we permitted the pressure of circumstances to carry us along to a state of complete chaos and lawlessness. In numerous cases state and commercial structures, including those in banking and foreign trade, have an interest in preserving this state of confusion and lack of supervision, as these become the sources of their vast illegal incomes. Incidentally, mafiosi give everyone a good lesson in the integration of partners from different countries regardless of nationality, party membership, or religion. The only principle they recognize is – Get rich!

Hence the conclusion: There lies, between the present and the future, an inevitable and difficult transition period during which radical market reforms must be combined with state regulation and control over the sphere of production, circulation, and foreign trade activities.

This does not at all mean that the program envisages any

backtracking or restoration of the old methods of economic management. Something quite different is intended, namely, the use of state control for accelerating the transition to market relations. Metaphorically speaking, the pivotal point of the program is the creation of a market infrastructure and of a competitive environment in all spheres of social production.

As I cannot go into all the details which this proposition entails, let me merely cite the titles of the principal sections of the program: "Amendments to the Program of Privatization and Transition from State to Private Property"; "The Policy of State Support for Entrepreneurs"; "Increasing the Scope of the Reform of the Banking and Financial System. Stabilization of Commodity-Money Relations and of the Economy as a Whole"; "Acceleration of the Creation and Development of Market Infrastructure. Greater Emphasis on Anti-monopoly Policy."

Besides, the methods of state regulation outlined in the program differ in principle from the old ones. We refer above all to such methods as tax, credit, and licensing policy, as well as other market levers.

The economy of Kazakhstan is becoming increasingly more open to mutually advantageous cooperation with partners from the "near and distant abroad," as we have taken care to prepare the necessary guarantees for foreign investment.

At the same time we took care to protect the economy from our own and foreign specialists in lining their pockets at state expense. The program has a special section called "Harsher Measures To Combat Organized Crime and Corruption."

It would seem at first sight that this is primarily a problem for law enforcement agencies. Experience has shown, however, that it has long gone beyond those limits, becoming an acute sociopolitical issue. Speculation, corruption, and venality do not just slow down the development of business and of market relations – they seriously distort their essence.

Fundamental changes have been proposed in the system of social protection of the population. It must be more just and

target specific sections of the population, rather than offer charity on the principle "a little bit for each." We refer here mainly to support for low-income families, reform of the system of payment for labor, and protection of the unemployed.

For a start, old-age pensions are all reduced to roughly comparable levels, and then it is proposed to adjust them in keeping with growing consumer prices and minimum wage levels in the economy. It is intended to pass a law "On the System for Minimal State Support for the Population During the Transition Period."

The last section, "The Mechanism for the Realization of the Program," envisions a set of measures that are necessary for the implementation of these plans; these measures include, along with organizational moves, support in terms of personnel and information. We proceed on the assumption that in the absence of state regulation, even in the framework of a well-organized structural system, any program is these days doomed to failure.

In conclusion, a few words about the CIS. I have no doubts about the need for a Commonwealth of Independent States within the framework of the former Soviet Union. The nature of this Commonwealth is, however, a different matter. Let me say frankly: In the shape it is now, it does not satisfy me. We gather together, we have a nice chat, find a series of compromises, and fly back after a banquet. However, translated into simple human language, "compromise" means that the given agreement does not suit anyone. That is why in real life things go on as before. In some cases compromises are necessary, but with us they have become the rule, while effective solutions are the exception.

In October last year, representatives of eleven republics of the former Soviet Union signed an agreement on the setting up of the Inter-state Economic Committee operating on the same principles as European Community commissions. No sooner had it been formed than it was liquidated. The common economic space was left without elementary coordination and predictability. After a hurried and uncoordinated liquidation of the State Bank of the USSR, real and continually increasing chaos set in in the ruble

zone, and if it is not stopped, the collapse of the financial "system" is just round the corner. Without proper economic coordination, we shall not be able to solve acute problems of currency, prices, and many others. I spoke of this at all our meetings.

In July this year the heads of states signed in Moscow the decision to form the Commonwealth's Consultative and Coordinating Economic Council. We prepared the draft of such an agreement. In August, plenipotentiary representatives of nine CIS countries discussed and initialed it in Almaty. However, at the meeting in Bishkek, after achieving compromises on a series of issues, a consultative working commission on the economy under the Council of Heads of State was set up instead. But its actual formation has not started yet.

My proposal for conducting a unified currency policy and the setting up of a Banking Union met with much the same fate.

That's how it happens that our proposals were approved and even adopted in Bishkek but they are not working. The mechanism for the implementation of agreements adopted in the CIS leaves a lot of room for improvement, and given a number of reservations on the part of leaders of several countries, there is every opportunity for shelving them completely.

The heads of state and governments of the CIS visited a number of Western countries and studied the organization of market relations there. In our interviews we all of us call on everyone to use these Western experiences, especially those of the European Community. But we say one thing and do another. We and the European Community proceed in diametrically opposed directions. To be more precise, we destroy that which they are aiming at. The Maastricht Accords in the European Community envision the creation of a single currency, harmonization of national legislative systems, introduction of a unified social and trade policy, regulation of migration and movement of capital, coordination of policy on competition, synchronization of taxation, and even the creation of incentives for backward regions. I would especially like to stress that "the main principles of the

European Currency Union's policy are the stability of prices as a most important goal and the impossibility for the central European Bank to finance state budget deficits."

When the issue of setting up effective economic bodies for the CIS is raised, some leaders invoke the idea of sovereignty. I would like to ask them: Don't the European Union's members have sovereignty? Has this sovereignty suffer from the setting up of the Commission of the European Union and other respectable organs of the Commonwealth? If it has, why then are there so many countries eager to join it?

I believe that there is no greater threat to the sovereignty of the states of the former Soviet Union than chaos, anarchy, and impoverishment of the people. It will be a hundred times more difficult for us to overcome the crisis and achieve a stabilization of living standards through bilateral agreements only than through a viable Commonwealth. We mustn't go against the logic of world development.

The cautious attitude of some leaders to the solution of urgent problems in the development of the Commonwealth is prompted by political instability. But I believe that common sense will prevail, and that we will follow the path of integrating our economies at a bolder pace, which will greatly ease their incorporation in world economic space.

I also place great hopes in this respect on the adoption of CIS Rules and Regulations, which should define the main principles and directions of CIS development.

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## **POLITICS MUST BE PRACTICED LOOKING EACH OTHER IN THE EYE**

*You have a reputation of someone who not only says he knows but really knows what to do about the economy. Western experts and advisors are working for you. And still the economy of Kazakhstan, just as that of Russia, is in deep crisis. So where has the program of economic reform in Kazakhstan failed?*

Well, let's recall how it all was, step by step. After all, it was all just a short while ago. We passed the law on cooperatives, and later another law on enterprises – which, incidentally, ruined everything for good. It turned out that no such law must be adopted under a command-administrative system. That law gave the labor collectives of enterprises the right to elect managers, and the people weren't accustomed to that sort of thing. The managers succumbed to the influence of certain groups within the collective. Those who had the flair for being liked moved into the foreground, rather than those who could do a job of work.

We were then searching for a new model of the economy. Suddenly everybody had a flash of inspiration: We had to build a market economy. People like Petrakov and Shatalin began talking about that. But no one had any experience then! Incidentally, the "600 Days" program was an attempt at going over to the market economy in an organized way, and fast. At that time things could be done in concert, all together. But the program was not adopted then. And then there was the coup, the collapse of the Union, the Belovezhye Accords, and the rest. At that time inter-

national organizations, including the International Monetary Fund, began working here.

They defined price liberalization, liberalization of the economy, transition from state to private ownership, and privatization as the principal goals. At the meetings of heads of state in 1991, I did my best to prove that all those things had to be done gradually and in concert, as long as we remained within a common space. It was believed, however, that the right moment had been missed. So as of January 1, 1992 Russia freed the prices. What was Kazakhstan to do, with 70 percent of its economy tied up with the Russian economy? We had no choice. True, by that time we had already worked out a system of privatization of housing through coupons and had implemented small-scale privatization. But on the whole control over the economy deteriorated.

Now that we have lived for more than a year under the conditions of all-out privatization, IMF experts are saying that at that time, when the Soviet Union still existed, we shouldn't have rushed toward the market economy in such a great hurry. Only gradually. But experience is experience, even if it is negative. We must draw lessons from it. We must say outright that our hope that the transition from state to private ownership, and privatization, would start from the grass-roots level proved unjustified. That is why we are rather vigorously introducing elements of regulation in the economy. We have declared all enterprises to be shareholders' companies, leaving half the shares in the hands of the state. We need that to regain some of the control over the economy and conduct privatization with the participation of the state as a property owner.

*Mr. President, and what about ownership of land?*

To answer that question, I must throw some light on the situation in Kazakhstan and in our parliament. Many people don't like Nazarbayev's wish for land to be sold and bought. Kazakhs are mostly engaged in livestock breeding and to some extent in

farming, so they fear that the most fertile lands will pass into other people's hands. For the present, we lease land for 99 years with the right of inheritance. This is acceptable to our citizens. For foreigners, it is a difficult issue. But gradually we will arrive at a situation in which those who build industrial enterprises and housing will be given land as their property. This problem will be solved – if not by the current Supreme Soviet, then the next.

*Your views and those of the Supreme Soviet are often completely at variance. Aren't you afraid that soon these contradictions will become irreversible, and that the Russian situation will play itself out in Kazakhstan, too?*

Sure, our parliamentary debates are not always equable. The situation was at its most dramatic when we were adopting the Constitution. We seemed to be on the brink of a split. And still we arrived through mutual concessions at the present version of it. Of course, this Constitution has its shortcomings. But on the principal issues we were able to find a common tongue. So now we have the fundamental law of our state recognized by the international community. Our Constitution has been subjected to expert legislative appraisal by specialists from France, Germany, and the United States. Of course, it will in future be improved, but already in these days it offers a chance to live normal lives under the fundamental law. This is the main thing.

Despite all our disagreements I value the fact that our parliament, even if it is not a professional institution, has done a vast amount of work and created a legislative basis for the transition to a market economy. The experiences of the Russian deputies teach our deputies that unity in the upper echelon of government is needed more than anything else in this extremely difficult period.

*Many people are convinced that Nazarbayev has at present enough authority to create, instead of the current CIS, a normally functioning structure comprising three or four states that would indeed want to coexist in the Commonwealth and operate in con-*

*cert. These could be Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. Why don't you make up your mind to do it?*

Frankly speaking, I had this hope of forming, within a short period of time, a normal Commonwealth, a Commonwealth that would enable us to jointly fight the crisis in the economy and avoid bloodshed and war. However, I realize now that we need time to become united. I believe that vast responsibility lies with Russia and its leaders. Russia must convince everybody that it really follows the path of democracy and does not want a return to the times of the empire. Why am I saying this? The fear of Germany persisted even after the war, until Germany and its leaders apologized to the whole world for Nazism – only then did the world recognize democracy in Germany. America expressed repentance for destroying the Indians. Russia must do something like this, too. Because all peoples of the former Soviet Union gravitate toward it – I'm convinced about it. It has become a habit, living next to the Russian people. The same kind of trust must be created at the state leadership level. On April 12 I telephoned Yeltsin and all the leaders of the CIS, calling on them to gather on April 16. Looking each other in the eye, we, the ten leaders, debated whether we would at last create a normal commonwealth, and who was ready to do what. There are three issues – an economic union, a common defense space, and cooperation on foreign policy. I asked literally everyone: Do you agree, or not? We gave instructions to our governments to prepare documents on these issues. We could not delay solution of these issues any longer. Now, after this meeting in Moscow, we must see how these decisions will be implemented, and whether we will be able to create an economic union (incidentally, this name was suggested in Minsk by Leonid Kravchuk, who for some reason spoke up in Moscow against the word "union"). If everything remains the way it was, Kazakhstan is ready to discuss again the idea of setting up a normal commonwealth in the future.

*Mr. President, you said the other day in Almaty that a new, integral program for national policy was being worked out...*

Well, what do you think? Should human beings have values? The state must also have such values, and the young generation must be brought up in the spirit of those values. In Kazakhstan, consolidation of a multinational people is item number one on the agenda. Our scholars are working on a program of accord. I suggested the idea for an Assembly for Unity and Accord. It might sit, say, twice a year to discuss all the issues that may arise. Suppose Kazakhstani Germans or the Uigur people have some problems – they have to be discussed. In general, the most important thing for us now is to develop a sense of a single Motherland in Kazakhstan's citizens.

*There are fears among the non-Kazakh population, Mr. President, that the demographic situation in Kazakhstan is being artificially adjusted to suit the Kazakh population, primarily through the resettlement of Kazakhs from Mongolia and the border regions of China. Is that true?*

This is a question that has to be answered straightforwardly, in order to avoid any false interpretations. There is no official state policy on this issue. But the laws passed by the Supreme Soviet for the benefit of people who were subjected to reprisals and driven from their land guarantee Kazakhstani citizenship for their descendants.

Recently I took a look at migration statistics. Last year, 188,000 people came to Kazakhstan and about the same number left. Some 110,000 Kazakhs settled here, as well as 54,000 Russians from Russia. Indeed, most Kazakhs came from Mongolia. They don't want to live there. Even in Soviet times Mongolian Kazakhs made attempts to cross the border with all their livestock and belongings and settle here. Gorbachev had to deal with these issues. Shevardnadze discussed this with the government of Mongolia. In this way the first five thousand families

settled here. At the same time 20,000 Kazakhs moved here from Russia and 17,000 from Central Asia.

Are Russians leaving Kazakhstan? Of course they are. We know that. But there is no state policy on that. Tell me now, what is Kazakhstan to do? Ban Kazakhs from returning to their homeland? How would Russia have acted in such a case? This process shouldn't be dramatized. Incidentally, local Kazakhs find it easier to live next to Russians than to people who have resettled from Mongolia or China. The latter are mostly engaged in livestock breeding; they have a lower cultural level. They don't find it all that simple to settle in here. As for the people who are leaving, they are mostly highly skilled workers and educated people. That is why the Kazakh nation itself, our state, should have an interest in keeping Russians, Ukrainians and Germans in Kazakhstan.

*According to some observations, business in Kazakhstan is now divided along national and clan criteria. Financial support for clans in Almaty is provided by relatives from the provinces, and unwanted competitors are eliminated. Underlying these processes may be political interests, for after all, people that have money also have power.*

I do not have any clear-cut information on this score, although talk like this is not without foundation. If the market starts functioning in earnest, there will be neither borders nor nationalities. Right now there are indeed instances of clan-type associations and attempts to revive tribal and clan relations. This is not unlike going back to the caves. They convene medieval assemblies, determine which tribe is the oldest, and all that sort of thing. We should transfer state-owned property into private hands and implement privatization faster. When major industries belong to shareholders, healthy private businesses will also take off the ground. There will be no division of local businesses on national criteria. Incidentally, my directive concerning the responsibility

of officials for participation in new commercial structures is also aimed at achieving this result. Great pressure has been exerted on them – more than a hundred major criminal cases are at present investigated in Kazakhstan. Instances of corruption and bribe-taking are revealed. Control over the enforcement of laws has been made tougher throughout Kazakhstan. Our anti-crisis program envisions a return to regulated economy to achieve greater order in the transition from state to private property and in privatization.

*There is no real political opposition in Kazakhstan, but you have many personal enemies...*

That is a difficult question for me. What is an opposition? A state leader must aspire to express the views of the majority of his population. I realize that a situation in which everybody is content with the leader's political course is impossible. One would like to have a civilized opposition which would work out its programs, which would prove that its proposals are better than mine. There is nothing like that now. And we have embodied it in our Constitution that extremist, uncivilized methods of struggle will be suppressed.

And as for personal enemies – I just don't know who it is that I hurt. All my life I have been trying to find a common tongue with everybody, especially those people who expressed a harsh dislike for me. I myself am totally devoid of rancor. In these days of democracy, the behavior of a certain part of our intellectual elite is completely incomprehensible to me. Instead of making use of democracy to educate the Kazakh population and stabilize the government structures and state independence and sovereignty, they aggravate the situation over the problems of Kazakhs and exacerbate the relations between nations. If they were thinking of the nation's future, they would be talking precisely of consolidation, tranquillity, and bringing the peoples together. It's the Kazakhs who need this above all.

Luckily, intellectuals are of different kinds. There are poets, writers, and scientists among them who approach these problems from high civic positions and show an understanding of the policies which I implement. Only under conditions of tranquillity and confidence in the future will the Russian-speaking part of the citizenry treat the problems of the Kazakh people with understanding. Why can't those who score points playing on base, small-minded, fleeting feelings understand this? In my speeches I openly say that our television must express the interests of multinational Kazakhstan without a bias for the Kazakh side, as is now happening. We should strive to get individuals of the Russian, Ukrainian, and German nationalities write for Kazakh papers. Kazakh intellectuals' writings should appear in Russian-language publications.

On the whole, though, it will be impossible to implement the policy of unity and consolidation within Kazakhstan unless the same tranquillity prevails in our country's environment. And this tranquillity can only be achieved if we, the republics of the former Soviet Union, unite to create our own economic space. In the final analysis, it is the economy that unites people. Kazakhstan trades with Russia, and that is to Kazakhstan's advantage; Russia trades with us, and it is also to its advantage. What is there to divide us? Russia's machine-building and electronics industry will be unable to work without Kazakhstan's non-ferrous metals. You can't make either armor or a pistol barrel without Kazakhstan's ferroalloys. All airplane cable is produced in Kazakhstan. In the same way we buy from Russia all those things that we lack. The whole world trades like that.

That is why, when I speak of the CIS and a unified economic space, I think of this as the prime condition for each of our states. God forbid that we should think even of the disintegration of Russia. Maybe some people think that other nations will profit by that? The CIS, a normal Commonwealth will strengthen Russia itself.

Let me say a few words especially about Kazakhstan and Russia. These are not political intrigues, this is life itself. This is history. Russians and Kazakhs have worked out a common mentality. How can you take that away? With no other people have the Kazakhs formed a closer union than with Russians. These are hundred-year old traditions. And we shouldn't shake fists at each other or show off our muscles. These ways are receding into the past. We are all of us United Nations members. Everybody should get used to the fact that we have become independent states. We must have friendly and mutually advantageous relations based on confidence in each other. And that's it – we don't need anything more.

INTERVIEW GRANTED TO KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA,  
MAY 21, 1993

## NEW CONCEPT AND NEW INITIATIVE

*In a few days several renowned scientists — Stanislav Shatalin, Nikolai Petrakov, Leonid Abalkin, Grigory Yavlinsky— will come to Almaty at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The underlying causes and prospects of this meeting are extremely significant. As President Nazarbayev stated in an interview to Izvestiya, the agenda of that meeting will include the concept of a new stage in inter-state relations throughout post-Soviet space and the elaboration of a new wide-ranging integration initiative.*

### “THE SHADOW OF A TERRIBLE MONSTER LOOMED NEARBY”

In recent times, I had to re-appraise the years that have elapsed since the disintegration of the [Soviet] Union, and, most importantly, to take a different look at the future of relations between our states.

*This sentence, with which our conversation began, sounded almost sensational, coming from Mr. Nazarbayev. We know how persistently and consistently he has fought all these years against the break-up of political and economic ties within the former Soviet Union, and when these ties were nevertheless broken, how perseveringly he tried to create new unifying structures and coordinating*

*organs. So now, when a real prospect for harmony has begun to loom, and agreement on the possibility of an Economic Union of the CIS has been reached, the champion of stability and unity declares that he has revised his views. What lies behind all this?*

The new conclusion that I have drawn is that the period of disunion, when centripetal forces prevailed, was in its way logical and largely inevitable, though not advisable. It now becomes clear that the main thing in these past years was the desire to insure oneself against a return to the empire, a desire which outweighed any rational arguments in favor of integration. Any contemplated coordinating organ was associated with some former dictatorial central distribution department. The shadow of a terrible monster still loomed nearby and seemed to be ready to materialize again.

*Does this mean that Nazarbayev has recognized the Utopian or at least untimely character of his former initiatives? It does not.*

The logic of what actually happened does not cancel the logic of the possible. I am still convinced that there was an alternative to the choice that was made owing to circumstances that were other than objective, and, which is most important, I'm convinced that the goal which I saw from the very beginning is the right one, and we will inevitably achieve it... Only this time we will achieve it by a different path, longer and more costly.

I never concealed the fact that even during the Novo-Ogarevo negotiations and especially after the coup [of August 1991] I very much wanted to see, in place of the Union that had outlived its usefulness, a new inter-state structure based on principles of democracy and equality. At a time when the whole world is moving toward integration, it is unreasonable to move in the opposite direction, losing our common economic, defense, cultural, and information space and sliding back into sovereign neo-isolationism. As an economist and adherent of statism, I foresaw the negative consequences of such a process quite well – probably better than most. So I had this idea that the CIS might be a

political structure, a commonwealth of a new type, if we should quickly and radically modify the Union infrastructure, just like the Maastricht Accords unify the EU. But very soon I realized that I was in the minority with this conviction of mine. I admit that this terribly depressed me. And still, I believed it necessary to take advantage of all the possibilities that still remained.

*Does it follow that such possibilities have been exhausted, I asked the President.*

The situation has basically changed now [he said]. Accordingly, new approaches are necessary. New possibilities have also arisen. It would be too primitive to believe, as some people do, that the republics of the former Union, having burnt their fingers over their sovereignty, are ready to return to the family bosom. Of course, both the euphoria concerning their own possibilities and the ambitions of their political leaders had their place in the republics. But the essence of the new quality in the situation lies, in my view, in the fact that the republics have at last begun to feel like really independent states. Such new acquisitions as their own currencies, borders, customs, armies – although they did not by themselves improve the life of their peoples, and often even made it more difficult – they delivered the peoples, or rather their leaders, from many fears and complexes. It is all the more worrying that conflicts of political ambitions running counter to the interests of their peoples continue.

“APART FROM SOVEREIGNTY, THERE’S ALSO LIFE...”

*Well-known for his diplomatic skills, his ability to find a common tongue with most diverse politicians, and quite naturally acting in many cases as a peace-maker, Nazarbayev was this time emphatically tough in his assessments, without any fear of hurting someone’s feelings or complicating relationships. This seems to be a new nuance in his present-day position.*

I have no time for diplomacy right now [the president said]. There's too much at stake. I draw a clear distinction between relations among countries and peoples on the one hand and between heads of state on the other. This is by no means one and the same thing. We communicate regularly and have a clear idea of each other. It is clear to me, for instance, that the position of Ukraine, or rather of its state leaders, has been and still is an obstacle in the way of a reasonable and painless process of integration on a new basis, something that compels us to slow down our movement from time to time. Many people believed that Ukraine's dropping out of the Commonwealth would inflict irreparable damage on it. That is a serious factor, of course. I would also like to stress my special respect for Ukraine and the Ukrainians, among whom I learned the ABCs of metallurgy in my youth. I am trying to build my relations with the present-day leaders of that great people on a friendly footing. I believe, though, that indulgence for "Ukraine's special position" was an error. The loss of a strong partner would be fully compensated for by the formation of a smooth-functioning structure that would soon produce some real results advantageous to the peoples of our countries. Unfortunately, the situation is not changing much now, either. At the last meeting of CIS states Leonid Kravchuk spoke up against the name "Economic Union," insisting that the word "union" has been compromised. Is it the right time for terminological arguments? Is the name more important than the substance? What is it but a pretext for demonstrating a "special position" and again delaying the process of achieving agreement?

*Nazarbayev was also puzzled by the position of the Belarussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich on the idea of collective security. The President of Kazakhstan noted that the parliament of Belarus had expressed itself in favor of the republic's participation in this system — why did the head of state insist on a different position, then?*

I sometimes think [Mr. Nazarbayev said] that it would be

simpler for us to achieve agreement if, having formed a kind of corporate club of heads of state, we chose holding on to our posts as our main task and built our policy on this basis. As for me personally, however, that is unacceptable. The contradiction lies in the fact that each leader, in word, cares for the good of his people – but are the people’s interests served by spiritual and intellectual isolation, a fall in production, a break-up of economic and cultural ties, and total nonpayment for products delivered? This past spring the leaders of the republics of the former Union have publicly admitted, one after another, that the economies of the independent states are on the verge of catastrophe, but at the same time they were in no hurry to pass a decision concerning CIS coordinating structures.

*In Mr. Nazarbayev’s opinion, some politicians still unjustifiably place the idea of sovereignty in opposition to the process of integration, speculating on this opposition.*

You see [he said], as a pragmatists I found it very hard to reconcile myself to this romantic idea, raised to an absurd fetish and often too costly for the peoples, which has prevailed in recent years. I have always assumed that, side by side with this idea, there was also life as we know it. Delegating part of the necessary powers to inter-state coordinating bodies in the name of the interests of all and each – this approach is much closer to me. Although let me assure you that sovereignty is not less precious to Kazakhstan than to any other country.

“WE SIMPLY HAVEN’T KNOWN ANY OTHER  
KIND OF INTEGRATION”

*Still, why is Mr. Nazarbayev so certain that the new possibilities for integration which he now envisions can now be realized while the differences in the approach to these problems persist? Doesn’t he contradict himself when he insists, on the one*

*hand, that the republics have gotten rid of their fears of the revival of the empire and at the same time reproaches his colleagues for adherence to the idea of “sailing on their own”?*

*Mr. Nazarbayev himself sees no contradiction here. The new quality of the present stage, he believes, lies precisely in the fact that integration processes may be freed from rigid political dependence and develop from the grass roots level – from economic, information, and cultural cooperation.*

These processes have already begun [Mr. Nazarbayev said]. They can, of course, be slowed down – by political ambitions or by failure to realize the new quality of the present situation. In both cases the politician in question runs the risk of falling behind the flow of life, behind his own people's natural movements. After all, what do we see happening now? While heads of state argue about terms, agrarians, industrialists, oil workers, interior ministers, social welfare ministers regularly gather together, exchanging information and experiences and consulting each other. We have here both a readiness and a desire for integration. But what will be the quality of that integration? We have all of us grown up in the USSR and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance – we just don't have any other experience. It is quite clear to me, though, that it is no longer possible to build partnership relations on an old basis – fundamentally new mechanisms are necessary. And that is the main conclusion that I have arrived at in my thinking on the prospects of post-Soviet space.

*I drew the president's attention to the fact that he had used the term “post-Soviet space” instead of “CIS” several times. Did that signify that he had hopes for an extension of the CIS framework?*

Well, just you take a look at what is going on yourself [Mr. Nazarbayev replied]. Horizontal, or sectoral, links, largely initiated by Kazakhstan, have gone beyond the CIS framework. Participation in these links is not determined by membership in the

CIS but is prompted above all by the interests of each of the members. This, in my view, will mark the beginning of something new – the quality of integration of the kind unknown either in the former Union or in the former Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

We are objectively tied together by the level of the economy, by the impossibility of appearing in the competitive world market, and by the existing structure of economic links. So my new conceptual approach to the prospects for integration within the post-Soviet space consists in building up cooperation from the grass roots level, from the level of the economy and various areas of life, without necessarily linking up this cooperation with politics. Here we have real possibilities not only for integration within the CIS but also of all the former republics of the Union and even of the countries of Eastern Europe.

*I reminded the president that the entire CIS path was paved with good intentions, but the numerous agreements never started working, remaining essentially mere memorandums of understanding. And even if an actually operating body is set up, won't it be a replica of the former federal Gosplan [State Committee for Planning]? These fears have, incidentally, been voiced after the recent meeting in Karaganda of ministers for industry of several republics.*

The reason for that has been pointed out even before [Mr. Nazarbayev said]: the absence of a mechanism. And what should the mechanism be, properly speaking, which would give us a chance to preserve independence and at the same time cooperate and deepen partnership with our neighbors? As we signed agreements, we each time outlined our intentions, as it were, but we had no idea as to how the goal would have to be reached, so we proceeded from the old principles – like having a unified center, management of resources for common purposes, directives and subordination. Please understand me correctly: It's not

as if I ceased to attach any meaning to what has been done within the framework of the CIS or of the new horizontal links. I merely wish to state that our agreements have yet to be filled with real meaning and content. After all, we have never known any other kind of integration: The only things that we knew how to do was command, administrate, and distribute.

But the world knows a different type of integration, too – the EU type. Europe started with coordination of various aspects of the life of independent states. Coordinating the sovereign states' policies on the various industries – that was the meaning of this type of mutual relations. Figuratively speaking, we must learn not just how to march along a given route in a single column but also how to work out common Rules of the Road. Models of the Coal and Steel Union type are smoothly operating in the civilized world. In order to produce something similar, we must clearly understand what it is, exactly, which insures the viability of such structures and how they can be projected onto our specific conditions.

So, to begin working concretely on this task, I invited to Almaty the scientists I greatly respect – Shatalin, Petrakov, Abalkin, and Yavlinsky. I propose to set up a group for the study of the system of relations within the EU, OPEC, etc., in order to work out recommendations and models in order to bring these experiences to bear on our integrative processes. I intend to discuss the results of our meeting with CIS heads of state and at a more advanced inter-state level. This may give rise to a major program and in the future, perhaps, to a model for a new commonwealth. I am sure that what is in store for us is a union that will be closer than what our newly independent sovereign states are currently ready for.

*If Nazarbayev's initiative is supported, the process may, in his view, develop dynamically enough. The formation of certain sectoral bodies—probably councils of ministers of the EU type –*

*will then be a natural demand of the new economy of the post-Soviet space rather than a schema imposed from above. This will mark the beginning of an integrative process which will last several years. When we have learned to live independently but in a coordinated manner, then each state will delegate, without fear and mainly with a view to its own interests, part of its prerogatives to a more solid union of the EU type. According to Kazakhstani President's estimates, this may take some six or seven years.*

INTERVIEW GRANTED TO THE NEWSPAPER IZVESTIYA,  
JUNE 5, 1993

## **BUT CAN WE MEASURE ALL THINGS AGAINST THE RUBLE?**

*After the collapse of negotiations between Kazakhstan and Russia on a unified ruble zone, Nursultan Nazarbayev and his government must certainly be living through a period that is far from pleasant. Opponents in parliament who advocated a currency of its own for Kazakhstan now reproach Nazarbayev for his short-sightedness.*

*Yesterday Nursultan Nazarbayev answered some questions asked by Komsomolskaya pravda.*

*Do you believe that the whole of the ruble zone issue was your personal mistake?*

From the standpoint of the current moment, we should probably have introduced a national currency a long time ago. But our actions aimed at establishing a unified ruble zone were prompted above all by considerations of strategic nature – the search for an optimal scenario for overcoming the economic crisis, as well as by political obligations. After all, there were normal negotiations in progress. Even now there is hardly a better scenario than combining the efforts of Commonwealth countries, including stabilization of money circulation.

We have never disputed the possibility of introducing a

national currency. It was a question of time schedules, of the need to clarify the positions of each side, and compliance with inter-state agreements then achieved at the highest level.

*Was this outcome of negotiations with Russia on the common ruble space unexpected to you? Is the government of Kazakhstan ready for such a turn of events?*

It became clear at a certain stage that the conditions laid down by the Russian side were unacceptable to us. If we accepted them, they would be followed by even harsher terms.

Yes, we made calculations on all the scenarios. Russia has, of course, every right to determine its financial policy to suit its political and other considerations, including the demands of the moment. As for whether we have made preparations for leaving the ruble zone or not — We foresaw this turn of events, and we worked on a conceptual groundwork in that area. Today we'll simply need to elaborate certain normative acts. I would like to assure you that we will try to minimize the losses connected with this forced transition to the new currency.

*Some people lay this charge against you that by following the lead of the Russian economic policy, you ended up in a blind alley...*

If we proceed from facts rather than emotions, the conclusion will be quite different. I have spoken more than once about the degree of interconnectedness between the economies of our countries. These factors cannot be ignored in implementing reforms — whether political or economic. For our part we were conscientiously trying to preserve normal partnership links. We also kept hoping that, despite the actions of certain Russian forces, we would arrive at mutually acceptable solutions. Judge for yourselves. We agreed to coordinate our actions in the sphere of economic reform and our policies on financing, credits, taxes, and customs. We had bilateral and multilateral agreements on the setting up of the ruble zone and of a banking and customs

union; there were also structures founded on direct links. All of this did not simply mean that we followed Russia's lead – there was also coordination of actions and, let me stress that again, compliance with agreements and obligations. I am still confident that following those agreements would be of great use to all.

I won't go into all the details of our relations. I'm sure that all things will fall in place in the course of time. Apparently Russia protected its own financial interests in taking things to a rupture. But can all things be measured against the ruble? And what are we to do about purely human relationships, about centuries-old good-neighborly relations which, I'm sure, will never be ruptured?

*Do you feel sorry that your efforts to consolidate the CIS have been wasted?*

Efforts to bring peoples and states closer together will never be wasted. On this, my position is immutable. It's an accomplished fact that Kazakhstan has left the ruble zone. But it does not in any way cancel the prospects for political, economic, and cultural relations between our states. After all, we have not lost the chance of establishing in the future relations of the type to be found, say, among the states of the European Commonwealth.

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## LET'S NOT SPLIT INTO "OURS" AND "THEIRS"

*Will the republic get out of the crisis?  
Will the CIS become a real commonwealth?  
What are the dangers of dual citizenship?  
These are the issues which Nursultan Na-  
zarbayev is pondering on.*

*Mr. President, in a recent speech you referred to 1994 as a breakpoint year for Kazakhstan that will see a turn for the better. However, the beginning of this year has been marked by rocketing prices, inflation, and a drop in the rate of exchange of the tenge. What do you rely on as you speak of the upcoming stabilization of the economy – concrete calculations, some soothing reports about the course of economic reform, or your intuition as a politician?*

My confidence that the present year will become a breakpoint in the development of Kazakhstan is not a prophecy based on an insight. It is mostly based on actual changes for the better achieved in the course of economic reform. Despite numerous difficulties, shortcomings, and even failures, reforms are proceeding apace and producing tangible results. The main thing here is that the structure of the economy is changing while the economy is in motion. Last year, despite the overall drop in industrial production, three-fourths of all the enterprises managed to find a way out of the maze of the crisis and achieved a growth in the physical volume of production. In most cases that was achieved

through learning to produce new commodities: ferromanganese, electrically welded pipes, welding electrodes, dozens of types of equipment, chemical products, construction and building materials, television sets, refrigerators and vacuum cleaners, audio and video systems. These are merely some of the examples, the most characteristic ones. To these must be added dozens of other products. We have even started production of Kazakhstani cars, albeit in small lots.

So if production is curtailed of weapons, in which the Soviet Union used to trade, or of some other commodities for which there is no demand due to absence of consumers or poor quality, we have no great regrets. We will pay attention to and support those people who, working for the good of Kazakhstan, consistently restructure production and adjust to the market conditions.

Of course, this does not mean yet that we already have a mixed economy. But making even this step in less than two years is a major achievement for Kazakhstan, where the public did not dare think just a short while ago that we would be able to produce complicated, electronics-based machinery, and where even the people of the older generation (unlike, say, in the Baltic states) had no notion of what private property was.

As for inflation and a certain fall in the rate of exchange of the tenge, we anticipated all this. It would be naive to expect that we could establish a hard currency from the start. The same is happening to the ruble and to the currencies of other CIS countries.

*You are always saying that sovereignty is not a goal in itself, that the main thing is to improve the people's standard of living. Tell us, Mr. President, didn't you feel sorry even once that the government of Kazakhstan rejected Russia's "bondage-like terms" and decided to leave the ruble zone?*

In signing certain international agreements, any state assumes certain obligations with regard to the other side. In this

way it delegates a part of its sovereignty to this other country, so to speak. Many terms, including what you call “bondage-like” ones, can be accepted if they bring well-being and prosperity to the country, if they help it to introduce new technologies, and so on. If it were, say, Japan, then we might forego some of our principles in the name of the people. But Russia is going through some hard times itself, and it will hardly be able to take into account Kazakhstan’s interests. The terms formulated by Alexander Shokhin proved unacceptable to us. He openly asked us to leave the ruble zone. And we knew that that was done on IMF recommendation. In short, we hold no grudge against Russia. In the final analysis, each country is free to solve its financial problems in its own way.

In the end the countries of the Commonwealth will have to adopt a supranational currency that will be valid throughout the CIS. It would be highly desirable if this happened soon, not in 30 years’ time, as in Western Europe.

*Mr. President, right now the “Russian problem” is getting more acute in the republic...*

Let me tell you right out: This problem is artificially exacerbated.

Let me say from the start that I reject the concept of the “Russian-speaking population.” Who isn’t a Russian speaker in Kazakhstan? All Kazakhstan, 99 percent of Kazakhs included, speaks Russian. If we accept this term, we will willy-nilly apply it to members of more than a hundred nationalities living in Kazakhstan – Germans, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Greeks, Koreans, Dungans, and others. The context in which this term is usually used nowadays in no way reflects their national interests.

The Kazakh language is alleged to be ousting Russian, above all in the system of education. But is that really so? At present Russian is the language of education for 270,000 students at higher educational establishments, which accounts for

78 percent of their overall number. More than 57 percent of schoolchildren in Kazakhstan are being taught in Russian only, although Kazakh is the republic's state language. Please understand me: This constitutional norm was not introduced on formal grounds only but primarily because the language of the Kazakhs ended up on the brink of extinction in their own homeland. It is the duty of the state and our duty as human beings not to let this happen.

Before we start talking of migration, let us make a short excursus into the history of this issue. The point is that for various reasons – historical, political, and social – the ancient land of the Kazakhs has always been the destination of various peoples, mostly from the European part of Russia.

Runaways appeared in our land as early as the times of Ivan the Terrible and of Peter the Great. Later migration became Russia's state policy intended to create a convenient bridgehead for military and economic penetration in the East. The very first mass wave of migration brought here peasants from all ends of Russia – victims of redistribution of land and Cossacks called upon to protect the borders of the Empire. It was in those years that the first "Cossack lines" – Uralskaya, Sibirskaya, Gorkaya – appeared on Kazakh land. The second significant wave of Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Polish migrants was caused by Stolypin's land reform and the desire to bring our lands, too, into this comprehensive redistribution. More than two million migrated to Kazakhstan in those years. Finally, masses of volunteers flooded Kazakhstan in recent times in connection with the development of the virgin lands and "construction sites of the century." This was the third and the most massive stage in migration to Kazakhstan. It was at that time that the demographic situation took shape which has, on the whole, continued to this day.

Naturally, people came here with different aims and intentions. The migrants of the first waves did their best to take possession of land and cultivate it, whereas last wave migrants came

here with the single, purely practical, purpose of earning some money and returning to their native land. It is also natural that for deported peoples a return to their homeland was the ultimate aim. But, regardless of who came here and in what way, the Kazakh nation with its traditional qualities of openness, hospitality, and good-neighborly spirit, played the greatest – or in any case not the smallest – role in the fact that Kazakhstan became a home for all of them. What are Kazakhs to be blamed for, then, if one third of them died during the forced collectivization, and they ended up being in the minority in their own land?

We should also mention the fact that most people who came to Kazakhstan felt themselves to be “top dogs,” for the whole of the Soviet Union (for which read “Russia”) was their home. With the disintegration of the vast country, these stereotypes began to change. Naturally, many of these people began to feel that they were now abroad. The feeling that they came to our land for a brief period only began to revive, and a desire to return to their homeland grew. But has this fact, so understandable in light of all our upheavals, become a mass, avalanche-like phenomenon? Let me cite some data on this score, data that are not at all classified. Last year, more than 200,000 Russians left Kazakhstan. This is a lot, of course, and a great loss for Kazakhstan. But we must also point out something else: Migration flows in both directions never ended. Even in the “prosperous” 1980s, between 80,000 and 100,000 annually left Kazakhstan, and a slightly larger number came. Last year, too, nearly 160,000 Russians moved to Kazakhstan to settle here permanently. Let me stress this: They were Russians! Only 60,000 of these came from regions which, putting it mildly, are not distinguished for stability. We should also take into account the fact that after Kazakhstan formed armed forces of its own, a great many servicemen left Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan’s army is not great, so naturally the officers left the republic along with their units.

It would be completely unjustifiable to speak of a vast flow

of refugees from Kazakhstan, unless, of course, one does so on purpose. There are no refugees at all, there's just freedom of choice of permanent domicile for everyone. They are two different things. We receive those who come to us quite openly. The amendments to the law on citizenship which I, using my additional powers, recently introduced are connected precisely with simplifying the procedure for acquiring citizenship for members of the families of Kazakhstani citizens, and not only for them, when they move to Kazakhstan.

I am not saying, of course, that there are no problems in this area, especially problems connected with abuse of power by officials – who incidentally forget all about their national sentiments when they take bribes (a Kazakh will take money from a Kazakh and a Russian from a Russian). Russian citizens also know about things like that, I guess.

I am extremely worried about Germans leaving the republic. More Germans left Kazakhstan than did Russians. I understand the feelings of people who wish to return to their historical homeland, the more so that most of them came to Kazakhstan against their will. However, in my talks with German leaders I always raise the issue of expanding German presence in Kazakhstani business. We have enough land. All you have to do is work, bring up children, and make the life of your family prosperous. Is dual citizenship really necessary under these conditions? You are asking me what dangers such citizenship is fraught with for Kazakhstan. It is not for the Kazakhs that there is danger here! Multinational Kazakhstani society mustn't be split into parts. There mustn't be "ours" and "theirs."

I have suggested a simple and realistic way out of this situation: Let a person moving into Russia freely receive Russian citizenship. If you come to live in Kazakhstan, you can receive Kazakhstani citizenship. It would be even better to introduce in the CIS a universal ID that would enable people to live where they

like regardless of citizenship. Then the issue of “dual citizenship” will disappear of itself.

*How is the CIS situation shaping up today? Do you still believe that this is a promising structure?*

I have never thought it to be without promise, otherwise I would not have put forward so many initiatives to promote integration of our states — economic integration above all. Our last meeting in Ashgabat has confirmed that the further we drift apart, the greater will be our need for integration.

I believe that we have signed enough documents regulating work and mutual cooperation within the CIS framework to last us until the end of the century, and that it is time today to fill this work with concrete content, undoing, slowly but meticulously, the knots of contradictions that have been tied in the last two years, in most cases quite artificially.

I don't know, there may be people who are not satisfied with talk of a unified economic space, but I have proposed on numerous occasions to all neighbors to lift all customs barriers and open borders. Please, let us sign a treaty.

*In the past, when officials of the two countries failed to reach an agreement on some issues, you and Yeltsin would interfere, and the problems would be resolved. Recently, Yeltsin has not, it seems, been “playing up to” Kazakhstan with any particular zeal. Would one be justified in thinking that there has been a cooling off in their relations?*

I am surprised at your question, although I can guess why you have arrived at this assumption. On one occasion Boris Yeltsin expressed regret that our governments, ministries and departments, with their clumsy handling of economic problems, place us in an awkward situation. And he was right in this. After all, there have been so many meetings, negotiations, and agreements! Last year, there were six meetings on the issue of the ruble zone alone! And still we haven't arrived at a positive solu-

tion. And the heads of state somehow ended up the guilty party, as it were. In general, officials failed to solve anything even after our meetings at the highest level, when we arrived at a common position on many issues.

Besides, the economy increasingly lives according to the rules of the market rather than directives from above.

We are constantly in contact, discussing a wide range of problems. It's just that the press has ceased to print reports on, say, a telephone conversation between presidents on some issue.

*Can we say, in connection with the fall of the ruble zone, that complications have set in in Russian-Kazakhstani relations?*

I wouldn't draw this conclusion. It has already been reported that we have concluded an accord with Russia on clearance of payments in the fuel and energy complex. Neither of us owes anything to the other party. Russia and Kazakhstan have an equal interest in strict compliance with obligations under our accords. There are other mutually advantageous solutions, too: Accords on military cooperation and joint space projects are also in preparation right now.

Premier Chernomyrdin's visit to Kazakhstan was also fruitful. As for talk of the ruble zone, it has been relegated to the past already.

*A few words about Russian-Kazakhstani relations in the sphere of military cooperation. The situation is quite clear: If Kazakhstan and Russia do not sign a treaty of military-political cooperation and documents on joint use of former strategic facilities, both sides will be the losers, as Russia will lose its bases for scientific and military tests, while for Kazakhstan these testing grounds will become a heavy load, since it cannot handle these problems on its own. Is Kazakhstan ready to make serious compromises in order to preserve the functioning, unique military-technical complexes?*

Compromise presupposes mutual rather than unilateral concessions. Kazakhstan has often stated its readiness to solve its problems with Russia on mutually advantageous terms.

Of course, the existing military complexes have a vast scientific and technological potential. And we will preserve it, either on parity terms with Russia or on our own. It must be taken into account, however, that the testing grounds and the Baikonur space-vehicle launching site in Kazakhstan occupy vast territories, roughly the size of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and the former GDR taken together, or more than 13 million hectares of land artificially withdrawn from the economy. It is easy to understand the people's attitude to these facilities, which as often as not pose lethal danger.

You know that fuel in the Proton carrier rocket contains the highly toxic component called heptyl, which belongs to the first danger category. After launching, the discarded parts of the rocket containing this heptyl simply drop from the sky to the ground as a sort of gift – far from a Christmas one – for the locals. It is yet to be calculated how large the territory polluted with this toxic substance is.

*Aren't you concerned over the fact that during his visit to the CIS President Clinton met all the "nuclear" presidents except the Kazakhstani one?*

Our negotiations with Clinton still lie ahead. In the nearest future I will pay an official visit to the United States at the invitation of the President of the United States. And I am not overly concerned over this fact for the simple reason that I discussed in detail the issues of CIS nuclear weapons with Albert Gore during his visit to Kazakhstan. We discussed, among other things, the substance of Clinton's negotiations in Moscow. Besides, as early as last December our parliament ratified, without any outside pressure, the decision to join the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. And it was these issues

that the United States President discussed with Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. There was no need for Kazakhstan to be present at this meeting.

In conclusion I would like to wish all Russian citizens, all readers and journalists of Komsomolskaya pravda happiness, prosperity, and health. I wish you could always be objective-minded and inform the public in a balanced and considerate manner of the way people live all over the world, including our country, the Republic of Kazakhstan.

INTERVIEW GRANTED TO THE NEWSPAPER  
KOMсомOLSKAYA PRAVDA,  
FEBRUARY 9, 1994

**Meeting  
with the Staff and Students of  
M.V.Lomonosov Moscow  
State University**

MOSCOW, 29 MARCH, 1994

**Nursultan A. Nazarbayev:** Great thanks for inviting me to Moscow State University. I received your invitation a long time ago, and so this meeting was included in the program of my official visit.

I have come here to express my desire that our links forged in the past should not be lost but should on the contrary be strengthened in every way. Moreover, the documents we signed yesterday bear evidence that we have solved all issues concerning our cooperation, including the setting up of joint ventures, financial-industrial groups, and the possibility for both sides to acquire shares and property in both countries.

It is a great honor for me to be here. This university is the alma mater of all science in the former Soviet Union. Kazakhstan will never forget what it owes you, as the present-day elite of the top executives and scientists of Kazakhstan was brought up precisely here in this university.

Now is the time of promotion for your university's alumni, for 30-35-year-old people who are now managing practically all of Kazakhstan's business. I believe that they will soon come to power in Kazakhstan. That is why neither the Kazakh people nor all of Kazakhstani citizens nor our state will ever forget this great

help. It has just been mentioned that some 400 of our young people are now studying at the university. We want this figure to grow rather than diminish. So I would like to invite you, Viktor Antonovich, to come to us with a delegation from the university to conclude an agreement and solve all questions arising out of it.

Present here are Galym Abilsiitov, deputy prime minister and an alumnus of your university, a Doctor of Technological Sciences – you know him; also Deputy Prime Minister T.T.Zhukeyev; our Ambassador to Moscow T.A.Mansurov; and the ministers of education, of foreign affairs, and culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan. We have come here as a group to talk to you and to answer your questions.

I would first like to inform you of the negotiations that took place yesterday and of the documents we signed. I believe that, following the treaty of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance concluded earlier, the documents we signed are not only a new step in our unification. I am convinced that they will serve as an example that will show all countries what kind of relations should be built. You are well aware of my integration policies. Whatever the media may write on this score, I want you to know that I will never change in this respect, because that is the way I was brought up. On the other hand, I must have been lucky in that all my life I have been involved with economics; the last six years I was a member of the government of the USSR, whose members understood better than anyone else to what extent the country's economy was integrated.

That is why the development of the CIS, giving the CIS a new lease of life and leading it out of the state in which it now is, is today a most vital task. It's a disgrace that states that are members of the same Commonwealth and even of the same defense council wage war on each other. There mustn't be any such states in the Commonwealth. In general, acceptance of a new state in any commonwealth is a matter for expert evaluation: Is it worthy of such acceptance? Just try and enter the West European com-

monwealth. And over here, some states sign 30 documents out of 400, others 100, while still others are present as mere associate members, even. The whole world is laughing at us. I understand that not all colleagues will support me, but I express my own thoughts. I would like to dwell on them in greater detail somewhat later.

During my talks here in Moscow in the course of my first official visit to the Russian Federation, 23 inter-state and intergovernmental treaties and accords were signed yesterday. I only want to tell you about the major ones. A large number of the documents signed concerns the deepening of our economic integration. President Boris Yeltsin and I signed five documents. At the heads of state level, a treaty between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on military cooperation was signed, and also a treaty on further deepening of integration and economic cooperation. Then there is the memorandum on the basic principles of solving issues connected with citizenship – I will speak of it later. Next, accords between our states on the basic principles and terms of using the Baikonur space-vehicle launching site – I think that the whole world watched our progress on this. Fifth, there's the agreement on the strategic nuclear forces temporarily based on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

As far as economic issues are concerned, special note must be made of the agreement concerning the setting up of financial-industrial groups, joint ventures, and trading houses not just in the capitals but also on the regional level. A number of consecutive measures are also envisioned to create the conditions for free trade, free movement of capital and labor, and stage-by-stage formation of a unified customs space of the two states. I raised the issue of such procedures being extended to all [CIS] countries, but it didn't work out that way. So somebody has to begin this at the bilateral level. We assumed an obligation to maintain the stability of the exchange rate of our national currencies, the ruble and the tenge. All obstacles are eliminated in the way of exchange

of currencies by individual citizens and transfer of funds, pensions, and grants. The governments of the two countries must regulate within a two-month period relations in the sphere of financial clearance and currency credits. The path is open to joint investment in production in the interests of the two states, with investors endowed with equal rights. The methods of further development of mutually advantageous relations and of scientific and technological cooperation between the defense industries of our two countries have been defined. For some reason, more than 40 defense plants in Kazakhstan were singled out [in the past] to produce equipment for nuclear submarines. What is to be done now? Should new plants be built for the Russian Navy in Russia, while there are such plants already in existence in the steppes of Kazakhstan? During my visit, acceptable solutions were found for such difficult issues as the use of the unique Baikonur space-vehicle launching site, the status of strategic nuclear forces as a whole, and the military-technical cooperation between the two countries.

On Baikonur. The testing ground and the technological facilities of the space-vehicle launching site of the town of Leninsk, which form the integrated scientific-technological and social complex Baikonur, is leased to Russia for 20 years. The governments of our countries will in the nearest future work out mechanisms for guaranteeing the constitutional rights of the citizens of the republic of Kazakhstan living in Leninsk (half of the 100,000 residents of Leninsk are Kazakhs and the other half, Russians). Recently, a delegation from US Defense Department came on a visit there, and the Americans said that there was no other complex like that in the whole world. To save the complex, created by all of us, from disintegrating and to make it work for the good of all of us, the main problem had to be solved without political scheming. So I am telling you here and now that we have solved that problem. We have agreed that a special representative of the President of Kazakhstan will be sent to the Baikonur space-veh-

cle launching site to supervise cooperation there. Problems connected with supplies of foodstuffs, water, power, and transport will have to be solved there. The Russian side will compensate for the losses and expenditures sustained by Kazakhstan in connection with the maintenance and exploitation of Baikonur in recent years.

Next comes the treaty on military and military-technical Cooperation. To insure a reliable joint defense within the common military-strategic space, Russia and Kazakhstan signed accords on the status of the strategic nuclear forces temporarily stationed on our republic's territory. The defense ministers of both countries will sign agreements on the issues of joint planning and use of armed forces in the interests of mutual security. In actual fact, a unified military space is being created. Problems involved in supplies of military equipment and prices for military hardware delivered by both sides to each other and in their cooperation, as well as in financing the field facilities of the Central Bank of Russia, have been settled, and our approaches to the training of military specialists and officers have been coordinated.

I handed over to President Boris Yeltsin as head of the depository state the document on the Republic of Kazakhstan joining the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Russia welcomed this step on the part of Kazakhstan, believing it to be an important contribution to consolidating global stability. The governments have been given a month to work out the procedure and terms of the functioning of military testing grounds. You know that practically all of them were in Kazakhstan, where the appropriate material basis was created.

We also signed a memorandum on the basic principles of solving issues involved in the citizenship and legal status of citizens permanently living on the territories of the two states. The memorandum establishes a simplified procedure for obtaining citizenship by the residents of the two states and provides guarantees for their travel without visas, registration or any duties.

Guarantees are envisioned for the possession, use and disposal of property by citizens of either of the two states living on the territory of the other state. In general, citizens of one state living on the territory of another will be guaranteed equal rights with citizens of the latter, and they will be able to serve in the armed forces of both states on contract. To implement this principle, the heads of state will prepare within a month an agreement to that effect.

A package of documents has been adopted on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and a basic agreement has been signed on cooperation between the two countries in the spheres of culture, science, and education, envisioning that festivals dedicated to one state will be held in the other state, attended by prominent figures in culture, the arts, business, and science. These festivals will be different from what they used to be: They will be conducted in a businesslike spirit and involve intellectuals, young people, and workers in the field of the arts of our two states.

Other documents should also be mentioned, including in particular the consular convention and agreements on mutual assistance in the customs and air communications area. To coordinate and secure the realization of all the agreements and protocols we have signed, a permanent Russian-Kazakhstani commission is set up headed by deputy prime ministers who will alternate chairing the sittings, which will be held by turns in Moscow and Almaty and report on the implementation of the treaties we have concluded.

The next question which you will certainly ask me, and on which I feel bound to share my thoughts with you concerns the future of our Commonwealth and the way I see it. Very serious problems have arisen in connection with the disintegration of a united state. Collapses like this inevitably entail all these things that are happening now. It is terrible that thousands have already killed each other, while millions go without a roof over their head, having become refugees. There is uncertainty, and there is the

problem of ethnic Russians who ended up in 15 different states. There is also the problem of a million Kazakhs left on Russian territory. There are other problems, too, and we must clearly see the actual state of affairs. Some people say one thing, others another, but it should be admitted that no one knows the truth in the last instance, so to speak. If an appropriate commission were to be set up, it would be able to say where the root of these problems lies. But we can see it as it is: The root lies in the disintegration of the state and in the ousting of Kazakhstan from the integral ruble space. You know my positions. We did all that we could, we ratified the appropriate agreement in parliament – but it didn't work out. Our people see what goes on in Tajikistan and in the Caucasus. That is why the politicians' task today is to ease these worries of the people through political decisions. We must give people the freedom to live where they want to live, without scaring them by putting up citizenship barriers, like – you will receive citizenship in 510 years. Even relatives and close friends cannot visit with each other.

I believe that in Western Europe politicians surge ahead in the matter of unification while the peoples lag behind. With us it's the contrary: The peoples want unification while the politicians lag behind.

How do I visualize the future of the space that was once a single state? Now, under the new conditions of independence, recognition of equal rights of all, and respect for the sovereignty and independence of each state, we might set up an entirely novel union. I would call it the *Eurasian* – not Euro-Asiatic! – *Union*. This Eurasian Union might be united on the following principles:

- the formation of supranational bodies to coordinate economic, defense, and foreign policies;
- a Council of Heads of State and a Council of Heads of Governments to discuss strategic issues and adopt final decisions;
- a common parliament to coordinate legislation, in place

of an assembly that does not impose any obligations on anyone. After all, there is the European parliament, so what are we afraid of? Everybody seems to fear the word “union.” We know that there’s the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance, and [CIS] presidents have signed documents on the Economic Union, although for three years we have been unable to adopt this decision because of this word “union.” In other words, if we began direct elections to parliament, it would be able to solve issues effectively. Decisions of this parliament would have to be discussed in the parliaments of all the states, and endorsed as changes in the legislation;

- the Council of Defense Ministers: the setting up a real defense complex;

- the Council of Foreign Ministers to coordinate foreign policy;

- the Inter-state Executive Secretariat. Not a coordinating one as now, which does little but collect papers and keep sending telegrams where we should come, where we should gather, but a real Inter-state Executive Committee of the Eurasian Union functioning on a permanent basis, appointed by heads of state and comprising representatives of all the members of the Commonwealth. That executive committee must be given the status of an observer in the United Nations and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Each member state must have a State Committee for EAU affairs, concerned exclusively with these affairs;

- next come issues of citizenship: the introduction of a common ID or common citizenship for all member states of the EAU. The notion of “foreigner” must not extend to EAU citizens traveling within the confines of the Union;

- the economy: assumption of mandatory joint coordinated programs for the implementation of economic reforms. The reforms may vary, but their direction must be identical; coordination will only be to everybody’s advantage. Direct

links between enterprises, the setting up of joint financial-industrial groups and joint ventures. The establishment through the EAU parliament of a legal basis for the interaction of economic agents;

– introduction of a supranational currency, after the model of the ECU, in order to avoid creating difficulties for the people. Let every state have a currency of its own, but the rates of exchange will determine the quality of each state's work. At present, though, insurmountable barriers have been created to impede the movement of commodities and mutual clearance;

– the setting up of an integrated information bureau of the Executive Secretariat of the EAU. Information must not be unfriendly – an agreement must be signed within the EAU on this issue;

– the Council for Education, Culture, and Science;

– the formation of a coordinated educational policy by the states of the Union;

– protection and realization of the rights of ethnic minorities;

– membership in the EAU does not preclude any bilateral relations with third countries. The main principle here is: equality and respect for the sovereignty and independence of states, for the rights of individual and the individuality of each state. Only countries that recognize these principles must be admitted to the EAU. As for those who do not accept them or are not yet ready to comply with them, we will work with them on the basis of bilateral agreements. Naturally, special conditions are created for the member-states of this Union, conditions that countries which are not members of the Union are deprived of. New members to be admitted to the Union by decision of expert commissions. Those who are not yet ready will have to wait.

I realize that what I am saying here is not approved by my colleagues the presidents. "Another Nazarbayev initiative," they'll say. This doesn't affect me. No "old Union" is thereby revived, no empire is advancing. If you want proof – here is the head of

the Republic of Kazakhstan officially invited to Moscow, to Russia, just like any other head of state. What is it but a recognition of fraternity and friendship?

Kazakhstan's attitude to Russia is exactly the same; Kazakhstan will in general always gratefully remember that everything that Kazakhstan now has – its economic potential, its scientific and technological basis, its culture, everything that we Kazakhs have become in these years – we owe all of it to Russia and the Russian people. Not to say this or forget this – well, I don't know what to call it. What price the feeling of gratitude, then? We must all get rid of this habit, which has taken root in recent years, of blaming all transgressions on Russia. As far as the System is concerned, Russia must have suffered from it more than anyone else. If we build our relations on this basis, I think we must enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century together.

If other states are unable to accept what I'm saying here, Kazakhstan is ready to build its relations with Russia on this basis bilaterally. I am not pursuing any political goals in saying this. As an objectively minded person, I know precisely that the well-being of Kazakhstan, of all people of many nationalities living in Kazakhstan, the well-being of the Kazakh people, their prospects and strategy lie in unification only. And when they talk of languages, etc., I'm convinced that losing the Russian language for a Kazakh is the same as going back a hundred years. Through what language will these states and these peoples enter the world of Science, the world of Culture? Through English? But you will have to start studying it thoroughly in the kindergarten already. I don't know when that is going to happen. I regard myself as a realist, I stand with my both feet on the earth, and that is why I reason like this.

I would like to stop here, so that you might have more time to ask me questions.

**Academician Shemyakin:** *Believe me, we are concerned over the fate of Kazakhstan as much as we are concerned over*

*the fate of Russia. What is your assessment of the latest elections, from this standpoint? We can't find out anything.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** One hundred and seventy-seven deputies have been elected, as against 360 in the previous parliament. You know the conditions under which the previous elections of 1989 were held. In these last elections, 37 parties and movements took part for the first time in the history of Kazakhstan. Of the deputies that have been elected, 52 put their candidacies forward themselves. The rest were nominated by movements and organizations at their congresses and plenary sessions. There was a novel feature that we introduced, something that no one else has: the state list. That is, I as the president proposed a list of two persons from each region, 21 regions in all counting the capital, which comes to 42 persons. The whole region voted for them, not just one electoral district but several. There were no problems with this; there were three or four candidates in each region, none of this two candidates for two seats business. Those who collected more votes were elected.

What's the idea of such a list? First, it is not the same to me how the parliament will be elected, whether representatives of all the peoples of Kazakhstan will get into parliament. I am speaking right out on this problem. We would all of us like to have representatives of the intelligentsia get in there, because the people listen to them; we would like prominent lawyers to get in there, to write laws; also prominent economists, to handle problems of the economy. I mean people who would otherwise never be elected – representatives of Chechens (there are Chechens living in Kazakhstan), representatives of Udmurts, Germans, and other peoples.

Recently I visited the United States, last week I was in the United Kingdom and Spain. No one asked me any questions about this. Only our Russian correspondents asked them. What I say on these occasions is this: Democracies in those countries are 150-200 years old. They crossed huge mountain ridges to reach

this level. And we are asked to become democrats in a mere two years, and this at a time when the people don't understand the gist of the question even. The people decided at first that democracy is chaos, a chance to do what they please.

In actual fact democracy is strict compliance with laws and punishment for failure to comply with the laws of the state. That is why we have a democratic regime of our own; we have a path of our own. Thank God we are moving in this direction. The main criterion during the elections was the law adopted by the parliament. This law was strictly complied with in Kazakhstan. Not one article of that law was violated.

**A.M Cherepashchuk, director of the Moscow State University Astronomic Institute:** *Esteemed Nursultan Abishevich, I would like to thank you, on my own behalf and on behalf of my colleagues, for your political and human wisdom. I would like to thank you for the kind words you have said about the scientists of Moscow and of Moscow University, and for your promise to help us in the matter of the status of the Almaty high-altitude observatory. This observatory has existed for more than 40 years, and all these 40 years we have collaborated with Kazakh astronomers, with the Astrophysics Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan. I'd like to stress that we would like to go on collaborating with Kazakh scientists in the future as well.*

**S.S.Grigoryan, director of the Institute of Mechanics of Moscow State University:** *Highly esteemed Nursultan Abishevich! I believe that your fine speech has found a hundred percent response in this audience. Speaking for oneself, I am deeply grateful for the ideas that you have expressed here.*

*I have this question to ask. Your concept of creating a Union out of the fragments of our country — what is the attitude to it of other presidents, if anything is known about it? Especially of Boris Yeltsin.*

**Nursultan A. Nazarbayev:** Unless the mass media lets

us down, we will know the day after tomorrow. I am speaking about this for the first time here. I want to stress again: I talked this over with Boris Nikolayevich in general terms. But, if you remember, he spoke of this in his state-of-the-union address to the Federal Assembly. He spoke of the strengthening of the CIS in broad terms. He says the same things in his memorandum to us, the heads of the CIS. The idea of creating a closer union is in the air, I believe. Not all politicians accept this idea, perhaps, but you will agree that the people do accept it. That is why I don't know what their attitude will be, nor do I want to hurt any presidents' feelings. Let them understand that my idea of the EAU is helping to achieve that goal. Today major industries are everywhere collapsing — who benefits from this? We must rise above all this bickering and pay more attention to the people who live like beggars. We must really think about these things. Only then will we follow the right path. That's why I'm speaking about this.

**Yury Zinchenko, president of the Moscow State University Student Union:** *Mr. President, thank you very much for your speech. You have cleared up many questions which the students and staff of our university were asking themselves. We would like to ask you to see to it that, whenever the presidents of the former Union meet, there should be talk not only of the integrated military-strategic space but also of an integrated educational and scientific space. That is the space which will help us survive and preserve our intellectual elite and advance into the future despite competition among neighboring states. Since you act as the initiator of progressive ideas in the CIS, we had this idea that you might, if possible, initiate the setting up of an inter-state fund for the support and development of Moscow University, considering the interethnic status of our university in which representatives of practically all the republics of the former USSR study. The university's difficult economic situation might be improved through inter-state cooperation. If your republic's financial resources permit it, we would like to ask you to provide per-*

*sonal grants for students from your republic studying here. That would be a sign of your attention and a kind of motivation for them. We have 20 departments, and if there were 20 grants, one for each department, for representatives of Kazakhstan, that would be a great help and great motivation for study and research. We would also like to ask you to work out, within the CIS frame, integrated policies on the issues affecting young people and education. These must also be given top priority, for they determine the future of our states.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I accept all your suggestions. My proposals for the setting up of a new organization of our Union include the development of a unified educational policy on the territory of the Union – if only we could create it. I will propose without fail to set up a fund for the support of Moscow State University in which representatives of all the republics study, receiving the best education in the world. Second, I intend to establish personal grants for students not only of Moscow State University but also of other higher educational establishments in Moscow. Apart from this, we are sending 250 students to study at various educational establishments of the world and of Moscow and Leningrad with the support of Kazakhstan. These will be called presidential grants.

To conclude, I would like to say that you have speeded up my proposals. I would like your university and Kazakh State University, which has the same status as yours, to have more than just an agreement between universities. It would be a good idea to found a club for young politicians with members from both universities, which could develop into a common club for young politicians of Kazakhstan and Russia, in order that future generations might be brought closer together. If you accept this proposal, we will send a special delegation here which will conclude the agreement with you. At state level, I will endeavor to guarantee support from Kazakhstan, and I will ask the leaders of Russia to do the same.

**Professor Blokhintsev of the Institute of Nuclear Physics of Moscow State University:** *Mr. President, I'm sure that if the leaders of other republics of the former Soviet Union, including Russia, shared your views on the relations between the republics, the history of our state in the past three years would have been different. Let me ask you a question in connection with the program that you have outlined. First, will it be published anywhere? It is desirable that as many people as possible, including here in Russia, might study this program. Second: Its realization will take a long time. In what way can and should it be started?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** As I said, I outlined it here for the first time. I believe it will appear in the mass media. I guess I'm doing right, speaking of this for the first time precisely in Moscow. Because Russia plays first fiddle in all integration undertakings. A great deal depends on the support of Russia. I will talk to some of my colleagues, the presidents of the other states. We will discuss them with my closest associates back home. I believe I will do right if I later send them for discussion not only to the heads of state but also to parliaments that are now elected in many states. Together with the President of Russia we will push this matter ahead.

I'd like to request you to ask me all kinds of questions, even those that will be inconvenient for me. I must openly answer all questions that you have close to your heart. Let us clear them up now, that they might not arise later.

**Professor Ushakov, Director of the Museum of Geography of Moscow University:** *Mr. President, what you have said here really finds an echo in the heart of everybody present here. We understand very well that the prosperity of the nation lies in its education, science, and culture. But there's the question of financing. What about funding of science and culture in Kazakhstan? We would like to know your attitude toward education and science as a whole.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Kazakhstan is not an island or something. Everything that has happened or is happening in all the [former Soviet] countries is happening in Kazakhstan, too. We have the same unpleasant things, the same problems and cares in higher education and science. And still we must realize, despite all these difficulties, that if we let our scientific potential slide, if we do not support the scientists, there will indeed be no future for us. That was why we extended state support to the Academy of Sciences, to our academicians, to provide normal conditions for their work. Next in line come doctors and candidates of sciences working at academy institutes and higher educational establishments. We are thinking of ways to make their life and work normal. As far as education is concerned, we embodied in the constitution the provision that state educational establishments must educate the people free of charge. Just as the leaders of Russia, we are constantly thinking about all this.

**S.G.Ter-Minasova, Dean of the Foreign Languages Department:** *I don't like politics and politicians. I came here only because the rector of the university asked all the deans of the departments to come here and meet you. I must say that you are the first politician whose every word I accept. And I will probably revise my view of politics. Thank you very much indeed. As a linguist, I would like to express my gratitude for the kind words you said about the Russian language. I attend many international forums, and I hear plenty of silly things said about the Russian language in Eastern Europe. Language is the people and their culture. Language is everything that a given nation has. I would like to propose that we introduce here Kazakh as a foreign language, as a symbol of our friendship and equality. You study Russian, and we here at the Foreign Language Department are ready to work out a program for the study of Kazakh as a foreign language.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I would say, let them study Kazakh in Kazakhstan.

**S.G.Ter-Minasova:** *But they teach English and French here, not in England or France. I would like this to be a sign of our appreciation.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Thank you. I recently read in a certain psychiatrist's work: As soon as a person decides to practice politics, as soon as he starts fighting for power, he's our patient, he says.

**M.Bashimov, a graduate student of Moscow State University:** *I'm taking a post-graduate course at the History Department. I've been with this university for eight years. I would like to express the same view as other scholars here: We are very glad to have you here at Moscow University. I also support the view that a common scientific space should develop between Moscow and Kazakhstan State Universities. That would do us a lot of good in the future.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** My eldest daughter graduated from the History Department of the Moscow State University and defended her thesis here. So I have a personal bond with your university.

**Pro-rector V.T.Trofimov:** *I would like to ask you a question which probably has no great bearing on politics. I would like to hear a direct answer: What is your attitude toward geological prospecting in Kazakhstan? Why am I asking this question? Let me explain: I'm a geologist. Here in Russia we often hear, in particular from Gaidar, that geologists have made too many discoveries already and they shouldn't be getting any more money. I exchanged letters with the minister for geology and I know a few things about financing in Kazakhstan. I would like to have a direct answer, if I may.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I do not agree with Gaidar. He probably says these things because he has never worked in industrial production; as a metallurgical engineer, I know what working in industry means. Whether the geologists have made a

great many discoveries or not, unless we invest funds in geological surveys, the industries of the whole former Soviet Union will stop completely. That is why we hesitated whether we should keep the ministry for geology or liquidate it. In the end, we restored it and handed the entire business of protecting natural deposits over to it. No one is going to dig for anything anywhere without its permission. Industrial geological prospecting is also done under its auspices. Of course, money is as scarce with us as with everybody else. But the oil industry, the gas industry, and non-ferrous metallurgy all invest money for geological prospecting done by the ministry for geology. I believe that this is a promising area.

**Professor Medvedev, Dean of the School of Medicine of Moscow University:** *Mr. President, whenever one starts some new undertaking and wishes to do it at a high standard, ones hears accusations like this: Aren't you training specialists for the West? If they are that good, they say, they will all leave. You have mentioned that you have provided 250 grants for your best undergraduates and graduate students, including for study abroad. Don't you have the problem of brain drain? What is your attitude to this problem, and what measures do you take to make talented people continue to work for the good of your republic?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** We do not have brain drain on the scale that is happening here. But I would like to say the following in this connection. Kazakhstan is vast, its riches are enormous, and the population is just 17 million. So whenever someone leaves (they call them Russian speakers, and I say that we are all Russian speakers. We should say: a Russian, a Kazakh, a French person, not use this newfangled phrase, "Russian speakers." All Kazakhs are Russian speakers), whenever someone leaves, each such departure disturbs me. I myself come from an iron and steel works, for 17 years I smelted pig iron. That is why I believe the departure of qualified workers completely unacceptable for the economy and for our state as a whole. Just let us get

our breath, and we'll be inviting 100,000 specialists annually in two or three years.

We will sign a contract with students who are sent for training here in Russia; according to that contract, they will have to return and pay back what we spent on their education.

**A student of Moscow State University:** *Some media carried an item about the capital of Kazakhstan being moved to Akmola by the year 2000. Is that true? And if it is, what is the reason for that?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Any state that has become independent must think about the position of its capital. It is best for the capital to be in the center of the state. In the times of the Soviet Union, in the times of a unified state, there were no problems. Almaty is in the easternmost dead end, 300 km away from the border with China. That is point one. Point two: The city is surrounded by eternal snow – there's snow there in winter and in summer. It is squeezed between two valleys, and the ecological situation in Almaty is extremely tense. One doesn't notice this in summer, but in winter it is very tense indeed. Then there is earthquake danger. Each square meter of housing costs ten times more than usual because of the danger of 9-10 point earthquakes. Second, the population of Kazakhstan is mixed, it belongs to different nationalities, and it is mostly settled in the center of the republic. And the unrest is greatest precisely here. According to Machiavelli's theory of state rule, the capital must be transferred to a place where unrest among the people is greatest. So my idea is to let the people know that we are going to protect their rights. But this idea has not yet matured, and debate is still going on in society. This problem is far from simple. It involves great expenditure. In the past, Nikita Khrushchev wanted to make Akmola the capital of Virgin Lands. There's everything there. There's a palace that stands empty, and two youth palaces seating 1.5 thousand each. There are administrative buildings. The city lies on a plain, the air is clean. A new state, a new elite, a new intelligen-

tsia must be created in a new place. We have this idea, but the question has not yet been decided in principle.

**Professor Sokolov, Dean of the Geology Department of Moscow State University:** *I would like to express our gratitude for inviting us to this meeting. This is a very useful meeting. Among all the spaces that you have mentioned, there's also a space that is called the geological space. The geological spaces of Kazakhstan and Russia are indivisible. This common space was consolidated and developed through the activities of geologists of Russia and Kazakhstan. Our university, and in particular our Geological Department, has worked in Kazakhstan a long, long time. I am very pleased to note that you supported our work in Kazakhstan. We will continue our research. As a reminder of this, I would like to give you this modest book devoted to 40 years work of our expedition in Kazakhstan. There are Kazakh geologists here as well.*

*In conclusion, I would like to recite a poem by Abai Kunanbayev, the outstanding Enlightener of Kazakhstan. This year marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, and next year will see the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary since his birth. These lines are addressed to young people of course. And we must always remember them.*

*I scorned knowledge, an empty youth,  
I saw its worth, but I followed a different path  
I have matured, but learning escaped me.  
Too late my reason aspired toward it.  
Who is to blame that I've been left with nothing?  
Had I studied since childhood, I'd be different now.  
If it is at all possible, send your young people to study here.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Thank you. How hard it is to translate Abai into Russian! I studied Kazakh at school, from the first form to the tenth, and I have a very good command of it. We are learning all our life how profound Abai's poetry is. But there aren't any good translations, and the people don't know what

profound philosophy and wisdom underlie Abai's poetry, especially for the young people. What kind of person to be, and what kind of person not to be. A great deal has been written about this, but Abai has a special approach of his own. He is a remarkable person. Next year, 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Abai will be marked. A festive edition of translations of Abai's poetry into Russian is being prepared now, and well-known Russian poets help us to translate his poems into Russian. I look through all the translations, and see how difficult it is to convey the actual meaning. These words can only be said in Kazakh. After all, there are Russian words that can't be translated in any way.

You've read a remarkably good translation there!

**Academician Khristiansen, head of a department of the Institute of Nuclear Physics of Moscow State University:** *Esteemed Nursultan Abishevich, I would like to express my admiration for the words that you said at the very beginning. You said there would be no problems for future joint projects by Russian and Kazakh scientists on the territory of Kazakhstan. That is extremely important for science. We have good links with the National Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan and with the Institute of High Energy Physics. This institute has always taken an active part in various studies in the field of super-high energy space rays. An extremely fascinating hypothesis is emerging now: It is quite possible that space rays are generated by the so-called space strings whose existence is connected with a new type of particles. This is a fascinating area of high energy physics. Astrophysics, cosmology, and high energy physics are all closely interwoven here. So this system will be built in Kazakhstan. We have very close contacts with the Institute for High Energy Physics and with the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan. The system is highly extended in space: SHAL100, area 100 square kilometers. We propose to extend this system to obtain better statistics. New technologies are used here, special fiber optics, computers. This will be an extremely important development in the applica-*

*tion of new technologies. The Institute of High Energy Physics is an equal partner. It experiences difficulties with starting research and experimental design projects. I have a request for helping them over this. We have blueprints for building an International Center; it has been endorsed by the government of Russia, and in a month's time we will come to Kazakhstan. We are asking for your permission to turn to you for help, if there is need of that.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I've been there and seen it all. They say that that geographical point is the most suitable one on the whole territory of the former Soviet Union. Present here is your alumnus Abilsitov, vice premier and minister for new technologies; he supervises the Academy of Sciences. We have concluded an agreement, and I am ready to offer assistance in all that I can do, for this is in the common interest of all science.

**A graduate student of Moscow State University:** *My field is agricultural ecology. What is your attitude toward withdrawing from agricultural use all land that suffered during the development of virgin lands? In pursuing economic profit, people often forget about the fragility of our nature, and it hurts me to watch it. The statistics on agricultural use of land show that 85 percent of North Kazakhstan Region are plow-lands now. This seems to be too much.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** To celebrate the exploits of the people who developed virgin lands, we held a festival for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Development of Virgin Lands in February this year. We must respect these people, it's their youth, their hopes, their energy. We must respect our history. On the whole, the development of virgin lands made a contribution to the country's grain reserves, but not one year was profitable in terms of yield per hectare: Up to five billion rubles was written off every five-year period. I worked on this myself in recent years, when we had to write off the losses. There are 25 million hectares sown

with cereals, overall plow-land totals 40 million hectares, plus 42 million sheep, 12 million cattle, 1.5 million horses, 500,000 camels, and so on. Twenty-five million hectares plow-land represent former pastures that yielded the cheapest mutton. In the last 10 years, we have been reaping 22-25 million tonnes of grain.

Kazakhstan needs just 6.5 million tonnes. We must cultivate 9-10 million hectares; in the previous years the sown area decreased by 3.5-4 million hectares. But we have some problems, like collective and state farms with 5,000 people in each, real cities. What are we to do with all these people? I tell them, take land and cattle, feed yourselves. But the people are not accustomed to living like that. There are two problems: We have to give the people land and jobs; of the 2,500 collective farms, 600 have no prospect of survival, so we are thinking of what we can do about it. It's a very big problem.

## **SPEECH AT THE MOSCOW MAYOR'S OFFICE**

MARCH 29, 1994

It gives me great pleasure to meet you here, to meet the leadership of the city and representatives of business circles and of Moscow's intelligentsia. In audiences like this, the atmosphere is usually unconstrained, people freely exchange opinions, and the exchange usually gives rise to quite a few interesting ideas. I hope that today, too, we will be able to discuss in an informal atmosphere some problems concerning cooperation between our states in the name of progress. The more so that Kazakhstan and Russia have close links, and the purpose of my current visit is to deepen and expand cooperation between our countries and raise them to a new level.

I would like you to regard my brief speech as an introduction to a free exchange of opinions on issues of mutual interest. I would like to find out your vision of the situation and hear your views.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a young, dynamically developing state which sets itself the goal of further development of democracy, economic reform, transition to market relations, and the speediest incorporation in the world community. The reforms in our country proceed in several directions.

The tasks being solved in the course of economic reform in both our countries are in principle the same: mass privatization, transfer of state property into private hands, freedom of enterprise, encouragement of producers and of competition, filling the

market with goods, and increasing the people's prosperity. The laws of the republic have created the legal basis for the transition to the market economy and encouragement of business. This legislation is continually improved in accordance with the norms of international law and our obligations as members of a number of international economic and financial organizations.

In the last two years some 9,000 enterprises have been privatized in industry, agriculture, trade, community services, and utilities.

Let me quote a few figures. Sixty-five national and state shareholder companies operate in Kazakhstan; these include holding companies combining 1,500 enterprises, the flower of our industrial and agrarian complexes. There are also 120 commercial banks, 60 stock exchanges, just as many insurance and leasing companies, two major auditing centers, and more than a thousand joint ventures.

We intend to rely mostly on our own resources in the realization of the program for democratic reform. It is clear, though, that we will not be able to achieve the desired result without bringing in considerable foreign investment, advanced technology, and state-of-the-art methods of management. That is why additional measures are taken to create the necessary conditions for attracting foreign investment.

You know full well that foreign investments bring with them, apart from everything else, new technologies and a system of retraining of workers. This is especially important for the finances and marketing in those branches to which no attention was paid in Soviet economy. In that economy, the volume of production always equaled the volume of sales, there was just one distributor, the state, and all funding had just one source, the state budget.

We are also trying to use foreign investment, in the belief that in the final analysis it will help consolidate the country's independence. For example, the privatization of the Almaty To-

bacco Plant according to a special program brought the republic more than \$300 million. Right now companies and firms from Turkey, Israel, Germany, Japan, the United States, Austria, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom are working on the implementation of investment and other projects.

I do not doubt that Russian entrepreneurs will also find a vast sphere of action and great chances to apply their potential in our country. We therefore attach great importance to cooperation with Moscow, which has a great economic, scientific, and intellectual potential.

Taking into account the existing situation, a new law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Foreign Investment" has been drafted; the National Agency for Foreign Investment has been set up at the Ministry for the Economy, whose task is expert evaluation of projects in question and the holding of competitions and tenders.

Along with economic reform, political reform is also vigorously implemented in the republic. Political reform largely facilitates the stabilization of the domestic situation, it is clearly oriented toward maintaining civic peace and national harmony. Various parties and public associations, which represent practically the whole spectrum of the population's interests, have been set up and are gathering momentum.

After the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which incorporates the foundations of our country's state and social system, an urgent need has arisen for asserting in practical terms the principle of division of state government into the legislative, executive, and legal branches, with their clearly delineated purviews and clearly defined powers.

Early this month we conducted free elections to Kazakhstan's first professional parliament; representatives of 37 parties and public associations, along with representatives of the territories, fought over seats in it. This is an indubitable success of our young democracy. At present our agenda includes the passing of

a law to determine the tasks, the sphere of action, and the organizational forms of the work of the republic's highest legislative body.

A constitutional law has been drafted on the cabinet of ministers which defines the status and purview of the highest executive organ and the procedures for its interaction with republican and local government offices. It also defines the personal responsibility of government members for the state of affairs within their purview, and envisages the possibility of dismissal of the cabinet as a whole and of its individual members.

The passing of these legislative acts, along with the law "On Local Representative and Executive Bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan," will complete legislative work on the formation of such bodies from top to bottom.

We envisage measures for further consolidation and improvement of the legal system. The purpose of the recently endorsed state program for legal reform is the regulation of all spheres of life, with the citizens' rights and freedoms, the consolidation of democratic institutions, and the development of market relations and private enterprise regarded as top priorities.

This is my fourth official visit abroad in March, and I won't conceal from you that the situation in the CIS evokes the most sincere interest in the west. Speaking for oneself, I have always been and still am a convinced adherent of preserving and further developing the historically established relations of friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding that have for centuries held together the peoples of our republics. Kazakhstan consistently defends the idea of economic integration of CIS member countries and stresses the need for maintaining our cooperation.

There mustn't be, however, any encroachment on our sovereignty or interference in each other's internal affairs, and the right of each people to determine the social system in its own country must be respected. Membership in the CIS provides the political and socioeconomic conditions for the development of

democracy in each country and enables them to jointly work out and implement measures to suppress armed conflicts in various areas of the Commonwealth, whoever their instigators might be.

Undoubtedly, integration processes imply a transformation of our relations, which must be adjusted to the new political and historical realities, and a search for new paths of development and cooperation.

Each of the former Soviet republics made its choice in favor of some variant or other of state structure with due consideration for the political and economic structure and national features. This choice must naturally be respected, and no one should question its correctness. There mustn't be any talk even of armed interference in the affairs of sovereign states. The time is long gone when some country might declare that its vital interests extended to the territory of a given state, or talk of some other country beginning to leave its sphere of influence.

These throwbacks to imperial thinking have absolutely no prospects now. History cannot be turned back. The efforts to maintain collective security, to effect a stage-by-stage formation of an economic union and consolidate the peace-making potential, all of which I keep talking about all the time, have nothing to do with any intention to restore the past.

I believe that the CIS is necessary in the interests of securing a normal life for all people, guaranteeing their social protection, preventing forced migration, creating the conditions for economic stabilization, and the realization of large-scale programs of development.

In terms of foreign policy, Kazakhstan naturally develops its traditional links with the republics of Central Asia – Uzbekistan, Kirgizia, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. However, we attach the greatest importance to our links with Russia which, I firmly believe, must be the focus of our countries' integration. We have an interest in political and economic reforms being consistently and successfully implemented in your country. Their success will ultimately

have a favorable impact on the situation throughout the CIS.

I will hardly err if I say that many problems facing Kazakhstan and Russia are identical. We both have inherited from the USSR a disintegrating economy, neglected utility services, a population steadily growing indigent, and a whole series of social and ethnic problems. To this should be added the breakup of our economic and intellectual links which have evolved over many years, a breakup which has inflicted – let's face it – enormous losses on all of us. We are all of us living through a far from simple transitional period, although we hope that it will not drag out too long. We have all the premises for preventing that.

I have always believed, and still believe, that a close economic union could only be to both our countries' advantage. Historically, we simply won't be able to develop without helping each other, we are simply destined to develop the way we do. Common economies, common historical-cultural traditions and, finally, a common mentality – these are the key factors which cement our relations. Russia is our major trading partner in terms of fuel and energy resources and products of the machine-building, chemical, timber, woodworking, and pulp-and-paper industries.

For its part, Kazakhstan supplies Russia with ferrous and non-ferrous ores, oil, coal, electric power, grain, and a great deal else.

That was the context of our talks with the Russian side yesterday, talks with the results of which I am quite satisfied. The heads of state have signed such highly important documents as the agreement on military cooperation, accords on Baikonur, and a memorandum on the basic principles of handling issues connected with granting citizenship in our countries. A number of urgent problems has been realized in the documents signed by the heads of governments.

Our peoples have for centuries lived together, and strengthening our good-neighboring relations is in the interest of the peo-

ple; it is not subject to mere considerations of the passing moment. Erecting frontiers between our countries and imposing restrictions on the movements of people would be an unpardonable mistake.

Lying at the juncture of two civilizations, Kazakhstan has since ancient times absorbed many values of East and West. As for the great Russian culture, it has long become part and parcel of each Kazakhstani's mentality.

We always bear in mind that thousands of Kazakhstani citizens received their diplomas at Russian higher educational establishments famous for their extremely high level of education and democratic traditions.

Our grateful people will ever remember the names of many selfless intellectuals who worked in Kazakhstan and spared no effort to spread knowledge, bring up the national intelligentsia, and strengthen friendship between our peoples.

We are now living in the times of great changes and serious trials. Not only our business relations but also our spiritual links are being tested now. But we have something that survived and grew stronger in the most difficult situations — friendship between the peoples. We in Kazakhstan never forget this sacred feeling. What other name can we find for the centuries-old relations between our peoples which have merged to form a strong alloy — the fate not only of our fathers and grandfathers but, I'm quite convinced, of our sons and grandsons.

It has long been proved that the economy is the mind, while culture is the soul of man. Without either of these components, our life would never have its full value.

**Meeting  
Between the President of the Republic  
of Kazakhstan Nursultan A. Nazarbayev  
and Mass Media Executives  
at the Central House of Journalists**

MOSCOW, 30 MARCH 1994

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** This is the first official visit, at the invitation of President Yeltsin, by the head of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation. This is a sign of our entering the phase of completely new, equal relations between sovereign, friendly neighboring states. I think I will now briefly inform you about the results of my visit and of our negotiations. I can say that I'm on the whole satisfied with the work we have done and the documents that we have signed. In all, 23 documents have been signed, five of them by the presidents, and 18, by the heads of governments and ministers. Let me briefly outline the major points that may be of interest to you and the public. The two presidents have signed a set of documents concerning further deepening of economic integration between the two countries. Special note must be made here of the "Treaty on Further Deepening of Integration and Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation," as well as the agreement on the setting up of joint financial-industrial groups and joint ventures, and on the opening of trading houses – not only in the capitals but also in the regions which had in the

past had economic ties and contacts. In other words, we are moving toward creating a unified economic space.

We gave our governments instructions to conclude a customs agreement that will prevent the emergence of barriers impeding the movement of commodities and labor; and we assumed an obligation to back the stability of both the ruble and of Kazakhstan's national currency. Obstacles are lifted in the way of exchange of currencies by citizens and the transfer of funds, grants, and so on. I believe that this will be of importance for the population at large and for the economy. The governments are given one month in which to regulate relations in the area of payments and clearance, and in currency and credit relations, which will open the way to joint investment in production for the benefit of the two states. Investors on both sides are given equal rights.

Ways of further development of mutually advantageous links and of scientific and technological cooperation are being determined, and the possibility emerges for buying and possessing shares of enterprises on both sides.

During the visit, work which had lasted more than a year was completed and solutions were found for two major issues. In March last year, Boris Yeltsin and I gave instructions to our governments to prepare agreements on military cooperation and on the Baikonur space-vehicle launching site. Baikonur includes proving grounds, technological facilities, and the infrastructure of the city of Leninsk: All these cannot be separated from each other, forming as they do the integrated scientific-technological and social complex Baikonur. It is leased to Russia for 20 years at the annual cost of \$115 million. In the nearest future the government will work out the mechanisms for securing the constitutional rights of the residents of Leninsk. The difficulty lay in the fact that, according to our Constitution, Leninsk is without question a city of Kazakhstan; of the 100,000 inhabiting it, 60,000 are citizens of Kazakhstan and the rest, citizens of Russia, mostly servicemen. How are we to find an acceptable solution? Our gov-

ernments' experts worked on this until 6:30 the day before yesterday, when we at last signed the documents.

The solution we've found is this: The head of the city administration will be appointed by decrees of the two presidents, and a special representative of the government of Kazakhstan will be stationed at the Baikonur space-vehicle launching site. The Russian side will compensate for Kazakhstan's losses and expenditures relating to its maintenance, as well as for its ecological impact on the area.

Another important document that we signed concerned military-technological cooperation. In order to guarantee reliable joint defense within the framework of their military-strategic alliance, Russia and Kazakhstan have concluded an agreement on the status of the strategic nuclear forces that are temporarily based on our territory. The two countries' defense ministries will sign an agreement on joint planning and use of armed forces in the interests of the two states' common security. And my idea is that there should be a common defense space, the more so that both Russia and Kazakhstan are signatories of the agreement on collective defense. We must start practical work in this area, especially considering that the spare parts for the military hardware come from the Russian side; more than 40 defense enterprises operating in Kazakhstan must work in the interests of the Russian army. Supplies and spare parts from the Kazakhstani side must also be provided at the domestic prices of each of our states. For example, in Soviet times Kazakhstan produced everything that was necessary for submarines, including torpedoes. Russia's Navy cannot therefore do without them, and we are also interested in these enterprises working.

The next important document is the memorandum on the basic principles of solving problems involved in citizenship and the legal status of the citizens of the two states. We know that this issue is now heatedly debated by the public. I can't say that this issue is nonexistent. It concerns not only Russian people who are

our citizens – it also concerns millions of Kazakhs who live on the territory of Russia in precisely the same situation. I won't talk now in detail of the principles of the Constitution of Kazakhstan which insures the equality of all people in law and in practice. But the gist of the matter is that people who used to live in a single state, within the same borders, ended up living in 15 different states. Naturally, such cataclysms are inevitable in the disintegration of such a huge empire. People see what is happening in Tajikistan and in the Caucasus, and it would be surprising if the people were not worried about their fate and their future. The task of our policy is to ease the worries and to give the people some confidence in the future. Kazakhstan is a multinational state. When we were handing out the coupons to all citizens during mass privatization, we counted 16,200,000 citizens; of these, eight million are Kazakhs, and five million Russians. These are the two ethnic groups that form the basis of the people and of our state. These are followed, in order of diminishing numbers, by Germans (one million, or about five percent), Ukrainians and Belarussians (one million in all), then Uigurs, Koreans, Uzbeks, and others. That's the ethnic composition. In all, more than 100 nationalities live in Kazakhstan. That is why, when the dual citizenship problem is raised, I as a politician and president would be ready to speak out and try to talk our parliament into introducing such citizenship, if I were convinced that this would lift the tension. But then almost half the population will have two passports and the rest, only one; it is as if we were flying in a plane and one half of the passengers had parachutes while the other didn't. This one fact would cause mistrust, whatever I might do; we would make the situation worse than before. That is why our memorandum sets out the agreement between our foreign ministries and heads of state. Boris Yeltsin and I discussed this issue and decided to accept a special principle in the relations between Kazakhstan and Russia. Whenever a person moves to the Russian territory from Kazakhstan, he must be given every opportunity to sell

his home, transfer his savings, all that he owns, and then go and get his citizenship. If he returns for some reason to Kazakhstan, he is immediately granted citizenship. All this stems from the present chaotic state of the economy. We conduct regular surveys and we see that a great part of the 200,000 who left Kazakhstan last year (the statistics may be not quite accurate) come from cities that were not even on the map; for example, 27,000 left Kurchatov – you know that it is a closed testing ground – and those were mostly officers and their families. A town like Priozersk wasn't on the map, either; 25,000 left that town alone, and these again were mostly servicemen and their families. You may remember the town of Emba; this town, too, was a closed testing ground. So if we count it all, we find that 200,000 left Kazakhstan and 160,000 arrived there, including 24,000 Russians from Russia. The rest came from troubled areas. So there are no grounds for any talk about large-scale migrations. In the good old 1980s, 100,000 would arrive each year [in Kazakhstan] and the same number would move out, and that did not cause any controversy. In general, we mustn't rely on the percentages. Here in Moscow there are also people wishing to leave the country lining up in front of embassies. We have agreed that the procedure for acquiring citizenship will be absolutely simplified on both sides. Let a person decide for himself where he is going to live. When worries over this point are eased, other problems will also be lifted, I believe. That's the kind of agreement that we signed. The agreement also envisions the possibility of our citizens serving in the armed forces on contract both in Kazakhstan and in Russia.

We have also endorsed a package of documents on peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as there remains a major scientific complex on the territory of the former Semipalatinsk testing ground. It should also be used. Fundamental agreements have been signed on cooperation between the two countries in the field of culture, science, and education, in accordance with which festivals de-

voted to one state will be conducted in the other, attended by cultural figures, artists, scientists, and businessmen. Other documents have also been signed, in particular a consular agreement, and also agreements on mutual assistance in customs affairs, air communications, and others. For all this to be more than agreements on paper (which is so often the case), we have set up a joint Russian-Kazakhstani economic commission and appointed deputy prime ministers who will sit every quarter in Almaty and Moscow and report to the presidents and governments on the implementation of these decisions. I believe that all these things follow from the agreement on friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance, which we signed on 25 May, 1992. To implement these fundamental accords ratified by our parliaments, we signed these documents which make Russia and Kazakhstan strategic partners and, I believe, bring the 21<sup>st</sup> century closer – in order that we might enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century together. I would like to stop here and answer your questions.

**Alexander S. Potapov, editor in chief of the newspaper**

**Trud:** *Mr. President, I and most of my colleagues see you as the most consistent politician on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and I mean “consistent” in the positive sense. In this connection, we are naturally interested in, and excited over, problems connected with the integrated space and integration processes, both economic and information ones, the latter being particularly important for us. In this connection, the Eurasian Unity (the media is a bit afraid to use the word “union,” and that is quite understandable) – is it the ultimate prospect for the Commonwealth, or is it some sort of additional process?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I had some very interesting meetings at Moscow State University. Then I went to see the Patriarch of All Russia. After that I met representatives of the intelligentsia and cultural workers at the Tretyakov Gallery.

Of course, all this is very disturbing. You may have heard that I expressed it as my personal opinion, lest some of my col-

leagues should say: "Here he is proposing yet another initiative, never gives anyone any rest!" I regard myself as a practical man, and I know the facts of life – I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but I know better than most how thoroughly integrated the economy of the former Soviet Union was, for I was at the time both a member of the government of the USSR and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Kazakhstan. My constant desire for economic integration may have its roots there. No one is speaking about restoring the Soviet Union as it was in the past. With all respect for sovereignty, independence, equality, and partnership, the way we see it throughout the world, the customs barriers that we have constructed must not stand in the way of economic integration and direct links between our economies. I told Boris Yeltsin that 65 brick buildings housing customs posts have been built along the Russian border with Kazakhstan; there aren't any such buildings on the Kazakhstani side. I made a proposal in this connection, saying that we had done away with these border posts on the border with Uzbekistan, in order to set an example for everybody.

The issue of different national currencies, now. What is the problem here? We had problems when the ruble was the only currency: Let's say, one state insisted on a commission to be paid by another. And what's the problem now? Why should we close the borders? Licensing and obtaining export quotas, that can be done at any factory or plant... You see, when Viktor Chernomyrdin and I met at a point between Kokchetav and Omsk, we saw customs officers standing some fifty meters apart on both sides. That means that first one side takes its share and then the other, or maybe they make a deal as to how much they will take off whom. And who gains by all this? Not the states involved, no. I won't cite the example of Europe, where we all go now and see that Europeans have plastic cards which they may or may not produce when they travel from Belgium to France, anyway no one is stopping them, they just live and work. That's why, Mr.

Potapov, let me say once again what I think of all this and why. Because we have approved 400 documents in the two years of our Commonwealth. I keep thinking, Well, why not? Of course, it's fine that we have the Commonwealth, we go visit with each other, we discuss things, we express our views on issues that pile up in between the meetings. All that is fine. And what about the practical side of the question? How do things stand here?

The Commonwealth exists, and in the meantime we drift further and further apart. That is the main thing that worries the people. They see that, in practical terms, nothing comes out of the Commonwealth the way it is now. How can it be that out of 400 documents one state has signed, say, 60, another state, 70, and a third one, say, 150. How are they to be implemented?

That is why I proposed this idea of the Eurasian Union, and it's not a new idea. Let me say once again that these are just my thoughts which I'm trying out now – I don't want to conceal it from you that I want to hear your opinions, maybe you will help me on this. How do I visualize all this? We must form supranational bodies. The Eurasian Union – well, some of my colleagues are afraid of the word 'union,' but there is, after all, the European Union, the Atlantic Alliance, and in September we signed the Economic Union. I waited for six months for this union to start working, but it has yet to do so. Because there aren't any supranational bodies. In order to coordinate economic, foreign, and defense policies, a council of the heads of state must be set up. It should operate as a council of governments rather than consider strategic issues. Why don't we establish, instead of the Assembly, a normal common parliament that would work out laws on bringing the legal codes of our states – say, laws on taxes or customs – closer together. Afterwards, its decisions will be discussed and endorsed by the parliaments of the individual states – and then we can work on the concrete issues. And what is the current Assembly? It just means that we get together, we talk, and we fly apart. But, say, a council of defense ministers must work in or-

der to create a real defense complex. We have set up such a council, but in actual fact there aren't any armed forces, no joint command, no General Staff. The council of foreign ministers ought to coordinate the foreign policies of our states. In general, there must be some sort of coordination, if only in the matter of export of raw materials, like oil and gas. Right now our countries compete with one another when we export something, especially gold and silver. If we are a commonwealth, we must somehow coordinate our policies.

Next point: In order to implement all this, I think we need something different from the Coordinating and Consultative Committee, as we call it now. What can Mr. Korotchenya do? What does he have? He can send us telegrams to say that there will be a meeting on such and such a date; he can send us some papers – but not more than that. That's why I say, what are we afraid of? Why don't we set up an inter-state executive secretariat of the Eurasian Union operating on a permanent basis, appointed and dismissed by the heads of state, and representing all EAU members? That executive secretariat must be granted the status of an observer at the United Nations. If we take this approach, that's the way it's going to be. Each country must have a state committee or ministry for the affairs of this Union that would supervise its work.

The next issue is that of citizenship – the introduction in all the countries of a common ID or of common citizenship on the territory of this Union's member states: The concept of "foreigner" is not extended to their citizens moving from one part of the EAU to another. That would do away with all the problems that have so far accumulated. And Russian must be made the official language of inter-state communication. What other language, if not Russian? English? But that would take too long. Whereas Russian is our wealth, and we mustn't abandon it. Too much has been said on this subject in recent years. Enough is enough!

What do I propose with regard to the economy? One thing

I thought of was mandatory coordination and joint programs for economic reform. Of course, the speed of movement, the methods and paths may vary. But there is a common concept of implementing reform worked out in the world, and, considering Russia's great intellectual potential, this would help all of us. That does not mean that somebody must pay somebody else and implement reforms at someone's expense. In the market economy, what do we have to pay for? We are all of us achieving world price levels now. This will be followed by direct links between enterprises, the setting up of trading houses (something that we have agreed on with Russia) and of mixed financial-industrial groups and joint ventures, the establishment, through parliaments, of legal foundations for the interaction of economic agents, and adoption of a supranational currency. I don't now, maybe this will not be a special kind of money but something like the ECU. Every country has set a value on its assets, but we establish the national currency's rate of exchange in relation to the dollar. Why don't we arrange things in such a way that people may travel from one state to another and exchange their money without any problems? What sovereignty or independence will this encroach on? Why don't we set up an inter-state investment bank? And the next question: the setting up of an integrated information bureau of the executive secretariat, the preservation of a common information space as our states' great cultural value. We must sign a special agreement that this information should not be of unfriendly character, that it should not undermine relations between friendly states.

Next point: We must set up a council on education, culture, and science and on the formation of a coordinated educational policy within the EAU. The rights of ethnic minorities must be protected by a special agreement. Further, membership in the Union must not, in my view, stand in the way of relations with third countries. If anyone wants to leave the Union, that country must give six months notice, and it must be granted that oppor-

tunity. But the fundamental principles must be those of equality, respect for sovereignty, independence, and the rights of the individual. On the other hand, if someone does not accept these principles, they mustn't be forced into that Union. Those who want to unite on these principles – it may be a union of three or four or five or six states, I don't know how many – they need not destroy the Commonwealth, as bilateral links still remain in force.

Each time some state wishes to enter the Union, an expert commission must decide, the way they do it the world over, whether that state is acceptable or not. Certain principles must apparently be endorsed. Point one: compliance with obligations assumed by agreement with other states. Point two: There mustn't be any associate members, each state must have the right of veto, and decisions are either made or they are not made. And if they are made, each state assumes an obligation and complies with it.

These are my ideas, and that is the way I see our future Community. I believe that it would make all of us stronger. We all of us have good relations with the West, we communicate with it and set up joint ventures with people from across the ocean. It seems, though, that no one's hopes for success in that area have so far been justified. And we must therefore help each other preserve the relations which came into being between our peoples and our states for the good of all; I believe that we must achieve this through our policies today.

**Alexander Potapov:** *Russian society is concerned with the same problems as all the rest. There is one more problem that is of great concern not only for the CIS but also for the world community – the problem of the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground, which played such a great role in the former USSR. What is your view of the future of the Semipalatinsk testing ground? I mean, will there be any nuclear explosions there?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Thank you for your question. You are giving me a chance to speak out on a problem that is very painful for us in Kazakhstan. Everybody knows now that

526 nuclear units were exploded there over 40 years, including 87 air blasts and 107 ground explosions. All this was shrouded in secrecy. Only in 1988 and 1989 did we begin to learn something about it. Two hospitals of the Third Department were completely secret, we did not even know the case histories of the patients. But I can tell you one thing: Even now women in Semipalatinsk and nearby districts are afraid to bear children, because the testing ground is next door. And there are no medical devices that would help examine them in time. We know now that there are 500,000 people who were subjected to radiation. And we are now left to face this problem on our own. We discussed the problem of Russia's participation in helping the sufferers, and we met with complete understanding and support from Boris Yeltsin. Over the next two or three months we will finish work on additional documents. As for the testing ground itself, a research facility was organized there, and research is done on the behavior of metals at high temperatures. That is to say, on the problem of safety of nuclear power stations. Moreover, research was done there on man's future flights to the moon. We mustn't destroy such great scientific potential, of course. It must work for the benefit of both Russia and Kazakhstan. That's the way I approach this issue of the whole territory, this whole region, where I walked around on my own two feet, right where the explosions had been carried out. After so many explosions, the surface of the earth turned into gravel. A great deal of plutonium is said to have accumulated there underground, and no one knows what state it is in. Our scientists assume that there is great danger for the future there. We know that decay continues for millions of years. Besides, one nuclear charge has been left there, and it will apparently have to be extracted. I guess you know that this place lies in the very heart of the land of Abai, among beautiful mountainous landscapes. Next year we will mark Abai's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the decision has been adopted to celebrate it throughout the world. We are building some facilities there; we are restoring monuments.

And it so happens that the testing ground covers precisely Abai's homeland. We are making arrangements for a qualified commission to study the issue and determine the extent of the damage. We would like to know what direction we should be working in, and what is the extent of the consequences of the explosions.

That is what I'm trying to arrange now. Western, Russian, and Kazakh experts should all take part in the study and determine the extent of the damage. And there can be no question even of resuming tests there.

**Voice from the audience:** *Thirty billions worth of assets have been taken out of the country...*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Thirty billion – this figure has never come up even. It is all determined by the rent, by the value of the basic assets. In terms of 1984 prices, the assets that are there cost 20 billion. We realize what difficulties Russia is facing, what difficulties we are facing. We are friendly states, we must solve all these problems together. I simply don't want to tell you what is written down in that agreement – if you wish, you can always take it and read it. All issues concerning the use of the space-vehicle launching site have been resolved, as was the issue of compensation for ecological damage and the use of the site between 1991 and now. We have agreed that Kazakhstan owes Russia \$1,250,000,000 from the years when it had the ruble and received technical credits and currency from Russia. This debt cancels what we are owed for what happened there before. I must say that both sides worked so long and so thoroughly on this problem that they ran it into the ground. It was taken into account that Kazakhstan is now taking part in space programs, that it is getting infrastructure for the communications system (Where else would it get satellite communications from?), that Kazakhstan's servicemen are being trained at Russia's military schools, that Kazakhstan's children study in Russia, and the number of Kazakhstan's undergraduates and graduate students

in Russian higher educational establishments is growing rather than diminishing. All this costs money now, and both sides are taking this into account. We arrived at that figure to the satisfaction of both sides. If you're interested in paper-and-pen calculations –

**Igor Golembiovsky, editor in chief of the newspaper *Izvestiya*:** *I would like to ask you several questions. I understand your interest for creating a unified space. But are you interested in the distribution of Russian publications in Kazakhstan? My first question in this connection is: Wouldn't you like as the leader of the republic to set a wonderful example and create a kind of protectionist support for Russian publications? The problem is (and I rely on information from the readers here) that we distribute our paper in Kazakhstan but receive no money for it, as transfer of funds is made difficult. In fact, the editors practice charity. But that is not our intention. We have to buy paper for your readers' benefit. We pay for the printers' services, which are much costlier here where we have to pay for them in rubles; and for all that we get vast losses because of the system that is in distributors' hands. The situation now is that Russian media are less and less distributed in Kazakhstan. This financial burden is too heavy for us. And if you are really interested in Russian newspapers –*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Is it the subscribers who do not pay for the distribution?

**Vladislav Fronin, editor in chief of *Komsomolskaya pravda*:** *Let us be honest, Russian newspapers do not get favorable treatment in Kazakhstan. This has nothing to do with you personally, but the public servants or ministers discharge their duties in a worse manner than — Speaking concretely, there must at least be reduction of the price of distribution, and that is in your power.*

**Igor Golembiovsky:** *It is a question of the policy of commu-*

*nications ministers. They are all of them the same, these ministers, whether in Russia or Ukraine or Kazakhstan. Here is the most important fact about communications ministry's failure to bring the papers to the subscribers: All that we spend on paper, on printer's services, on distribution — all of this amounts to 30 percent of the expenditure, while postal services cost 50 percent. That is why the circulation drops sharply. Kazakhstan is now the only republic, apart from Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia, where we are still hanging on.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Recently I asked this question — why wasn't Literaturnaya gazeta getting through to Kazakhstan anymore, and couldn't we find some possibilities to go on getting this paper. That is why I separate two aspects of this issue. The officials that you mention — well, I guess we can take care of them. That is our problem. And as for the problem of payment— If Moscow papers have to pay more than Kazakhstani papers, this must be adjusted by all means. As for the postal services — I just don't know, maybe the selling price is higher in our country because of this, but that is as it should be. I promise to sort it all out, and if the price is really higher, we must make it the same as for Kazakhstani newspapers. Then again, we won't be able at present to provide more money to support Russian newspapers than we do for Kazakhstani papers. Although, when living standards improve, this won't be a problem. I believe that Kazakhstanis will lose a great deal in all respects if this information doesn't get through to us.

Thank you for this meeting. I would like to conclude this meeting with an expression of my great thanks, and to invite you to our country. We will provide an opportunity for you to visit not only Almaty but also the east, the center, and the north of the country. Problems that have recently been raised by the media were aimed at spoiling relations between Russia and Kazakhstan. True, it would be wrong to say that there aren't any problems at

all. Of course there are problems. A great state has collapsed, a whole empire has collapsed, but both Russia and Kazakhstan have an interest in easing these problems. Our people are suffering as it is all over the whole space that was previously called the Soviet Union. I am against this, and your objective approach to me and to Kazakhstan may help overcome this. We, Russia and Kazakhstan, must set a fine example in our relationships in the post-Soviet period. You must bear in mind that on the issue of the space-vehicle launching site Baikonur and other issues I also have opponents who keep saying that I "sold out," "gave the site away," and so on. In terms of cost, it equals the loss of the Black Sea Fleet by Russia. And I believe that both Russia and Kazakhstan have gained by this: Who would profit if this unique complex ceased to function and went out of commission in a few years? These are my reasons for inviting you to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

**DRAFT PROJECT  
FOR THE FORMATION OF  
THE EURASIAN UNION OF STATES**

JUNE 3, 1994

At present all the CIS countries continue to experience a profound crisis in all spheres of social life – in the economy, politics, ideology, and interethnic relations; socioeconomic tensions are growing. This takes place at a time when the development of the Commonwealth of Independent States is determined by two tendencies. On the one hand, national statehood in these countries continues to develop, and on the other, there is a tendency toward greater integration of the Commonwealth countries.

The CIS plays a positive role as an inter-state alliance in the legal formalization of inter-state relations of the member states. The potential of the CIS has not yet been exhausted. Still, the current structure of the CIS bodies does not permit a full realization of the existing potential for integration. Both the leaders and the peoples of Commonwealth countries are paying attention to this fact.

Previous CIS experiences show the need for a transition to a new level of integration which will guarantee compliance with jointly accepted obligations by all the member states.

International experience shows that any inter-state alliance lives through various stages in its development, new forms of cooperation being added in the course of time. The CIS has sig-

nificant advantages, such as a high level of economic integration, similar social-political structures and the population's mentality, multiethnic populations in most republics, and common historical traditions.

All this points to the need for combining the building of national states with the preservation and development on this basis of inter-state integration processes. The logic of history is such that integration in the world community is only possible through the joint efforts of all Commonwealth countries relying on the powerful integration potential developed over the decades.

CIS mechanisms must be improved, but in the present situation the Commonwealth must not be regarded as the only form of unification. Experience has shown that the CIS countries' further development is now handicapped by the insufficiency of the internal potential of each of them. The development of this internal potential is only possible under the conditions of economic integration of the post-Soviet countries on a new, market-economy basis.

The structures of the unified economic complex which we have inherited continue to erode. The forms of economic links that have outlived their usefulness are withering away, and that is an objective process. At the same time tried and tested technological links which are in keeping with the short- and long-term economic interests of our countries are also withering away.

Market reforms are characterized by universal laws. Not one country can ignore them without falling into economic romanticism. It is advisable to unite the efforts in market-oriented reforms of the economy of the countries of the former Soviet Union on the basis of close economic ties developed over decades.

As world experience shows, successful modernization can be achieved by transitional societies only through their joint efforts. At the same time we see that the continuing attempts to solve this task through the efforts of the individual CIS states act-

ing on their own have yet to meet with success. They will remain unsuccessful until economic integration is realized on new terms. On the other hand, attempted reorientation toward some regional economic alliances in the "far abroad" have clearly proved to be unrealistic.

Lack of policy coordination on prices for exported raw materials has become a serious problem for the Commonwealth, producing a negative impact on the economic situation of these states. On the other hand, it introduces an element of instability in the established world links and forces third countries to take harsh measures. The export of raw materials and of fuel resources is the most important source of our countries' earnings. The need has thus arisen for a unified system of export policies of the CIS countries in the interests of all member states, with provisions for serious sanctions in case of violation by some country of agreed quotas and prices.

An important element in insuring successful market reforms is improvement of national legal codes in the CIS countries. Further modernization is impossible without bringing the legislative bases of economic activity closer together, since existing differences between them become a serious obstacle in the way of integrative processes in the economy.

Taking into account the differences between our countries in the levels of development of market economy, in the democratization of political processes, we propose to establish an additional integrative structure, the Eurasian Union, whose activities would be combined with those of the CIS. In doing so, the member states will take into account the diversity of integration scenarios and differences in the rate, form, and direction of CIS states' development. Thus there is an urgent need for the formation of a new economic order in the CIS. The purpose of that order would be coordination of economic policies and adoption of joint programs for the conduct of economic reform whose implementation would be mandatory for all member states.

The socioeconomic and political crisis occurs in a situation where practically all CIS states have multiethnic populations. As a result, ethnic tensions are growing, which leads not only to increased tensions within the states but also to conflicts between them. This situation undermines the institution itself of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Joint efforts must therefore be made to work out mechanisms for containing, localizing, and extinguishing various types of conflicts.

At present all CIS countries are searching for state structures that would be in keeping with their internal conditions. Experience shows, however, that neither unitary nor federal CIS states can be seen as fully stable.

Economic integration dictates the need for creating political institutions possessing sufficient powers. They must include the functions of regulating mutual relations between states in the spheres of the economy proper, in politics, legislation, ecology, culture, and education.

The time has thus come to eliminate all obstacles in the way of higher-level integration and simultaneously to create instruments for such integration.

At present, the process of disintegration in the sphere of science, culture, and education is taking place. A cultural and educational space that was once a single whole is now fragmented. In this situation the dictum that "science has no borders" proves to be simply untenable. Against the background of current aggravation of socioeconomic difficulties, the exodus of specialists in the spheres of science, culture, and education is sharply increasing, the country's intellectual potential is diminishing, and the level and quality of education are falling. These processes lead not only to the breakup of a formerly integral system but also to isolation from cultural and scientific achievements of world civilization.

At the same time the desire to intensify integration process-

es in the economy and in politics must rely on maintaining and developing coordinated policies in the sphere of culture, education, and science. The tendency toward the internationalization of obtaining new knowledge and applying it in practice must be preserved and consolidated. Integration of studies in science and technology has become an inalienable part of the globalization of industrial activity as a whole.

The isolation of the post-Soviet space from the world cultural and scientific community is fraught with the danger of again falling behind other countries in technology.

One of the key tasks of the new states is insuring their territorial integrity and security. At present the post-Soviet space is a zone of instability and of combinations of conflicts of various types, experiencing at the same time the impact of sources of tension outside the CIS. Protection of external borders and stabilization in conflict areas can only be effected through joint efforts of all the states involved and requires the member states' coordinated approach to defense issues.

The problem of ecological security remains one of the most painful and least solved problems in the CIS. Ecological tensions are caused by a number of factors, including the consequences of nuclear testing, the work of nuclear power stations, pollution of the environment by industrial waste, and degradation of the natural environment as a result of man's economic activity (the drying up of water resources, deforestation, soil erosion, and so on).

These problems are vitally important for practically all CIS countries, the more so that ecological disasters are mostly located in border regions. These problems have a common technological basis and extensive methods of economic activity. Today, not one of these problems can be solved through the efforts of a single state, not even the largest one. The preservation of the environment is a global task requiring major capital

investment and a combination of the efforts of all nations.

Offered for discussion is a draft project for the establishment of an integrative alliance under the tentative name Eurasian Union (EAU).

### EURASIAN UNION (EAU)

The Eurasian Union is a union of independent states aimed at the realization of the member states' national interests and of the available common integrative potential. The EAU is a form of integration of sovereign states whose goal it is to consolidate stability and security and to achieve socioeconomic modernization in the post-Soviet space.

The basis for closer unity of the independent states is determined by their economic interests. EAU political institutions must properly reflect these interests and facilitate economic integration.

#### I. THE PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRATION

The following principles and mechanisms for the formation of the EAU are proposed:

– national referendums or decisions of parliaments on the entry of states in the EAU;

– the signing by member states of a treaty on the setting up of the EAU on the basis of the principles of equality, noninterference in the affairs of each other, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of state borders. The treaty must lay the legal and organizational foundations for deeper integration, with the formation of an economic, currency, and political union as its goal;

– no associated membership is permitted in the EAU;

– decisions are carried in the EAU by the qualified majority

of four-fifths (4/5) of the overall number of member countries.

Independent states join the EAU, if the following preliminary conditions are satisfied:

- mandatory compliance with endorsed inter-state agreements;
- mutual recognition of the existing political institutions of the EAU member countries;
- recognition of territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders;
- rejection of economic, political, and other forms of pressure in inter-state relations;
- cessation of hostilities among member countries.

New members enter the EAU after an expert evaluation is passed on their readiness to enter the EAU and all EAU members vote unanimously on it. Expert evaluations are proposed by an organ formed on parity terms by the states which expressed their readiness to become EAU members.

EAU states may take part in other integrative alliances, including the CIS, on the basis of associated or permanent membership or in the role of an observer.

Every member can leave the EAU, giving notice not later than six months before the decision is made.

It is suggested to form the following supranational bodies: the Council of EAU Heads of State and Heads of Government – the highest organ of EAU political leadership. Each member state chairs the EAU for a period of six months in rotation according to the Cyrillic alphabet.

The highest consultative and advisory body is the EAU Parliament. The Parliament is formed by delegating deputies of the member states' parliaments on the basis of equal representation of each member country or through direct elections. Decisions of the EAU Parliament come into force after their ratification by the parliaments of the EAU states. Ratification must be effected within the period of one month.

The main area of the activity of the EAU Parliament is coordination of the member countries' legislation to insure the development of a unified economic space, protection of the social rights and interests of individuals and of mutual respect for state sovereignty and civil rights within EAU states.

The EAU Parliament creates a common legal basis to regulate the relations between the member countries' economic agents.

The Council of EAU Foreign Ministers, to coordinate the member countries' foreign-policy activities.

The Inter-state Executive Committee of the EAU – an executive and supervisory body functioning on a permanent basis. The head of the Executive Committee – a representative of the member countries – is appointed by the EAU heads of state for a period defined by the heads. The Executive Committee's bodies are formed to include representatives of all the countries.

The EAU as represented by its Executive Committee must receive observer status in a number of major international organizations.

The EAU Executive Committee's Information Bureau. The member countries must assume a special obligation or law not to permit unfriendly statements about the treaty's member states which may damage relations between them.

The council for Education, Culture, and Science. The formation of coordinated policy on education, promotion of cultural and scientific cooperation and exchange, and joint activity on compiling textbooks and manuals.

To achieve a deeper coordination and effectiveness of the activities of the EAU countries, it is deemed advisable to set up in each of them a State Committee (or Ministry) for EAU Affairs.

Regular meetings and consultations on health services, education, labor, employment, culture, combating crime, and so on, by ministers of EAU countries.

Encouraging the activities of non-governmental organiza-

tions in various areas of cooperation in accordance with EAU member countries' national legislation.

The Russian language is the official EAU language, functioning side by side with the languages of legislation in the member nations.

Citizenship. Free movement of citizens within EAU borders requires coordination of external visa policy with regard to third nations. On changing the country of residence within the EAU, an individual automatically receives the other country's membership.

One of the cities at the juncture of Europe and Asia, such as Kazan or Samara, might be proposed as the capital of the EAU.

## II. THE ECONOMY

In order to create a unified economic space within the EAU framework, it is proposed to establish a number of supranational coordinating structures:

– a commission on the economy under the Council of EAU Heads of State to work out the main directions of economic reform within the EAU framework; the commission takes into consideration the interests of the national states and offers its proposals for endorsement by the Council of the EAU Heads of State;

– a commission on the raw materials of the EAU exporter countries to coordinate and endorse the prices and quotas for exported raw materials and fuel and energy resources, an appropriate inter-state agreement to be signed by the member countries. Coordination of policy in the mining and sale of gold and other precious metals;

– a fund for economic and technological cooperation formed with EAU members' contributions. The fund will finance promising science-intensive economic, scientific, and technolog-

ical programs and render assistance in the solution of a wide range of problems, including legal, tax, financial, and ecological issues;

– a commission on inter-state financial-industrial groups and joint ventures;

– an EAU international investment bank;

– an inter-state EAU court of arbitration on economic problems, to resolve conflicts on a legal basis and to impose sanctions;

– a commission on the introduction of a clearance monetary unit (transfer ruble).

### III. SCIENCE, CULTURE, EDUCATION

It is proposed to implement a number of measures to preserve the potential achieved in the previous decades and to enhance integration in this sphere:

– the setting up of common EAU research centers to carry out fundamental research in contemporary knowledge;

– the setting up of an EAU fund for the development of scientific research to unite the scientific collectives from various countries;

– the setting up of a committee on links in the field of culture, science, and education under the Council of the Heads of EAU Governments;

– encouragement of the formation of non-governmental associations in the sphere of culture, education, and science;

– the setting up of a grants fund under the EAU Executive Committee.

### IV. DEFENSE

It is proposed to conclude the following accords within the EAU framework:

– an agreement on joint actions to strengthen the national

Armed Forces of the EAU member countries and to protect EAU external borders.

The EAU will establish a unified defense space to coordinate defense activities:

- the formation of joint peace-making EAU forces to maintain stability and eliminate conflicts within the member countries and between them. The sending of peace-making forces to conflict areas on EAU territory – with the agreement of EAU member states and in accordance with international legal norms;

- the tabling of joint proposals by EAU member countries at international organizations, including the United Nations Security Council, on lending EAU joint contingents the status of a peace-making force;

- the setting up of an inter-state center on problems of nuclear disarmament attended by representatives of international organizations.

All EAU states except Russia maintain their nuclear-free status.

## V. ECOLOGY

The following mechanisms must be formed in the nearest future:

- an ecological fund under the EAU Council of Heads of State, to realize ecological programs within the EAU framework, to be financed by all member states;

- coordination of actions with international organizations to reduce the extent of environmental pollution;

- endorsement of short- and long-term programs for major problems of restoration of the environment and liquidation of the consequences of ecological disasters (the Aral Sea, Chernobyl, the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground);

- the endorsement of an inter-state EAU agreement on storing nuclear waste.

\* \* \*

History is offering us a chance to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a civilized manner. One of the ways to achieve that, in my view, is the realization of the integration potential for the establishment of the Eurasian Union, which will reflect the objective logic of the development of the post-Soviet space and the will of the peoples of the former Soviet Union to achieve integration.

## **SEARCHING FOR WAYS TOWARD A NEW INTEGRATION**

FROM A SPEECH AT A CONFERENCE ON  
“THE EURASIAN SPACE: INTEGRATION POTENTIAL  
AND ITS REALIZATION”

SEPTEMBER 20, 1994

I don't think this conference ought to set itself the task of working out what is now known as “destiny-shaping” decisions. I don't doubt, though, that the exchange of opinions that will take place here and the lessons that each of us will be able to draw from this exchange will help us all to make yet another step forward in understanding the realities of our dynamic, far from simple times and in the search for promising ways of restoring broken links between peoples and times. After all, it has fallen to our lot, not someone else's, to be the eyewitnesses of and participants in global historical and geopolitical events which will change the destinies of peoples and states. It is therefore extremely important to determine the correct vector of development which coincides with the main direction in which human civilization advances and which guarantees progressive development of a whole group of states established in the post-socialist space.

In my view, it is for these states that the idea of forming a Eurasian Commonwealth is of the utmost interest, for it is a question of concentrating efforts to overcome in the shortest possible time the economic crisis, which is inevitable in a transitional peri-

od; to implement political reform; and to alleviate the difficulties that keep arising. By no means everything has been done even in the CIS framework to eliminate all possible obstacles in the way of maintaining and further developing economic cooperation and to get rid of the endless economic and political grudges against each other, as well as of chaos at industrial and agricultural enterprises. This is how it appears, translated into the language of facts: Some 400 documents were adopted in the period of the Commonwealth's existence, but no significant results have been achieved so far, as a number of states reject some of these proposals, interpreting the content of the agreements in their own interests.

Just as important, and in a sense perhaps even more vital, is the fact that the project is oriented toward universal humanist values which at a certain period of time were abandoned in this country. We all of us have a common centuries-old history, traditions of living together, a cultural heritage, and a common human fate. Many thousands of people – a war veteran who liberated the Ukraine, a volunteer from Smolensk Region who came to Kazakhstan to develop virgin lands, an engineer from Belarus who came to Uzbekistan to fulfill some Five-Year Plan at a great construction site, a writer from Georgia who published his books in Moscow — none of them can reconcile themselves to the idea that today we are separated from each other by boundaries and customs, by barriers and walls that the history of our countries has never known. In general, why should we forget the fact that our peoples defended, through their joint efforts, their freedom and independence in the years of the Great Patriotic War; that many outstanding figures in Kazakh culture and science were educated in Russia, the Ukraine, and the Baltic republics; and that in the years of Stalinist deportations the Kazakh people helped as best they could the Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Koreans, Chechens, and many other victims of repression?

We are naturally concerned over the fact that increasing

numbers of specialists in science, culture and education are leaving the republic, which results in the deterioration of the republic's intellectual potential. On the whole, these processes result not only in the breakup of a once integral system but also in isolation from the scientific and cultural achievements of the world civilization. We must maintain and strengthen the process of internationalization of obtaining and practical employment of new knowledge. Integration of scientific and technological research has become an inalienable part of the globalization of industrial activity as a whole.

After all, one must also think of the simple everyday needs of people – their free movement and communication with their near and dear. These are far from secondary problems. They are much more important than the current political situation or the struggle between the different branches of government or the struggle for power. After all, this is one of the most important constituent elements of the task that is of the greatest importance to any right-thinking politician — maintaining the stability of their countries and regions and peace and quiet in the homes of our citizens.

Let me point out at once that neither I nor any other supporter of our states' real integration have any ideas about the revival of the former empire, of the union that we used to have. The independence of our republics has become a real and tangible fact, it has been filled with concrete political meaning and content, it has become part and parcel of our states and peoples. And no one can turn history back.

And still, we mustn't underestimate one very dangerous tendency — the desire of certain forces to restore the USSR, by violent means, if need be. We are against this sort of integration, and we will never permit this turn of events. He who thinks in these terms is again trying to drive us up a blind alley of history. On this path, all we can expect is further escalation of violence, in-

creasing zones of instability and conflicts, and a slower rate of development or even curtailment of reform.

Of course, the draft project is also opposed by people who hold quite different views, and that is only natural. I can say frankly that it is received rather ambiguously even in our republic. In generalized form, all widely divergent opinions fall into three groups. The main group supports integration in the form of the Eurasian Union; the second group also backs it, but with certain limitations. There is, however, yet another position, which appears to me to be conservative; it is represented by the not too numerous political forces which do not believe integration processes to be necessary at present.

I'm not going to enter into debate on this; let me simply say that I respect all opinions and am ready to discuss all proposals. I will be only too glad if they bring us a single step closer toward cooperation and equal partnership for the sake of our countries' and people's prosperity. I'm fully convinced that this idea will inevitably be implemented; there is no alternative to it, and it is destined to win in the future. Its strength stems from the fact that its sources lie at the grassroots level, that it is the product of the moods and aspirations of the people who have lived in the Eurasian space for centuries. It is the people who are the author of the idea, not I. I merely took the initiative in trying to generalize and express it.

Let me note, though, that some of my opponents, who accuse me saying that the idea of Eurasianism is not new and cite historical examples ranging from the Czar's colonial policy to the times of socialism, including Western fascist-type scenarios, ignore the fact that history teaches mankind at least a few things. You cannot take certain frozen fragments just for argument's sake, without any analysis of the modern times, the dynamics of transformations and changes not only in the geopolitical situation but also in the people's world perception and mood.

Let us try and ask the people themselves at some kind of

international referendum about this issue and discuss it in parliament. I am sure that we will find understanding and support among the absolute majority. The more so that, regardless of the place of residence, our peoples have recently suffered so much, they have seen, and still see, more conflicts, blood, and human grief than all the postwar generations taken together. I guess it's time our politicians decided for themselves and made it clear to the people what we are building, a market and free states open to cooperation, or whether we are erecting "iron curtains" within our national boundaries.

I'm sure there aren't any alternatives to global integration, and in the first place in the Eurasian space. This is in the interest of all our peoples and countries. That is the defense against final disintegration and the only guarantee against possible geopolitical disasters and social-political cataclysms.

The whole world aspires these days toward integration, toward combining efforts, and toward reasonable regulation of all affairs. We have before our eyes the experiences of the European Community, of the League of Arab Nations, alliances of Latin American countries and those of the Pacific region, and of many other communities. All of them develop and deepen their relations, they keep looking for, and finding, mutually acceptable solutions, and this is to their advantage both in the world community and on the world market.

We must draw lessons from their history and current practice, and we must realize at last that no country can enter the world community on its own. This can only be achieved through joint efforts, the more so that we have a powerful integrative potential that has evolved over decades. But, let me stress this again, this can only be achieved through joint efforts. We mustn't discount our current economic realities. He who is now trying to find a new identity by switching to more distant and seemingly more promising partners as often as not ends up in failure.

We can now say, without distorting the truth, that even with-

in this brief period after the publication of the draft project for the formation of the Eurasian Union, the effectiveness of Commonwealth institutions has increased. I will be so bold as to say that, in a way, the draft project worked as a catalyst. Let me refer in this connection to the setting up of the Inter-state Economic Committee which Kazakhstan proposed almost in the first days of the existence of the CIS. This is, after all, one of the propositions underlying the EAU which is aimed above all at solving economic problems within the Commonwealth space through creating, among other things, supranational organs to facilitate the implementation of the accords and agreements that we conclude. This is prompted by the need to coordinate economic policy and adopt obligatory joint programs for economic reform.

The sovereignty of each state is inviolable. No one is going to forego it these days. When Europe was going to unite, this fiat was put forward: "Go ahead as far as it is possible within the union mechanisms. But never encroach on the foundations of state sovereignty." Why don't we follow the same principle? Let us make this the union's normative basis and see each other as equal agents of international relations.

The formation of the Central Asian Union can be seen as a stage in the practical implementation of the EAU project. Agreements have been signed, for instance, which guarantee unimpeded solution of citizenship problems and problems in the sale of real estate and its acquisition on the territory of another state, which also eliminates psychological discomfort of people moving from country to country. Problems of socioeconomic, scientific, technological, and cultural cooperation are being solved. Let me note in particular that the documents signed by Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan have all been adopted within the CIS framework and in no way contradict its principles. The doors are therefore open to other states. In a word, regional integration is becoming yet another factor of CIS consolidation and another step toward a higher-order integration.

Moreover, the EAU project is aimed precisely at the development of the intrinsic advantages of the CIS, such as a high level of integration of the economies, of sociopolitical structures and the population's mentality, as well as common historical-cultural traditions. But, even considering all this, I still believe that the draft project is neither the truth in the last instance nor a dogma. It is open to discussion and to new proposals, additions, and comments. Time itself introduces its own amendments. The first layer of EAU, involving the solution of economic problems, is already being implemented.

The second layer is the humanitarian one; it is connected with protection of human rights, with cultural and scientific exchanges and coordination of educational policies, and it is beginning to be implemented in decisions that have already been adopted or are at the preparation stage. In this connection I would like to propose the idea of a Eurasian university, which would solve not only general educational problems but also methodological and even organizational ones.

The third and most difficult aspect is the political one. However, the objective logic of the development of the CIS and the need for increasing coordination of political steps call for putting to work the whole of our potential. I refer above all to guaranteeing the security of CIS space which is under pressure of "hot" conflict zones. The steps now being taken by CIS countries show the correctness of the vector of cooperation that we have chosen to consolidate stability and peace in the post-Soviet space.

After all, we are residents not only of our countries, in territorial or national terms – we are Eurasians in terms of our roots, our history, and attraction. Each of us cannot but be concerned with what is happening in the neighboring countries. Not only because our relatives, friends and acquaintances live there but also because of the feeling of soul-to-soul closeness that lives on in each of us. This inevitably evokes a feeling of pain and common concern over the destinies of people that used to live in a

common human space. We have to do everything in order to fill our policy with human content. In effect, we, the politicians of the post-Soviet times, have a very unusual and absolutely pressing duty to our past and future generations and to ourselves – to transform a recently totalitarian society into a civilized democratic one. Unless we solve it now, it may become an even heavier burden for the future generations. Can we leave this sort of heritage to them? I'm sure that everybody understands and shares my concern, and we will all contribute our share to the realization of the ideas of integration.

## **FOR PEACE AND HARMONY IN OUR COMMON HOME**

SPEECH AT THE FIRST SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY  
OF THE PEOPLES OF KAZAKHSTAN

ALMATY ON 24 MARCH, 1995

For many centuries the Kazakh people had to fight for its independence and sovereignty. Owing to its best qualities, its ability to unite in times of danger, and, not least, its desire to live in peace, harmony and good-neighboring relations with other peoples, it has not disappeared in the torrents of history and, after biding its time for decades, has managed to restore its statehood. Let us give their due to many generations of our forefathers who, despite all the hardships that fell to their lot, were able to secure the future of their people and preserve their language, culture, traditions, and freedom-loving aspirations. In the final analysis, all this led to a revival of Kazakh statehood.

The Kazakh people has stood the test of time, and it has a rich and complicated history. Today, this history must help all the peoples living in Kazakhstan better understand the roots of our unity and rule out any historical reproaches, for, as we look back at our history, we must see the future. Extremely important tasks befall our generation – to preserve our ancestors' heritage, to consolidate the revived statehood, and to ascend to a qualitatively higher level that meets the demands of the civilized world community. Together and singly, we must all of us realize our responsibility for the future of our country. And that means that,

as we remember the past, we must also aspire for the future, live in peace and harmony with other peoples, and respect their culture, traditions, and customs. As Kazakhs say, *bereke basy birlikte* "joining forces is the gateway to happiness." The delegates of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, entrusted to represent the legal interests of 120 nationalities, bear an enormous historical responsibility for the future of each ethnic group and of the whole Kazakhstani people.

The initiative for the establishment of the Assembly comes from the very depth of our society. Considerable preparatory work has been done on the realization of that idea in the republic. Minor assemblies in the various regions were convened, to which the most worthy candidates were elected.

The first session of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan has been convened in order to analyze the path that has been traversed and the ongoing sociopolitical processes, and to determine the optimal ways of the realization of our nationalities policy. To achieve this, a broad dialogue is needed and consultation with you, representatives of the interests of our republic's entire citizenry. We will have to answer the following questions: How are we to maintain and consolidate social stability? How are we to conduct our affairs in the period preceding the next parliamentary elections? How are we to speed up reforming society? The people must know all this not from some dubious sources but from the most competent ones, those that are directly involved in working out and implementing state policies, from the government that is working today together with you.

We have in effect left behind the most difficult part of the road, and we are close to the breakpoint in this crisis situation – we are on the eve of an upturn. But the past, the present and the future are so interwoven and interdependent that it will be very difficult to achieve real positive changes without an assessment of our historical experiences and those of other nations.

ETHNIC PROBLEMS OF THE MODERN WORLD

Human civilization is an endless chain of birth, efflorescence, and departure from the historical arena of peoples and states. Often this process becomes global in character. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone such events occurred at least three times. First, after the First World War, when the disintegration of a number of empires resulted in the formation of sovereign states – Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Finland, and others. The second wave of emerging new states was linked with the national-liberation movement and the collapse of colonialism. At that time, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, some former colonies called for a revision of the existing boundaries and openly stated their readiness to resort to violent means. In this way territorial disputes arose between Somali and Ethiopia, Ghana and Togo, India and Pakistan, Morocco and Algeria, and so on. More than 50 territorial conflicts occurred in Asia, Africa, and Latin America between the end of the Second World War and the 1990s, conflicts in which more than 15 million lost their lives.

Time and tragic experiences have forced the understanding that in a situation of ethnic diversity characteristic of most countries any attempts at setting up state borders along ethnic divisions are fraught with grave danger to the young states' very existence.

Gradually the concept of inviolability of borders and of territorial integrity of independent states prevailed – a concept that is based on commonsense: Despite all its shortcomings, maintaining a territorial status quo is preferable to bloody conflicts. As this approach became established, the nations got a chance to start solving the most vital questions of their development and achieve the first successes. Other countries, unable to leave their mutual claims behind them, exhaust their strength in conflicts, undermine national resources, and at the same time narrow down their possibilities for international cooperation. That is why the

principle of continuity of sovereignty, that is, the view of borders as a given and rejection of their revision by violent means, has no alternatives.

At present the world is living through a third stage, one that is connected with the collapse of the socialist system. The disintegration of the Soviet Union raised the issue of maintaining international stability. It created areas of imbalance in world geopolitics, which resulted in growing instability not only on CIS territory but also beyond its borders.

Each country's right to choose its own future is unquestionable, but the realization of this right must not encroach on the rights and interests of other ethnic groups. The events in Yugoslavia and the tragic conflicts in some areas of post-Soviet space have brought convincing evidence of destructive tendencies fraught with the danger of explosions of immense force. Extreme manifestations of these are large- and small-scale wars flaring up on ethnic and territorial grounds, whether it be in Azerbaijan or Armenia, Bosnia or Tajikistan, Georgia or Moldova.

Ethnic tensions and conflicts of various degrees of intensity are characteristic of all stages in the development of mankind. The present outbreak of conflicts in the post-socialist world was to some extent inevitable. It is linked to the fact that many peoples are now going through a stage of mutual alienation. I am convinced that this spiral of upheavals will bring about, after a certain period of time, stability of a new type: Having separated from each other, the countries and peoples will realize the losses which isolationism entails and get back to the path of integration.

#### LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN

The study and re-interpretation of the nationalities policy conducted in the former USSR appears to me to be of fundamental importance. It would be a profound illusion to believe that the Soviet epoch has sunk into oblivion or that we know it well

enough. It should be acknowledged that our historical notions, especially those at the mass consciousness level, lack objectivity, that they are fragmentary and sifted through a great many filters of vulgar sociology. Hence the extremes in interpretation, ranging from attempts to fill the blank spots with nothing but black paint to idealization of our recent past. Both are equally dangerous for the society that is being revitalized now, for it does little except irritate people, impair their ability to make responsible decisions, and serve as the basis for all sorts of political speculations. Moreover, it would be an error to believe that the introduction of democratic institutions can by itself amend the situation and resolve the problems of ethnic relations.

What was the main historical miscalculation of the previous system? In my view, it lies in the fact that whole peoples were forcefully driven into the Procrustean bed of the totalitarian state, and under the flag of proletarian internationalism, at that. In actual fact this resulted in the spring of national self-awareness being compressed. History has shown once again that, whatever the path of development — capitalist or socialist — chosen by society, the building of a state is inevitably doomed to failure unless institutions for protection and development of national self-awareness are established.

The whole of Soviet history shows evidence of numerous violations of the rights of people and facts of outright genocide. Take the famine of the 1920s and 1930s, when millions of citizens died. The number of Kazakhs was nearly halved, while the Russian and other peoples lost millions of honest toilers, of educated and enterprising people, and the genetic stock of many nations was undermined. Take the mass reprisals and shootings of the best representatives of national culture, science, literature, and social thought. Or take the mass deportations of peoples and liquidation of national state structures.

As a result of badly thought-out economic policy and the realization of the “projects of the century,” a great ecological catas-

trophe enveloped almost the entire territory of Kazakhstan. The activities of the defense departments did considerable damage, too. All this brought Kazakhstan the problem of the Semipalatin-sk nuclear testing ground, the tragedy of the Aral Sea, the damage done by the biological weapons testing grounds on Vozrozhdeniye Island and in Western and Central Kazakhstan. This policy naturally met with resistance, which in some cases erupted in open action in defense of public property and national values. Its ultimate goal was genuine national equality.

The aggravation of conflicts in ethnic relations at the end of the 1980s was the result of many years of oppression of the people's national awareness. It was this sphere that proved to be the most sensitive barometer reflecting the entire depth of society's most painful problems, which was the root cause of the open opposition of a number of republics to the totalitarian system. At that stage, the inequality of the peoples in terms of their national statehood became the primary source of political splits within the superpower. It failed to withstand the pressure of the natural desire of the peoples for real state sovereignty.

We must draw lessons from what has happened. Our nationalities policy must take into account the ethnic composition of the population of Kazakhstan and the process of its formation, which was far from simple. According to expert estimates, about 1,150,000 people arrived in Kazakhstan in the course of the peasant colonization before the revolution. Some 250,000 dispossessed well-to-do peasants were exiled from the central areas of the USSR to Kazakhstan. In the years before the Second World War, 1,200,000 people were resettled in Kazakhstan from all corners of the land, mostly from the European regions, as manpower for industrial construction. Over the years, some 800,000 Germans, 18,500 Korean families, 102,000 Poles, and 507,000 people from the nationalities of the Northern Caucasus were deported to Kazakhstan. Crimean Tartars, Turks, Greeks, Kalmyks, and others ended up here against their will.

As a result of the deportations, the republic's population grew by 1.5 million. During the war, 350,000 were evacuated to Kazakhstan. During the development of the virgin lands, 1.5 million arrived, and an added 150,000 came to the closed military facilities. These figures do not take into account the organized hiring by the various departments and natural migration to our republic.

As a result, some 5,600,000 were resettled in Kazakhstan from the beginning of the century to the present day, including 3.5 million in the last 40-50 years, not counting the people who were exiled or evacuated here.

On the other hand, one of the terrible consequences of Stalin's criminal collectivization was the death of some 1.5 million Kazakhs. In 1930-1932, about 1.3 Kazakhs migrated beyond the borders of the USSR never to return. Let me cite just two figures to show the disastrous effect of the repressive policies for the peoples of Kazakhstan. In 1930, the republic's population was 5,873,000 – almost the same number as was resettled here. By 1933, the population dropped to 2,493,000.

Respected Delegates!

Kazakhs bear no blame for the fact that the 20<sup>th</sup> century became for them a century of tragic events which turned them into a minority in their own native land. Those who dare doubt this people's right to national statehood do not know or do not wish to know the depth of this drama. I am sure that the Kazakh nation deserved statehood just as much as any other. It has suffered enough throughout its history to achieve statehood.

Nor does any blame attach to those who ended up in our republic against their will. The causes of today's migration do not lie in economic problems alone but also in the fact that the descendants of forcibly resettled Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Germans, and other peoples wish to go back to their historical homeland and take part in the building of their national statehood.

With its unique ethnic diversity (based on the tragedy of many peoples), Kazakhstan nevertheless avoided the sad fate of our nearest neighbors in the CIS countries, now plunged into fratricidal wars. And I am convinced that in the future, too, we will be able to maintain peace and ethnic stability in our state.

What is this conviction based on?

I believe that there are three approaches to solving the national question. On the first approach, some countries implement the policy of squeezing out people of a different nationality. This has never been the policy of the Kazakh people, which has always fraternally welcomed migrants. I don't think there is any need to explain to you that any grudges of one people against another are senseless and can have dangerous consequences, as the path of confrontation leads to powerful explosions and untold loss in human lives. The second approach consists in ignoring the national question and hoping that these problems will fall away of themselves. But that is not a way out, either. We are thus left with the third and the only correct path, the one that we are following now and that calls for painstaking, hard work. This is the path of searching for points of contact and expanding areas of concord and trust between the peoples. No tasks can be solved without the policy of concord and reasonable national strategy.

Our main line must be based on the development of all the national groups through the search for compromise and a strengthening of unifying principles. The Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan must be one of the mechanisms consolidating our society.

As the country's president, I regard maintaining social stability and ethnic concord as my principal task. This concord is not something given from above, it is only achieved through intense work. I feel indignant – and so do you, I hope – when some irresponsible politicians, playing on economic hardships, call almost outright for a split in society. Some go as far as to say that only Nazarbayev needs stability and harmony. Yes, I stand

up for peace and quiet in our land, above all because these are needed by millions of Kazakhstani families. I don't want mothers, their hair gray with grief, weep over zinc coffins; I don't want children to become cripples; and I don't want old men and women cry on the ruins of their homes. Believe me, a person who has lived and seen a great deal, that blood and chaos start with irresponsible statements by political crooks lusting for power – they won't be stopped by tears and loss of life. It is time for the public to pronounce its uncompromising judgment on them, too. I call on the members of the Assembly and on all right-thinking citizens of the republic to speak out at last about those individuals who are consciously pushing society toward ethnic conflicts. It is not the peoples but these crooks who are to blame when brother rises against brother and neighbor against neighbor.

We must always be on guard, and we must always remember that there is real danger of all sorts of political intrigues provoking not only ethnic conflicts but also conflicts within ethnic groups. We can see these days that tragedies are not infrequently connected with a split within nations themselves.

This confirms the observation that a single-nation population is not a panacea against all ills. The struggle between various clans and regional groups may result in nations leading self-annihilating wars. Observers believe that that is exactly what is going on in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and some other countries. I must state for the benefit of those who want to split our people along certain lines of division that, as the president elected by the whole people, I will firmly and resolutely suppress such attempts.

We must also pay special attention to all cases of nationalist manifestations at everyday level, official callousness, and irresponsible media statements. These seem to be mere isolated occurrences, but they may lead to grave consequences.

I would like to stress the indubitable priority of the positive lessons of history, on which we must rely in our everyday work. I have already had occasion to speak about wholesale denigration

of the past. The totalitarian regime did irreparable damage to our peoples, but even in those years the processes of economic development and mutual enrichment of culture, science, and education continued. We must always bear in mind that our peoples fought together to defend their freedom and independence during the Great Patriotic War, that they rapidly restored the country's economy, and made a breakthrough in space conquest. Many outstanding representatives of Kazakh science and culture were educated in Russia, the Ukraine, in Uzbekistan, and the Baltic republics. I hope that other peoples will not forget, either, that in the years of Stalinist deportations the Kazakh people did its best to help Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Koreans, Chechens, and other victims of reprisals.

Victory over fascism, of which the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is celebrated this year, became a most striking manifestation of the selflessness and heroism of the people who defended their country and their right to freedom and human dignity. The last meeting of CIS heads of state decided to jointly celebrate that great anniversary and to award orders and the Zhukov medal to the Commonwealth's war veterans. I also proposed that the governments offer the veterans a chance to travel free to the former battlefields and to meet their brother-soldiers. It was also proposed to send a group of representatives of veteran organizations from CIS member countries on May 9, 1995 to the Federal Republic of Germany to pay their respects to our men who died during the Second World War. The Council of Heads of State expressed support for these ideas. I believe it right and proper not to divide up our common victory, and give the veterans all they deserve.

Esteemed delegates!

Kazakhstan's foreign policy is closely interwoven with domestic problems, including ethnic ones. My idea for the formation of the Eurasian Union implies, among other things, civilized solution of both ethnic and inter-state problems and contradictions. We can't carve a living body. The politician's highest duty

lies, I believe, in understanding his responsibility for the lives of millions of people who found themselves all of a sudden outside their own country for reasons outside their control. Integration of the peoples through preserving political independence and ethnic uniqueness of sovereign states is the only reasonable and civilized form of peaceful development of the Eurasian space.

The EAU project was not the least among those factors that revitalized integration processes within the CIS. You know that at the end of last year a number of extremely important decisions was taken in order to strengthen the good-neighborly relations between Russia and Kazakhstan. Ways of solving such pressing problems were found as citizenship, military cooperation, the setting up of a unified customs space, and a great deal else. Agreements on the legal status of our citizens permanently residing in either of the countries and on simplified procedures for acquiring citizenship are an important step which is in keeping with the principles of the international community and offers a civilized solution to problems facing ordinary people. Nowadays every Russian or Kazakhstani, as they arrive at a new place of permanent residence, may become citizens of that state without a lot of complicated legal red tape.

Of great significance for our republic is the development of integration with our closest neighbors in the region, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, with which we are creating a unified economic space. Besides, all the states of Central Asia are jointly working to overcome the consequences of the ecological disaster in the Aral Sea area.

A whole complex of tasks was solved in the course of the February meeting of CIS heads of state in Almaty. I would particularly like to single out adoption of the "Memorandum on Maintaining Peace and Stability in the Commonwealth of Independent States" proposed by our republic. We believe that none of us should distance ourselves from the problems within the Commonwealth, especially problems involving bloodshed, loss of life, ruin,

and suffering for peaceful citizens. The memorandum is aimed at extinguishing the existing conflicts and prevention of possible ones. The passing of the document confirms yet again the desire of CIS member-states to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of borders and the existing sociopolitical structure, and to take measures to suppress any manifestations of separatism, nationalism, chauvinism, and fascism.

We are taking the path of integration without fear. I would like to remind those who fear for the foundations of our statehood that Kazakhstan today is capable of withstanding any expansion, whether it be military interference, political or economic expansion, separatism or chauvinism. Another important factor is the guarantees of our security given by the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, and China. Kazakhstan's independence has thus become a fact of history, and it is securely protected by international political, economic, and diplomatic legal acts. We will never forego our independence and territorial integrity.

Esteemed Delegates!

You personify Kazakhstan, its national diversity, the richness of its culture, and the hopes of its citizens who elected you to this assembly – an official body under the head of state.

Whenever I have the chance, I'm trying to convince every Kazakhstani that our main treasure in the last ten years has been social stability and the absence of any ethnic strife and bloodshed.

The reason for this insistence is that, when war and death enter our home, everything else – prosperity and little afflictions, luxury and well-being, a person's position within the social pyramid, and so on – lose their value and significance. For war takes away man's most precious possession – his priceless life; it uproots people and turns them into life's flotsam – into refugees.

Thank God, this cup will pass from us. And we bow low before our people, our citizens for this. But these things do not come about of themselves. Behind all this are days and nights of

intense thinking, analysis and comparison, the search for harmony and the sense of enormous personal responsibility for our multiethnic people that entrusted its destiny to us.

Wars bring vast losses that are hard to make up for. In this century alone they have eaten up funds that would have been enough to feed the Earth's entire population for 50 years or provide fine housing for more than 500 million families.

Just think about all the things that are happening in Chechnya, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and other "hot spots" of the CIS and the rest of the world, and you will realize that people who do not value our stability, people who are trying to destroy our tranquility, out of personal ambition or political delusions, these people are outright enemies betraying their own people. That is why the people must be vigilant and never succumb to false promises of instant easy life. There aren't any such paths.

I remember and highly value the trust the people expressed in me on 1 December 1991. In order to justify this trust, I will do everything despite all opposing forces and factors. You have my assurance that that is so.

I am calling on you and on all my fellow citizens to realize your special responsibility these days, for it is our destiny to live and act in the epoch of great changes. All that we are doing is not just of destiny-shaping significance, it also carries the imprint of history. Our descendants will judge us by what we are doing now. What Kazakhstan will be like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how the destiny of our children will be shaped, depends on us.

## **VICTORY IN THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR: THE PEOPLE'S UNFADING FEAT**

FROM A SPEECH AT A CELEBRATION MEETING  
DEVOTED TO THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF VICTORY DAY

MAY 5, 1995

Esteemed compatriots!

Dear veterans of war and labor!

Today, the land of Kazakhstan, the states of the Commonwealth, and the entire world community celebrate a great and glorious date. We are marking, in an unusually solemn and exciting atmosphere, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

During four long years our country withstood, sustaining terrible losses and making an incredible effort, the onslaught of Nazi Germany's powerful war machine. During four years hails of lead mowed down the ranks of defenders of our Fatherland, bringing "killed in battle" notices and widows' tears to cities and villages. During four years the people in the rear, stinting themselves in everything, sent trainloads of war materiel to the front. "We will break the backbone of Nazism!" pledged the soldiers in '41. "We will finish off the beast in his lair!" they promised in '45. They kept their word, and on a sunny day in May, just like today, festive fireworks announced to the world the victorious ending of the most terrible war in the history of mankind.

Here in this hall we are looking, with great emotion, at the faces of the veterans and at the glittering decorations they were awarded for their feats of war and labor, and we are filled with the feeling of great happiness. We went the thorny path of war to the end, losing a great many comrades in battles. Your wounds are still giving you pain, and your hearts sink at the word "war." We bow low before your feat which will live on in the ages to come! Today we remember those who fell on battle-fields, all the war veterans who have not lived to see this glorious anniversary. We swear by their will and courage and by their deeds that we will always defend those patriotic ideals for which they gave up their lives. According to revised data, 26,600,000 Soviet people died in the war. One million two hundred thousand went to the front from Kazakhstan, and more than 600,000 never returned. They gave up the most precious thing they had, their own lives, for our future and for our Motherland. Let us observe a minute's silence in honor of their memory.

Those who were destined to live on have also fulfilled their duty to the Motherland honestly and to the full. Just look at the constellation of soldiers attending today's ceremony! Present here are Heroes of the Soviet Union, holders of the Order of Glory, Heroes of Socialist Labor, soldiers who took part in the Victory Parade on Red Square. On average, every veteran present in this hall has more than ten war decorations.

Your hair has long been touched with silver. It is remarkable, though, that despite your age and old wounds, practically all of you do great community work, rendering us invaluable assistance in educating young people. It is worthy of admiration that many of you still continue to work.

## KAZAKHSTANIS ON BATTLE FIELDS

No battles of the Great Patriotic War were fought out in Kazakhstan, and still the events that occurred at all its stages were

closely connected with our republic. Millions of our compatriots made their military and labor contributions to the defeat of the hated enemy.

Kazakhstanis proved their heroism in the very first hours of the war, at dawn of June 22, 1941. The first fierce strike of the Hitlerite troops fell on the Brest fortress, defended, among others, by our compatriots.

The hellish howls of dive-bombers, explosions of shells and grenades, machine-gun fire, endless attacks of Nazi infantry and armor, long hours without sleep or food – none of this could break down the spirit of the Brest heroes. A great deal has been written about the courage and unrivaled staunchness displayed by the Kazakhstanis Seminchenko, Khabibulin, Ledovskikh, Baizhigitov, Zhumatov, Fursov; their feats are remembered by their comrades.

In those days, the heroism of our compatriots was legendary throughout the land. Their names were on everyone's lips. Hundreds of thousands of Kazakhstanis besieged recruiting centers, demanding to be sent to the front.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that the republic became the country's mobilization center. Dozens of divisions, brigades, and separate units were formed in Kazakhstan. They fought on all the fronts, experiencing both the bitterness of defeat and the joy of victory.

I know how much the glorious names of their units mean to the veterans – the Eighth, Twenty-Seventh, and Seventy-Third Divisions of the Guards, the One-Hundred and Fifty-First and the Three Hundred and Eighty-Seventh Rifle Divisions, the One Hundredth Rifle Brigade.

And, of course, the legendary feat of the 28 guardsmen of the Panfilov division stand apart from the rest. So much has been written about their courage that I will hardly be able to add anything new. Still, I would like to point out one thing.

The words which the whole world knows now: "Russia is vast, but we cannot withdraw any more: Behind us is Moscow!"

were said by our compatriot Vasily Klochkov. But do many people, especially young people, know that the political instructor was not a regular Army man at all? Before the war he worked at a canteen in Almaty. And this seems to me to be a manifestation of the whole war generation phenomenon. Collective farmers, workers, accountants, journalists, people of the most peaceful professions became courageous and hardy soldiers, performing striking acts which displayed great human spirit, soldierly talent, and military valor. Explaining this is both difficult and simple: Their love of their native land, their readiness to live and fight for it to the last drop of blood helped them to crush an apparently invincible enemy.

And what trials did our women go through at the front! It seems incredible now, but their frail shoulders carried burdens that would have bent double any big hero! The women fought side by side with the male warriors, never asking for any indulgence. Moreover, it was their presence that inspired the fighters and lent them fresh strength. Many of these heroic women are among us today, and I address the warmest greetings and my very best wishes to them.

We also remember with gratitude those who fought courageously not only at the front but also behind enemy lines. More than three thousands of our compatriots heroically fought with the Nazis in Russia, the Ukraine, Belorussia, Yugoslavia, and other countries as guerrillas and in the Resistance.

Our young people must be brought up in the spirit of loyalty to our native land, they must be ready to defend their Fatherland in the same way as our ancestors did. I would very much like the soldiers of our young Armed Forces to become your worthy successors, dear veterans, and to know by name every single soldier who covered himself with unfading glory in the battles with the Nazi invaders. Let the legendary fighters – twice Heroes of the Soviet Union Begeldinov, Beda, Lugansky, and Pavlov and Heroes of the Soviet Union Abdirov, Mametova, Moldagulova,

Syanov, Sukhambayev, Momysh-uly, and many others – be living examples for them rather than documentary episodes. Let them learn how to be true to their oath from the soldiers who recently received the republic's highest decorations Khalyk Kakharmany and the Golden Star – Kaysenov, Kulakov, Taipov, present right now in this hall, and from all the Kazakhstanis who fought in the war.

The Book of Memory of Kazakhstan, published in the republic, bears striking evidence of our gratitude to the war veterans. As one reads the documents collected there, one is inevitably struck by the fact that the remains of our compatriots lie buried in the most far-flung parts of our land and the world: Stalingrad, Pskov, Kharkov, Moscow Region, the Baltic republics, Poland, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Germany, France... Hitler's tanks did not roll over the land of Kazakhstan, that is true, but the war left its sad traces in every single city, town, and aul.

EVERYTHING FOR THE FRONT,  
EVERYTHING FOR VICTORY!

We must also remember how things stood on the home front in those harsh years. Thousands of workers and peasants left Kazakhstan for the front. Women and children, invalids and old-age pensioners had to take their place, doing incredibly hard work with very little sleep or food. Later they were helped out by the people evacuated from the occupied parts of the country. Evacuated plants and factories started work. However, these, too, suffered from a most acute lack of skilled personnel. The situation in the rural areas was nothing short of catastrophic, all family heads fighting at the front. There were no machines nor our reliable helpers, the horses. And still, how many striking facts one learns as one studies the chronicles of those years, or simply checks them against one's own memory!

People worked 12-14 hours a day. There was this slogan in

those times: "You must do in a single minute as much as you did in an hour before the war." And the slogan was rigorously implemented. Of course, the discipline was harsh, and there was coercion, too. But even without coercion people achieved the greatest heights of organization.

Within a very short period of time, dozens of mines and ore-dressing plants began operating in Kazakhstan's nonferrous metallurgy, as did the first installations of the Ust-Kamenogorsk and Tekeli lead and zinc industrial complexes. Later, the Aktyubinsk ferroalloy plant, the iron and steel works in Temirtau, and the Guryev refinery went into operation. Products from the mines of the Altai, lead from Chimkent and Leninogorsk, copper from Balkhash, ferroalloys and chromites from Aktyubinsk, coal from Karaganda, and oil from the Emba region – all went in an endless stream for the needs of the front.

And here is an example from agricultural production. In the dire year 1941 Kazakhstan, suffering badly from a shortage of manpower, gathered in the crops on a territory that exceeded that of the prewar year 1940 by more than a million hectares. Let me add that in the war years the republic supplied almost five million tonnes of grain, more than 200,000 tonnes of potatoes, some two million tonnes of sugar beet, and a great deal of other highly important produce. Again, if we compare our potential of the war years and now, and if we take into account that the people were then in fact developing virgin lands, one can but wonder: Was something like this really possible? But the statistics are real!

The events experienced by the Kazakhstanis in those years have a striking moral aspect. The republic became another home for millions of people from Russia, the Ukraine, Belorussia, and many other republics, whose homes had been burned down or destroyed and who had to go looking for refuge far from their hearth and home. On numerous occasions I saw for myself that they had not forgotten the hospitality with which the Kazakh peo-

ple received them in the evil times of war, sharing with them bread and shelter.

The care lavished on the evacuated children was particularly touching. In the first year of the war alone, Kazakh families adopted more than fifteen hundred orphans. Most of them are now our compatriots, they are working side by side with us and building together with us the future of Kazakhstan, which has become their homeland.

For the sake of historical truth we must also mention here those peoples who were forcibly deported to Kazakhstan, the people who were exiled there, and the people who served in the so-called Labor Army. Despite their harsh trials and thanks to the warmth and hospitality of the people of Kazakhstan, they struck root here, and their intense work made a large contribution to victory.

The years of the Great Patriotic War were marked by extremely fruitful contacts between the Union republics in science and culture. Major figures in these fields, who worked fruitfully and strenuously together with Kazakhstanis in the name of victory, joined the intellectual elite of our country.

I would like to stress above all that Kazakhstani science, too, firmly put itself on the map in those years. Kanysh Satpayev performed a real scientist's feat which may have saved the lives of those present here. He took part in the discovery and industrial development of manganese ore deposits in Central Kazakhstan. It would be hard to exaggerate the significance of this discovery for the front, as the only manganese ore deposit then in operation in the Ukraine had been seized by the enemy.

On the whole, the army was then beating the enemy with hardware that contained four-fifths of Kazakhstani lead, two-fifths of copper, and two-thirds of molybdenum.

Side by side with representatives of Kazakhstani science then worked such major Russian scientists as Academicians Tsitsin, Grigoryev and Zavadovsky. The outstanding scientist and Presi-

dent of the USSR Academy of Sciences Vladimir Komarov also worked then in Almaty, devoting his efforts to defense problems. Incidentally, he said at that time that joint work with Kazakhstani scientists on mobilizing the republic's resources for the needs of defense would bring about positive results in the nearest future and would not only make a great contribution to the defeat of the enemy but also to greater development of Kazakhstan's economy and culture. These words proved to be prophetic.

Culture and the spiritual values we held in common with all the other republics also made a great contribution to the victory. It was a process of mutual enrichment. The whole country heard the voice of Jambul and his legendary words: "Leningraders, my children!" The Central United Film Studios in Alma-Ata created such films as "Two Soldiers," "The Front," "She Defends the Motherland," "Wait for Me," "The Airborne Cabby" and other masterpieces which made a great impact on the civic education of millions of people and, if you wish, on winning the victory.

Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, Aleksei Tolstoy, Samuil Marshak, Konstantin Paustovsky, Lyubov Orolova, Sergei Prokofiyev, Vladimir Lugovskoy and many other artists and writers lived and worked at the time in our capital. They did a great deal to educate our national cadre, they held in high esteem our culture, and showed great respect for the language and traditions of the Kazakh people.

I would like to stress that the participation of Kazakhstan in the Great Patriotic War was so wide-ranging, and the contribution of Kazakhstanis to victory was so great, that it is simply impossible to cover all aspects of this theme in a single report.

We can say with confidence that the enemy's military plans were thwarted by friendship of all our peoples. Hitler built his plans for a successful campaign on the assumption that ethnic strife would start with the beginning of the war. Few people know that it was precisely with this goal in view that the Nazis dropped a landing force in the western part of Kazakhstan, which met with

an inglorious death. A local dweller, Baishugan Bekturaliyev, repeated the feat of Ivan Susanin. The saboteurs killed him when they realized that he was leading the group in the wrong direction.

Friendship and mutual assistance among the peoples is the most reliable tool of overcoming all difficulties. That is a truth for all ages.

### REMEMBERING THE PAST, THINK OF THE FUTURE

We need the lessons of history not only to make judgments about the path that we have traversed but also to choose reliable reference points for our movement into the future.

Victory in the Great Patriotic War produced a huge spiritual upsurge among the people; it changed the character of the republic's economy, science, and culture. Taking a broad view of the socioeconomic and sociopolitical development of Kazakhstan in the last fifty years, we will inevitably come to the conclusion that the war, which brought incalculable misfortunes, started at the same time processes that were completely new for the Union republics and drastically changed the destinies of whole peoples.

After the war, Kazakhstan led the same life as the rest of the country: It liquidated the consequences of war devastation, it built housing, schools and hospitals, and developed virgin lands. All things seemed to be falling in place, and the long-awaited era of prosperity seemed to be just round the corner. Who would have thought then that the country's leaders, unshakably hard-line in all their political and economic views, were taking the country into a historical dead end! They failed to catch on in time that the whole world was moving to a new stage of scientific and technological progress and, instead of following the changing world, they kept the country behind the Iron Curtain. The country's talented people bear no blame for this.

As a result, we got what we got: The personality cult gave way to an epoch of voluntarism, which in turn smoothly glided into a period of stagnation. This latter was replaced by perestroika, which the people mostly remember as a hopeless attempt by the powers that be to give a cosmetic polish to the cracked facade of the command-administrative system. The wind of change which started in April 1985 grew by the beginning of the 1990s into an uncontrollable storm which swept away the decayed political and economic systems and scattered the remnants of a once great power, maiming the lives of millions of people.

Let me cite some facts from previously closed files. The glowing statistical reports of the past concealed far from comforting facts: As early as in the 1950s, a steady fall began in the rate of growth of the former Soviet Union's GDP. A country in which one fifth of the population was engaged in agriculture could not feed itself.

It thus transpired that, moving along a spiral, we were actually spiraling down, not up. And our leaders' fiery assurances that the present generation of the Soviet people would live under Communism was nothing but wishful thinking, a sweet lullaby or fairy-tale, no more. It may well be that, had our leaders woken up to the start of our decline and slide into stagnation, our common fate would be different now. But that did not happen. The dominant but historically doomed system and the mentality of the then leaders prevented that development. I realize that it is not pleasant for you to hear this. I admit that it pains me to have to say this, too. But I must tell you the whole truth in order to convince the people of the need for reform, the need for following our present path, which is far from simple but necessary for our country. I know that this path is not quite clear to all. But I believe that we will take Kazakhstan out of the crisis.

I am saying this because we must draw lessons and proper conclusions from history. Otherwise we are doomed to eternal floundering in the swamp of sociopolitical and socioeconomic disasters.

Right now a clear-cut political course has already been established, and the Kazakhstanis expressed their support for it during the referendum that took place ten days ago. Having received thousands of telegrams addressed to me, I realized that this course is supported by the older generation, too. Thank you for your great trust!

The referendum brought the people closer together. It showed their unanimity on the issue of our main values: harmony, peace, and prosperity. The support of the entire people placed on my shoulders a heavy burden of responsibility for the fate of all Kazakhstanis. I thank the whole of the people of Kazakhstan, and I thank you, dear veterans, for your support. I will do everything that I can in order not to disappoint you, my dear compatriots.

#### LET US STRENGTHEN SOCIAL STABILITY AND ETHNIC HARMONY

According to a well-used metaphor, the army is a mold of the whole society; sustaining that metaphor, we may say that our society today is a mold of the multinational army that liberated Europe from fascism fifty years ago.

Indeed, apart from Kazakhs, people from almost all nationalities of the former Soviet Union that once stopped the brown plague now live and work in Kazakhstan. Just you take our present meeting: The gray-haired veterans sitting here in this hall include Kazakhs and Russians, Ukrainians and Tatars, Uigurs and Poles, Belarussians and Germans, and members of many other nationalities.

I am saying all this to remind you that we are living in a multinational country. The principal lesson from the experiences of world development is that the main problem which states with this kind of population have to solve is that of maintaining civic peace and ethnic harmony.

As we speak of the lessons of the past war, we must remember that its cause was Nazism. A bunch of political adventurers came to power in Germany, promising the people instant paradise on earth. When they came to power, they threw the people into the conflagration of the war and brought incalculable sufferings on other peoples, too. That adventure ended in a crash. And that is the way all policies based on hatred for humanity end.

Nazism begins with chauvinism and nationalism. It begins with false patriotism: "I love my people, I don't like other peoples." Do we express a clear-cut attitude to those who practice this policy? I don't think we do, or not enough. We must say no to stirring up ethnic strife in whatever form it may take.

The primary condition of ethnic stability is, after all, the desire and readiness of different ethnic groups to practice tolerance, to listen to each other, and to accept mutual compromises for the sake of this great goal. Believe you me, no ideas, even the most grandiose ones, are worth a brass farthing if their realization calls for human blood, tears, and suffering.

We encourage in every way the desire of the people to drink from the spring of their own culture and to bring up their children and grandchildren in the spirit of their peoples' age-old traditions. But we have repulsed, and will always repulse, any manifestations of separatism and chauvinism, whatever clothing they might be wearing. Kazakhstan will never be an arena of ethnic strife. We will never allow that.

Dear veterans and workers of the home front! I am invariably grateful for your support for the political and socioeconomic reforms implemented in our country, and for the policy of maintaining peace and ethnic harmony. I see support for my policy in the words which you, old soldiers, recorded in the Book of Memory of Kazakhstan: "Friendship between peoples is our historical destiny. We ought to remember this at all times, we should live by this, and not throw dry wood on the bonfire of intolerance and enmity on all sorts of nonsensical pretexts. It is not for this that

we, war veterans, saved our native land from Nazi enslavement and raised the Flag of Victory over Reichstag.”

These are fine words, and I am saying thank you for them.

### FOR PEACE WITHOUT WARS OR VIOLENCE

Recently I saw again some documentary footage from fifty years ago about a fine day in May like today: Red Square in Moscow, the streets near the White House in Washington and Times Square in New York, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and Paris boulevards, the square in front of the Whitehall and Buckingham Palace in London. This footage from the film archives shows scenes in other European cities and the Union republics, including Alma-Ata. Even black-and-white film conveys the colors of joy and universal jubilation. I was struck by this sudden thought: How very much alike these outwardly different people are. And that was indeed so: They were very much alike, for they had this in common – the misfortunes and joys experienced together, and the hope to build, after victory, a new world without violence or enmity. Despite the dreams and the mood of the victors, this did not happen, though.

The allies of yesterday became enemies in a war of a new type – in the Cold War. An incessant arms race began, accompanied by a dirty campaign of mutual accusations and insinuations. Waves of violence caused by division of spheres of influence between the so-called socialist and capitalist camps engulfed whole continents. The terrible danger emerged of the destruction of humankind by accumulated nuclear arsenals.

History seems to arrange it all in such a way that only now, half a century later, have we got a chance to draw lessons from the trials we went through and at the same time answer the same question as in 1945: What sort of a place should the world be? Only now can we put into reality the victors' dream of building a new, safe, and democratic world order.

We are also constrained by the realities of today. The bitter truth is that after the ending of the Cold War, too, conflicts continue on the territory of the former Soviet empire, in Eastern Europe, and in other corners of the globe. Not one state today can stand aloof from them, whether the local wars are blazing far or near. All of them find a painful echo in our hearts, as we mourn the dead, the destruction, and the grief of bereaved mothers. Just a few weeks ago we buried our country's sons who died heroic deaths on the Tajik-Afghan border. Things like this must not happen at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

That is why we face the urgent task of building a new comprehensive structure of relations on the basis of which the edifice of international security and progress must be erected.

It is highly symbolic that Kazakhstan has already shown its goodwill: The Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground was unilaterally closed down in 1991 by one of the president's first decrees. Work on liquidating stockpiles of nuclear weapons is in full swing. I believe that it is quite a realistic task – making the first fifty years of nuclear tests also the last in world history.

All decisions adopted on our initiative within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States are aimed at achieving peace and harmony. In particular, the last meeting of heads of state in Almaty adopted a memorandum on peace and stability in the CIS proposed by Kazakhstan.

The war in Europe ended 50 years ago. Strictly speaking, however, it did not end even when the last Soviet soldier was withdrawn from Eastern Europe, when the countries of the “socialist camp” and the Baltic states acquired genuine independence. It did not end, because neither side, equally responsible for unleashing the Cold War, expressed repentance for what had been done.

We also owe a debt to Soviet peoples subjected to repression and deportations, to hundreds of thousands of GULAG inmates. Of course, the Soviet Union has disintegrated, and there

seems to be no one who could be called to account. But there are the post-Soviet states – the former Soviet republics. The world awaits from them those cleansing words.

I officially declare from this platform that Kazakhstan is deeply sorry about the tragedy of the past, which probably slowed down world development, and about the abuse of power that maimed many human lives; and that it holds out a hand of friendship to all states that are ready for an open and honest dialogue. I promise that our country will endeavor to prevent any possibility of a return to the totalitarian past and do everything that it can that the planet might never know any wars, either cold or hot.

I have just returned from a trip to the United Kingdom, France, and Russia, where I was invited for Victory Day celebrations. Heads of some 80 countries and delegations of veterans from many countries of the world took part in the anniversary celebrations in London, Paris, and Moscow. My meetings and conversations with Prime Minister Major of Great Britain, President Mitterand of France, Mr. Chirac, U.S. Vice President Al Gore, Chancellor Kohl of the Federal Republic of Germany, President Yeltsin of Russia and others once again confirmed these leaders' favorable attitude toward and trust for Kazakhstan. The stability of the political establishment in Kazakhstan encourages investments in our country. It is with great pleasure that I extend to you, dear veterans, and to all citizens of Kazakhstan my congratulations and an expression of my sincere desire for fruitful and peaceful cooperation for the prosperity of our peoples.

In conclusion, I would like to address the young generations of Kazakhstanis. In the final analysis, it was for your happiness, young men and women, for the sake of the possibility itself for you to live in this land, that your fathers and grandfathers fought, locked in mortal combat with the enemy. Not all things turned out the way they visualized in the brief hours of respite between battles, not all their dreams came true after the war.

Today, however, we have a chance to continue what the

veterans once began, to build, figuratively speaking, a tower of joy and happiness. It is my desire for this tower to be stronger than the Tower of Babel and to survive all storms for many centuries to come. And this largely depends on you, young people, on your desire and ability to join in transforming our society. I am confident that you will be my allies, and that I will be able to rely on your energy, initiative, and optimism.

Dear veterans, dear fathers and grandfathers! Time moves on inexorably, and your ranks are getting thinner. People are departing who have earned great merit in the eyes of history, people who have kept intact their sacred faith in their ideals through all their life, people whose destiny was at the same time both happy and tragic. It was happy because they were people of clean conscience and clear purpose, people who never lost their optimism, cheerfulness, or faith in life. Yours is a generation of unbending people who triumphed over Nazism and the incredible economic ruin. But it is also a tragic generation, which had to live through a collapse of former ideals and symbols of past life.

But it may be worth looking ahead into the future, casting doubts aside. Of course, you put your whole lives into the old system. But that system, having demonstrated the highest technological achievements in matters of armaments and space conquest, proved to be incapable of satisfying the people's elementary everyday needs, although it had at its disposal one sixth of the earth's dry surface with all the riches of nature, including mineral deposits, known to man.

We were lagging further and further behind even those countries which had nothing but their people's hands – neither natural deposits nor vast territories. I can agree that life was then poor but stable, and that suited quite a few people. But it was a disgrace for a state that was potentially one of the richest in the world, and it couldn't go on long.

The Great Patriotic War was won by the blood and lives of

millions of people. But the economic competition that followed was lost by the socialist system finally and irreversibly, which humiliated the victors of yesterday in the eyes of the rest of the world, both the vanquished and the recent comrades in arms. The totalitarian regime could not offer its citizens a dignified life, and that was why it easily collapsed at the first formal pretext that offered itself. In a manner of speaking, the Third World War was won without guns or tanks.

You bear no blame for that. It happened due to the historical incapacity of the old system and to the errors of the epoch that is receding into the past. Socialism failed as a world social formation. Now we are building a new state and a new democratic society which will be based, in economic terms, on socially oriented market economy which has proved its effectiveness in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in many countries of the world.

Keeping the link between the times, respecting your choice and loyalty to what you have lived through, and taking all that is useful for future life from the past, we, the present generation, are hoping to prove that we are historically right, and we firmly believe that we will do so.

It has become a catch-phrase, "Victory Day is a celebration with tears in your eyes." But I would like to end this report on an optimistic note.

I wish that you, dear veterans, might see with your own eyes a prosperous, sovereign Kazakhstan, and celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Great Victory in a great war!

## **ASSESSING THE PAST AND FURTHER DEMOCRATIC REFORM OF SOCIETY**

SPEECH AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY  
OF THE PEOPLES OF KAZAKHSTAN

JUNE 30, 1995

Dear delegates of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan!

On your initiative, the first referendum in the history of the republic was held in April this year. I am sincerely grateful to the entire multinational people of Kazakhstan and members of the Assembly for their profound understanding of the most important problems of our radically reformed society.

Being essentially a realist, I fully realize that, as the people extended the president's powers until December 1, 2000, they voted for stability, for ethnic and civic harmony which we manage to maintain in Kazakhstan, preventing bloody conflicts. They voted for the continuation of the political course which guarantees the public peace which we all so badly need, and thereby for the strategy being implemented in the political, economic, and social spheres.

The changes that began under the slogans of perestroika have led to the collapse of the ideals and destinies of a whole generation, to serious disturbances in their life rhythms, to a decline in the economy and, as a result, a decline in the well-being of hundreds of thousands of people.

In short, there were quite a few losses, and still an overwhelming majority of the people voting in the referendum said

yes to the question on the ballot paper. Is that a paradox? I don't think so: I believe that, through the results of the plebiscite, the Kazakhstanis demonstrated their faith in the future of our sovereign republic.

That is why I am grateful to the Assembly on whose initiative the referendum was held. Incidentally, it showed the great authority of the Assembly, which has essentially turned from a consultative body into an actively functioning public institution expressing the people's real aspirations and consolidating Kazakhstan's multinational society. Wouldn't it therefore be reasonable to introduce a reference to the Assembly in the new Constitution?

The people's massive participation in the referendum and the uniformity of their views and opinions have created a basis for the political stability in the country in the period until the new century; they opened up before the head of state room for maneuver not only in tactical but also in strategic terms, and offered an opportunity for an assessment of the path we have traversed and for defining the direction of future movement.

The principal aims which I declared in 1992 in "The Strategy for the Establishment and Development of Kazakhstan as a Sovereign State" and in 1993 in the work "Society's Ideological Consolidation as a Condition for Progress in Kazakhstan" remain unchanged. Let me recapitulate the principal priorities:

- securing stability and ethnic harmony as an absolute political condition for successful implementation of reform;
- formation of a socially oriented market economy combining state-owned and non-state-owned property;
- creation of legal conditions and practical basis for the realization of the principle of man's economic freedom;
- building a society insuring an acceptable level of well-being for all its citizens;
- development of ethnic identity and maintaining the national-cultural diversity of Kazakhstan;
- deepening democratic reform, insuring pluralism in politics;

– formation of a dignified image of Kazakhstan in the world community on the basis of observation of the freedoms and rights of man, winning strong positions in the world economy;

– transformation of the state structure of Kazakhstan into a democratic republic of the presidential type.

We are moving in this direction according to plan. I would like to outline at this forum my vision of the situation; substantiate the policy that follows from the results of the referendum in the principal spheres of public life; and describe the plans which will have to be implemented in order to lay in the nearest future solid foundations of a democratic, law-based state. It is a question, above all, of the strategy for market development and for building the state.

#### STATEHOOD: PROBLEMS OF BIRTH

Kazakhstan is now living through a difficult, breakpoint period characteristic of all CIS countries. An explanation for this lies in the traditions of the peoples living together within a single state, in their common mentality and political culture, the habit of solving socioeconomic tasks within the framework of an integrated complex of the national economy, and absence of a new level of division of labor and industrial specialization.

During the initial stage of independence in 1991-1993, utopian notions about a quick and easy transition to a new state prevailed in Kazakhstan, just as they did in the other CIS countries. The complexity of work to be done and the measure of responsibility for its results were clearly underestimated. Running for the first time into such phenomena as freedom of the press, democratic expression of the people's will, freedom of conscience and meetings, and other attributes of democratic society, many people lost their bearings, while some political leaders – let me say this outright – deliberately tried to exploit the situation in their own interests.

There was a plethora of ideas, programs, and models for reforming Kazakhstan, which contained theoretical speculations, mostly of populist nature, put forward in those days. All this was thrown before the public along with criticism, often malevolent, of the existing authorities and by noisy promises of speedy prosperity – on condition, of course, that these leaders take up key positions in the state. It will be appropriate here to recall Lev Trotsky's letter in connection with some speeches by Socialists at the Sixth Comintern Congress which he followed while in exile in Alm-Ata. "Theoretical proof can be given [wrote Trotsky to his friends] that the cloud on the horizon looks like a camel, or rather a fish, of if the prince (that is, the leader of the hour) prefers, like socialism in a separately taken country or some other sort of original fried eggs." That was roughly the situation here, only on a different historical plane.

Many people then saw being in opposition as a situation of tough confrontation between the country's leadership and political parties; they interpreted freedom of speech as an opportunity to say and write whatever they cared to, even if it was fraught with the danger of fanning the fires of ethnic and social conflicts. They were not above insulting the honor and dignity of their opponents. They saw elections as their right to push their own people into various positions in their own narrow group interests.

This distortion of democratic principles took place because society was not yet ready to absorb these principles, and because a mere facade of democracy had hastily been erected, so that the gap between democratic freedoms and their monstrous realization disoriented the people. This evoked profound disappointment among the people. They were frightened by alienation from the traditional state patronage, by the new rigid links between rights and obligations, and by the need for self-sufficiency, for disposing of their life entirely on their own.

In that period, practically everyone was a Jacobin intent on destroying old society. There was an illusion of broad social uni-

ty, a faith in democratic leaders capable of solving all old problems at one go. Many minds were tempted by the euphoric hope for the formation of a full-fledged market without any problems, for a rapid rise in the people's living standards, and for the establishment, within a very brief period of time, of a law-based society with well-developed political freedoms. It seemed enough to wish for something, and it would all come true.

But the expectation in all CIS countries that the collapse of the old regime would soon be followed by a firmly established civil society and a democratic state similar to western democracies proved to be utopian.

It has become clear today that there is no short, direct road from totalitarian society to all this. Objective historical laws were forgotten in the revolutionary elan. It was also forgotten that it had taken centuries to produce Western civilization. National markets took decades to evolve; democratic rights were won as a result of long, hard struggles; and the parliamentary system developed as a result of a long and far from simple process.

The hope for a rapid transition to the market also proved an illusion. The market turned out, as often as not, to be a primitive bazaar; privatization of property did not result in its effective functioning due to the absence of a real owner of the property; and the state budget proved to be a source of credit speculation. Democracy as the power of the people often degenerated into the struggle for power among various influential groups and a strengthening of narrow-minded regionalism.

All kinds of criminal and destructive elements rather than ordinary citizens often enjoyed the fruits of freedom. It is a bitter admission, but the possibility of amoral enrichment in the times of troubles united corrupt members of the state apparatus, law-enforcement agencies, financial and banking structures, commercial structures, and criminal kingpins. You know that it is with these people that we are fighting the most fierce struggle now.

The causes of the social crisis we are living through now

do not lie so much in the confrontation among the as yet weak political forces as in the conflict between the progressive democratic process, on the one hand, and conservative forces, personifying the old mindset, on the other.

The drama of our situation is rooted in the fact that the early enthusiasm of the people for reform and freedom found no economic, social, and political support. We continue to live in a fairly indeterminate society strangely combining powerful units of the old system of state socialism and isolated elements of the democratic order of life.

What are the causes of these problems? They lie above all in the fact that the Jacobin period of perestroika badly shook the people's trust for reform and for the very notion of democracy. One of the shrewdest experts on our old system conveys the atmosphere of those times in very apt words: "Almost anything is possible, but nothing happens. Almost everything is permitted, but almost nothing can be realized."

The whole point is that the leadership of the Soviet Union had no program for radical socioeconomic and political reform. Not one of the fundamentals of the Soviet system – the leading role of the Communist Party, state monopoly on property, ideological dictatorship – were called in question. And it was these elements that had to be the objects of transformation. The result was a natural disintegration of the system rather than its reform.

After the well-known events of August 1991 there came the stage of formation of new independent states and a general infatuation with the idea of sovereignty as a panacea against all present and future problems. It wasn't stated outright but somehow implied that, suffice it to declare independence and the aims of democracy and the market, and all the misfortunes would be left behind. This happened in Kazakhstan, too.

Reality proved much harsher. It turned out that there is a long path leading from declaration of sovereignty to achievement of real sovereignty. Difficult stages of development had to be

traversed from declaration of democracy and the market to their actual establishment. This became particularly clear in 1993 and 1994. It transpired that there was no unity in society – there were completely different groups with their own interests and notions of the future structure of society.

Numerous groups appeared in that period which loudly proclaimed themselves to be parties and movements; they were headed by over-ambitious leaders pursuing goals that were far removed from the public interest. This disease of the times of emergent statehood manifested itself in two parliamentary crises and two dismissals of the government.

Yes, that was the time of the people's disenchantment with the reforms and of a profound sociopolitical stress. But it was also a period of sobering up and gradual realization of the true complexity of the reformist path.

I am saying all this not just to state the facts but also in recognition of my own miscalculations. Our only justification is that we followed an unfamiliar path acting on the trial and error principle. My thanks go to the people who expressed an understanding of all this at the 29 April referendum this year.

At the same time imperceptible but very serious, fundamental changes have occurred in all spheres of life.

Let us take the economy. The market entered our life; it is not yet a full-blooded market but it has its rules, and it necessitates revisions in the economic relations within the republic and among states. For example, we often speak of restoring old economic ties within the CIS economic space, as the breakup of these ties became a serious factor in the deepening crisis of production. In the past these links were regulated by the state from above, while now they begin to be regulated by the market system from below. Or you take this factor: There emerged – and I stress that this is a positive factor – such an attribute of the market economy as competition with its derivatives – better quality goods and real prices for them. Simultaneously certain elements of the market

infrastructure came into being, and the stratum of homegrown entrepreneurs appeared. The conditions of ownership were changed drastically, foreign trade was liberalized, and the positions of the national currency were consolidated.

We must remember that with the introduction of the tenge in November 1993 we began real regulation of financial and economic processes and the course of reforms in the country. In the same period Kazakhstani statehood was actually established. The world learned about Kazakhstan's existence, and its authority as a peace-loving state grew. Political stability became the principal guarantee for foreign investors – that was the reason why they believed us and came to us.

During the entire period that followed, social collisions were overcome on the basis of the Constitution and the laws. Compared to the recent past, this is of great importance: The previous practices of suppression of dissent and of the individual gave way to adherence to political methods of solving problems and a peaceful evolutionary type of reforms.

I would characterize this as the distinguishing feature of the Kazakhstani variant of the emergence of new statehood. We were able to prevent the eruption of political strife into bloody conflicts; parliamentary crises did not involve the arrival of tanks on the streets of cities; we did not become embroiled in civil wars, nor did we permit any escalation of tension connected with separatist tendencies.

Quite a few hardships fell to our lot, but, compared to what other countries are experiencing, we have avoided many horrors of the transitional period, and we have every right to be proud of it. That is why we must cherish the harmony and stability in our country as the apple of our eye.

It is now clear to everyone, I believe, that a return to the old regime is impossible – too many changes have occurred in the economic system, the psychology of the people, and the structure of society. That is why, as we look back on the path we

have traversed in the three or four years, we can safely say that, in terms of historical significance for the people and the state, it equals decades.

TOWARD TRUE DEMOCRACY, STABILITY,  
AND SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

Our society is on the threshold of new, truly democratic transformations. But if we seriously wish to become a law-based state, we must firmly adhere to the Constitution, for no circumstances can be above law. Regrettably, our ideology covered too long and too often the state's total disregard for the law in relation to society and the individual on the pretext of the need to protect their interests. After all, it was not for nothing that the great jurist of the Renaissance Hugo Grotius warned: "Necessity, this great refuge of human weakness, destroys all law."

Now that we are on the threshold of adopting a fundamental, long-term document we must rise above the current situation, everyday difficulties, and all sorts of "necessities of the transitional period."

Our principal goal is the creation of a powerful state – only not as a self-sufficient force but as a tool for the protection of citizens on the basis of generally recognized democratic freedoms and values. We see only one way to achieve this: restrict the state's monopoly on property to an acceptable level, develop other types of property, and grant every citizen the freedom of enterprise.

The government, its ministries and departments deserve a reproach in this connection, as they still cannot discard the Soviet frame of reference and continue to behave as champions of the state sector only. They must become fully involved with other forms of property and help private businesses. Our laws do not just permit this – they are pushing in that direction.

The fruit of the incipient improvement in the economy must

be earmarked for satisfying the vital needs of the socially unprotected strata of the population, in the first place of indigent and disabled citizens, pensioners and students. As for the rest, the state must guarantee their economic independence in achieving self-realization through labor and creativity.

To implement all this, the state budget must be replenished reliably and systematically. A smoothly operating tax system must play the main role here. We must not cross the line beyond which great tax pressure begins to suppress the population's economic activity and reduce the flow of money into the treasury. There's this golden dictum: The taxpayer is the state's partner, not game on which open season is declared.

To achieve economic growth and, on this basis, improvement in the people's well-being, I gave instructions to the government to work out, till November this year, a draft "indicative" plan of economic and social development for the period 1996-2000. Omitting many details, let me point out the main thing: This document must determine the measures necessary to raise the living standards of the population of Kazakhstan at least two-fold, bring down annual inflation to 10 percent in 1998, and resume the growth in production by the year 1996.

The program now being worked out outlines the conditions and infrastructure for effective functioning of small-scale and medium businesses and for the development of private enterprise. Considerable attention will also be paid to improving social protection of the population, to specifying its targets, among other things, through clear division of responsibilities between state bodies and transfer of services formerly rendered by state enterprises to the local bodies.

In broader terms, declarative democracy without free economy is fine soil for the emergence of a dictatorship. It does not matter whether it is the dictatorship of a single person, a group of people, or a party. When society is not yet structured and insuf-

ficiently stable, all kinds of accidents can happen and any turn of events is possible.

Recently we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Victory Day. The world owes its present existence to the immortal feat of the Soviet people. Now there's this question: Didn't Hitler, who unleashed the world war, come to power through democratic elections? And don't all sorts of extremist elements now strain to grab power using the people's interests as cover? We must draw lessons from the past and the present.

Kazakhstan has the necessary political guarantees for democracy. I am convinced that we have chosen the right vector of development, as proved by the guarantees for a multiparty system and freedom of the press created in this country. Politically, the state is oriented toward civic peace and ethnic harmony.

Unfortunately, not all people realize the practical irreversibility of the changes that have already occurred. No parties with mass support in society have been formed in the republic, and this deprives the government of objective indicators of the public mood. Time will pass, however, a civilized political structure will become established, and influential parties will take shape with meaningful programs and serious cadre potential. It will then be normal for them to come to power – and the main thing is, it will be useful to society.

A few words about the role of the media in the development of democratic society. As I have said already, the existence in Kazakhstan of a free and independent press is our invaluable democratic boon. Some people cannot grow accustomed to it, and they don't like it. I often feel pressure on this point from various quarters. And still, I firmly declare that we will continue to create conditions for free journalism in Kazakhstan.

In this context, we must also accept the following proposition: If the state creates normal conditions for the press, then the press must not go beyond the limits of law and journalistic ethics. The fact is that an incautious word can become the detonator of

completely unpredictable events. Seeking to increase their circulation, some publications make overt or covert attempts to play on national or religious issues. Dwelling on the hardships of life and demonstrating life's black aspects only has become almost the rule. Journalists must understand that this produces a feeling of hopelessness and social apathy in society and in no way helps a person to adjust to the new conditions.

Dear members of the Assembly! I have often encountered the view, in different audiences and with different interlocutors, that the reforms now being implemented lead to the loss of spirituality, that the psychology of the market, whether we want it or not, engenders the cult of force, profit-seeking, and egoism. You too must have heard grumblings about our young people losing moral guidelines, disdain the sources of culture and the traditions of their people, and being disrespectful to their elders. It appears that they are Mankurts, a lost generation, and nothing more.

I believe that these categorical statements are not the best argument in the eternal contention between fathers and sons. Let us take an unbiased view of the problem. The bulk of the young people is now studying foreign languages; they are interested in the culture, customs and traditions of other countries; they study the spiritual roots of their own people; they learn the basics of marketing and management and other difficult things. And they do all of this quite consciously, mark you, on the understanding that, without fail, they will need in the future the new knowledge they are absorbing. Isn't that the path leading to true spirituality, to the fountainhead of world and national culture?

On the other hand, it would be a serious error to entirely ignore the danger of young people losing their spiritual and moral heritage. Indeed, having opened the information floodgates, we have been hit by the murky waves of the so-called mass culture which substitutes cheap, brightly packaged surrogates for true morality. Of course, with the passage of time young people

will learn to distinguish true values from ersatz. And we, the older generation, must help them get their bearings in this complex world and find spiritual reference points.

I am sure that education in the moral basics of our multinational society must be elevated to the status of national policy. Or, to be more precise, we need a state policy in this area, a carefully worked out long- and short-term program of action. We will all agree, I think, that all the necessary conditions must be created in Kazakhstan for the development of education, culture, and art – those branches of our life which bring, as world experience shows, the greatest yield. Investment in man, his education and culture is investment in the state's future. That is why the draft new Constitution is fully oriented toward man and guarantees the satisfaction of his spiritual and moral needs.

## **AN IDEA TO WHICH THE FUTURE BELONGS**

*Mr. President, in the present situation of a profound and wide-ranging crisis which the former republics of the USSR are now going through, the ideas of reintegration in one form or another are now acquiring considerable influence. It is therefore no accident that your proposal for the formation of the Eurasian Union of States has attracted such great attention. It is naturally of special interest to the readers of the journal called Evraziya [Eurasia]. We would very much appreciate it if you could briefly outline your position on this issue.*

I would first of all like to say a few words about the conditions that necessitated the EAU project and the factors that make it a realistic proposition.

At present, the sociopolitical and economic life of the post-Soviet states is characterized by two sweeping processes. On the one hand, their national interests are taking final shape, and on the other, there is a growing understanding in these states of the extreme importance of economic integration. It is a fact of real life that the newly formed countries must choose one of these tendencies as their top priority.

Although the economic integration that is possible in the present conditions slows down to some extent the rise of sovereignty, it is in fact a harsh demand of real life which objectively shapes the policy of these countries in the CIS framework. This is an unavoidable "tax" one has to pay for the ultimate goal of modernization of the economy and society.

The whole world aspires these days toward integration, toward combining efforts, and toward rational regulation of their relations with near and distant neighbors. We have before our eyes the experiences of the European Community, of the League of Arab Nations, alliances of Latin American countries, those of the Pacific region, and of many other communities. All of them develop and deepen their relations, they keep looking for, and finding, mutually acceptable solutions. Their member states clearly profit from this.

We must draw lessons from their experiences, and we must realize at last that no country can enter the world community and the world economic order on its own. This can only be achieved through joint efforts, the more so that we have a powerful integrative potential that has evolved over decades. The market has certain universal laws, and ignoring them would mean falling into the trap of economic romanticism or voluntarism. There are countless fresh examples to prove that he who is now trying to find a new identity by switching to more distant and seemingly more promising partners as often as not ends up in failure.

Only by concentrating on the main task – advancing economic reform – can we overcome, through joint efforts, the prolonged crisis in which former Soviet republics are stuck. Solution of economic problems would lift a great many issues in science, culture, education, and in ethnic and interpersonal relations. This is all the more important that the young sovereign states cannot in my view permit themselves the luxury of solving each emerging problem one by one, as they are in fact elements of an overall crisis.

Unfortunately the CIS has not fully justified the hopes once placed on it. Having established this integrative structure, we failed to create a system of responsibility for its fate, a system that would properly take into account both the actual changes in the interests of the member states and the dynamics of the development of the entire post-Soviet space. That became the principal

cause for the failure of many constructive propositions put forward within the CIS framework.

A conceptual method for resolving this situation had to be found, and we did so by proposing a closer integrative alliance, the Eurasian Union.

The EAU project takes into account the great diversity of integration scenarios, differences in the rate of development of CIS countries, and lack of uniformity or unity of direction in this development.

The principal goal of our initiative is coordination of economic policy and adoption of joint programs for economic reform whose realization would be mandatory for all EAU members.

The EAU project became a catalyst for integrative processes within the CIS, as it triggered off the adoption by CIS nations of projects for the creation of an inter-state economic committee, a clearance union, and a number of other documents intended to form an economic union of CIS states.

It should be stressed that the CIS is not the only form of integration in the post-Soviet space.

As I have already said, most CIS documents signed to this day and consolidating its unity in the political, economic, defense, and other spheres largely remain unrealized. The Commonwealth's bodies do not fully implement the functions of regulating inter-state relations, inasmuch as some states partially reject some agreements or interpret their content in their own selfish interests.

Unfortunately, this integrative structure, in which political goals still prevail over economic ones, is characterized by an abundance of all sorts of obstacles in the way of economic cooperation and endless complaints of some member countries against others. It is therefore not surprising that we have failed to create a common economic space, establish smoothly running sectoral cooperation, and form an effective system of regional division of labor.

It must also be stated that the development of sovereign states within the CIS alone leads to their mutual alienation in many areas, including, apart from the economy, also politics, science, culture, and education.

Naturally this situation does not at all suit the peoples of the CIS which carry the main burden of the economic crisis. The majority of them unequivocally express themselves in favor of closer cooperation, which sometimes comes in conflict with the aspirations of the political elites.

The need for reforming the CIS to make it a more effective, workable alliance has thus become obvious. This implies a rejection of the old, optional forms of integration by those states that are ready for such a move and a transition to a qualitatively new stage of integration. That was the purpose of my initiative to set up the Eurasian Union.

I would like to note at the same time that the idea of the EAU in no way means the disintegration of the CIS, as some politicians believe.

In spite of what has been said above, it must be realized that the integrative potential of the CIS has not yet been exhausted. The level of integration of the Commonwealth member states is so high that it has not so far been achieved by the European Union. Unlike Western Europe, we have a system of economic links, a dense transport network, and a unified production technology, all evolved over decades. For instance, it took European states quite long to work out and enforce common production and technological standards and to start joint production, whereas all this has long been established here. The Commonwealth even has a common language of inter-state communication. Finally, the peoples of our states have similar mentalities and world perceptions based on a desire for unity and close cooperation.

All this is entirely in keeping with the aforementioned world tendency toward expanding integration. It follows from this that the breakup of established links under the far-fetched pretext of

achieving greater sovereignty must be stopped, and the integration potential must be preserved at all cost.

However, that would be a half-measure. Based on the existing level of integration, it is necessary in my view to create qualitatively new forms of such integration.

Thus, while we insist that the CIS be maintained, we are also resolutely in favor of the setting up of the EAU. The formation of the Eurasian Union within and side by side with the Commonwealth would be the historical compromise that the post-totalitarian countries and their peoples need.

The draft project for the setting up of the Eurasian Union says that, "along with the improvement of the CIS mechanisms, it musty not be regarded as the only form of unification." That means that the EAU does not rule out the formation of bi- and multilateral unions of states, including unions outside the Commonwealth.

Of course, the relation between these integration structures will inevitably change in the course of deepening market reforms and the member countries' advance along the democratic path of development, as the mechanisms of cooperation change and improve. But the integration potential will be maintained and increased, and that is the main thing.

It is important to understand that the EAU project does not call for a resuscitation of the former USSR. True integration of our states does not signify a revival of the former empire, of a union based on dictatorship and coercion. The independence of our republics has become a reality filled with concrete political meaning and content, it is an inalienable part of the peoples' mentality. And no one can turn time back.

The desire of some forces to restore the USSR using, among others, forceful methods is a path leading into a historical dead end. Any attempt to restore the totalitarian state would have to be paid for in escalation of ethnic tensions, expansion of the zones

of instability and conflicts, the slowing down or even complete curtailment of reform, and many other tragic consequences.

The principles of the formation and functioning of the Eurasian Union in no way encroach on the member states' sovereignty. On the contrary, while retaining their independent status, the EAU members could implement economic reform through the supranational coordinating organs, take part in the division of labor between states, and carry on their economic activity abroad. The information and educational space now in existence would receive a qualitatively new impulse for development.

The new model of relations among post-Soviet states must be based, in our view, on the following principles: equal rights and responsibility; mandatory compliance with adopted inter-state agreements; mutual recognition of CIS countries' established state and political institutions; recognition of the territorial integrity and inviolability of borders; rejection of political, economic, and other forms of pressure in inter-state relations; and cessation of hostilities between such states.

The project for the establishment of the EAU provides for rotation of member states chairing the coordinating organs and the possibility of their unimpeded withdrawal from such an alliance.

At the same time the principle of inviolability of the borders must not lead to the creation of a new Iron Curtain, which would result in national self-isolation and autarchy. On the contrary, this demand should be complemented by guarantees of the right of man to freedom of movement.

Thus the Eurasian Union as a new form of integration of sovereign states must help consolidate the stability and security of post-Soviet states and achieve their socioeconomic modernization, which is in keeping with the basic interests of each member state.

*We know that the idea of the establishment of the Eurasian Union met with a rather equivocal response in the CIS countries,*

*especially among the leaders of these nations. What would your explanation of this be?*

The causes of ambiguous attitudes toward the initiative of establishing the EAU are rooted in a number of factors.

Too little time has passed since the moment when the sovereign states which emerged on the ruins of the USSR began to develop under the conditions of independence. In many of them the power structures are essentially in the stage of initial formation and are not yet fully effective. As the new countries gain new experiences in building their independent statehood, they learn how to discover and maintain their foreign policy in the complex and multiform world of international relations.

Nor can we discount the inertia of mass consciousness, which until recently was characterized by a heightened emotional attitude of CIS nations to sovereignty and to the real possibility of the existence and free development of the national idea.

That is why it is hardly surprising that the calls for integration are sometimes seen as a challenge to sovereignty, as a desire to restore the totalitarian past and the former centralized system of government.

These are sincere delusions, so to speak, and they can be surmounted.

At the same time the idea of the establishment of the EAU obviously does not suit the Commonwealth countries' radical nationalists who claim to be the only champions of and spokesmen for the interests of their peoples.

It is a reality of life, though, that the pressure of geopolitical factors along with the destabilizing internal tendencies, which are unavoidable against the background of objective critical phenomena, force post-Soviet states to accept integration in the economic, cultural, educational, and other spheres.

People begin to understand that it is impossible to overcome the severe economic crisis in the CIS countries unless their common living space is harmonized through joint efforts. The

simple truth is becoming more and more obvious that voluntary isolation under the flag of unlimited sovereignty equals regress and total degradation.

Economic integration as a sheet anchor for the former Soviet peoples also becomes a rigid historical imperative for the political elites. Inasmuch as there is no alternative to this unification of states on the new conditions of equality, just as to their total political independence, politicians have just one way out – to find a reasonable combination of these tendencies.

If the EAU idea, with some possible revisions, were to be realized, our peoples would form an organic part of the world integration processes. That would be a civilized path toward unification.

I believe it appropriate now to explain the causes of Kazakhstan's interest in the setting up of the EAU.

Kazakhstan, just as the other CIS countries, is interested in the realization of this project for many reasons.

Despite the fact that the restructuring of the economy in this country has just begun, our republic has already run into the problems of unemployment, falling living standards, and growth of social tensions. By fully restoring our traditional markets, the Russian market above all, by forming anew the broken links with our partners of many years standing, and by extending new lines of economic relations to the “near abroad,” we hope to alleviate to a large degree the consequences of the crisis. And the Eurasian Union, being a more rigid form of economic integration, is best suited to meet this top priority task.

Considering the tensions that have arisen in some areas on the southern borders of the EAU, we believe that the new union could be a guarantor of Kazakhstan's foreign security. This is quite a realistic proposition, as EAU members' security is one of the necessary conditions of its inner political stability. It is no accident that obligatory conditions of entry into the Eurasian Union include cessation of hostilities, economic blockade, and other

repressive actions by the member states. An effective mechanism might be created within the defense union for the prevention and suppression of possible conflicts within and between member states.

Finally, a new level of integration will permit a solution of everyday problems of many people who found themselves on opposite sides of the new states' borders. Restoration of ordinary human links and greater harmony among people living in a once unified space have in the final analysis profound humanist content.

*It appears that your conception of the Eurasian Union of States mostly foregrounds problems of integration in the economy and in politics. At the same time you pay considerable attention to maintaining the inherited common potential and the strengthening of integration in the sphere of science, culture, and education.*

*Inasmuch as our journal has the subtitle "Peoples. Cultures. Religions," we would like to ask you to dwell in greater detail on these issues.*

Culture, science, education, and the EAU project are all intrinsically interconnected. I believe that the realization of the EAU initiative would become a major step in the assessment of the realities of our far from simple and dynamic times, in the search for the most promising ways of spiritual, cultural, and moral revival and development. The fact is that the present global geopolitical events are basically changing the destinies of whole countries and peoples, who are the most active participants and, one might even say, creators of these historical changes. It is therefore extremely important to check the direction of development of post-socialist states with the main direction of the development of the entire human civilization.

At present, the once unified scientific, cultural, and educational space becomes fragmented, and axioms like "Science has no borders" or "Culture is the ambassador of peace" are left

suspended in the air. The increasing socioeconomic difficulties have become the cause of a sharply increased outflow of first-class specialists from these most important spheres of human activity. State borders have considerably impeded, if not stopped entirely, scientific and cultural exchanges between former fraternal republics. As a result, the scientific and intellectual potential of society declines, as do the level and quality of education.

Hence the task of maintaining and consolidating a unified informational, scientific, educational, and cultural space and of intensifying the dialogue between CIS member states in all spheres of humanitarian activity.

I regard in this connection as reasonable and highly topical the propositions put forward in the summing-up document of the international scientific and practical conference on "Eurasian Space: Integration Potential and Its Realization" held in Almaty in September 1994, namely, to create a Eurasian University; combine the intellectual efforts of scientific and research collectives of CIS countries for the realization of the joint research project "Eurasia, 21<sup>st</sup> Century"; and set up an international non-governmental fund on problems of Eurasian integration not only for the assessment and generation of EAU ideas but also for their practical implementation.

The specific problems of the development of culture in multiethnic Kazakhstan are also linked with the EAU project.

Kazakhstan has chosen the path of building a truly democratic society. And it is hardly possible to solve such a large-scale task without painstakingly considering the interests of all the strata of Kazakhstan's multiethnic population. That means that we have to build a multicultural space which would be dominated by two streams.

One of them represents the revival of Kazakh culture and of its constituent elements, above all, language. There was a long period during which Kazakh culture was leveled off, while language as a full-fledged means of communication was squeezed

out of everyday life. Today, however, we witness the process of recovering what was once lost.

The second cultural stream is Russian culture. Being one of the powerful sources that feeds world culture, it belongs not only to the Kazakh people but also to all the other peoples of Kazakhstan. And that is extremely important, for, if we isolated ourselves from it or tried to question its beneficial effect on the development of Kazakh culture, we would consciously fence ourselves off from the world heritage of the human mind and traditions.

The existence of a multicultural space in Kazakhstan is an objective fact; ignoring or negating it would mean mutilating our common social-cultural and political space and introduce tension into ethnic relations, thereby complicating the formation of stable civil society. Orientation toward just one of these streams and rejection of the value of the other would result in encroachments on the rights of man, on his freedom of self-expression and his choice within the framework of responsibility before law and society.

That is why, while fully supporting the desire to secure a proper place for Kazakh culture in general and Kazakh language in particular, we are in no hurry to artificially speed up this process. Reckless haste in this case may produce a destructive impact on the social well-being of Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and members of other nationalities living in the republic.

However, while recognizing the equal importance of the two cultural streams, it is also important to stress their mutual complementarity and enrichment, which is undoubtedly in keeping with the fundamental interests of all ethnic groups in Kazakhstan. However, this process, too, must occur in an evolutionary manner and in the framework of objective laws of social development; it must be determined by the entire social-cultural, economic, and political potential of society rather than the political claims of the moment or hasty legal acts.

*Still, it is no secret that there have recently been negative tendencies in ethnic relations in Kazakhstan, too. Serious problems have surfaced in the position of what is known as the “Russian-speaking population.” What is your position on these issues?*

I must say that my attitude toward the term “Russian-speaking” is very cautious. It does not define a person’s nationality or membership in any social, professional or party grouping. I believe that this highly politicized neologism has been invented by those outside circles which would like to provoke, in their own interest, ethnic strife in the young sovereign states or by radical nationalists inside the CIS countries who have an interest in violating the civil rights of the non-native population.

There are several million people in Kazakhstan – and these are not necessarily Russians – who regard the Russian language as their native tongue or who have a perfect command of it. Some of them were born here, others arrived here – either voluntarily or as Stalin’s prison inmates. But they all of them made an invaluable contribution to the socioeconomic and cultural development of the republic and have every right to call themselves Kazakhstanis, with the same rights as any other citizens of the republic.

INTERVIEW GRANTED BY PRESIDENT NAZARBAYEV  
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## **NURSULTAN NAZARBAYEV, THE MAN WHO DECIDED TO LIFT THE “BELT OF TEMPORIZING” OFF EURASIA**

*Mr. President, do you ever think of history, when you are not preoccupied with the exhausting, nerve-racking current affairs which, whatever may be said to the contrary, make up ninety percent of the process of running a state? Does the first president of Kazakhstan feel himself to be an historical personality?*

Last year, as I returned from the United States, I stopped off in Paris for talks with President Mitterand. I had an hour and a half of free time, and we went to the Hotel des Invalides. I guess anyone who stops by Napoleon's tomb thinks of history and greatness. I believe there are two types of historical personalities. Napoleon is a great man, although he shed rivers of blood. I remember Raskolnikov musing on this subject. Whatever may be said now of Hitler, Stalin, or Mussolini – they are historical personalities and, consequently, they are endowed with greatness, albeit greatness with the negative sign. But there are great people of a different type – creators, builders, law-givers, such as Abraham Lincoln or George Washington. Or take such an outstanding personality as De Gaulle. He knew humiliation and emigration but, displaying extraordinary courage, he not only restored France as a great state – he also found it in him to get out of Algeria with dignity, avoid a civil war, overcome military dependence on the United States, and win a special status for France in the Western world. Or you take Ataturk, who inherited the ruins of the Ottoman empire but was able to inculcate Western values

in the people of Turkey, in particular the Western attitude to work. Today Turkey is a very strong country. Where active politicians like myself are concerned, only history can pass judgment on this. As the people surrounding us raise glasses at banquets to us, they call us historical personalities, but it is not their word that counts here. It's our descendants who will judge us by our deeds.

*If I understood you correctly, the first president of Kazakhstan likes De Gaulle because he managed to create a strong France and overcome its military and political dependence on the United States. And he likes Ataturk because the latter made Turkey lean toward Europe and laid the foundations of the Turkish "economic miracle." Can we assume that you see these two vectors of development as optimal for Kazakhstan?*

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was, as everybody knows, a Turk of European extraction. The attitude toward Ataturk as a politician is mixed enough, but he managed to get rid of the "imperial complex," finding an entirely new place for Turkey in the world. He made the Turks take a fresh look at themselves. Turkey began to develop as a European country and achieved great success. It is a far from simple task, ceasing to shed tears over a lost empire and starting to work on concrete, creative tasks in the new state. Ataturk did not unite the Turkish people under the flag of reviving the Ottoman Empire but around the idea of building a national state of their own. I believe that Russia needs people like that right now, too. As far as De Gaulle as president is concerned, he managed to create an effective vertical power structure and put France's politics and economy in order, but it wouldn't enter anyone's head to call him a dictator. It would probably be best, according to Oriental custom, to close our discussion of historical greatness with an appropriate parable. A certain Roman emperor was asked – why wasn't he erecting monuments to himself? After all, he was so great! His reply: I don't want people to ask after my death, Whose monument is this? Let them wonder

instead: How is it, he was such a great man, and there's no monument to him?

*Both these statesmen were able to give their peoples a new ideology whose main tenets, incidentally, have so far not been questioned either in France or in Turkey. Are any attempts made in Kazakhstan to formulate a state ideology of its own? If so, what are its main principles?*

The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan states that the republic of Kazakhstan recognizes ideological diversity. This is a guarantee against a unified totalitarian ideology hostile to any dissent. We are building a law-based, democratic, civil society. That means that any discussion of ideology must take into account the specific features of the way of life and the way of thinking of the people or peoples living in the state. Of considerable importance are its territory, natural deposits, geographical situation, its role in the international division of labor, and so on. All this affects ideology. The Kazakh people have ancient traditions that are handed down from generation to generation. How are they to be adapted to the new political and economic system evolving in this country? Of course, we would very much like the people to borrow all the best from the old and from the new, we would like all the residents of Kazakhstan, regardless of their nationality, to feel worthy citizens and patriots of their country. It is no secret that the loyalty of the Americans and the Japanese to their national values is explained, among other things, by the fact that a very high standard of living is part of these values. We must also do our best that all citizens of Kazakhstan might live prosperous and dignified lives. My ideal is a society of well-to-do people. But this process cannot be speeded up by a president's decree or a decision of parliament. I believe that the best ideology is the one that comes from real life. We are only beginning to build a state of our own, we are searching for things at this transitional stage, so I cannot say that we have formulated some new ideology finally and irreversibly. Our values, our national ideolo-

gy are evolving as life evolves. But I can promise firmly that in Kazakhstan the state will not oppress the individual.

*And still, of all the CIS leaders you were the first to propose integration initiatives. Your proposals to set up the Eurasian Union, which has created such a stir, isn't this an ideology? Incidentally, all sorts of opinions are expressed in this connection. It is alleged that Nazarbayev needs this to go on siphoning off Russia's resources. Or this: Doesn't he see himself as the head of this Union, by any chance?*

As far as siphoning off is concerned, the level of and the control over economic relations in today's world are such that no one can siphon off anything from anyone free or in any decent quantity. Practical experience shows that Kazakhstan can live and develop without siphoning off anything from anyone, including Russia. It is another matter that Kazakhstan and Russia can lose profitable economic ties and markets. The second consideration doesn't hold water either. Kazakhstan alone is more than I can chew, so to speak.

I don't know if a policy aimed at mutually advantageous integration is an ideology. After all, the entire world is now aspiring toward integration and rational regulation of relations with near and distant neighbors. The European Union, the Arab Nations League, alliances of Latin American countries and those of the Asian Pacific region are all deepening their mutual relations, looking for, and finding, mutually acceptable solutions of political and economic problems. Their states can only profit by this.

Unfortunately, the CIS has not fully justified the hopes placed on it. In the last two or three years it has become clear that development within the CIS framework only leads to their mutual alienation in many areas, including, apart from the economy, also politics, science, culture, and education. This situation can hardly suit the peoples of the CIS which carry the main burden of the economic crisis. The people unequivocally express themselves in favor of closer cooperation; they come to realize that it is im-

possible to overcome the severe economic crisis engulfing the whole of the CIS without “ennobling,” through joint efforts our common living space, and that voluntary isolation under the flag of sovereignty is actually tantamount to regress and total degradation. This naturally comes into conflict with the aspirations of both the ruling political elites, which see calls for integration as a challenge to sovereignty and a desire to restore the old centralized system of management, and of radical nationalists posing as the “only defendants” and “champions” of their people’s interests.

The formation of the Eurasian Union within and side by side with the CIS might be, on the one hand, the historical compromise which the post-Soviet independent states need so badly now, and on the other, a prototype of the future union, at a much higher level, of countries and peoples.

*There is said to be in existence a certain secret document produced either by the CIA or the State Department which asserts that the new states formed on the former USSR territory will be partially reunited by the year 2000. Ivan Rybkin, the speaker of the Russian State Duma, likes to repeat the phrase: “We are doomed to concord.” You are saying: “We are doomed to integration.” But how can Russia be integrated, say, with Ukraine, which is definitely intent on curtailing cooperation, or with Central Asian states — Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan, which have opted for models of development of their own, not quite in keeping with recognized norms of democracy and promoting Islamization of various spheres in the life of society? It was only in the USSR that all differences could be leveled off, and all peoples brought to a common denominator.*

First, I am all for respecting the choice of any people, especially in the hard transitional period. Second, the project for the Eurasian Union in no way calls for a revival of the old USSR. Integration does not at all signify a return to the old empire, to a union based on dictatorship and coercion. The independence of the

former Soviet republics has become a reality, it is filled with concrete content, and it has become part and parcel of the people's mentality. This fully applies to Kazakhstan, too. No one can turn the clock back. The desire to restore the Soviet Union at any cost, including violent means, is the road leading to a historical dead end. Any attempt to restore the totalitarian state would have to be paid for in escalation of ethnic tension, expansion of zones of instability and conflicts, and slowing down and even total curtailment of reform. The principles of the formation and functioning of the Eurasian Union, on the other hand, would enable the member states to implement, without any encroachment on their state sovereignty, economic reform, take part in the inter-state division of labor, and carry on foreign trade. The fact that some CIS countries today cease to be oriented toward Russia is explained by Russia's inability to offer a comprehensible integration program of which the first point must be actual recognition of the equality of all the newly independent states. Russia must define its geostrategic interests as soon as possible. Time is slipping by. The chaos and waverings in the CIS are caused, among other factors, by the republics being forced to solve their economic and geopolitical tasks on their own. And the weak, as we know well, do not choose their allies but obey the strong.

*That is all very well, but the notion "Russia's geostrategic interests is clearly not limited to its relations with the CIS alone, right?"*

Undoubtedly. From the very center of Eurasia we see quite well that construction of a new system of international security is underway in the West. For example, NATO is busy moving east, closer to Russia's borders. In the east and south-east, Asian countries continue to look for ways of political and military cooperation within the framework of their own structures. If we look at the geographical map, we will easily see that there is a continuous vertical belt of countries from Russia in the north to India in the south (including the Central Asian countries, Iran, and Paki-

stan) which have so far joined neither East nor West. I would call this solid geopolitical belt of countries along the meridian in the center of Asia the “belt of temporizing.” Despite all the differences between these countries, they form a rather integral group in terms of potential resources and possibilities for influencing the balance of forces not only in Asia and Eurasia but also on a global scale. Security in Europe and especially in Asia, relations between the world economic centers of Western Europe and South-East Asia will largely depend on the positions and orientation of the countries of this geopolitical “belt of temporizing.”

The largest and so far the most powerful of these countries is Russia. It is Russia's choice that will determine stability in the world and especially in Eurasia. I believe that Russia has three options. The first is to join the West European structures. But these are not letting Russia in. The second, to join the East-Asian structures. No one is awaiting Russia there either. Finally, the third option is to try and gather the countries of the “belt of temporizing” in a special group and create a new system of security on the Eurasian continent. The other countries have just two options – either go east, or build a system of security without Russia. Kazakhstan might help Russia in the matter of gathering the “belt of temporizing” in Eurasia. In the first place, Kazakhstan, along with the other Central Asian states that were formerly Soviet republics, conducts a policy of preserving peace and stability in Central Asia. Second, Kazakhstan is quite active, within the CIS framework, in terms of international security and disarmament. Third, Kazakhstan has initiated the convening of a conference on cooperation and trust in Asia. Fourth, Kazakhstan participates in the work of the OSCE, the program Partnership for Peace, START-1, and in the Disarmament Commission. In a word, Russia cannot find a better partner as it leans toward Asia.

*President Boris Yeltsin of Russia has also recently expressed himself in favor of closer cooperation within the CIS framework...*

Many declarations about the CIS are purely political and easily forgotten as soon as the internal political situation in the country changes. The president of Russia spoke in favor of closer cooperation in the days of the Bosnian crisis, when Russia felt slighted by its new partners, when it felt itself isolated. Hopefully, he was speaking sincerely. Although it could have been said in a friendlier tone, without stressing the interests of Russia alone or ignoring the interests of Russia's CIS partners, especially at a time when they entrusted the chairmanship of the CIS to Russia. Regrettably, Russian politicians sometimes behave in a different manner. I remember Alexander Shokhin and Boris Fyodorov literally twisting Kazakhstan's arms as they pushed us out of the ruble zone. They were aware already that there would be no ruble zone, but for some reason they continued to play strange games with us, insisting on endless concessions.

*What is, specifically, Kazakhstan's interest in the Eurasian Union project?*

Kazakhstan, just as the other CIS countries, Russia above all, is interested in the realization of this project for many reasons. Kazakhstan has begun restructuring its economy. We are now faced with unemployment, falling living standards, and growing social tension. By fully restoring our traditional markets, the Russian market above all, and forging anew, while that is still possible, the broken links with partners of many years standing, we hope to alleviate to a considerable degree the consequences of the crisis. Considering the tensions that have arisen in certain areas along the CIS southern borders, we believe that the new union could be a guarantor of Kazakhstan's external security. The external security of the members of the Eurasian Union is a necessary guarantee of its internal political stability. A necessary condition of entry into the Eurasian Union must be cessation of hostilities, economic blockade, and other repressive actions on the part of member countries with regard to each other. An effective mechanism could be created within the framework of the defense

union to prevent possible ethnic and other conflicts within the states. A new level of integration could permit the solution of everyday problems of many people who ended up on opposite sides of the new borders. Restoring ordinary human links and providing adequate living conditions within a space that was once a single whole – what's so negative about that?

*Your idea of a new geopolitical alliance along the Eurasian meridian seems to be very interesting. But will people professing such different faiths as Orthodox Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism be able to realize their community? Incidentally, Mr. President, you are said to have performed a Hadj, to have met the Pope of Rome at the Vatican, and received in Alma-Ata Alexy II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. Can you say that you are a religious man, a believer?*

The world religions, especially Christianity and Islam, are very similar to each other in terms of their canons. Loving your neighbor, helping the sufferer, taking pity on the poor and the wretched – all this is present both in Christianity and Islam. Believers – whether Christian or Moslem – are afraid to sin in their earthly life for they will have to answer for that on the Day of Judgment. The older generation remembers the religious commandments, and they therefore did not lose their bearings when Communist ideology collapsed. Young people are in a more difficult situation now. They are no longer atheists but cannot yet be said to be believers. I believe that spirituality, that is, inner decency, and faith go hand in hand. First a person takes the path of spiritual perfection, and then he comes nearer to God. Islam and Christianity are the two wings of Kazakhstani spirituality.

During my official visit to Italy I met the Pope. That man produced a great impression on me. He was well-prepared for the meeting and talked freely on the problems Kazakhstan is now facing. He has excellent knowledge of what goes on in the world, and has an opinion of his own on it all. I was at the Vatican with my younger daughter Aliya, and I asked him to bless her. He

raised his hand but then looked at her and obviously remembered that she was no Christian, no Catholic. So he froze, with his finger at her forehead. I have a photograph of that occasion.

We talked for forty minutes with him. I said that all peoples were now looking for spiritual support, they wanted to know how to go on living. I also said that the 21<sup>st</sup> century must become the age of final reconciliation of the two major religions, Christianity and Islam. He agreed with what I said. True, when I told him that I was going to Mecca, to Saudi Arabia, he complained that they absolutely rejected the Roman Catholic Church there, and said that the Islamic clergy must be more tolerant. Every religion has the right to exist, but men must have the right of choice, they must have freedom of conscience. The Pope received us in his country residence. He thought it necessary to give a little present to everyone who was there.

Then I went to Mecca. I talked for two and a half hours with King Fahd Abdel Aziz. We met at 11 p.m., that's the custom there. Probably because it is very hot in the daytime there. Kazakhstan is the extreme north-western area to which Islam extends. The king said that it was very interesting for him to meet someone from that area. I was struck by the sincerity of both the Pope and of the king of Saudi Arabia. They are true believers. There is not the slightest tinge of falseness about them. As I talked with them, I kept thinking about myself: What am I, a former Communist – a believer or an atheist? This is something that I always think about as I talk to people in whom I feel true faith. I console myself with the thought that it takes a whole lifetime for a person to come to God. One can come to God in one's young years, or at a mature age.

The king of Saudi Arabia told me an interesting thing. For many centuries Saudi Arabia was under the colonial yoke. Allah gave it wealth in the shape of oil, and only then did the country become free. "Once Allah blessed our independence and gave us these riches," the king said, "why don't we return part of that

wealth to Allah?” That was his answer to my question – whether it was true that \$100 billion was spent to build a mosque around Kaaba, in which two and a half million Moslems can pray simultaneously. I was overwhelmed by that mosque. The first floor, the second floor, the square all around, the pillars – everything is made of white Italian marble. You don’t see the horizon from this mosque, only an endless row of supports. With an air-conditioner at each support. The mosque is not closed, it is sizzling hot outside, but the air-conditioners cool the air. The king said: “God gave us, and we must return.” Saudi Arabia does indeed spend vast funds to keep the holy places in order and create the proper conditions for the pilgrims arriving here from all over the world. They do it, although I don’t think it is that easy even for them, with their wealth.

In the past, Communist leaders rarely met with church hierarchs. They only began meeting them when they became leaders of independent states. And they discovered that these were very well educated and worthy people. I met Patriarch Alexy several times, and I have profound respect for him. He is a very wise man, a peace-maker by his nature. It is so important in these days. I was very touched when he accepted my invitation and came to Alma-Ata. I’m glad that he was pleased by the things he saw here. Such meetings are extremely useful. According to the Constitution, religion is separated from the state in Kazakhstan. There must be no political parties or movements of a purely religious sort. But we are creating conditions for free development of all religions, giving back cult facilities to Moslems and Christians all over the republic.

*You still haven’t answered my question, Mr. President...*

I’m not striking out my Communist past, that is why it is very hard for me to answer your question. I come from a Moslem family. When I was born, my grandmother was still alive, and she brought me up. As far back as I remember, she prayed, performing the *namaz* five times a day. Eight generations back, I

have a great ancestor called Karasai-batyr. He performed many great feats in 1640-1680. That was the time of the Jungar invasion. He had to lead the host of all Kazakhs. Karasai-batyr was famous for being the first to employ trench warfare tactics against the Jungars. Under his command, six hundred warriors withstood the onslaught of an army of ten thousand. They stopped the Jungars, just like King Leonides' 300 Spartans stopped the Persian host. So Granny told me, If things get tough, pray to the spirit of Karasai-batyr, and he will come to your aid. I believe in that. Many times in my life I found myself in difficult situations, and I somehow got out of them each time. Maybe it's a kind of auto-suggestion? Every person, whatever he might say and whatever kind of atheist he might regard himself as, has a sense of faith and hope, a sense of the presence of God. Every Soviet Communist had that sense, too. At Easter, I go to an Orthodox church, and during the Ramadan festival, I go to a Moslem mosque. That is not a fine gesture of a politician who wants to win the trust of believers. I do it quite sincerely. I am the president of a state in which both Moslems and Christians live. They are my fellow countrymen, my electors. Therefore their faith is my faith. I adhere to the idea that God is one, and that people come to Him in various ways.

*Mr. President, does the voice of ordinary people ever reach you? In Russia, it has been believed since time immemorial that the tsar, the ruler, the president is sitting somewhere high and knows nothing about the people's misfortunes. How would you assess your own activity if you were an ordinary citizen of Kazakhstan?*

Frankly speaking, I still feel ashamed as I dash along the streets in a black limousine past ordinary people. This must be due to my working-class past – I'm a metallurgist by profession. I'm extremely concerned about what people are thinking as they follow the speeding car with their eyes. So I tell myself this: If I do everything in my power to improve the life of the people, if I

give them prosperity and peace and protect them against upheavals, they will bear with me even if I rush past them in my limousine.

It is difficult, almost impossible to hope, though, that all people think well of me these days. Can't even think of a thing like that. The people are experiencing great hardships because of the collapse of a unified state, decline in production, economic crisis, payment arrears, low wages, irregular payment of old-age pensions, unemployment, and work stoppages at enterprises. But all things are learned by way of comparison, they say. If we compare Kazakhstan with other CIS countries, where blood is shed and people are dying, we are not doing all that bad, I guess. We are not among the last in the matter of reforming the economy and society, either. It must be for this reason that the Kazakhstani continue to trust me.

Honestly, I did not expect 95.4 percent of voters who came to the polls on April 30, 1995 to vote for extending the president's powers until the year 2000. I believe that people place their hopes for a speedy improvement of their lives on me. This is a source of constant worry for me. Of course I'm concerned about what people are thinking and saying about me. I'm doing all I can to have people who think well of me to continue doing so, and to change for the better the opinion of those who don't like me.

*There are quite a few young people around you. Is this a deliberate cadre policy? Do you as the head of state value the experiences of leaders of the old school?*

I said before, and I'm ready to repeat it again, that in the past the best cadres were absorbed in the Party bodies. The Party was a kind of elite. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, when we began to lay the foundations of independent Kazakhstan, we worked with the people that we had. There just weren't any others. We did not sack anyone from their posts simply because a person had been the secretary of a city or district Party committee. Those who have learned to work under the new con-

ditions are still working. Take for example Andrei Braun, head of the administration in Akmola. People joke about him that he is a Party dinosaur, but at 58 he is working for the good of the reforms better than some twenty-five-year-olds. Many people leave of their own will. Not everybody decided to follow the caravan of reforms. Some people don't know what they have to do or how or, most importantly, what for. It's a tragedy, in fact. A splitting of personality. Appointed by a decree of mine, the leader is supposed to implement the policy of the president and the government, but in his heart of hearts he doesn't want to do it. As a result, his performance is slowed down, and he has to be relieved of his duties. In this way a third of the heads of regional administrations were replaced recently. It has always seemed important to me that people coming to power should be not so much of young age as capable of thinking in a fresh, novel manner, with a sense of the future. At first, there were very few people like that in Kazakhstan. Later, however, Dr. Bang, my first advisor, and the European Union helped to set up the Kazakhstani Institute for Economics, Management, and Forecasting. In the past few years, 350 young people graduated from it – people who know foreign languages and have Master's degrees in economics and management. There is also the Bolashak program: We sent 500 students to Western countries. When they come back, they will form part of the new Kazakhstani elite. According to an agreement concluded with President Mitterand, we set up in Kazakhstan a higher school for managers after the model of the one in Paris. It trains professionals who will occupy the posts of ministers and leaders of the regional and district level. The youngest head of the administration we have is in Semipalatinsk region – he is 31. Two ministers in our government are roughly the same age. We have young people working in the Finance Ministry, the National Bank, the People's Savings Bank, and the Ministry of Justice. These are all new people, the children of perestroika.

*OK, but what is to be done about the principle of personal loyalty, a principle that is highly valued not only in the East?*

That's a tough question. I guess I'm temperamentally unsuited for the role of the leader – I always get upset when I have to part with people who failed at their job. How were so-called teams put together in the past? Officially, on the grounds of loyalty to the Marxist-Leninist idea, but in actual fact on the criterion of loyalty to the superior. I'm not against loyalty, if it comes from identity of views on politics or economics. A person must be loyal not so much to President Nazarbayev (he can make mistakes) as to the people. I can forgive everything for this kind of loyalty. But the other kind of loyalty – I don't share your ideas but I must hold on to this post to earn my bread – this sort of loyalty doesn't suit me at all. I came across this sort of loyalty many times. Whenever your position becomes shaky, these "loyal" people hide themselves at once.

They are never at your side – and how loyal they seemed in the past! As I grow older, I come to look at these things with greater equanimity. What is the Nazarbayev team today? It is a group of people who are capable of pushing reform ahead and improving the life of the people. If they meet these demands, they are a team. If not, then not.

*And suppose they do meet these demands but keep arguing, insisting on their views, and telling you unpleasant things?*

Let them. Nowadays my attitude toward these things is quite normal.

*And before?*

Painful. After all, I was first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan and chairman of the Council of Ministers. I could not be criticized. What did it mean in those years, criticizing a Central Committee secretary or chairman of the Council of Ministers? It meant destroying the system. One might aim even higher. One could destroy the

tradition. Generally speaking, the East has never been too keen on criticism. He who violated the tradition simply got killed. Just like in the film about Abai. A person is accused of looking too tenderly at his daughter-in-law. So he is hanged from a camel's neck.

In Soviet times I was just like everybody else. And since we have started building a democratic, civil society, I will follow the new traditions just as faithfully. You know that the Constitution allows me to pull in the reins. But I don't want that. I can, but I don't want to. I want all people to express themselves freely and without fear, I want this to become the norm of our life. My people, the Kazakhstanis, got for the first time a chance to become free citizens in their country, and I mustn't permit anyone to take this away from them. We have not sent anyone to prison for dissent or with legal violations, we haven't yet closed down a single newspaper. When I discussed the draft new Constitution, serious debatable issues came up. They waited for me to speak up. And I told them: "Don't take pity on me, don't be afraid to hurt my pride. If something is amiss, prove it to me." So they tried to convince me and prove they were right. It's difficult to get accustomed to the new relations – not just for me but also for others, too.

*And suppose that a group of people disagrees with you? A whole organization, maybe a political party? Do you accept the idea that there may be a political opposition in Kazakhstan?*

My views have greatly changed in recent times in this respect, too. In Soviet times, the idea of legal opposition to the ruling regime could not have entered my head even, that much is clear. Now, however, I accept this with equanimity. It is normal for society to have different parties expressing the interests, often conflicting interests, of different strata and groups of the population. They carefully monitor the administration's mistakes, draw the attention of society to them, and do not let us rest on the

laurels. These people are sometimes more useful to society than some fat-cat officials.

I would put it like this: If political opposition did not exist, it ought to be created. The only question is, What sort of opposition is it going to be? There's great danger to social peace from assorted political extremists, from politicians who try to unbalance the situation in society in order to ride the crest of a murky wave. I'm ready to welcome and support oppositionists with constructive ideas and mindset. They don't gloat over the government's errors but suggest their own solutions. I'm ready to cooperate with these oppositionists. People like that can be properly integrated in the ruling structures, they are working on the presidential staff and in the government. There are a great many examples of this. And no one forces them into renegeing on their convictions or political preferences. They simply come and work for their own benefit and that of society.

*The media often reproaches you for undemocratic tendencies. The dissolution of the parliament and the holding of the referendums are often cited as examples...*

Criticism of the government in a free press is a normal thing, and a useful one sometimes. Of course, one gets irritated, angry, or puzzled at times. But that happens only when one encounters obvious incorrectness in the presentation. And if criticism is intelligent, conscientious, and convincing, it is best to think it over.

However, a serious politician must be able to ignore the fear that his actions may get a bad press. Did I know that the press would reproach me for anti-democratic tendencies, dictatorial leanings, and clamping down on the parliamentary structure in the republic? Of course I did. But I took into account the existing realities. The parliament had been dissolved by decision of the Constitutional Court. It did not have wide support in the broad sections of the population, it had failed to become a professional body capable of performing its main task – creating the legislative basis for reform. It took them a year to pass fewer than

ten laws that had anything to do with reforms. Right now, there's a pause there. There's no parliament. Well, and what has happened? No one is having hysterics, the state is not collapsing, and the opposition is not suppressed. During this pause, however, nearly 70 acts, absolutely essential to society, have been worked out and endorsed by the president's decrees that have the force of law.

And still, Kazakhstan cannot and will not exist without a normally functioning legislative branch of government. In accordance with our Constitution and laws we will hold free parliamentary elections early in December this year. I sincerely hope that the new parliament will prove to be really professional. Each branch of government will do its own job on the principles of mutual responsibility. And the president will guarantee their normal functioning and responsibility before the people.

*Do you manage to maintain personal relations with people who are near and dear to you but occupy a much lower rung of the social ladder?*

Only yesterday I saw off my close friend Nikolai Litoshko. In 1958, when I was 17, we faced off in a wrestling bout in Dneprodzerzhinsk in the Ukraine, where I lived at the time. I did free-style wrestling at that time, I was a middle-weight – 79 kilos. It was a really tough bout. Later, I again beat him, when we met at city-level competitions. He lost three kilos and went over to another category. I knew his parents, too. His mother gave us some pies, when we left the Ukraine for Kazakhstan. It took a train four days then to get here. Nikolai is a simple worker, a metallurgist. An old-age pensioner now. I never lost touch with him. President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine learned about it and brought him over during his visit to Kazakhstan.

In 1960, I returned to the Karaganda Iron and Steel Works. In 1962, I got married. Nikolai also moved to Kazakhstan. He drove in every nail in my little apartment. My wife Sara liked him immensely. Here's a real man, she said, a real master in his house.

When he came over this time, I saw that his hands were callused, so I asked him: "What's this, Nikolai, you're an old-age pensioner, aren't you?" "Well, what am I to do," he said, "one must live somehow." His old-age pension comes to two million *karbovantsi*. I did some mental arithmetic – that amounts to just \$14. So he started a kitchen-garden, and in summer he builds garages and homes for his neighbors. That's the sort of guys they are, my friends the metallurgists. Many of them live in Temirtau. Life has treated them in all sorts of ways. So I keep in touch with my old friends. And one doesn't have all that many real friends – people whom one has known for a long time, people who can say anything right to one's face. I would very much like to get away from it all some day and go to Temirtau, for all of us to gather there. We metallurgists are pensioned off at 50. By the way, I earned my pension a long time ago.

*Are you really planning to retire on a pension, Mr. President?*

Thinking of it...

*Some serious problems have arisen in Kazakhstan in connection with its Russian population. What do you think on this score?*

There are several million people – not all of them Russians – in Kazakhstan who regard Russian as their native tongue. Some of them were born here, others came here of their own will or under prison escort in Stalin's times. They made an invaluable contribution to the republic's culture and the economy. They and their children are rightly regarded as Kazakhstanis and equal citizens of our state.

As I understand it, it is a question of the Slavic part of the population which found itself, as a result of the disintegration of the USSR, cut off from the historical homeland by borders that sprang up no one knows whence. We treat their concern about their fate with understanding and are trying to take their interests

into account as best we can. The new Constitution describes Russian as an official language whose status is equal to that of the state language. Several dozens of papers and magazines appear in Russian, there are TV and radio broadcasts, and education at many secondary schools and higher educational establishments is also in Russian. Russian theaters function, and books in Russian are produced. There is even a Russian inscription on the bank-notes of the national currency, the tenge. But so far we have failed to stop the exodus from Kazakhstan of Russians, as well as Germans, Ukrainians, Greeks, and members of other nationalities. It should be noted that the bulk of Russians who are now leaving are residents of military townships, including top secret ones. The military ranges are closed down, the servicemen leave, and civilians are left without jobs. The Central Asian Military District had a contingent of half a million, and our army is ten times smaller. At a recent meeting, Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said that 700,000 Jews had migrated from Russia to Israel. The President of Germany also spoke about Germans leaving Russia. But they do not reproach Russia for that. Incidentally, tens of thousands of Kazakhs are returning to Kazakhstan from Russia. The causes of migration do not lie in ethnic friction, which simply does not exist right now in Kazakhstan, but in the people's desire to improve their material well-being. To calm the people down, we concluded an agreement with Russia on a simplified procedure for acquiring Russian citizenship for people leaving Kazakhstan for permanent residence in Russia. The people realized that the government has no secret designs against them, and the flow of migration began to abate. Recently, the new term "re-emigrant" has appeared here – the word refers to those who, having realized the hastiness of their original decision, are returning to their abandoned hearths.

*You said recently that, if we were to compare the situation in Kazakhstan with the Great Patriotic War, the battle of Kursk*

*has already been won. When will ultimate victory come, Mr. President?*

I am no soothsayer, no Nostradamus, not even an ESP specialist. I would very much like to bring closer the time when the citizens of Kazakhstan will at last be able to earn good money, when society will be rid of this terrible blight, crime, and when people will have everything needed to live a normal life, to work, love, and enjoy the pleasures of life. I may not be doing all that well, I'm not satisfied with my performance myself, but I'm doing everything that I can. And the victory is not far off.

*Do you feel a happy man now that you are at the pinnacle? What years do you regard as the best – those that you have already lived through or those that you have yet to live?*

Kazakhs have this well-wishing formula: Make me as happy as a child. The word *sabi* means “baby,” “child.” Each age has its own dimension of happiness, but childhood is still the happiest time. True, I grew up in a peasant family, my mother and father worked on a collective farm, and we lived in poverty. At 16, I began to work at an iron and steel works, in a blast furnace shop. Later I studied at an institute, then went back to the plant. It may be surprising, but in those years I practically had no feeling at all that the weight of the system oppressed me. There was complete democracy and freedom of speech within the working collective. I worked 17 years at iron and steel works in Temirtau and Karaganda, and on the whole it was a happy time for me.

My maturity fell on the time of disaster for this vast country. I had to take extremely difficult and responsible decisions. Just as most other Soviet people, I lived through what is known as a crisis or split in consciousness. Just as they, I know the feeling of hopelessness, of an abyss yawning under your feet. We were not conscious of that at the time itself of the collapse of the Soviet Union, this sense only came later. At present Kazakhstan is gradually overcoming the crisis, it is groping for a path of its own

in the world, and establishing good relations with its neighbors. Kazakhstan is a worthy and respected member of the world community, and it is pleasant to think that I have had something to do with it all. In Soviet times I worked as a regional Party secretary for the economy, then a Central Committee secretary for industry. On the whole, I never had anything to do with ideology, always with the economy. I was responsible for meeting planned targets, and I remember the pressure I worked under. But since the beginning of the 1990s, every year is about as hard as six or seven years before. But I'm bearing up, for these are very interesting years.

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## **I SINCERELY WISH RUSSIA ALL THE BEST**

*Mr. President, we are accustomed to believe that extremism and terrorism are the lot of split countries and societies divided within themselves. But the assassination of the prime minister of Israel by one of his own people has shown that the situation is much more complicated than that. Do you agree that the former confrontation of the two world systems has given way to the much more contradictory confrontation between what may be called society's traditional, healthy forces and extremist forces which may make use of all sorts of slogans but always lead to destabilization, chaos, and war?*

Terrorism, extremism, anarchy, nationalism, and similar manifestations become exacerbated at breakpoint moments in history. The destruction of the USSR shifted the world's axis. The old mainstays were destroyed. The new ones are just beginning to take shape. We utter fine words about universal human values and pass humane laws, but they do not work, for laws are only effective when society is mature enough to obey them. Laws then easily and naturally become part of our life. Nothing like that is happening in this part of the world. We say that mechanisms for enforcing laws must be created. That is so, but the problem is even more serious than that. Not only the CIS but also countries like Israel with their monolithic view of the state's national tasks belong to the "risk zone." Recently, I met both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat at the anniversary session of the United Nations in New York. They reached an agreement on the Middle

East settlement, and I congratulated them on that. I had the impression that Mr. Rabin was at the peak of his political career, that that was his “star hour.” Nothing augured such an early and terrible end.

*Political figures are usually killed precisely at the peak of their careers...*

That is true. But only in part. The Middle East is the scene of conflict of extremely diverse interests. There was also the assassination attempt on the president of Egypt, when he was on a visit in a foreign country. Assassination attempts are made at moments when events are inexorably moving, through the efforts of political leaders, in the direction that does not suit certain forces. Then terrorists come on the scene. But history also knows cases of leaders arranging assassination attempts on themselves. Naturally, quite different goals are pursued in cases like this.

*Both cases seem to be possible in the CIS, right?*

Quite right. The situation is complicated by the fact that re-division of property is in progress now. What are the characteristic features of most CIS countries today? Rampant crime, contract killings, laws that do not work, and fear that has become the norm of life. Almost half the killers that have been identified but never caught roam the former Soviet Union. It is impossible to solve the problem of crime in Russia alone or Kazakhstan alone. Only through joint efforts can it be achieved. Besides, big money is made in a situation of chaos, war, and disorder. I first fell to thinking about this in Nagorny Karabakh, where I went on a peace-making mission along with Boris Yeltsin. Do ordinary people – it doesn't matter whether they are Armenians or Azerbaijanis – need this bloodshed? Strangely, no one – not statesmen, not political scientists, not journalists – can offer a sensible explanation: Why don't the wars in Nagorny Karabakh or Tajikistan end after so many years? Why is the Russian army still fighting its own people in Chechnya, after a whole year?

*Alas, Mr. President, all of post-Soviet history is an endless row of questions without answers.*

I don't agree. There are answers. The peoples, the ordinary people, have nothing to do with any of this. It is the politicians that set the flywheel of war and massacre in motion, and it is criminals that use it in their own interests. They will all be named in due time, without fail. In Karabakh, it all began with the 1989 elections. To get elected to the USSR Supreme Soviet, the candidates – incidentally, not just Armenians or Azerbaijanis – began to play the nationality card, for that was the easiest way to collect votes.

*They're playing the nationality card, say, in Canada, too. But things don't go as far as murder and mayhem there.*

They don't in Canada, but they do in Northern Ireland and Spain. I am thinking of all this with great concern. I continue to believe that integration of CIS countries is above all necessary to bring the peoples of our countries back to normal existence and to reassure them. For the CIS countries, integration and cooperation spell more than just economic advantages: They stand for the absolutely necessary sense of spiritual and psychological stability and confidence in the future. All this must naturally be achieved on condition of maintaining their independence and sovereignty by all the states. We have lived together for hundreds of years. The most remarkable thing is – and this is something that no one for some reason remembers – that our peoples have had common experience of building a market economy: I refer to the period before 1917. Today the CIS countries are just as united in building capitalism as they formerly were in building socialism and communism. So let us combine our efforts! I am convinced that the greater the economic integration, cooperation, and mutual assistance in the vast spaces of the CIS, the less misfortunes, poverty, chaos, extremism, and terrorism there will be.

But, let me say it once again, cooperation must be predicat-

ed on equal compliance with and unconditional respect for the rights and interests of all the countries of the Commonwealth without exception. Only this approach can lead us in the future to a dignified union of independent nations.

*And what about compliance with and respect for the rights of “non-titular” (non-native) peoples within the CIS countries themselves? It appears that you as the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan are in a rather difficult position. On the one hand you are under pressure from part of the national elite that wishes to build a Kazakh state for Kazakhs, first and foremost. On the other, you have problems with the Russian-speaking population, with Cossacks in particular.*

I believe that a person claiming to be a politician must look at any problem from different points of view. In this particular case, we must look at the problem from the standpoint of both Russians and Kazakhs, as well as members of other peoples living in Kazakhstan. If the problem is considered from one standpoint only, that is nationalism of the first water. Can you imagine what would happen in Kazakhstan if I gave a free hand to the small but extremely vigorous group of our Kazakh nationalist intelligentsia, if I accepted their positions? Today, the most numerous ethnic group in Kazakhstan, approximately half the population, are Kazakhs. Some 30 percent are Russians. On the whole, members of some 100 peoples and nationalities live in Kazakhstan. Descendants of those Kazakhs who were forced to migrate after the 1917 revolution to Mongolia and Iran have returned to their homeland. Quite a few Kazakhs have resettled from other Central Asian countries and from Russia, to which they escaped from death by starvation in the 1930s. At the same time the exodus continues of Germans and Russian speakers who came to Kazakhstan either as exiles or as hired labor to develop the virgin lands, to Komsomol-sponsored construction sites, defense factories, and so on. Many of these people never dreamed of staying

in Kazakhstan for good, they always cherished in their heart the thought of eventually returning home. It is a fact that the numerical balance is now shifting in favor of the native population. That process is natural for any young state. And still, Kazakhstan was, is, and will be a multiethnic state. And I see myself precisely as the president of a multiethnic state. I believe that Kazakhstan continually confirms, not in word but in deed, its desire to be Russia's close and friendly neighbor. We always take into account Russia's interests both in domestic and foreign policy. But let no one in Russia think that we are going to make endless one-sided concessions. It takes two to tango, you know. At our recent meeting in Alma-Ata, Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told me that some 700,000 Jews left Russia for Israel in recent years. We also know that quite a few people are leaving Russia for the West, too. But the politicians of those countries do not blame Russia for it.

*I realize, Mr. President, that you are now speaking as a president, as the leader of a young state which is nevertheless accepted by the world community. And suppose we look at the problem from the human rather than state view?*

To begin with, I was educated in Russian, and brought up on Kazakh and Russian cultures. There have always been a great many Russians among my friends. Second, the word "internationalism" has never been an empty sound for me. I grew up and developed in a multiethnic environment. The Kazakhs' respect for Russians developed historically. I am very sorry that some politicians want to drive a wedge between Russians and Kazakhs. And still, I distinguish between the private opinions of these politicians and the positions of Russia as a state. Although, frankly speaking, I sometimes fail to grasp the logic of the formation of public opinion in Russia as regards Kazakhstan. They write that I have seized unlimited powers, that I adjusted the Constitution to suit my own needs, and as good as established a dictatorship.

Meantime, the latest constitutional reform was adjusted to the interests of the Russian-speaking population, too. The old Constitution stated clearly that Kazakhstan is the state of the Kazakh nation which has achieved self-determination. I fought for three days against this formula in the then parliament, but I could do nothing. The Russian language was then endowed with the status, unparalleled in the world, of the language of interethnic communication. The present Constitution begins with the words "We, the people of Kazakhstan": It no longer carries the assertion that this is a state for Kazakhs only. It is recorded there that Kazakhstan is the state of a multiethnic people which protects the rights of all citizens regardless of their nationality, religion, political convictions, and so on. The Russian language, along with the state Kazakh language, is given the status of an official language in all organizations and offices. In what other country, including Slavic ones, is this issue solved in such a manner? In 70 percent of state schools in Kazakhstan, the children are taught in Russian. What other country has Russian theaters and newspapers in every regional capital? I keep saying quite openly that Kazakhs need the Russian language more than the Russians themselves do. It was through the Russian language that Kazakhs gained access to world science, literature, and culture. Young Kazakh intellectuals who now run our state were educated in Russian. The Russian language is one of the United Nations' world languages. The loss of the Russian language would be a loss for Kazakhs. I would like to advise politicians who are now "defending" the Russian language in Kazakhstan to take a look at what the Russian language is turning into in Russia itself, and how it is being treated. In fact, if, say, there are some people in the Duma who believe that there's something wrong with the status of Russian in Kazakhstan, let us set up an authoritative joint commission on human rights which will objectively consider all these problems, including the position of Turkic speakers in Russia. Let me make a reservation from the start, though: These must be

people who are concerned above all with the truth rather than a chance to earn some political capital. I must say that I always get very emotional when I speak on this kind of subjects. I believe that there aren't any problems of this sort among ordinary Kazakhstanis.

*I'm afraid I'll upset you again. Recently, a great deal has been said and written about cuts in Russian TV broadcasting on Kazakhstan territory.*

That is a purely financial problem. Incidentally, I insisted on leaving prime time – until midnight – for Russian TV broadcasts. What is TV these days? It is not just news and films, it is also advertising. Without spending a kopeck, Russian firms add 17 million Kazakhstanis to their potential buyers. We could stand this, I guess. But broadcasting is also power, maintenance of apparatus, repairs, and service personnel who have to be paid wages. Any state that broadcasts on another state's territory pays money for advertising its goods and for relaying its programs. Today, Kazakhstan has no funds to finance not only Russian TV but even its own TV, not to the full extent. That is the crux of the problem. But, if the people of some region wish to see all Russian programs, no one will prevent them from collecting the viewers' money, paying up and watching all they want. That is what is done in the regions. There's no ban on the part of the state. We're not against it. Let everyone watch and read whatever they want. Not one newspaper has been closed in recent years in Kazakhstan. No one has been held to account for dissent. It is a separate issue, though, that Russian TV takes liberties with Kazakhstan's problems. And they don't wish to listen to other viewpoints. They are not letting us get anywhere near Russian TV.

*Mr. President, what is in your view the basic difference between the domestic political situation in Kazakhstan and that in Russia?*

I believe that the political situation in Kazakhstan, especial-

ly after the referendums on the Constitution and on extending the president's powers, has become stabilized. The people are coming to realize their unity. Re-emigration began, that is, a return of the Russian-speaking population to Kazakhstan. At the beginning of next year I'm going to make these figures public. As soon as our major Sokolovsko-Sarbaisky ore-dressing plant began working, two hundred families returned from Russia within the space of a month. People are returning to iron and steel works and aluminum plants. That is yet another proof that basically migration from Kazakhstan has purely economic rather than political roots. As soon as people are paid normal wages, they return and work just fine. That is natural. People want to live well, and they want to be paid well for their labor.

*And still, Mr. President, the problem of 25 million Russians who have ended up outside the borders of the new Russian state exists. And that problem is mostly political rather than economic.*

But it is not the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan who should be held accountable for it. I did not want an abrupt collapse of the Soviet Union.

*Authors of various memoirs are writing now that the disintegration of the USSR was predetermined by the weakness of the former common state. By the way, what is your attitude to works of this genre? After all, you are often mentioned in them. For example, Gorbachev's aide Andrei Grachev insists that one night secret talks were held in Novo-Ogarevo between Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and you, and that it was decided that you should take up the post of prime minister. You are said to have agreed then to dismiss many of the people who later became members of the State Emergency Committee. The Kryuchkov department naturally recorded that conversation, and then the "power ministers" and the rest, realizing that they would not be able to hold on to power, conceived the coup. Other memoirs state that Gorbachev wanted you for vice president instead of Yanayev...*

Yes, we had that conversation. But there were three of us there. No Andrei Grachev among us. I don't believe that Gorbachev wanted me either for prime minister or for vice president. As for the State Emergency Committee, I believe that it had all been planned much earlier than that. It is a different matter that both Gorbachev and the coup-plotters were constantly suffering from a paralysis of the will, a pathological indecisiveness. If you want my personal opinion, I believe that Gorbachev gave up the Soviet Union practically without a fight. At the time of the Belovezhye talks he had sufficient powers, he was still the leader of a nuclear superpower and the supreme commander. I have my own view of these events that changed the course of history, a view that is different from other memoir writers.

*Could it be that you are also writing memoirs, Mr. President?*

People usually write memoirs when they retire from active service, whereas I am still an active politician. Let us say that I'm working on a book in which I'm trying to convey my own interpretation of the historical events of which I was an eyewitness and participant. There is this concept of the "third truth." It always comes later, when the heat is off.

*What is the difference, in your view, between this truth and the first and the second ones?*

The first and the second truth is not so much truth as the self-justification of the victors and the vanquished.

*Mr. President, you once said that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a personal tragedy for you. Just imagine what Russian people experienced and are still experiencing at finding themselves strangers at the festival of building independent national states!*

Russians in the CIS countries felt themselves to be more citizens of the USSR than of Russia as such. At the referendums in

the Baltic Republics and the Ukraine, the absolute majority of Russians voted for the independence of the new states. Ninety-nine percent of Kazakhstani Slavs voted for me during the elections of the president of Kazakhstan. For some reason, people don't like to remember this now. The trouble with Russia is that it has no definite policy toward the 25 million Russians who found themselves (through whose efforts, one might ask?) beyond its borders. One hears it stated, all of a sudden, and at the highest level, that they must all be returned to Russia and settled in there. It immediately transpires, however, that there are no funds for that, nor will there be any in the future. That is playing with fire. Suppose those 25 million all of a sudden up and move to Russia, where, if we are to be frank, no one is expecting them. That is why I call on those innocent people not to let themselves be hostages in the hands of politicians or playthings in their struggle for personal power. I'm telling Russians and Russian speakers in our republic: Let Kazakhstan be our common, beloved Motherland!

*Mr. President, what is your attitude toward the Cossacks living on Kazakhstan's territory and to Cossacks in general?*

That depends on which Cossacks you mean. For instance, I do not quite understand how Cossacks can form an alliance with Communists. What is this, Red Cossacks? Or are they the Cossacks whose forefathers were destroyed in their thousands by Trotsky, Sverdlov, and other Bolsheviks just for being Cossacks? We know that Cossacks are not a nationality but an estate, and inequality of estates is banned by the Constitution of Kazakhstan. I tell them: If you wish to remember your history and culture, if you want to establish a community, sing songs, and live and work together – you're welcome. But please do not forget that it is forbidden to carry side-arms in Kazakhstan, and that there can be no military organizations in Kazakhstan other than state ones. If Cossacks want to serve, we will draft them in the Kazakhstani armed forces, and let them serve as regular Army servicemen.

But we cannot, and will not, permit any other military formations, especially not if they are subordinate to Russian councils of atamans. Our Constitution does not permit this. I am the guarantor of compliance with the Constitution. If anyone wants to dig deeper into history, then Kazakhs have some grudges against the Cossacks, too. Not the present-day Cossacks but the conquerors of the past. It was with the Cossacks that the bloodiest chapters in the Kazakhs' pre-revolutionary history are associated. The Cossacks took away the Kazakhs' best lands; they were given the right to shoot at Kazakhs approaching their villages. In this way, thousands were killed. Together with Kolchak, Annenkov, and others, the Cossacks put Kazakh lands to sword and fire. I believe that the time has come to speak openly of these things. Those who want to play Kazakhs against Cossacks are enemies of Kazakhstani-Russian friendship and trust. They thirst for blood. I am the president of all Kazakhstanis regardless of their nationality and religion. That means that all citizens of Kazakhstan must have equal rights. It is out of the question for some citizens to be permitted to walk about armed with sabers and guns while others are not. I have nothing against Cossacks, but they must obey the laws of the state whose citizens they are. Then again, Kazakhstan and Russia are independent states. Would Russia permit the existence on its territory of military formations of, say, China? So why must there be illegal military formations in Kazakhstan?

*The Russian press, Nezavisimaya Gazeta included, reported on reprisals against such people as the journalist Suprunyuk and Ataman Gunkin.*

The Russian press can turn to the Interior Ministry of Kazakhstan for exhaustive information on the subject. Incidentally, that information was published in the newspaper Kazakhstanskaya Pravda. Both these persons are under investigation for previous legal offenses and on the run. It is not a question of

“Cossacks being thrown in jail in Kazakhstan” – it’s just that no one is permitted to violate the laws and the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Their guilt or innocence will only be determined by the court according to law. That is my firm promise. To conclude this subject, so galling to me, let me say frankly that there is a large group of people in Kazakhstan who champion the national idea and who would like to see Kazakhstan a Kazakh state first and foremost. I am not concealing this. After each statement by Russian politicians expressing their intention to defend Russians, I am pressured in my country: Why don’t you state that you’ll be prepared to defend Kazakhs? A couple of warlike statements, and control over the situation may be lost. That is why any advantages of one nationality over others are impermissible in Kazakhstan. Only in a situation of 100 percent equality of all citizens can we maintain stability and good relations between peoples. We don’t want people to leave Kazakhstan, we don’t want ethnic strife. Ordinary people have so far kept intact their feelings of friendship, understanding, and faith. It is my duty to preserve peace and tranquillity in Kazakhstan.

*Extreme politicization of society and unconcealed mutual hatred of politicians eager for power interfere with peace and tranquillity of CIS countries. All elections turn into a real psychosis and a test of the nation’s endurance. The presidents of the three Central Asian countries conducted referendums on extending their powers and, let’s put it that way, reformed their parliaments. In Russia, too, they keep talking about the boons of “enlightened authoritarianism.” Couldn’t you share your views on this subject?*

Let us compare the situation in the well-established democracies and in the CIS. There, the parties are as a rule headed by extremely well-to-do people, and the electorate of a given party has evolved over decades, if not centuries. It is above all the presence of a powerful middle class that lends stability to the

traditional democratic systems. The middle class is, if you wish, the backbone of democratic society. The distinctive features of the middle class are moderation, balance, and caution. In the CIS countries, the middle class is only beginning to take shape. Failures at their chosen professions and mentally unbalanced people with a grudge against the whole world often go in for politics here. They don't want to, nor can they, work for the good of society, they don't want to learn, their whole purpose in life is to join some political organization and get into the power structures. The people feel that. Election passions mostly rage in the capitals, while in the provinces it's all peace and quiet. Time is needed for normal political parties, like those in the West, to emerge. In our countries, parties cannot evolve "from below." That is why we in Kazakhstan help them to emerge "from the top," gradually and in a civilized way, if at all possible. In the absence of a strong middle class in the country, no other path is open to us. Society is amorphous. It has not yet become divided into the traditional categories of liberals and conservatives, that is, moderately left-wing and moderately right-wing.

*In Russia, an attempt to create two such wings on the eve of the Duma elections failed.*

They must have started from the wrong end, I guess. In Kazakhstan, the national vote during the referendums has shown that it is the state that must assume the initiative in directing the course of economic reform and the formation of democratic society – naturally, on the basis of the Constitution and absolute compliance with laws. To conduct reforms successfully, an effective vertical power structure is needed above all. We made so bold as to doubt that such a good thing as democracy would by itself lead Kazakhstan to political stability and economic prosperity. The democracy that we got a taste of during the nationwide TV broadcasts of the first USSR Congress of the People's Deputies was no democracy at all but the worst possible ersatz of it. It was as if all

the filth were thrown into the streets and no one wanted to tidy up. Regrettably, democracy in its chemically pure form according to the formula “the people rule the people in the name of the people” is today impossible. I can assure you that the “purely” democratic countries of the West are run by oligarchies. When they call on us to proceed at once to democracy on the American or French model, they forget their own history. I read recently that until 1928 American farmers had no right to vote. Decisions to outlaw segregation were passed there in the 1950s, and laws on equality of men and women, in the 1970s. That is to say, it took democracy some 150-200 years to arrive there. Why then do they want democracy to come to us at once – after so many years of totalitarianism? I believe that democracy is merely knocking at our door today. And each country has the right to choose its own way of preventing democracy from breaking into our home like a tornado. Democracy cannot be introduced by a decree. Democracy can only be achieved through suffering. Right now, we are exactly in the “suffering” phase. Today, the state in Kazakhstan is the guarantor of implementing market reform, liberalizing the economy, and extensive privatization – as a result of which, incidentally, the state ceases to be a monopolist or, putting it straightforwardly, it is chopping away at the bough on which it is sitting. But that is not the bough of a strong state defending the rights and freedoms of citizens but rather the dead branch of dictatorship and authoritarianism. That is why, in the present situation, the holding of a referendum in Kazakhstan on extending the president’s powers and the adoption of a new Constitution by the whole people was nothing more nor less than speeding up the course of reform and other positive political processes.

*What are the consequences of this, Mr. President, other than the fact that the next presidential elections will be held in 2000 while the new parliament, as far as one can see, will not inconvenience the government and the president in any way?*

One consequence of that is, to begin with, that Kazakhstan has today outstripped Russia in constructing a legislative basis for reform. We have surpassed Russia in adopting market-oriented laws. The problem of private ownership of land has been resolved. Considerable changes have occurred in the reorganization of the law-enforcement system. We separated investigative agencies from the prosecutors' offices and the courts, thereby leaving behind the Vyshinsky method. We have considerably reinforced the legal possibilities of the police. A special group was given the task of ridding the country of racketeers. The majority of such gangs were destroyed in the past six months. In eight months, the incidence of crime declined in Kazakhstan by 18 percent, while crime exposure rose by 20 percent. We can't say, of course, that we have beaten crime completely. Finally, we outstripped Russia in the rate of reforming the vertical executive structure. The transitional period cannot do without such a structure. According to the new Constitution, the president forms the cabinet himself, appointing all representatives of the executive branch of government from top to bottom. But the local maslikhats, known in the past as the Soviets, can pass a vote of no confidence in any head of the administration – at district, city, or regional level. In this case, the president is obliged to relieve him of his duties. Thus effective control over appointees is implemented. Appointment of judges also follows a new procedure. The parliament, the government, and the courts all have powers clearly defined in the Constitution. They mutually control each other's activities. If any of the branches should violate the Constitution, the president will hold them accountable before the people.

*A personal question, Mr. President, from the editor in chief of Nezavisimaya Gazeta. Are you still devoted to the idea of Eurasianism?*

Just as before, the Eurasian idea is for me, above all, the

idea of integration and cooperation. I believe that, luckily, the desire of the peoples of the CIS for integration does not depend on the will of Nazarbayev, Yeltsin, or Lukashenko. It is an objective process and a historical necessity. Ordinary people are always smarter than the politicians. The wise men of old times said, If you want to lead the people, follow them. The idea of integration is the idea of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The United States would not be the United States without integration with its neighbors, nor would the European Union be the European Union. But I'm really upset when I see one president use these slogans to get elected, and another, to suit the exigencies of current politics. Today, only isolated fragments of this model are highlighted, but its essence is forgotten. I don't think this is correct. I'm not disappointed, no. The Inter-state Economics Committee – that comes from my Eurasian project. The Inter-state Court of the CIS also comes from my project. So does the Customs Union. People in Western Europe are beginning to talk of a confederation of their states. But not one of the European countries will lose its independence and sovereignty. For example, big Germany will recognize tiny Luxembourg as an equal partner. So why do we keep doubting? We are waiting for Russia to declare that all CIS member states are equal partners, and that we are going to coexist on the basis of equality and respect for each other's independence and sovereignty. But such a declaration isn't forthcoming.

*So it appears that there is some disappointment after all?*

I'm often reproached now – why am I silent on the matter of the Eurasian Union? Frankly speaking, I would not like to play into the hands of certain politicians today, in the run-up to the elections to the Russian Duma. Let the parliamentary and presidential elections run their course. Let the political situation in Russia clear up and stabilize. I will then have my say. I sincerely wish Russia all the best. I wish very much that worthy people should come to power in Russia. I swear before the face of Allah

that I want order and a good life for the whole people to come to Russia, I want democracy to be established in Russia and reforms to proceed successfully. It is this sort of Russia that I see as Kazakhstan's strategic partner in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As God willed it, we are neighbors. We must live in peace and friendship.

*Mr. President, what is the reason for moving the capital from Alma-Ata to Akmola?*

There's no politics here. In Khrushchev's times, Tselinograd (now Akmola) was built precisely as the future capital of Kazakhstan. The city of Alma-Ata was built for 400,000 people. Today, its population has grown to one and a half million. The city is closed in by mountains, it has no space in which to develop. Environmentally, the situation in Alma-Ata is the worst among all Kazakhstan's cities. Geographically, Alma-Ata is in a dead end. All roads end there. It costs the world these days to fly to Alma-Ata from Kazakhstan's western regions, let alone Russia. Alma-Ata is not the center of the state. From the economic standpoint, it is impossible to develop Alma-Ata further. Besides, it is a region highly susceptible to earthquakes. Of course, the transfer of the capital does not at all mean that we are abandoning Alma-Ata to the mercy of fate and all moving to Akmola at one go. The status of Alma-Ata as the country's financial and cultural center will be defined. But we have to think of the future of independent Kazakhstan. Alma-Ata lies at the intersection of roads from east to west and from north to south. It is open to further construction. All governmental offices can be housed there right now without a hassle. In the past, two palaces of culture were built there which can seat two and a half and one and a half thousand respectively. The complex of edifices built for the Tselinny Region Party Committee can house simultaneously the offices of the presidential staff, the government, and parliament. I believe that the transfer of the capital will be an incentive for a breakthrough in its development. We are already receiving investment offers.

Today I looked at a draft project for a business center in Akmola worth \$200 million. The firm offers to build and maintain it without asking for a single tenge from us. Another western firm wants to build an airport and a terminal and manage them for a period of five years. Again, we won't have to pay for anything. South Korea is prepared to invest funds in the development of the construction industry. I think it must please Russia to have the capital of Kazakhstan closer to it!

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA,  
NOVEMBER 15, 1995





Speech after the signing of bilateral documents.  
The Kremlin, January 20, 1995

The signing of Kazakhstani-Russian documents.  
Vladimir Hall, the Kremlin, January 20, 1995

Official visit of the President of the Republic of  
Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation. Ceremonial  
meeting in the St. George's Hall of the Grand  
Kremlin Palace. March 28, 1994





At a traditional press conference in Moscow

Meeting with the Chairman of the Government of  
the Russian Federation Viktor S. Chernomyrdin.  
January 20, 1996

Meeting with Mr. Koptev, director general of  
the Russian Space Agency.  
The Kremlin, January 20, 1995





Meeting with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Barvikha.  
February 13, 1996

Reception in honor of the space crew of  
the Soyuz TM-19 space ship, T. Musabayev and  
Yu. Malenchenko, in the residence of the President  
of Kazakhstan in Moscow. January 20, 1995

Talking to A. Potapov, editor in chief of  
the newspaper Trud, at a meeting with leaders of  
the Russian media at the embassy of the Republic of  
Kazakhstan. February 16, 1996





Speech at the Russian Academy of Social Sciences.  
February 16, 1996

Press conference at the Interfax press agency.  
May 16, 1996

Talking to G. Osipov, president of the Russian  
Academy of Social Sciences. February 16, 1996





Meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State.  
Moscow, the Kremlin, May 17, 1996

Meeting with Russia's leading businessmen.  
Moscow, May 16, 1996

Rector of Moscow State University V. Sadovnichy  
awards H.E. Nursultan Nazarbayev the diploma of  
a Moscow University Professor Honoris Causa.  
May 16, 1996





In the studio of artist Ilya Glazunov.  
January 18, 1996

Visit to Moscow on August 8-9, 1996





Opening of the Kurmangazy Mausoleum in Astrakhan Region of Russia. October 11, 1996





Examining blueprints for construction in Akmola. Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Moscow. March 27, 1997

Vitaly Tretyakov, editor in chief of the newspaper Nezavisimaya gazeta, presents the President of Kazakhstan with the Sword of the Knight of the Eurasian Order. March 27, 1997

President Nazarbayev and First Vice Premier of Russia Anatoly Chubais at the Vnukovo-2 airport. March 27, 1997





Visit to the reconstruction site of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Moscow, March 27, 1997

President Nazarbayev hands His Holiness Alexy II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, samples of granite sent as a gift from the Republic of Kazakhstan. March 27, 1997





Meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State.  
Moscow, the Kremlin. March 28, 1997

At the ceremony of awarding President Boris Yeltsin  
the highest distinction of the Republic of Kazakhstan —  
the Altyn Kyran (Golden Eagle) Order.  
Moscow, the Kremlin. March 28, 1997

Soft snow falling in Moscow as President  
Nazarbayev leaves. March 29, 1997





### Meetings in Moscows

with chairman of the YABLOKO public movement  
Grigory Yavlinsky. March 28, 1997

with First Vice Premier of Russia Boris Nemtsov.  
April 23, 1997

The signing of an agreement between Kazakhstan,  
China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan on  
the reduction of armed forces in the border area.  
Moscow, the Kremlin, April 24, 1997





Talks with Jiang Zemin, Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic. Moscow, the Kremlin. April 24, 1997

Traditional meeting with heads of Russian media at the embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Moscow. April 23, 1997

President Nazarbayev among a group of editors in chief and heads of Russian information agencies and TV companies. The embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Moscow. April 23, 1997





At the Russian Academy of Public Service under the President of Russia. April 24, 1997

Speech before the staff and students of the Russian Academy of Public Service under the President of Russia. April 24, 1997

Meeting with heads of the Russian media in the residence of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Almaty, May 16, 1997





After the meeting in the residence of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Almaty, May 16, 1997

Before the meeting of the heads of state participating in the «4 + n» Treaty.  
Moscow, October 22, 1997

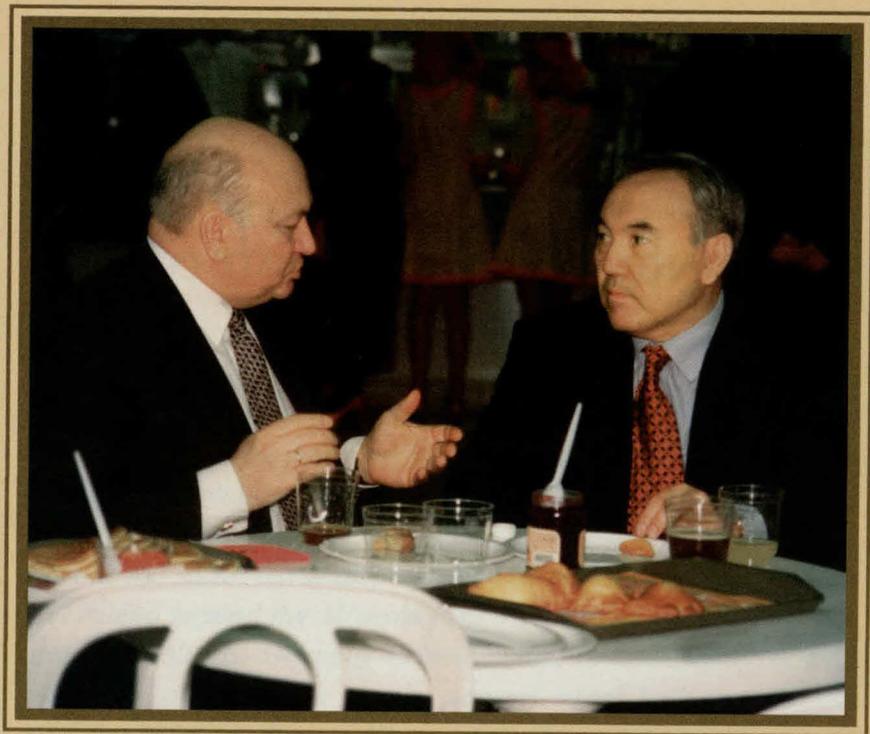
Speech at the ceremony of opening the Memorial Mosque at Poklonnaya gora in Moscow.  
September 6, 1997





In the studio of the sculptor Zurab Tsereteli.  
Moscow, October 21, 1997

Conversation with Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov.  
Visit to the Okhotny ryad trading center in Moscow.  
Moscow, January 23, 1998



FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES  
OF THE EMBASSY  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN  
IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

## THE GATE LEADING TO THE NEAREST NEIGHBOR

*Mr. President, our paper has access to the data of numerous polls whose purpose was to find out the attitude of Russian citizens to certain political figures both in Russia and abroad. We did not include in the ratings lists those fake politicians whose popularity, blown out of all proportion by the partisan media, does not extend beyond the Moscow Ring Highway. Only true inhabitants of political Olympus were included in those lists, persons who are familiar to the people, persons whom both the capitals and the provinces know. We use this opportunity to inform you that your name is invariably mentioned by the respondents at the top of the list. And we stress that these respondents are Russian. And all this despite the fact that the majority of the Moscow media either ignores or deliberately distorts your policies, and writes of Kazakhstan in condescending and dismissive tones. What would your explanation be for your popularity in what is now a foreign state?*

That is a question that the citizens of this state should be asked to answer. But I will admit that this is pleasant to hear. I would like this kind attitude of Russian citizens toward me to continue.

*Don't you yourself feel how high your authority is among Russian citizens?*

What am I to say... I get letters, numerous letters, both from city dwellers and rural residents of Russia. I have quite a few friends there, and I keep up links with them. They come to

see me, and we are in constant contact. This is a bit like a gate to the nearest neighbor. It so appears that the information curtain that has separated our two states is not as impermeable as some people would want to see it.

*If this is no secret, what do our compatriots write to you about? What issues do they mostly raise with you?*

No secret at all. I guess you have plenty of letters like that in your mail, too. There are complaints about chaos in life, about economic hardships. There are questions about why the Soviet Union disintegrated, and how the peoples can overcome the alienation that has arisen between them. Some ask for details of the project for the setting up of the Eurasian Union. Proposals are put forward – often extremely sensible ones – for the improvement of the integration mechanism within the CIS. People express their gratitude for policies aimed at maintaining friendship and harmony among peoples.

There are also quite confidential letters, and this is often the start of a long correspondence. For example, the Kuznetsovs from Khabarovsk Territory, a husband and wife who have decided to christen their newborn son Nursultan, asked my consent to that. So I gave my blessing and sent congratulations and the gifts appropriate to the occasion. A year later I inquired how my godson was doing. I received a detailed account which upset me: It turned out that the current misfortunes had not bypassed that Russian family. My namesake's parents are ordinary rural workers. Their son had to be operated on, and he is now ailing. I invited them to my place for a visit and for some treatment.

*Maybe we'll follow the authors of your letters and start at the beginning? People are wont to say now that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was predetermined by the logic of historical development. Three guys, even if they had the proper authority as major regional leaders, could not have destroyed a strong, viable state, they say. The question arises, however: What sort of historical logic can it be if the disintegration of a great power*

*has hurt the vital interests of dozens of millions of ordinary people? We know that history is rational: Models of state structure that have outlived their usefulness are replaced by more progressive ones which are in keeping with the demands of society. In our case, however, the result was the opposite. And the process of rescinding [the original Treaty of Union], if such a term is applicable to the decisions made in Belovezhskaya Pushcha, was amoral...*

*Incidentally, couldn't you lift the pall of secrecy hanging over those days in December 1991? Why weren't you present in Belovezhskaya Pushcha? There are quite a few theories on this score. For instance, in his speech in the Duma Solzhenitsin expressed regret that Nazarbayev had not been invited to the meeting, while Yeltsin insists in his "Memoirs of a President" that it was Gorbachev who talked you out of a trip to Belorussia. What really happened?*

Not all things were as simple as they may appear at first sight. Future analysts will probably sort out in detail what actually happened in this country four years ago and find the only correct explanation of the events. For the time being, each eyewitness takes a parochial view of the events of those days. I have come to the conclusion that the memoirs of active politicians are not to be trusted: They are either trying to justify themselves, or else being crafty. I believe that the truth lies in a comprehensive analysis of all judgments.

*And still —*

Well, on the issue of the amorality of what has taken place and on the rationality of the course of history. The historian Vasily Klyuchevsky once wrote that the natural regularity of historical events is in inverse proportion to their spirituality. Just how moral and natural, from the point of view of the Romans, was the disintegration of the Roman Empire? Seizing the country, the barbarians not only drowned it in blood — they also destroyed

the greatest of all cultures. For several centuries Europe sank in the gloom of ignorance and frenzied clericalism. However, as a result of the downfall of the civilization of antiquity humanity moved to a qualitatively new stage of historical development.

I am aware that the realization by former USSR citizens of the historical inevitability of the crash of a superpower and the prospect of building a new society does not make them feel warmer or better fed. The people will begin to get some dividends from the market economy only in the future, while the losses from their country's disintegration, quite tangible losses, are sustained already today.

The Belovezhye decisions did indeed prove a surprise to me. Let me remind you that the meeting of Yeltsin, Kravchuk, Shushkevich, and Nazarbayev in Gorbachev's office was appointed for December 9. We had to decide on the final date for the signing of a Union Treaty and offer it to the other republics. On the eve of that date, on December 8, I flew to Moscow. I was met by a representative of Boris Yeltsin who said I was wanted on the phone. The leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia stated that they had signed important documents on the day before (I could only guess what sort of documents they were) and invited me to join in. They were in very high spirits. As it was a question of the fate of the state, I could not improvise or act on the spur of the moment, so I resolutely refused.

I realized, however, that urgent and decisive measures were needed. The decay reaction could become a chaotic chain process, and then the debris of the collapsing superpower could bury all – anarchists, monarchists, radicals, liberals, and the “founding fathers” themselves. That is why the heads of the Central Asian republics gathered in Ashgabat to discuss the situation. The world media immediately began speculating on a Moslem bloc being put together in Turkmenistan as a counterweight to the Slavic bloc. There were certain grounds for these speculations. On arrival we all of us received a project drafted by the meeting's

hosts proposing the setting up of confederation of Central Asian states. This opened up a clear prospect for a sharp split within the former Soviet republics.

It was my task to avoid such confrontation at any cost. Frankly speaking, it took a lot of effort and, if you wish, flexibility, to talk the leaders of the former Soviet Union into gathering on December 21 in Alma-Ata. That meeting, so memorable to me, adopted a declaration which envisaged the maintenance of a unified economic space, coordination of economic policies and reforms, financial clearance on the basis of the ruble, and coordinated policy on the liberalization of prices and social protection of citizens.

We all of us remember that in those days Kravchuk, Shushkevich, Kozyrev, Shakhrai, and others made thunderous statements to the effect that a real rapprochement between the republics would start at once, with better results than in the USSR. Nothing like that happened, and mainly because the legal aspect of the issue was ignored. At our initiative the meeting decided to make the Alma-Ata decisions legitimate through their endorsement by the USSR Congress of Peoples Deputies, a fact that many active and retired politicians seem to have somehow forgotten. Probably because it is not to their advantage to remember these things.

However that may be, we managed, albeit hastily, to fill a dangerous vacuum: Instead of the "triple alliance" that was in the works, a comprehensive inter-state alliance was set up to rule out the possibility of a split within the post-Soviet space along ethnic-political lines. In this way the centripetal processes were directed along civilized channels, and this, I am deeply convinced, helped avoid many conflicts and possibly a great deal of blood-letting.

Time has passed. Assessing the past, I see that the disintegration of the country did not begin in December 1991 but much earlier, with the disintegration and degradation of our economy. I know this as a member of the former Union government, not by hearsay. It began when the country was run by decrepit old men,

and the frame that kept it together, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, collapsed with the withdrawal of the Communist Party of Russia from it. I don't believe in the decisive role of the subjective factor or in the designs of external forces.

*If I remember right, this process was then termed parade of sovereignties. The republics eagerly proclaimed their independence and at the same time did their best to grab the biggest slices of the Union pie for themselves. It transpired all of a sudden that Russia was a colonialist country, and that the peoples of the Soviet Union were united by crude force rather than community of interests. It should be noted in all fairness that Kazakhstan was one of the last to declare its independence. Was it proof of your tardiness or hopes for the revival of the USSR?*

There's an old film about two persons chained together. Two Americans, one white, one black, escape from prison. They have different views on life, different interests and aspirations, and the only thing that they have in common is their handcuffs. But as they run away from the chase, the escapees come to learn one another better, and their openly hostile relations turn into deep attachment.

It was the same with Kazakhstan and Russia. United by the will of fate, they could hardly have shared a liking for each other: Their language, faith, customs, and a great deal else were pushing them apart. The Steppe rose on more than one occasion against tsarist autocracy, but all attempts to get rid of the "elder brother's" importunate guardianship were invariably cut short by sword and fire.

It took many decades to overcome the estrangement, but in the end our peoples first achieved a tolerance of each other and then mutual understanding, liking, and friendship. People simply learned to concentrate on the similarities of their world perception rather than differences between them.

Kazakhs have always aspired for a statehood of their own

but not through self-isolation or encroachment on the rights of anyone whatsoever. Even for a great goal like this, how would it be possible to carve up a living organism and maim the lives of people of other nationalities inhabiting Kazakhstan?

That was the reason why Kazakhstan declared its independence only on December 16, 1991. And it wasn't one of the last to do so – it was actually the very last. After the talking-shop in Novo-Ogarevo and the after-coup hiatus in state power I as Kazakhstan's political leader had but one choice – to become an adherent of a "soft" variant of self-determination: I saw the future of the post-Soviet "apartment" as a confederation, with the republics' state sovereignty as an absolute condition. On this provision, if we were to be divorced, we could do so in a civilized manner, without banging the door. We did not hurry to lower the bar on this, hoping until the last moment that commonsense would gain the upper hand and we would overcome the tendency toward total disintegration. Unfortunately, events took a different turn. As God is our witness, it wasn't our fault.

*As a result, everyone got something, but unfortunately it wasn't the deluxe apartment which everybody had been dreaming about but rather a bunk in an overcrowded room with all the doubtful pleasures of this sort of dwelling – suspicion, continual squabbles, and even fights among the residents. What is the way out? The split just cannot be any wider, there's more than enough sovereignty in, say, Russia but the life of the ordinary people is not improving at all. It appears that the government's call to wait patiently some more in the hopes that tomorrow life will be easier no longer meets with understanding among the people.*

It hasn't come to the point of fighting among the former Union republics so far, but I agree that there is sometimes a certain tension in their relations. And the way out of this (I have been saying this for some years already) lies in real economic rapprochement on the basis of equality. The entire world is

becoming consolidated, it is intensifying mutual links, while we still keep arguing about whether this is going to undermine the basis of our national independence.

Yes, we will have to concede part of our sovereignty, for we will have to create supra-national executive organs and unify the legislation of different states. Europe has taken this route, and small states like Belgium or Luxembourg do not fear at all that, say, Great Britain will run their lives or dictate their policy. Similar processes gather momentum in Latin America, the Asian-Pacific region, the countries adjoining the Indian Ocean, everywhere. Only post-Soviet states seem to have frozen in a kind of stupor.

*Mr. President, this has been an eventful year for Kazakhstan. We refer to the dissolution of the Supreme Soviet and the holding of two referendums as a result of which your powers as the head of state were extended and the new Constitution was adopted. All this evoked a mixed reaction in Russia. Many mass media were quick to comment on the republic's sliding back into totalitarianism and even dictatorship. And how do you as Kazakhstan's state leader assess these events?*

I have a counter-question for you: Where have you seen a politician bent on becoming a dictator resort to a national referendum to achieve his ambitious goals? Other tried and tested methods exist to achieve such goals. You take any country with a dictatorial regime and see how military juntas or financial oligarchies come to power there.

More than 90 percent of the republic's voters came to the polls, and of these more than 95 percent voted for extending the president's powers. Meantime Kazakhstan is living through the same difficulties as Russia and all the other post-Soviet republics. The people are living through really hard times. And just look – no social apathy at all! People take a really active stance! I give you my word, this support and trust of the Kazakhstanis lend me greater strength and make me work with increased vigor.

I am quite convinced that you cannot drive people who have tasted freedom back into the barracks, not even by sweet promises. Yes, I'm in favor of strong presidential powers for states with a mixed type of the economy, and I don't conceal my views. But I'm in favor of this only within the limits strictly defined by law. As we change the model of social development, we mustn't mark time or lie on a bed of roses instead of taking important decisions. And in the eleven months of its existence our last parliament gave birth to just eight market-oriented laws! That's crazy. Not only that, it also torpedoed many initiatives of great importance for the country's future.

*Such as?*

It is not for me to explain to you the role a Civil Code plays in building a law-based state. Kazakhstan was virtually suffocating without it. I literally pleaded (that's the only word for it) with the legislators: Please adopt the Code, this document is like an artificial limb for a cripple dreaming of returning to normal life. The parliament intended to go on vacation, so dropping all urgent business I spent day after day in parliament pushing the draft code through. Work seemed to be moving ahead, the articles were adopted by the dozen (there were more than four hundred of them, if memory serves), but the moment I was distracted for one day only, the legislative process became bogged down in empty verbiage.

At last the Civil Code was adopted. To celebrate that victory over sluggishness, I drank champagne with the parliamentarians on New Year's Eve and wished them to be more on their toes in the future, to be more sensitive to the demands of the voters and of life itself. This wasn't to be, though: The drafts of such highly important documents as the Tax Code, the laws on the National Bank, on bankruptcy, privatization and many others got hopelessly stuck in the parliamentary routine.

Another example. I proposed that the deputies should come to a decision on the status of the Russian language, on the

issue of ownership of land, and the form of statehood. Let me recall that the old Constitution described Kazakhstan as the state of the Kazakh nation that had achieved self-determination. A vote in parliament rating several options in terms of acceptability clearly showed the conservatism of the main body of deputies, whose response to all these options was unambiguous: Everything is fine as it is, we are not going to change anything. There's no need to explain, I believe, what upheavals this was fraught with in a multiethnic state.

The verdict on the illegitimacy of the Supreme Soviet, based on numerous violations during the elections, was passed by the Constitutional Court. Realizing that the parliamentary crisis could to some extent destabilize the situation, I sent my objections to the Constitutional Court, but it overcame them and unanimously confirmed its original decision. The law is the same for all, and I as the guarantor of compliance with the Constitution obeyed the decision of Themis, the goddess of justice.

In a short while elections to the new parliament will be held in Kazakhstan. I want to believe that it will prove more professional than the old one, and that it will achieve greater success in the making of laws. But the president, too, wasn't idle while awaiting the elections: Based on my constitutional powers, I issued several dozen decrees that have the force of laws. This practically completed work on developing a legislative basis necessary for successful implementation of reform. Socioeconomic and sociopolitical processes that had nearly been brought to a standstill were intensified. Finally, we implemented a legal reform, separating investigative bodies from the public prosecutors' offices. We have thus overcome the Soviet system of law-enforcement with its traditional bias for the prosecution.

*Couldn't you describe in greater detail the position of the Russian-speaking population in Kazakhstan? As far as we know, the exodus from the republic of Russians, other Slavic peoples,*

*and Germans has assumed mass proportions. What is your attitude to this problem? Are you trying to turn the tide back?*

I have already mentioned how tolerant Kazakhs are. Generation after generation, they accepted migrants – during the Stolypin reforms, Stalin's reprisals, development of virgin lands, and mass recruitment to All-Union construction sites. They shared bread and roof with everybody, and lived in peace with everybody. Therefore you can believe me that Kazakhstanis are not leaving the country because of encroachment on their rights. A report from law-enforcement agencies comes to my desk every day, and I declare quite officially that no complaints like that have been lodged either with the police or with prosecutors' offices.

Having analyzed the situation in detail, I came to the conclusion that migration is caused by other factors, and its motivation varies with time. In the first years after the declaration of sovereignty, psychological discomfort was the main reason for the exodus of the population from Kazakhstan as well as from the other republics. Many people who do not belong to what is now known as titular nations began to feel unsure about their future. All of a sudden they found themselves outside the unified country of which their historical homeland was a part. And all this occurred against the background, let's face it, of economic and political chaos and unclear prospects for each of the newly independent states. In periods like this, people instinctively wish to be closer to their compatriots, they try to move to a place where they believe it will be easier to live through the times of trouble. All this is quite natural.

At present, the motives for departure are becoming more specific. In most cases people leave when there is a weighty, sometimes mundane, reason for moving – reuniting with close relatives, caring for aged parents, prospects for starting a family, or the possibility of getting a well-paid job.

Material incentives prevail over others. Just look, aren't people leaving Russia for the United States, Germany, Canada,

Israel, Greece, and other economically developed countries? It's all the easier since the formalities accompanying travel to the "far abroad" are simplified in the extreme in all our countries.

I believe that the authorities have no right to interfere with these aspirations. Although, frankly speaking, we're extremely sorry about it, as Kazakhstan is losing its employable residents, its skilled specialists who could make an invaluable contribution to its socioeconomic development.

*So you mean to say that you exclude the pressure of radical nationalists from the list of factors that cause people to emigrate, right?*

Yes, I do. Except perhaps for some cases on the purely everyday-life level. For the most part, Kazakhs are brought up on two cultures, Kazakh and Russian, so that starting a row with Russians or Slavs or people of other nationalities would be tantamount to hostility toward their own other self. I receive quite a few letters from Russians, Germans, Greeks, and members of other nationalities expressing gratitude to Kazakhstan and to the Kazakhs for their kindness and equable, friendly attitude.

The preamble to the new Constitution begins with the words: "We, the people of Kazakhstan, united by our common historical destiny..." The Russian language has the status of an official language in the republic, that is to say, it has precisely the same rights as the state language. Russian as well as German, Korean, Uigur theaters and cultural centers function in the republic; newspapers, TV and radio broadcasts appear in many languages. Incidentally, we even have a paper in Ukrainian – no other post-Soviet state except Ukraine itself can boast of such a publication. A consultative body under the auspices of the president – the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan representing practically all nationalities living in the republic – is doing some really fruitful work.

Let me tell you more: In order to allay the unjustified wor-

ry and the feeling of psychological discomfort among the Russian-speaking population, Kazakhstan has concluded an agreement with Russia on a simplified procedure for granting citizenship to Kazakhstanis leaving for permanent residence in the Russian Federation and to Russian citizens wishing to settle in our republic. True, the Duma has not yet ratified this agreement. But we are not losing hope that the new Russian parliament will eventually consider this important document.

Such is our nationalities policy. And here are some of the first results it has brought: This year the republic's losses due to migration have decreased fourfold compared with last year. As you see, a positive tendency has emerged here, one which we predicted two years ago as an inevitable development.

Re-emigration is also growing in volume: Kazakhstanis, having failed to settle in beyond the borders of the republic, are coming back to their familiar surroundings. We welcome these "old newcomers" and help them settle in where they had previously lived.

*So far as we know, the moratorium on the ratification of the agreement that you mentioned was imposed by Duma deputies not without some influence on the part of Kazakhstani Cossacks. The impression is that the relations between the power structures of your state and the Cossacks are far from unclouded. Isn't that so?*

Let us first of all define our terms. What are Cossacks – a people, a nation, an ethnic group? No, it is an estate, just as merchants or nobles were in old Russia. To keep the outlying areas of the empire in submission, the tsarist authorities initiated and encouraged in every way the founding of Cossack settlements on conquered lands. Having studied in detail the evolution of Cossacks in Kazakhstan, I came to the conclusion that they cost my people a lot of blood and tears. OK, let's forget all this, no use bringing up old grudges.

But tell me now, can a small portion of a sovereign state's citizenry have the right to organize military formations, carry fire-arms and cold steel, award each other military ranks and insignia, when the rest of the citizens have no such right? Especially in a situation when, in response, attempts are made to organize other military formations, of the type that Kazakh khans used to have. And what will come next? Does anyone want our children to live through the same misfortunes as the children of Karabakh, the Dniester republic, or any other hot spot?

We are not against Cossacks. They are our citizens, and they enjoy the same rights as everybody else. But we are against violations of the Constitution and of the laws. I repeat: The law is the same for all.

*This would appear to be your domestic problem. But if we browse through some Russian publications, we will see that it is eagerly debated by the Moscow media. Why do you think is that?*

I am sincerely grateful to the Russian printed and electronic media which more than once supported Kazakhstan at difficult moments and honestly reported on the course of our reforms. In recent times, however, many of them have shown a distinct bias in their treatment of our republic. You too noted at the beginning of our conversation the tendentious character of some articles and broadcasts of the Moscow media. Is it hard to understand that a friendly tone in describing the ongoing events will not only help people to keep up their spirits and optimism in these far from simple times but will also help to improve Kazakhstani-Russian relations? No, all the facts are distorted, and authors add dark hues even to stories about Kazakhstan that are black as it is, while positive information available to the editors is not published at all. That is what's called information expansion. I would like to point out, though, that it does not increase the number of Rus-

sia's friends beyond its borders. More than that, it hits like a boomerang the ethnic Russians living in the national republics.

The situation sometimes borders on the ridiculous. An alarm system in one of Almaty's commercial shops went off, and a couple of armed policemen at once arrived on the scene. Next to the shop was located the bureau of a Moscow TV channel. Seeing the police under their windows, the reporters panicked and started calling their colleagues: We're being surrounded, they cried, they want to throw a noose around the neck of a free press, help! I don't know if this "sensational" story was ever broadcast, but there was a lot of laughter in the local journalistic circles.

*Mr. President, both Russia and Kazakhstan are on the eve of parliamentary elections. Besides, presidential elections have been appointed for June [1996]. It would be nanve of us to expect you to give a political forecast, but I guess we have the right to ask you about the existing tendencies. What is your assessment of the victory of the leftist forces in East European countries?*

If we take the leftist forces in the traditional sense and extrapolate the term to the former Soviet republics, we might just as well speak of the victory of leftist forces in, say, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan as personified by former Communists Yeltsin, Karimov, and Nazarbayev. But nowhere, Eastern Europe included, have the policies been turned back; on the contrary, democratic and market reforms have merely intensified.

I don't believe that in voting for the leftist forces the electors express themselves in favor of a return to the past. Just note how many businessmen there are among the functionaries of left-wing parties. It would be hard to suspect these people of nostalgia for barrack-room socialism or the planning-and-distribution economic system! It is enough to take a cursory look at the program of, say, Kwasniewski to see that he upholds Social Democratic slogans in their classical European interpretation.

The same can be said, with certain adjustments to the Russian mentality, about left-wing parties in Russia: They freely intermingle positive acceptance of the multiparty system and market economy with calls for increasing social protection for the population and increasing the role of the state in regulating economic processes. And it is quite indicative that they are now leading in the election marathon. There was a time when voters had no idea at all that the path of evolutionary changes would be so long and bumpy. You have rightly noted that the leaders' calls for some more patience no longer meet with support or sympathy. As the unforgettable hero of Ilf and Petrov's works used to say, they need the money now, and all of it at once, not bit by bit. The result is the electorate's shift to the left.

The left wing today is not the same as it was yesterday. Voting for them, the "crew" seems to be signaling the men on the bridge: Do not change the course, let the ship of the state speed ahead, but – faster. And we must all of us reckon with this demand.

In the final analysis, it is a matter of complete indifference to me whether Poland's president elect Alexander Kwasniewski was a member of the Communist Party or not. The main thing is that he is an adherent of the ideals of democracy and progress. It is equally a matter of indifference to me whether such well-known Russian politicians as, say, Grigory Yavlinsky or Nikita Mikhalkov were, or weren't, Communists. My liking for them is based on the fact that both of them are honest and decent people sincerely concerned about Russia's destiny. The first of these men did everything he could after the August 1991 coup to preserve the unified economic space and save the country from total collapse. I respect him for his internationalism and profound knowledge of the economy. The second, a real Russian intellectual, a great artist and human being, is magnifying the glory of his country through his imperishable works. Whatever bloc they might belong to

now, whatever party interests they might defend, I'm confident that they will always put the interests of their fellow citizens above all.

I could name quite a few other people who are equally dear to me. Russia has an abundance of such people, and I am therefore quite confident in the happy future of your country and the future of the great Russian people.

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**THE EURASIAN UNION:  
NEW HORIZONS, PROBLEMS,  
AND PERSPECTIVES**

SPEECH AT THE SESSION OF  
THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES

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As I formulated my vision of integration two years ago, I laid no claims to total realization of all the provisions of the project, being fully aware of all the political connotations of that period. Two considerations were my primary motivation. First, I wanted to generalize within a single whole the most realistic proposals for further integration which simultaneously appeared in the countries of the post-Soviet space. Second, I wished to interrupt the indecently drawn-out pause in the activities of the CIS institutions. I believe that I succeeded at both these tasks. The project for the formation of the Eurasian Union started a whole wave of publications in the mass media, as well as discussions and conferences in the scholarly circles of the Commonwealth countries and in the "far abroad."

If I'm not mistaken, more than 500 comments on this project appeared in the CIS media. Several major international conferences were held. The project was included on the agenda of the October 1994 summit meeting of heads of Commonwealth states in Moscow.

In the last two years there was movement in the CIS coun-

tries on some issues that had been at a standstill, including the formation of an inter-state economic committee and the signing of a customs union.

I would also like to note that a number of tendencies pointed out in the draft project, both negative and constructive, have been unambiguously confirmed.

For example, it was clearly stated in the draft project that the CIS cannot be the only form of integration in the post-Soviet space, and that it was necessary to form regional and sectoral unions. Time has confirmed the correctness of this approach, and we are witnessing the emergence of such integration forms. Suffice it to mention the Customs Union of three states, the Central Asian Union, and so on. I believe that new forms will also emerge in the next few years.

The project was based on the awareness that in the near future the CIS countries would not become equal partners in any of the developed economic blocs. That was exactly what happened. The idealistic nature of hopes for such incredible breakthroughs in economic zones with a different technology and infrastructure is more than obvious today. Nevertheless our countries are increasingly participating in major international organizations in the West and in the East. For example, Kazakhstan takes part in the work of the OSCE, the Organization for Economic Cooperation, and others.

Despite this, however, we continue to be adherents of integration in the post-Soviet space, regarding it as a priority task. I still believe that the constructive nature of integration processes will rest on the platform which is outlined as a model in the EAU draft project.

Why am I so confident of that? The impulse given almost two years ago is still bearing fruit today. Three more countries are soon going to join the Customs Union. A month ago, Russia completely lifted the customs barriers on its border with Kazakhstan. Incidentally, we did that six months ago. I must also point

out the growth in the volume of Kazakhstani-Russian trade in that period, as well as of trade between Kazakhstan and Belorussia. The functions of the Inter-state Economic Committee are becoming more and more substantive. The process of formation of integration "nuclei" also continues on a regional basis, in particular in Central Asia. Some of the critics of this last process fail to notice the simple fact that this is an integration node within the large CIS subsystem – I stress that it is within the system, not outside it. Again, we mustn't underestimate the signing by nine countries of a treaty on collective security and a great many bilateral agreements. The Russian-Kazakhstani agreement on simplified procedures for acquiring citizenship can be cited as an example. It is an illustration of the practical potential inherent in the Eurasian project.

But the inexorably moving time has this characteristic that it continually creates new political and economic realities. These include declining structural interconnectedness of the national economies; increasing autonomous, often diametrically opposed, economic interests; differences in the type of economic reform; considerable differences in the political landscape; and a growing split in the cultural values and, more broadly, civilization orientations of CIS member countries.

Ignoring these processes would mean acting like an ostrich. An attempt to overcome these objective tendencies by an effort of will would be even greater political madness.

Certain politicians, who were suddenly roused to become integrationists overnight, are regrettably falling behind the events again. They don't take into account the fundamental changes which in recent years have taken place in each of these countries and in the Commonwealth as a whole. And still, an optimal version of the development of integration will have to be found in this new "post-Soviet reality," too.

Let us recall the events of two or three years ago. CIS republics entertained hopes for the continued existence of the ru-

ble zone until the last moment. We found ourselves in an extremely difficult economic situation characterized by rocketing inflation of the young national currencies, poor command of the methods of macroeconomic stabilization, collapsed industry, lack of clarity in privatization programs, unprecedented social tension, and breakdown of all economic links. That picture was characteristic of all the states.

We chose to go our separate ways then, advancing largely by trial and error, often in isolation, all of which created great additional difficulties. Most CIS countries have passed through the nadir of economic decline, they have mastered the levers of financial stabilization, their industrial policy has become animated, and there has been a qualitative improvement in commodity supplies on the market. This complex process inevitably brought new partners and new economic interests with it. Today, the integrity of the economic structure of the post-Soviet state is an order of magnitude lower than it used to be.

The specifics of reform in different countries have largely pushed apart their legislative systems, especially in the economic sphere. Integration in the sphere of law has become a much more complicated task. The direction of the political dynamics also varies from one Commonwealth country to another. But does this rule out the urgency and the possibility of a new impulse toward integration? I'm sure it doesn't. However, before we begin to speak of a new strategy for integrationism, I would like to share certain observations on integration myths of recent times.

Despite certain dramatic and often objectively given changes in social consciousness, the political elites' integration stereotypes still remain within the same old narrow spectrum. They may be tentatively divided into the nationalist-traditionalist, restoration-oriented, and liberal. As far as the nice Romantic and liberal picture of our speedy entry in the greater Europe or greater Asia is concerned, the answer to it is perfectly clear and can be expressed in this laconic formula: "No one is expecting us there." It is

going to be a long process, not without some prospects, but any forced effort or idealization of partners is completely out of place in the developed world. Unfortunately, these naive approaches played their negative role in the past, as they often determined the wrong choice of priorities.

The nationalist-traditionalist ways of solving problems grow out of emotionally understandable but politically inadequately weighted ideas. That which is the source of inspiration, however paradoxically it may seem, for part of the intelligentsia, on the one hand, and the most marginal strata of the population, on the other, rests on two erroneous foundations. First, on postulating the strategic balance that was destroyed already in the late 1980s. All sorts of musings on the use of force are at least five years out of date. Second, the real national interest, including political interest, must be based on a sober assessment of the geopolitical realities of the new hierarchy of forces in the world. It is time everybody understood that.

In my view, it is more important for all of us to define the strategic problems of our national security than seek out the small potential conflicts in the relations between our friendly countries. In general, I don't quite understand how the priority of certain serious, long-term problems relevant to the whole nation can be forgotten while the problem of all sorts of "toy soldiers" can be pushed into the foreground. Emotions, especially national emotions, are not the best conductor of integration.

Integration based on restoration of the old social model, however striking it may appear, rests on substitution of one premise for another. A certain bias toward "socialization of economic policy" is inevitable, but it mustn't be confused with restoring the old statehood. Incidentally, the "left-wing Renaissance" in Eastern Europe is harmoniously combined with continuation of the foreign policy of the more liberal predecessors. That means that we must analyze the situation rather than substitute the choice of a socioeconomic model for that of a geopolitical model. The

more solid left-wing politicians in the CIS countries clearly understand this.

In my view, not only political but also intellectual elites lack these days a realistic understanding of integration prospects and difficulties. And a realistic assessment enables one to draw a number of fundamental conclusions. First, the integration of the entire post-Soviet space within a more constructive structure than the Commonwealth is problematic in the nearest historical perspective. At present, it became quite clear that the idea of a two-speed, multi-layer integration, proposed two years ago in the EAU project, is still topical. Although I suggest we use a different term, "integration centers." It is a question of adopting a new strategy instead of frontal and standardized integration, doomed for this reason to failure: Integration policy must be geographically more localized, with greater stress on the choice of spheres of coordination. The more so that the recent experience of perestroika conducted by the Center according to a single standard ignoring the regional, national, economic, social, and political specifics of the republics showed how hopeless the unified approach was.

Such an approach cannot take into account the interests of our states, the more so that we have already gone through a certain stage in the development of our own statehood and in the formation of new economic relations and vectors of our foreign policy. Besides, the countries of the former USSR have drifted even further apart in terms of basic indices of economic development. In this situation, talking of universal schemata of unification would mean objectively undermining that which has already been achieved by economic reform. We mustn't be afraid that a group of states will appear which will outstrip other states in their development. World history shows that any integrated alliance has leaders which the other countries follow. The idea of a two-speed, multi-layer integration will enable us to take into account in an optimal way both the national interests and those of the Commonwealth as a whole.

We must honestly define our positions: The center of integration must be made up of countries that are close enough to each other in terms of the type of economic transformations and living standards. Right now no one is prepared to set apart substantive funds for overcoming the socioeconomic gap. There are too many internal problems and no serious funding for helping the stragglers catch up. But we must keep looking for ways to solve this task, too.

Today, the integration center can begin to evolve precisely through the mechanism of the action of the tripartite Customs Union. Some painstaking work will have to be done here, particularly in bringing the tax legislation of different countries closer together. It's high time we moved from politicized priorities to pragmatic ones. The Customs Union, which may become the basis of a new approach to integration, must not be expanded for the sake of political priorities only. It must be built on the basis of all its participants' economic interests.

Second, the greatest danger to real integration lies in calls for, and still more so, actual attempts at, forcible re-integration. What we refer to as post-Soviet space mustn't be presented as a sort of Phoenix ready to be born again from the ashes. What happened on the territory of the former USSR is a superimposition of two interconnected but autonomous processes: an inner crisis of a social system and fundamental geoeconomic, geocultural, geotechnological and, finally, geopolitical shifts. If the problem lay, for instance, only in the internal crisis of the system, the attitude toward post-Soviet space as a temporarily frozen colossus would be correct. But that is not so: The fragmentation of this space is too deep. That is why the scenarios of forcible re-integration are merely a nostalgic model leading to bloodshed for the sake of creating a temporary Utopia, not a stable construction.

Let us consider the goals set by the people proposing to restore the USSR. What do they want to restore? The Brezhnev

period? But the crash of that form of statehood was predetermined by internal economic stagnation. Do they want to go back to the system which sustained a shattering, humiliating defeat in the economic competition and crippled thousands of young lives in the Afghan war? Or do we want to return to "socialism with a human face"? But that is impossible, either, for the tendency toward greater sovereignty for the republics was growing even then against the background of paralysis of the government which increasingly often resorted to armed suppression of its own people in convulsive efforts not to collapse. Nor do I think that we will permit a restoration of Stalinism with its genocide, repression, and atmosphere of universal fear.

Effective integration on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century means using the levers of economic and cultural influence. It is extremely dangerous to use instead outwardly effective but archaic methods.

Third, a clear strategy and definite goals are needed. The maximum goals must be outlined with utmost clarity, and if they are rejected on principle, there mustn't be any empty slogans about integration. I have a clear idea of the goal of integration at the present stage. That goal is a unified market in the sense of absence of any technical or tax borders constraining free movement of commodities, capital, and manpower. Are we prepared to accept this absolutely clear model or not? We must clearly define our position on this, rather than drift among beautiful slogans about our glorious past. To what extent are the separate states ready for a common market? How is it going to reflect on the competitiveness of our national economies and living standards? How does it mesh with state security? These are the questions to which answers will have to be found.

Fourth, the necessary condition of real integration is recognition as a top priority in foreign policy of collaboration between the Commonwealth states. These priorities, however, must not be expressed through political campaigns for internal consump-

tion but in practical measures for building a system of unifying economic, cultural, and political structures. This raises the fundamental issue of choosing the criteria or group of criteria to determine the content and direction of post-Soviet integration in the nearest historical perspective. There is no unanimity on this score either.

Against this background, the slogans of restoring the USSR, which threaten national sovereignty, are pushing our countries still further apart. Regardless of the will and desires of the conservative forces, sovereignty is a reality. No state is going to forego sovereignty. Forcible integration can sharply change our states' reference points and direct the vector of their integration effort outside the CIS. Genuine adherents of integration, who do not use this idea as a PR exercise, realize today that civilized, progressive integration must go hand in hand with, and even complement, the strengthening of the states' national sovereignty. This integration is a synonym of stability and security, as proved by the experiences of Europe and North America.

Some elements of the EAU project were implemented in the new CIS institutions. Work on a unified approach to integration in the Eurasian space must rely on a mechanism of two-speed, multi-tier integration. The greatest danger here is forcible re-integration, which may be effective in the short term but will quickly result in greater disintegration. One of the signs of fragmentation of the post-Soviet space is growing civilization diversity on the CIS territory. The minds of part of the political elite are riddled with traditionalist, restoration-oriented, or liberal stereotypes. Each of these models of integration is to some extent simplistic, which has negative political consequences on the practical side. The prospects for integration are determined by the extent to which the partners are in principle ready to form a unified market space.

The history of the most powerful integration alliance in Europe was also far from simple. As they created, some 40 years

ago, various European communities, the countries that made them up aspired eventually to arrive, through overcoming ethnic strife, at a “unified Europe.”

The movement went through several concrete stages – from a customs union and a common market to a single internal market with free movement of commodities, services, capital, and people; later, to an economic and currency union; and finally, to a political union.

A most important condition of successful movement toward a “unified Europe” was the formation of a legal basis for integration and a system of common institutions which were part interstate, part supranational in character. Certain powers, which are part of the sovereign rights of EU member states, are delegated to these institutions. It was this feature that mostly distinguished the European Community from all the other integrated alliances in various regions of the world.

Integrationism not based on the principle of equality has no future. Integrationism based on equality, on free will and pragmatic interest, is a future worthy of Eurasia which only in this case may become a global factor of world economy and politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IS THE SHEET ANCHOR OF OUR RENEWAL**

*Mr. President, let me thank you on behalf of our readers for this interview. It is not the first one, and each of them was remarkable in its own way. Everything that you say evokes great interest and response...*

Thank you, I'm very glad to hear this. I read your paper and know it well.

*It has become a tradition to start each New Year with a meeting of CIS heads of state. Our paper has already reported on the most recent one, in January. And still, we would very much like to get some information from the horse's mouth, so to speak. We have learned that you, Mr. President, tabled two proposals at this meeting. What are they about?*

I won't go through all the issues on the agenda of the January summit. We discussed a very wide range of problems, took the proper decisions and adopted the proper documents. At first sight, the present meeting in the Kremlin did not differ from the previous ones: The talks were businesslike, and the schedule very tight. But that's at first sight only. I believe that our council of presidents has become more unanimous in the understanding of the extreme importance of economic integration. It is becoming a vital necessity for all the post-Soviet states. And I totally share Boris Yeltsin's view that the illusions have been dispelled that it is easier to solve one's problems on one's own and become a full-fledged member of the world community. Other countries'

experiences teach us quite a different lesson. There are the experiences of the European Union, of the Arab Nations League, alliances of Latin American states, and many other communities. All of them deepen their relations; they are looking for, and finding, mutually acceptable solutions of political and economic problems. And it is all to their advantage.

That is not just the viewpoint of the presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan. It is shared by most Commonwealth member states, as proved by our decision to speed up work on expanding the Customs Union and the setting up of the Clearance Union, and by the instructions we gave to the Inter-state Economic Committee to establish direct relations with the United Nations and other international organizations on socioeconomic issues.

My proposals, now. The first one concerns the joint statement by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to the effect that during the election campaign in Russia and other CIS countries various parliamentary candidates proclaimed that the USSR would have to be restored in its old borders, by violent means if necessary. We reject this idea, as we believe that this is a road leading to a historical dead end and an incentive to the development of zones of instability and conflicts, as well as to the slowing down and even curtailment of reform. The quintessence of our statement is this: We must unite, but only on the economic basis, while totally rejecting political and other forms of pressure in relations between states. That statement was taken cognizance of.

The other proposal concerns the convention for a simplified procedure for acquiring citizenship in CIS countries. What was my motivation for this proposal? A year has passed since the signing in Moscow of three most important agreements between Russia and Kazakhstan: the treaty on the legal status of RF citizens permanently residing on Kazakhstan's territory and of Kazakhstani citizens permanently residing in Russia, and also an agreement on a simplified procedure for acquiring citizenship by RF citizens arriving in Russia. Time has shown that this is the right

way: Fewer people began to leave our republic, and members of different nationalities now feel easier in the mind, more like equals. There is also the flip side of the coin: After we introduce the Customs Union and the Clearance Union, there will inevitably occur a redistribution of labor and capital, and ordinary citizens and entrepreneurs will change their place of residence more often. Some of them will move for a longer period, others for a shorter one, depending on the way they cope with their affairs. So why should we complicate people's lives? It should be just like in Europe: If you wish to move to another country, they'll simply take a look at your passport, and that's it!

Incidentally, your readers must know that the day before I introduced this convention for the consideration of my colleagues the presidents, I paid an official visit to Belorussia – Russia and Kazakhstan's partner in the tripartite Customs Union. Apart from the treaty of friendship and cooperation between our two states and a consular convention, a package of agreements was signed in Minsk similar to the Russian-Kazakhstani ones – on the status of the citizens of Belorussia and Kazakhstan and on dual citizenship.

*All this is very interesting, and it will have long-term effects. And what about your idea of the Eurasian Union? Haven't you given it up? If not, what is your vision of the ways of attaining that goal, of the realization of this idea?*

Let me remind you of the reasons for proposing that model. That was spring of 1994, not long after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the time when politics, not economics, were top priority for many Commonwealth countries and their leaders. Our states, Kazakhstan included, had to deal with the problem of overcoming an acute crisis within the entire economy complex and the financial system, as well as with ethnic conflicts. Besides, the CIS had not fully justified the hopes placed on it. Having created this structure, we failed to construct a system of

responsibility for it, one that would take into account both the real changes and the dynamics of the entire post-Soviet space.

A conceptual solution had to be found for a way out of the existing situation. We did that by proposing a draft project for the formation of the Eurasian Union of States (EAU). It was distributed as an official document of the United Nations and published in the media. I was told that more than 200 articles on this idea appeared in the CIS press alone. Conferences were held in Moscow, at Moscow State University, and in Alma-Ata.

A great deal has changed in the past few years: The potential of the CIS has been reinforced, mutual understanding among our states and their presidents increased. And the main thing is that there has been a leveling off of our countries in terms of their market strategies and the level of reforms; we have also tamed inflation to a certain extent and introduced stable national currencies. At that time, in April 1994, the summit in Moscow discussed it and "took cognizance of it." It is clear what stands behind this protocol formula. Some perceived the Eurasian Union as a direct encroachment on their sovereignty. Others expressed the apprehension that the parliament of the Eurasian Union proposed by Nazarbayev would become Russia's fief or "deputies' majority." My argument that we are all trying to become part of the world community, where there are such things as the European Parliament and European Government, fell on stony ground.

We then began working at two speeds. We shifted into first gear as Russia and Belorussia signed an agreement on a customs union and simultaneously Kazakhstan and Russia concluded a customs agreement, too, which made our union a trilateral one. But that is a topic for a separate discussion.

Let me repeat: That is important. As we put forward the idea of the EAU, we proceeded from this assumption: Economic integration is the basis of our renewal, and it has great unifying potential. It may be that the model was somewhat ahead of its time. One thing is clear, though: It is viable, and it is already

helping the Commonwealth move ahead. Several developments grew out of it: The treaty on the setting up of an economic union was concluded, the memorandum on the basic directions of integration within the CIS was adopted, the inter-state economic committee was established, the agreement on the clearance union was signed, and a number of other documents were adopted aimed at the formation of a real economic union of the Commonwealth countries.

To anticipate certain questions that may be asked in this connection, let me stress: I'm an ardent supporter of preserving the CIS. I am quite convinced that the formation of the EAU within and alongside the CIS will be an historical compromise that all the former Soviet republics and their peoples need. If our countries develop normally, if we restore the traditional markets, the Russian market above all, if we put an end to military conflicts and blockades, we will inevitably come to the Eurasian Union.

*At the last meeting of CIS heads of state examples of initial results of the customs union of the three (so far three) states were cited. Thus Kazakhstan's exports to Belorussia rose by 35 percent in 1995, and to Russia, by 47 percent. Simultaneously the presidents expressed themselves in favor of the establishment of the Clearance Union. The reason for this is clear: Such an institution would help the growth of external and domestic trade, the development of corporate links in the industry, and a growth in the number of financial-industrial groups. Recently, Kirgizia joined this union, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have expressed a readiness to do so, and Azerbaijan and Moldavia are showing an interest in it. We would like to learn some details: What is behind the procedure of joining the Customs Union, and just how fast are these things done?*

Practically everybody knows that the customs are a serious regulator of economic relations. That is why the formation of even a "truncated" union will require time. It will be formed in

two stages. At present, we've gone through the first stage. What is behind this, you ask? Quite a lot: changes in the legislative systems of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belorussia to bring them closer together; lifting of tariff and quantitative limits on mutual trade; abolishing customs controls between the signatories to the trilateral agreement; establishment of common customs tariffs for other countries, and so on.

Can you imagine: Along the 10,000-kilometer long border between Kazakhstan and Russia, we eliminated and disbanded 16 customs houses, 52 customs checkpoints, and 38 checkpoints on highways and railroads. Open borders stimulated trade with our partners in the agreement. Our trade with Russia and Belorussia went up from third place to first. The path toward changes was not easy. As Kazakhstan and Russia regulated their tariffs, it transpired that Russian car import duties amounted to 70 percent, while ours, 25 percent. In the end we found a compromise: Russia met us halfway, scaling down its tariffs. But these lower tariffs do not extend to third countries. That means that Kirgizia, Uzbekistan, and the others will have to overcome these hurdles as they enter the Customs Union.

Unexpected things can also happen. I have already spoken of my trip to Belorussia and of the agreements we signed with President Alexander Lukashenko. In the course of our visit I looked into the state of market reforms conducted by our partner. Facts came out concerning lack of coordination in the price policy and deviations from the requirements imposed by the agreement on a unified procedure for regulating foreign trade, which is a necessary condition of entry into the union. The main difference is that Kazakhstan and Russia have liberalized their food prices, while Belorussia is still keeping them regulated. Two sides have already introduced free prices for fuel, while the Belorussians live the way they had before. Clearly, movement toward a common goal will be slow, given this sort of situation.

However that may be, we have gone through the first stage and are proceeding to the second. It envisions a unification of the customs territories of Russia, Belorussia, and Kazakhstan as a single territory and the transfer of customs borders to the external border. If we conclude the second stage this year, we will proceed without delay to the formation of a clearance union. After that payments between our states will take a normal course, and economic integration will be accelerated.

To conclude my answer to this question, let me say that for third countries all these procedures will take a longer time than we all would have wished. And another point. Apart from the above conditions, entry in the Customs Union will require agreement of all the three states who founded the union. But we are not a closed-in space with an Iron Curtain, and we will be glad to see the other Commonwealth countries in our ranks. I believe that we will soon be five or six, not three.

*Mr. President, apart from integration within the CIS, other processes also occur in Central Asia. The Inter-state Council has been set up attended by the presidents and prime ministers of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kirgizia. There's also The Executive Committee and other structures. A unified economic space of the region is being vigorously built, in fact. How is your commonwealth linked up with the CIS, the common Customs Union, and in general, how is it doing?*

Indeed, the treaty on the establishment of a unified economic space of Central Asia, signed by the presidents Islam Karimov, Askar Akayev, and myself on July 8, 1994 in Alma-Ata is becoming a political reality. Together, we are creating the basis for our future. That future is impossible without unity and cohesion, without the realization that we, the peoples of Central Asia, have a common destiny and a common future. We are tied together by bonds of historical, ethnic, geographical, cultural, and linguistic community. We integrate on the basis of centuries of good-neighborly relations, but at the same time we preserve our

state sovereignty and political independence. Our rapprochement does not signify regional isolation, it does not contravene the CIS, and it is open to other countries of the former Soviet Union.

Our treaty will last until the year 2000; its preamble states that it takes into account the "need for measures to implement the treaty on the setting up of the Commonwealth Economic Union." Our goals follow from the other common goals: free movement of commodities, services, capital, workforce, as well as coordinated credit and clearance, budget, tax, price, and customs policies. Customs barriers have long been lifted between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kirgizia, which has made the movement of commodities free and permitted easy solution of problems in changing citizenship and selling property. Apart from its economic importance, our integration also satisfied ordinary human interests.

How is this going to link up with the customs strategy of Russia, Belorussia, and Kazakhstan? In the best possible way.

There are no customs barriers in Central Asia, and that means that quite a few headaches are eased for third countries entering the greater Customs Union.

Now on the question of how the regional union is doing. Not bad. We have set up the Central Asian Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Each country has contributed \$3 million to it. This is decent-sized capital; with this capital, we can get up to \$90 million in investments. If these investments are intelligently distributed, we will not only be able to revive production but also develop comprehensive cooperation, avoiding the production of commodities produced by the neighbors. If Kirgizia starts production of gas meters with the aid of foreign investors, that is to the advantage of the entire regional market. We know that this production line exists, that the Central Asian Bank is working on it, and that means that neither Kazakhstan nor Uzbekistan need to build a similar plant.

*We know that Kazakhstan has gone through ups and downs on the road to the market economy. Since the middle of 1994 when your program for the deepening of reform and overcoming the economic crisis was adopted, the country has followed a policy of stringent anti-inflation measures and structural transformations. Prices were liberalized...*

To this can be added measures for demonopolizing the county's economy, reform in the agricultural industry, as well as measures to bring down all barriers for enterprise and commerce. There were some hard times, of course, for the republic and the people of the republic. In the middle of 1994, however, there came the first signs of macro-economic stabilization, which further developed in 1995. The new cabinet of ministers, together with the National Bank, managed to take hold of the levers controlling inflation processes. Today the monthly rate of inflation is at a regular 2-3 percent, which is an order of magnitude less than last year's level. As envisaged by the program, the national currency has been strengthened: For more than six months the rate of exchange has been at a steady 62-64 tenge to the dollar. This was made possible by the strengthening of the entire credit and monetary system and a steady increase in the National Bank's gold and currency reserves, which have exceeded \$1.7 billion.

Our industry, too, has begun to overcome the crisis: In 1995, the country's GDP amounted to 992 billion tenge. The industry produced 216 billion tenge's worth of goods, while trade remained at the previous year's level. Average wages throughout Kazakhstan increased by 9 percent. We were also able to slow down the fall in the incomes of poorly paid strata of the population with fixed incomes.

I'm also often asked this question: What is the privatization situation in your republic? It is proceeding apace, and we are approaching Russia's level of transferring industries from state ownership to private. Our plans are as follows: This year we

intend to complete small-scale, mass privatization in the rural areas. I wouldn't like to look at the process through rose-tinted spectacles: At the macro-level, the program's goals in privatization and the development of the alternative sector of the economy are achieved with relative success, while at the micro-level, and especially in the specific branches of industry, there is a certain tardiness, which affects the overall tempo of reform. On the whole, however, we can say that the tasks we set ourselves have been solved. If that is so, we must set new targets. Besides, as I have mentioned already, Kazakhstan's economy enters a qualitatively new stage of development. The need has arisen for adopting a new medium-term program for deepening reform.

*Tell us a few words about its principal directions and main tasks.*

It is in fact the government's program covering 1996-1998. Its goal is to consolidate the results achieved in the last two years and secure a further rise in the economy, an end to the decline in production, and a growth in the people's living standards.

As I and my advisors worked on this program, we singled out the following principal tasks:

- further lowering of the annual rate of inflation from 26-28 percent in 1996 to 9-12 percent in 1998;
- gradual shifting of emphasis from anti-inflationary measures to investment;
- stabilization by the beginning of 1997 and achievement of economic growth later, above all in the strategic branches of industry – ferrous and nonferrous metallurgy and the oil and gas industry;
- reform of the finance sector and of enterprises, creation of incentives for direct investment in competitive production;
- increased support for private enterprise, above all for small and medium-size businesses;
- strengthening of law and order, of payments and finan-

cial discipline, and improvement of the mechanisms for the regulation of the economy.

These are merely the basic points. It would take a long time to list all that has been targeted for 1996-1998 to deepen the reforms.

*You mentioned the shifting of emphasis to investment measures. Kazakhstan cannot complain about lack of attention on the part of business circles of Western Europe and South-East Asian countries. Through your efforts and those of the cabinet of ministers the republic is developing cooperation with its neighbors in the CIS, especially the Russian Federation. Some time in the past at a press conference here in Moscow you spoke, in answer to a question from me, of prospects for a common oil and gas market of Kazakhstan and Russia, placing great hopes on the Caspian pipeline consortium project. But it came to a standstill. What is the reason for that? Will the pipeline construction be continued?*

I remember that press conference where I spoke of the integration breakthrough in the CIS, of the agreement between Kazakhstan's Mingazprom and the Russian company Gazprom on joint work on the development of the Karachaganak gas-condensate field. The contract is a profitable one for Russia, which received equal rights with our republic and the Agip—British Gas alliance, a 15 percent share, which will later be increased by the Russian-Kazakhstani common market. So far as I know, American partners intend to increase supplies of condensate to Russia, namely to the refineries in Bashkiria. As you see, we collaborate not only with foreign companies but also with Russian structures.

Owing to its determined investment policy, Kazakhstan increases production of carbohydrates both on dry land and on the Caspian shelf. But it is not enough to produce oil and gas, they have to be sold as well. And this can't be done without pipelines leading to CIS and world markets. At present Russia has given us an annual 5.6 million tonne quota, which our oil companies will

pump to Novorossiysk terminals. But the republic could be pumping more. I know the pipelines leading across Russian territory from the year 1984, when I was Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Kazakhstan and a member of the federal government. In those years the USSR produced 620 million tonnes a year, while now the entire CIS produces about 320 million tonnes. Whereas the existing gas and oil pipelines can pump up to 150 million tonnes of hydrocarbons. If we look at the overall oil export figures, we will see that the pipelines are working at half strength only. But that is a different matter altogether.

The problems of export of Kazakhstani oil would be quite solved with the implementation of the well-known project proposed by the Caspian pipeline consortium formed by Kazakhstan, Russia, and the Oman Sultanate. The pipeline will go from the Tengiz oil fields to the port of Novorossiysk via Atyrau, Astrakhan, Komsomolskaya railway station, and Tikhoretsk. The main part of the route will pass across Russian territory, which will be of considerable profit to Russia. Kazakhstan will be a co-owner of an alternative direct-purpose pipeline. The sides have carried out all the procedures envisaged by international law and ratified the project.

But the construction of the pipeline came to a standstill, as you put it. Why? There are two reasons. First, having contributed \$50 million at the first stage of construction, Oman proved unable to go on funding the project. Second, the Chevron corporate, one of the founders of the Tengizchevronoil JV, which will be the main user of the pipeline, refused to accept Class B shares (without the right to vote), and disagreed on the issue of oil transport tariffs. After my talks with the members of the consortium and Chevron businessmen, the matter of investment seemed to have been settled. Russia and Kazakhstan pay in 25 percent of investment each, the remaining 50 percent will go to Chevron, which assumes the responsibility for investing up to \$700 million,

with contributions from Mobil Oil, Agip, British Gas, and others. As for the Oman Sultanate, if it doesn't change its mind, its share will be determined as the contribution which it has already been made, that is, some 5 percent.

One would like to believe that there will be no more misunderstandings involving the consortium. Any delays in the realization of this project can inflict significant damage on Kazakhstan's economic program – while our new partners are directly interested in speedy and unobstructed transportation of Tengiz oil west.

*Mr. President, to conclude our talk I would like to express my gratitude for your detailed answers, and also to find out your opinion on the status of the Caspian Sea. The fact is that publications in the media on this issue are rather contradictory. What is the position of Kazakhstan on this score?*

I don't see any big problem here. Before the disintegration of the USSR, all issues connected with the Caspian and its division into sectors were solved on the basis of the 1940 Soviet-Iranian treaty on trade and navigation. Nowadays the realities are different, as the number of Caspian states has increased to five: Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan. To deal with any possible reproaches to the effect that Kazakhstan "opposes the solution of this question," let me explain: At present, there is only one conceptual proposal concerning the status of the Caspian – the one worked out by Kazakhstan. I talked this concept over with Boris Yeltsin when I paid him a visit at the Central Clinical Hospital. Recently, I thoroughly discussed this issue with Vice President Hasan Habibi of Iran and exchanged view on this with Saparmurat Turkmenbashi, Heydar Aliyev, and others.

Our common position is that the Caspian mustn't be a sea of contention, that it must serve the cause of peace and cooperation and increase the economic potential of the Caspian states. Kazakhstan suggests that economic space be divided along the

bottom of the sea while the issues of navigation, fishing, and environmental protection be handled jointly by all parties.

A couple of words on our shelf. If Russia wishes to take part in its development – and I assume it does – there are no obstacles here, either. Kazakhstan invites any Russian company to cooperate. We give it 20 percent (that's \$200 million) and say: Invest your portion of the capital and work for our and your own benefit! That's our position on the Caspian.

INTERVIEW GRANTED TO THE NEWSPAPER DELOVOY MIR,  
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## AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS TO A COMMON GOAL

*How well do the plans of various CIS states with their seemingly different goals mesh in the context of integration efforts within the Commonwealth? Isn't the expected "Slavic union" intended to be a counterweight to the policy of some post-Soviet republics aimed at the setting up of what is now referred to as the "Turkic bloc"? Nezavisimaya gazeta asked President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan to answer these and other questions on the eve of today's summit meeting in Moscow. It was President Nazarbayev who put forward the initiative for the establishment of the Eurasian Union. The project, published two years ago, has been either passed over in silence or anathematized, but it has not so far lost its topicality. On the contrary, it is so popular these days that its author has acquired a stable and well-deserved reputation of a consistent integrationist.*

I believe that every right-thinking leader, as he plans and implements state policy, can no longer ignore two obvious dominant elements in the minds of the peoples of the former Soviet republics: their desire for coming closer together, on the one hand, and an actively negative attitude toward the totalitarian past,

of forced “friendship of the peoples,” on the other. Being together, but not at the cost of losing their own sovereignty; being independent, but not through erecting mighty bastions on state borders – that is the way I would formulate this imperative.

I’m told that the two positions are contradictory. By no means, I reply. These are two sides of one and the same coin. For example, the Kazakhs know full well from their centuries-long acquaintance with great-power chauvinism what that thing is, and they will not be tempted back into the barracks, not for the world. But we have never identified the conscious and goal-directed policy of the authorities suppressing national self-awareness in the empire’s outlying regions with the Russian people. On the contrary, we are infinitely grateful to Russian science, culture, and literature, to Russia’s best sons who helped us find a window looking onto the wide world and to find a place in the world civilization. Hence our desire not only to restore old links with our close neighbors and friends but also to form new, closer, and more just relations.

I know that other peoples of the collapsed superpower feel the same toward their close neighbors. That is why I proposed the plan for a Eurasian Union of States for their consideration.

Those who know the project from other than hearsay clearly realize that it does not exclude a diversity of forms and methods of integration: On the contrary, it implies such diversity. We insisted that diverse links between post-Soviet states could be built up at a bi- or multilateral level, or within the framework of the entire CIS.

Two years have passed, and these seemingly speculative schemata are now fully fleshed out. In one part of the post-Soviet space an integration nucleus including Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan began to be formed, while in another part, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan have achieved a new level of cooperation. The Inter-state Economic Committee of the CIS has been set up and is actively functioning, as are the Customs Union, which

a whole series of states is ready to join, and the Central Asian Union; numerous bilateral agreements have been signed, including agreements between Kazakhstan and Russia. They have begun to work already, bringing tangible benefits. With the lifting of customs barriers, trade between our country and the Russian Federation increased by 56 percent, and that with Belarus, by 33 percent. The Central Asian Bank is now funding twenty of the fifty planned projects.

Mark that the formation of these two new vectors of cooperation, far from undermining the CIS, merely strengthened it, for it gathered hundreds of thousands of new supporters under the banner of integration. Among other things, Kazakhstan's trade with all CIS countries has increased, while the structure of trade and services has qualitatively improved.

We can draw a parallel here with the Benelux countries which are successfully solving the problems of regional integration in no way threatening the interests of the European Union of which they are members. The formation of additional integrative structures and an extensive network of bilateral relations gave the CIS yet another impulse for development. That is why there can be no question even of setting up our treaty in opposition to the principles of the CIS. The initiators of the alliance need hardly be suspected therefore of any attempts to put together Slavic or Moslem pacts.

Incidentally, what will our future community be called? After all, it will be made up of European and Central Asian states. So will it be called Slavic-Turkic? I believe that we can't find a better name than the Eurasian Union. True, this may impinge on some people's ambitions, as the name was suggested not by them but by someone else. But the point is not who bears the palm or rests on the laurels – let anyone who wishes rest on them. The main thing is to keep the substance and make the idea work.

Certain questions, however, arise. Why is the new level of cooperation acceptable to some states and not to others? Isn't it

evidence of the weakness of the idea itself of a closer alliance between post-Soviet states? Let us be honest, to some political players these issues are probably the main trumps in their game of anti-integration poker, especially during election campaigns, when they are not particularly choosy about the sort of language they use.

In fact, things are not as complicated as all that. As I came up with the EAU project, and very often later, I spoke of the inevitability of different states' entry in the new inter-state alliance at different speeds, which is precisely what is happening now. The dynamics of the states' movement toward a common goal will be objectively determined by the degree of their readiness for deeper cooperation. Each of them tackled the reforms in their own way, which is on the whole quite natural. As a result, though, different, and often contradictory, legislative bases were created and also, understandably, different economic ties and relations, in keeping with these states' specifics. Besides, we ought to take into account the variance in the speed of economic reform, which resulted in differences, sometimes significant differences, in the degree of readiness of market mechanisms and infrastructure. The speed of political reform varies, too. Hence the impossibility for all members of the Commonwealth to simultaneously join in the processes of deep integration.

Well, in Europe these processes took four decades to accomplish. Considering our integration potential and largely identical world perception, we will need significantly less time. But we will undoubtedly need a "chronological pause," however insignificant it may be in the historical perspective. But we mustn't artificially speed up these processes – with time, all things will fall in place of themselves.

I'm not acquainted with the agreements reached by the leaders of Russia and Belarus. I can only say that, if they believe that the model they chose of bilateral rapprochement is in keeping with the hopes of their peoples and the current historical reali-

ties, I can only welcome this. As for us, we will observe this process with interest. I suggest we regard it as the CIS testing ground.

As for the treaty between Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia, it opens the way to bringing closer together the national legislative systems without detriment to the states' own interests; it will also promote coordination of the methods for socioeconomic reforms.

What, specifically, is on the agenda? In the economic field, we intend to coordinate the reforms we will implement; create favorable conditions for the functioning of a common market of commodities, services, capital, and labor; secure equal rights to the purchase of property and to possession, use, and disposal of that property on the territory of any of the four states; and to adhere to a coordinated price policy. With this aim in view it is proposed to set up a unified model normative basis for civil legislation and state regulation of the economy. The formation has begun of the transport, energy, clearance, and a number of other unions.

Besides, we might conclude the formation of a unified customs space in this year already. The heads of the four states regard a simplified procedure for acquiring the citizenship of these states as a most important measure in increased cooperation in the social and humanitarian spheres. Besides, the contracting parties intend to assume obligations to conduct a coordinated social policy, create conditions for maintaining and consolidating a common cultural and educational space, and work out joint programs for the training and re-training of specialists and students.

To achieve such great goals, it is proposed to institute joint official bodies for managing integration. The highest of these bodies, which will be concerned with solution of strategic problems of cooperation, will include heads of state, heads of governments, and foreign ministers. Another will include parliamentarians delegated by the highest legislative bodies of the member

states, and its task will be the harmonization of their legislative systems. Finally, the third body will control the course of integration on a permanent basis.

Of course, the document that has been prepared for signing is much broader and covers more areas than may appear from this cursory description. In my view, it can considerably promote deepening cooperation between the Commonwealth countries eager to move in this direction. Fully realizing the importance of the solution of this fundamental task for the lives of the citizens of our states, the heads of Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia intend to put their signatures to the treaty on greater integration in the economic and humanitarian fields.

We can thus say that a group of countries has emerged in the CIS which has in some respects gone ahead of its CIS partners and can be held up as an example of the world's mainstream development. That is only natural. In the past a mere handful of countries gave an impulse to the formation of the European Economic Community, later transformed into the European Community, and later still, into the European Union. They had to overcome mutual suspicions and rejection of the integration idea by people many of whom fought on different sides in the Second World War. Who remembers this sort of thing in Europe today?

We in the Commonwealth, however, remember it all very well, and we know that it is best to solve common problems jointly. This historical knowledge, multiplied by many years of cooperation, is the best guarantee of success for our current integration efforts.

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## THE WAY IT WAS

*The “Treaty of Four,” as the agreement on deeper integration between Russia, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, and Kirgizia has been christened, has already become a fact of history. It is nevertheless still discussed in the media and analyzed by politicians and scientists. Below we publish some comments by one of the four “co-authors” of the treaty.*

I believe that the treaty signed by the presidents of the four countries will remain the focus of public attention for a long time to come. Kazakhstan’s position on the issues of integration policy is well known. We proceed from the assumption that, in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the formation of sovereign states, the rapprochement between our states is a normal and objective process which is in tune with the integration tendencies characteristic of all the countries of the world.

I have believed, and still believe, that integration of different CIS countries will be the main factor of 21<sup>st</sup>-century politics. When it became clear late in 1993 and early in 1994 that these integration processes were growing weaker, I put forward the idea of the Eurasian Union. There’s a symbolic coincidence here: The project was first made public on March 29, 1994, exactly two years before the signing of the “Treaty of Four.”

My colleagues the presidents met this project rather coolly, putting it mildly. However, a later session of CIS heads of state

decided to take cognizance of it and make it the basis of future integration processes.

I believe that the EAU idea has proved viable because it got the support of ordinary people. The “virus” of integration gradually spread winning ever more supporters.

First we created the Economic Union, and soon after, the Customs Union – exactly what was proposed in the Eurasian Union project. In this way borders were opened to the movement of labor, commodities, and capital, all of which Kazakhstan needed to boost its economy and improve living standards. Half of the 28 articles of the treaty signed in Moscow are a recap of the basic propositions of the Eurasian Union project. And if we take into account that such proposals as the institution of the economic and customs unions and a common court to deal with economic matters in the entire CIS had been implemented before, that means that an additional five or six EAU articles became part of the Moscow treaty.

So I can say with pride that 20 articles born in Kazakhstan are now part of the treaty of four equal, sovereign states. In fact my idea has been fulfilled.

It is not important who bears the palm. The point is that concrete decisions which have a bearing on the lives of hundreds of millions of people in the post-Soviet space should be fulfilled. Now, let's try and analyze the reasons which made the realization of this agreement possible.

It has long been in preparation. We discussed it at the summit of CIS heads of state in January this year. When the project was ready, we meticulously analyzed it with Yevgeniy Primakov, Russia's foreign minister, and then there was a discussion, several hours long, with Boris Yeltsin.

The signing of the document was appointed for March 14. But then came the well-known decision of the State Duma... It would be quite wrong, though, to be scared by it and give up fundamental, systemic decisions.

I sent the draft project to Askar Akayev and Islam Karimov, and I also suggested we put off the signing of the treaty for two weeks, for the colleagues to have a chance to discuss everything thoroughly.

We know that, as a result, Kirgizia joined the accords.

The point is that a necessary condition of the signing of this treaty was entry in the Customs Union. And the four states acceded to this condition. Customs laws now have to be harmonized, and agreement should be reached on the size of customs duties and identical management of the entire customs system. Within the Customs Union, the prices of all commodities must be identical.

Everything goes the way it should, according to plan. Meetings are held when they must, according to an agreed schedule. Of course, there is an element of political scheming, as in every electoral campaign. That was what happened in December last year, during the elections to the State Duma. That is what is happening today, as Russia is preparing to elect a president.

I am sometimes asked: What is my attitude to the decisions of the State Duma? Frankly speaking, I treat them as decisions of a neighboring state's parliament, and that's it.

In December last year, during preparations for parliamentary elections in Russia, many politicians used the slogan of integration for their own selfish purposes. And they often deliberately scared people, linking this slogan up with calls for the restoration of the former Union.

I am saying firmly and unequivocally that there can be no question of restoring the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan will never support this idea. But I fully realize that speculative utterances concerning the restoration of the USSR can only slow down the process of integration. For this reason, I made a special statement at the meeting of heads of state, which was received with approval.

“The Treaty Between the Republic of Belarus, the Republic

of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation on the Deepening of Integration in the Economic and Humanitarian Spheres” – such is the full title of the document.

The treaty recognizes each signatory’s state independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Article 1 says that the treaty comes into effect only on condition of compliance with the sovereignty of the countries and the principles of equality, mutual advantage, inviolability of the existing borders, and non-interference in the internal affairs. Article 2 proclaims the goals of steady improvement of living standards; defense of the rights and freedoms of the individual; social progress; formation of a unified market of commodities, services, capital, and labor; and development of unified transport, energy, and information systems. Other goals include the working out of unified minimal standards of social protection of citizens; creation of equal opportunities for receiving education and access to the achievements of science and technology on the territory of the four states, and harmonization of legislation in this area; coordination of foreign trade policies; and securing a proper place for each state on the international arena.

These are the basic principles which are outlined in the treaty.

Further, Article 25 says that the present treaty in no way constrains the economic or political relations of each side with other countries of the world community, does not infringe on the status of each member country as an agent of international law, nor does it infringe on their obligations with other nations, including CIS countries.

Finally, Article 28 confirms that the present treaty is effective over five years and automatically prolonged unless one of the members expresses a desire to withdraw from the treaty. The intention to withdraw must be made known to the partners in the treaty in written form a year in advance. The main motif of the treaty is voluntary integration which does not allow of any use of force. Only this approach will lead to a long-term, mutually ad-

vantageous commonwealth for the benefit of all. The entire document testifies that we are moving in the direction already traversed by the European Union, although we are still far behind it. We will have to do a job of work yet.

At present, the "4 + n" formula precisely expresses the essence of the treaty signed in Moscow. If some other state deems it necessary to join us, it is entirely welcome.

The process of integration must proceed at different levels. Not all sides are ready for deep processes in this sphere. In some countries, the process of reform has slowed down. There are objective reasons which explain that. There are problems, of course. If there is a will, however, they can all be solved, as proved by the fact that we, the presidents of the four countries, signed this document. I'm sure that it has a great future.

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**NORMAL INTERACTION BETWEEN  
SCIENCE AND POLITICS  
MUST BE RESTORED**

SPEECH AT LOMONOSOV  
MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY

ON MAY 18, 1996

I would like to avoid any oversimplification of interaction between science and society. Today, extreme politicization of the problem of science reflects its interaction with the organs of state government rather than with society. Clearly, this area of managerial decision-taking, directly linked with the financing and structuring of universities and institutes, is very important. But the knot of scientific problems cannot be undone on pragmatic criteria only. A long time ago the great Voltaire said: "It is always dangerous to be right on issues on which the mighty people of this world are wrong." Indeed, politicians' pragmatism often prevents them from seeing the cultural and institutional role of education.

At the same time normal interaction between science and politics must be restored, and science "as a way of rationalization of means in their relation to ends" is a normal phenomenon in stable societies. The unbalancing of the science—education—politics system in the last few years is precisely that, a lack of balance, and there is nothing objectionable about a clear formulation of the political goals of a scientific system's development.

It would be a mistake to assume that things are different in the rest of the world.

The epoch of gratifying one's personal curiosity at state expense has sunk into oblivion, and all our countries are now facing the acute question of the competitiveness of our own scientific and educational systems.

The root system of the great science that has given the world some of the major achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been left here, in Russia, and it must go on bearing fruit at various points of the Eurasian cultural space.

No institution is more international than science, and it would be unpardonable if integration supporters did not use this lever to bring our peoples closer together.

Thousands of Kazakhstanis studied at Moscow State University, and many of them later became outstanding scientists, prominent captains of industry, and well-known public figures. It is here that five academicians of our National Academy of Sciences and five of its corresponding members were educated.

Quite a few of Moscow State University's alumni are successfully working right now in top executive posts in the republic's state administration on the practical implementation of sociopolitical and socioeconomic reform.

Apart from its principal function, Moscow State University was thus doing, during many years, the extremely important job of consolidating friendship among peoples and of harmonizing ethnic and inter-state relations.

I believe it fundamentally important to inculcate the high principles of scientific ethos in politics and everyday life.

The formation of a scientific and educational system of colossal scope considerably enlarged the autonomous cultural environment of the scientific community, creating the illusion of independence from society at large. But this self-sufficiency, which is to some extent fruitful in a closed society, is a dangerous delusion under the changed conditions of an open society.

The cultural resources of society at large constitute in a great measure an irrational mixture of lost meanings, apocalyptic prophecies, and primitive soothing incantations. Today as never before do we need to introduce strict and rational standards of science into this disturbed and disappointed world of illusions and utopias.

Science as a social-cultural phenomenon, just like many other things in the newly independent states, is living through a period of adjustment to open society, although the deep genetic affinity of free science and open society is obvious.

And it is not a question of fashionable copying of other people's experience. Following the stereotype of "a new look through an old slit" is hardly intelligent. Sure, the post-modernist vocabulary is filling the pages of various publications and TV screens, but the slits are all old, and the eyes that are looking through these slits burn with antagonism. It is especially scary when this hatred has nationalist coloring.

I'm all for pluralism. Practically the entire political spectrum is currently represented in Kazakhstan, from communist and socialist to nationalist parties. But estate-based, religious, or any other parties forbidden by law have no future in Kazakhstan.

The presence of fascist parties, which in some CIS countries exude a classically anti-Semitic stench, and in others are anti-Moslem, cannot be regarded as a sign of democracy. I will use all constitutional resources not to permit it.

Ideological tolerance is still a commodity in very short supply in the post-Soviet space. Without tolerance as the basic condition of ethnic, religious, or political dialogue, everything will be built on the balance of forces only. But, despite its outward strength, the balance of forces is a fairly fragile thing in politics. It is best to create this balance through rational dialogue, as demonstrated by scientists for centuries.

My political experience is prompting me that a different ontology of social life in the West shapes a specific set of analyti-

cal and terminological tools. This methodology is then thrown like a net on the highly unusual societies of the post-Soviet type. And such a net fails to catch the main thing, the institutional specifics of these societies.

Our society in transit cannot be adequately described by someone outside this society. And the noble task of scientists, whose elite corps is mustered here at Moscow University, is not just to describe it objectively but also to rationalize the process of creating our highly variable future.

We know that the greatest events in history are not made – they just occur. This two-hundred-year old observation is tinged with healthy skepticism. One of the problems of our highly mythologized society is that we are accustomed to see either good or evil will in everything. We are so accustomed to this that we miss the obvious fact that many epoch-making events are not planned, they just happen.

The study of the events of our recent late-Soviet history calls for a significant shift in the methodological perspective. There's no need to demonize our recent history; if we do, we'll find it hard to understand our near prospects. The notorious "invisible mole of history" is doing its job inaudibly, without regard for political personalities.

It can thus be said that the normative principles of scientific activity – universalism, objectiveness, and organized skepticism – are important not only in the self-sufficient sense but also with regard to politics and political action.

When I was choosing the site for making public my integrationist initiative for the setting up of the Eurasian Union, it wasn't by accident that I opted for a Moscow University's lectern. At that time, when the counter-integrationist mood clearly prevailed, Russian scientists' intellectual support was of great significance. Today integrationism is in fashion, but, being a realist in politics, I am in no way deluded by political rhetoric. At the same time, though, there are certain real achievements.

I derive some satisfaction, of course, from the fact that political ideas put forward two years ago are implemented in such practical moves as the setting up of the Customs Union, the solution of the problem of citizenship, and in multilevel integration proceeding at different speeds in different areas. The treaty signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia on deepening integration in the economic and humanitarian areas was a qualitatively new step in this process.

We assumed the obligation to coordinate our reforms and create favorable conditions for the functioning of the common market of commodities, services, capital, and labor.

A unified model normative basis for civil legislation and for economic reform is being worked out. A unified customs space will be created in this year already. Furthermore, it is just as important for us to cooperate in coordinating social policies and in maintaining and consolidating a common cultural space.

It is highly important that the treaty is open to all CIS countries. The "4 + n" formula of this treaty speaks for itself. The joining of other states in this treaty will testify to success of economic reform in the Commonwealth.

Integration of the modern type must be built on rational foundations, not on archaic colonial sentiments.

This rationality is based on a clear understanding of the fact that the entire post-Soviet zone is lagging, in historical terms, further and further behind the rest of the world.

This rationality is also based on the need to preserve the political independence of the states integrated in the union.

This rationality is further based on increasing the unity of cultural and civilization orientations. It is precisely the cultural and civilization tension that constitutes the main challenge for Eurasian integration on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, although it does not figure noticeably in the senselessly noisy battles of geopolitical amateurs in all CIS countries.

It may be that practical politicians have too little leisure to gain meaningful insights into the flow of reality, but, in objective terms, the volume of information accessible to any head of state is considerable.

So the mosaic of personal impressions forms a very complex and multidirectional picture of civilization tension, both internal and external, in the post-Soviet space.

That is why a rational interpretation of integration is not so much a view of the past, which is unquestionably impressive, as a view of the future – a very problematic future.

It must also be recognized that this future is becoming increasingly variable, with more and more alternatives appearing on the horizon. The only thing that a sober politician can guarantee is that neither unbridled optimism nor gloomy eschatological prophecies can be seen as fatalistically inevitable.

Integration is based on several fundamental principles.

First, it is not a question of reintegration but precisely of new integration. Incidentally, radically minded opponents and supporters of integration alike are arguing, either consciously or cunningly, about things that are quite different from what is actually happening. And what is actually happening is the search for structures and mechanisms for a new integration, not the restoration of the USSR.

Second, successful integration may be predicated on evolutionary build-up of integration institutions and channels. The creation of a strong institutional basis of integration in the sphere of the economy, culture, science, and education will require time and serious investment. It will require, in fact, the sort of real work that is done, say, by Moscow State University.

Third, integration will only become a reality if the cultural and civilization specifics of the ethnic groups involved are taken into account, and state sovereignty is respected.

The numerous talking shops trading in obscurantism built

on principles of ethnic superiority seriously distort and aggravate ethnic and inter-state relations.

It is embarrassing to observe mass publications pass xenophobia for the voice of the people. In Eurasia, Europocentrism is naive and dangerous. It is the uniqueness of our somewhat eclectic civilization resources that glues together this vast space after the disintegration of one big state. It would be pernicious arrogance to try to glue it together by violent means. This calls for special tact with regard to inter-state problems, including tact on the part of science.

When one reads lengthy discourses in some scientific publications on ways to re-draw the existing borders, one recalls the English expression about gentlemen economically endowed with intellect. For intellect is above all the ability to comprehend the structure of reality.

## **EURASIA: INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION**

Early spring of 1994. The countries of the former Soviet Union were in a state of deep socioeconomic crisis.

As the situation developed, I realized ever more clearly that the Commonwealth of Independent States was becoming an instrument of “civilized divorce” of the member states. All attempts to direct the process along a different, integrationist channel were unavailing. There were many causes for that, including a rather unhealthy attitude toward the very concept of integration: Any integrationist initiative was perceived as a threat to sovereignty. Meantime the political dynamics increasingly involved the destruction of not only economically senseless forms that had outlived their usefulness but also of quite rational, mutually advantageous links.

Besides, *political conflicts in some Commonwealth states*, their desire for rapid integration with the West or the East, and hope for aid from abroad eclipsed the need to preserve a common potential generated over decades.

*It was in these conditions that work on the Eurasian Union concept began.* But the perception of this idea by politicians, state leaders, and peoples proved far from unclouded. We all of us had to overcome the unidimensional, black-or-white perception of the world. It was this approach that struck me above all about the debate of those years. Proceeding from the false “integration vs. sovereignty” premise, people saw these concepts as mutually exclusive rather than interconnected and mutually complementary.

The CIS and its governing bodies that had evolved by 1994 were clearly not coping with the problems they were facing, and they failed to realize to the full the integration potential that was available. Of course, the Commonwealth was going through the stage of initial formation, but it was too long-drawn-out – despite the fact that we had significant advantages over other integration areas, such as a high degree of economic integration, similar sociopolitical structures and the population's mentality, as well as multinational populations and common historical traditions in most countries.

All this testified to the need to combine the building of national statehood with the preservation and development on this basis of inter-state integration processes. The logic of history is such that optimal entry into the world community is only possible through joint efforts of all Commonwealth countries relying on a solid integration basis developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

After a long study of the experiences of international alliances, analysis of the situation in the CIS countries, and consultations with specialists, I came to the conclusion that integration processes had to be intensified. However, some preparatory work is needed for the right perception of any initiative by the public.

The need to form a new integration alliance was first articulated during my visit to the United Kingdom in early spring 1994. In my speech at the Royal Institute for International Problems I pointed out that the “development of the post-Soviet space is currently determined by two tendencies: On the one hand, national statehood is coming into being, and on the other, there is a tendency toward integration of CIS countries. The need has arisen to reform the Commonwealth of Independent States itself, which will secure the establishment in this region of a belt of stability and security and increase the degree of predictability of political evolution.”

I outlined the idea for the formation of the Eurasian Union in greater detail in a speech at Moscow State University in March

1994. I counted on a positive response from the scientific elite of Russia's oldest university, and my expectations were not defeated. Most scientists supported this initiative from the very beginning. It was scientists who began a wide discussion of this idea in the media. Naturally, there were comments, new suggestions, and criticism of the project. All this made me glad, for the thing started rolling at last.

In September 1994 a scientific-practical conference was held in Almaty on "Eurasian Space: Integration Potential and Its Realization." It was attended by statesmen, politicians, public figures, scientists, and media people from almost all Commonwealth countries. The conference's concluding document proposed "to take steps to strengthen the CIS integration potential on the basis of the idea for the Eurasian Union of States and other integration projects."

The International Movement for Democratic Reforms addressed an appeal, entitled "The Eurasian Union Must Be," to the Moscow conference of CIS heads of state. On behalf of the 60 collective participants from the independent states, the appeal stated the need to support the initiative of President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan: "It is now clear that the CIS in the form in which it exists is ineffectual. New forms of consolidation are needed, and economic, defense, diplomatic, and environmental treaties must be concluded. Joint structures securing their activities must be set up. The peoples which have lived side by side with and supported each other need this."

The forum "Toward a New Accord" organized on the initiative of the International Movement for Democratic Reforms totally supported the initiative for the setting up of the Eurasian Union. On June 18, 1994 the forum held a conference on "The Eurasian Community: Unity in Diversity," attended by representatives of 30 parties and 60 public movements from the post-Soviet states. The participants in the conference adopted an appeal to peoples, parliamentarians, and heads of state: "We support the project for

the Eurasian Union worked out by President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, and call on heads of state to consider it in the interests of their peoples.”

Meanwhile intense work on the project itself “On the Formation of the Eurasian Union of States” continued, and it was published in June 1994.

It may be stated without exaggeration that that project was the focus of media debate in the CIS throughout the year 1994. Most observers called it “sensational” and stated that it “evoked a strong response.” The idea may be said to have fallen on fertile ground and received powerful support in extremely diverse circles.

Later, after the first responses were analyzed, the final variant of the project for the formation of the Eurasian Union was prepared; it was sent to the leaders of Commonwealth states, distributed by the United Nations, and put on the agenda of the October 1994 summit of CIS heads of state in Moscow.

So what did I propose at that time? The EAU draft project said that integration of CIS countries must be developed, but it mustn't be regarded as the only form of unification. Experience showed that development of the CIS was slowed down by the insufficiency of the internal potential of each of the member countries, which can only be increased under economic integration of the countries of the post-Soviet space on a new, market basis.

The degradation of the structures of the integral economic complex that we inherited from the USSR continues. Forms of economic ties that have outlived their usefulness are withering away for objective reasons. At the same time tried and tested technological links are disrupted, although they conform with the economic interests of our countries in the short- and long-term perspective.

Inasmuch as all CIS countries have proclaimed their adherence to market economy, I believed it necessary to unite our efforts toward reforming the economies of the former Soviet Union.

An important element of securing the success of market reform is improvement of the national legal codes of CIS countries. In this connection I put forward the proposal to bring closer together the legislative bases of economic activity, for the existing differences between them are becoming a serious obstacle in the way of integration processes in the economy.

The project naturally devotes considerable attention to the problems of CIS security. Considering the overall situation in CIS countries and along our external borders, I believed it necessary to say outright that post-Soviet space was a zone of instability and of conflicts of various types which additionally experienced the impact of hotbeds of tension outside the CIS. Only joint efforts of all the interested states could provide protection for the external borders and stabilize the situation in conflict areas, which required a coordinated approach of the member states to defense issues.

The problem of environmental protection was, and still is, one of the most painful and still unresolved issues in the CIS. This acute problem cannot be resolved by going it alone, either. New and, in my view, effective mechanisms of humanitarian cooperation were also proposed.

At that time the draft project for the Eurasian Union was not properly appreciated, although it wasn't rejected out of hand either. This attitude prevailed during two years after the publication of this project. In general, the position of many politicians reminded me of the old bureaucratic maxim: "On the one hand, it looks fine, but on the other, suppose it backfires?"

I still remain an advocate of integration of the post-Soviet space. As I formulated my vision of integration two years ago, I laid no claims to total realization of all the provisions of the project, being fully aware of all the political connotations of that period. Two considerations were my primary motivation. First, I wanted to generalize within a single whole the most realistic proposals for further integration which simultaneously appeared in several countries of the post-Soviet space. Second, I wished to interrupt

the indecently drawn-out pause in the activities of CIS institutions.

In the last two years there was movement in the CIS countries on some issues that had been at a standstill, including the formation of an inter-state economic committee and the signing of a customs union. I would also like to note that a number of tendencies pointed out in the draft project, both negative and constructive, have been unambiguously confirmed.

For example, it was clearly stated in the draft project that the CIS cannot be the only form of integration in the post-Soviet space, and that it was necessary to form regional and sectoral unions. Time has confirmed the correctness of this approach, and we are witnessing the formation of such integration forms. Suffice it to mention the Customs Union of three states, the Central Asian Union, and so on. I believe that new forms will emerge in the next few years.

The project was based on the awareness that CIS countries would not in the near future become equal partners in any of the developed economic blocs. That was exactly what happened. The idealistic nature of hopes for such incredible breakthroughs into economic zones with a different technology and infrastructure is more than obvious today. Nevertheless our countries are increasingly participating in major international organizations in the West and in the East. For example, Kazakhstan takes part in the work of the OSCE, the Organization for Economic Cooperation, and others.

This does not stop us from being advocates of integration in the post-Soviet space, which is regarded as a priority task. I still believe that the constructive nature of integration processes will rest on the platform which is outlined as a model in the EAU draft project.

Why am I so confident of that? The impulse given almost two years ago is still bearing fruit today. Three more countries are soon going to join the Customs Union. Early in 1996, Russia completely lifted the customs barriers on its border with Kazakh-

stan. Incidentally, we had done the same thing six months earlier. I must also point out the growth in the volume of Kazakhstani-Russian trade in that period, as well as of trade between Kazakhstan and Belorussia. The functions of the Inter-state Economic Committee are becoming more and more substantive. The formation of integration "nuclei" also continues on a regional basis, in particular in Central Asia. Again, we mustn't underestimate the signing by nine countries of a treaty on collective security and a great many bilateral agreements. The Russian-Kazakhstani agreement on simplified procedures for acquiring citizenship can be cited as an example. It is an illustration of the practical potential inherent in the Eurasian project.

But inexorably moving time has this characteristic that it continually creates new political and economic realities. These include declining structural interconnectedness of the national economies; increasingly divergent, often diametrically opposed, economic interests; differences in the type of economic reform; considerable differences in the political landscape; and a growing split in the cultural values and, more broadly, civilization orientations of CIS member countries.

Let us recall the events of three years ago. Until the last moment CIS republics entertained hopes for the continued existence of the ruble zone. We found ourselves in an extremely difficult economic situation characterized by rocketing inflation of the young national currencies, poor command of the methods of macro-economic stabilization, collapsed industry, lack of clarity in privatization programs, unprecedented social tension, and breakdown of all economic links. That picture was characteristic of all post-Soviet countries.

We chose to go our separate ways then, advancing largely by trial and error, often in isolation, all of which created great additional difficulties. Most CIS countries have passed through the nadir of economic decline, they have mastered the levers of financial stabilization, their industrial policy has become animat-

ed, and there has been a qualitative improvement in commodity supplies on the market. This complex process inevitably brought new partners and new economic interests with it. Today, the integrity of the economic structure of the post-Soviet space is an order of magnitude lower than it used to be.

The specifics of reform in different countries have largely pushed apart their legislative codes, especially in the economic sphere. Integration of legal codes has thus become a much more complicated task. The direction of political dynamics also varies from one Commonwealth country to another.

Ignoring these processes would mean acting like an ostrich. An attempt to overcome these objective tendencies by an effort of will would be even greater political madness.

But does this rule out the urgency and the possibility of a new impulse toward integration? I'm sure it doesn't.

However, before we begin to speak of a new strategy for integrationism, I would like to share with you certain observations on integration myths of recent times.

Despite certain dramatic and often objectively given changes in social consciousness, the political elites' integration stereotypes still remain within the same old narrow spectrum. They may be tentatively divided into the nationalist-traditionalist, restoration-oriented, and liberal. As far as the nice Romantic and liberal picture of our speedy entry in the greater Europe or greater Asia is concerned, the answer to it is perfectly clear and can be expressed in this laconic formula: "No one is expecting us there." It is going to be a long process, not without some prospects, but any forced effort or idealization of partners is completely out of place in the developed world. Unfortunately, these naive approaches have played their negative role in the past, as they often determined the wrong choice of priorities.

The nationalist-traditionalist ways of solving problems grow out of emotionally understandable but politically inadequately weighted ideas. That which is the source of inspiration, however

paradoxical it may seem, for part of the intelligentsia, on the one hand, and the most marginal strata of the population, on the other, rests on two erroneous assumptions.

First, on postulating the strategic balance that was destroyed already in the late 1980s. All sorts of speculations on the use of force are at least five years out of date.

Second, the real national interest, including political interest, must be based on a sober assessment of the geopolitical realities of the new hierarchy of forces in the world. It is time everybody understood that. In my view, it is more important for all of us to define the strategic problems of our national security than seek out the small potential conflicts in the relations between our friendly countries. Emotions, including nationalist emotions, are not the best conductor of integration.

Integration based on restoration of the old social model, however striking it may appear, rests on substitution of one proposition for another. A certain bias toward “greater social orientation of economic policy” is inevitable, but it mustn’t be confused with restoring the old statehood. Incidentally, the “left-wing Renaissance” in Eastern Europe is harmoniously combined with continuing the foreign policy of the more liberal predecessors. That means that we must analyze the situation rather than substitute the choice of a socioeconomic model for that of a geopolitical model. The more solid left-wing politicians in the CIS clearly understand this.

In my view, not only political but also intellectual elites lack these days a realistic understanding of integration prospects and difficulties. And a realistic assessment permits a number of fundamental conclusions.

First, integration of the entire post-Soviet space within a more constructive structure than the Commonwealth is problematic in the nearest historical perspective. It has become quite clear that the idea of a two-speed, multi-tier integration and the idea of a kind of “integration centers,” proposed two years ago in the

EAU project, are still topical. It is a question of adopting a new strategy instead of frontal and standardized integration, doomed for this reason to failure: Integration policy must be geographically more localized, with greater stress on the choice of spheres of coordination. The more so that the recent experience of perestroika conducted by the federal Center according to a single standard ignoring the regional, national, economic, social, and political specifics of the republics showed how hopeless such a standardized approach was.

This approach cannot take into account the interests of our states, the more so that we have already gone through a certain stage in the development of our own statehood and in the formation of new economic relations and vectors of our foreign policy. Besides, the countries of the former USSR have drifted even further apart in terms of basic indices of economic development. In this situation, talking of universal schemata of unification would mean objectively undermining that which has already been achieved by economic reform. We mustn't be afraid that a group of states will appear which will outstrip other states in their development. World history shows that any integrated alliance has leaders which the other countries follow. The idea of a two-speed, multi-tier integration will enable us to take into account both the national interests and those of the Commonwealth as a whole in an optimal way.

We must clearly define our positions: The center of integration must be made up of countries that are close enough to each other in terms of the type of economic transformations and living standards. Right now no one is prepared to set apart substantive funds for overcoming the socioeconomic gap. There are too many internal problems and no serious funding for helping the stragglers catch up. But we must keep looking for ways to solve this task, too.

The integration center can begin to evolve through the mechanism of the action of the tripartite Customs Union. Some

painstaking work will have to be done here, particularly in bringing the tax codes of different countries closer together. It's high time we moved from politicized priorities to pragmatic ones. The Customs Union, which may become the basis of a new approach to integration, must not be expanded for the sake of political priorities only. It must be built on the basis of all its participants' economic interests.

Second, the greatest danger to real integration lies in calls for, and still more so, in actual attempts at, forcible re-integration.

What we refer to as post-Soviet space mustn't be presented as a sort of Phoenix ready to be born again from the ashes. Let me cite an environmental mental association. The end of the Aral Sea was not only manmade: Simply the peak of man's economic activity coincided with the lowest point in the natural fluctuations of the sea level. At least, that is one of the hypotheses.

What happened on the territory of the former USSR is a superimposition of two interconnected but autonomous processes: an inner crisis of a social system and fundamental geoeconomic, geocultural, geotechnological and, finally, geopolitical shifts. If the problem lay, for instance, only in the internal crisis of the system, the attitude toward post-Soviet space as a temporarily frozen colossus would be correct. But that is not so: This space is too deeply fragmented.

That is why the scenarios of forcible re-integration are merely a nostalgic model leading only to bloodshed for the sake of creating a temporary Utopia, not a stable construction.

Effective integration on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century means using the levers of economic and cultural influence. It is extremely dangerous to use outwardly effective but archaic methods instead of them.

Third, a clear strategy and definite goals are needed. The maximum goals must be outlined with utmost clarity, and if they are rejected on principle, there mustn't be any empty slogans about integration. I have a clear idea of the goal of integration at the

present stage. That goal is a unified market in the sense of absence of any technical or tax borders constraining free movement of commodities, capital, and manpower. Are we prepared to accept this absolutely clear model or not? We must clearly define our position on this, rather than drift among beautiful slogans about our glorious past. To what extent are the separate states ready for a common market? How is it going to reflect on the competitiveness of our national economies and living standards? How does it mesh with state security? These are the questions to which answers will have to be found.

Fourth, the necessary condition of real integration is recognition as a top priority in foreign policy of collaboration between the Commonwealth states. These priorities, however, must not be expressed through political campaigns for domestic consumption but through practical measures for building a system of unifying economic, cultural, and political structures.

This raises the fundamental issue of choosing the criteria or group of criteria to determine the content and direction of post-Soviet integration in the nearest historical perspective. There is no unanimity on this score either.

Against this background, the slogans of restoring the USSR, which threaten national sovereignty, push our countries still further apart. Regardless of the will and desires of the conservative forces, sovereignty is a reality. No state is going to forego its sovereignty. Forcible integration can sharply change our states' foreign policy reference points and direct the vector of their integration effort outside the CIS. Genuine champions of integration, who use this idea not just as a PR exercise, realize today that civilized, progressive integration must go hand in hand with, and promote, the strengthening of the states' national sovereignty. This integration is a synonym of stability and security, as proved by the experiences of Europe, North America, and South-East Asia.

The key to integration is recognition of the existing political institutions of different states. Of course, there are certain

general civilized requirements at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which even the most odious political regimes are expected to comply with. It is fundamentally important, however, to recognize the specificity of the political system in each member of the potential integrated alliance. After all, no one in the European Union is bothered by the fact that typically presidential republics and classical parliamentary republics are integrated in a single whole. At the same time voices are heard that the political regimes [here] are so different that unification is impossible. This is essentially wrong. Besides, a common tendency has become apparent throughout the territory of the former USSR toward the establishment of strong presidential republics, and this tendency mustn't be simply ignored. One can argue whether that is bad or good, but the obvious synchronism of the processes is proof of the similarity of the overall political context regardless of national or regional variations.

Another constructive precondition of integration consists in the unequivocal recognition of the territorial integrity and existing borders. This is the principal theme of various political speculations, historical myths, and projects that are insulting to other nations. The proponents of rearranging the borders fail to comprehend a very simple maxim: As you kindle the flames at your neighbor's, first look where the wind is blowing. Today, internal territorial integrity is much more important to the post-Soviet nations than daredevil calls for seizure of other nations' territory. A stable good-neighborly situation along external borders clearly harmonizes the internal situation as well. To believe otherwise means to say that black is white. Territorial integrity is not a question of historical symbolism – it is a question of survival of the states themselves, even the smallest ones in the post-Soviet space. Playing games with this, even for the sake of obvious election campaign rhetoric, means planting a time bomb under one's own statehood.

I'm an advocate of a realistic approach to integration. But

realism does not mean pessimism. Sure, the situation mustn't be idealized, new realities mustn't be introduced at will. But we cannot sit on the river bank, either, passively watching the flow of history. No integration is possible without a political will.

The history of the most powerful integration alliance in Europe was not without its problems. I remember a European ambassador then working in Kazakhstan making some interesting calculations in connection with celebrations of the Schuman day. Seven years passed between the proposal by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman to establish the Franco-German coal and steel union on May 9, 1950 and the Treaty of Rome on the setting up of the European Economic Union signed by The Six on March 25, 1957. As for the Maastricht treaty on the establishment of the European Union, it was only signed 25 years later – on February 7, 1992. The turning point in the long and painstaking preparations for this integration came on April 4, 1951, when Jean Monnet, the man who inspired the European Community, met Konrad Adenauer and managed to convince him of the need for the principle of equality in the community.

Lessons can be drawn not only from other people's errors but also from other people's successes. Integrationism not based on the principle of equality has no future. Integrationism based on equality, free will, and pragmatic interest equals a dignified future for Eurasia, which can only in this case become a global factor of the world economy and politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## I DON'T FEEL LIKE A "BLOOD HOSTAGE" AT ALL

*Mr. President, in your last book you write this: "We mustn't succumb to wishful thinking. Confusing ideals and political reality is fraught with great misfortunes and the state's collapse." How would you assess the situation in Kazakhstan from this standpoint? On one hand, we often hear from official sources that "economic stabilization has begun," "the slump as such has been overcome," "we are experiencing a lull before a breakthrough." On the other hand, the papers draw a picture of unemployment, poverty, rampant inflation, and other delights of a "savage" market. So what is the truth?*

"A lull before a breakthrough," I noticed that one myself as I looked through local newspapers. It seems that government officials are not averse to lexical refinements. There is also this awkward but persistent phrase, "stabilizing the economy." It has about as much sense as stabilizing a person's cardiogram...

So where's the truth? You have partially revealed it in your own question. If a nation has the media criticizing the government, that means that there is pluralism in this nation, and pluralism is a most important attribute of civilized rather than savage market. However, there is a noticeable shortage of educated criticism to describe the complex economic realities of our times in a substantive and accurate way.

As regards the substance of your question, now. On rampant inflation. We had "rampant inflation" – more than 2000 percent – some two years ago. That period was characterized by a

huge decline in production, a weak private sector, and an almost total absence of financial discipline. In the difficult political and economic situation at the time of the disintegration of the USSR our primary task was the building of a new state and consolidation of ethnic stability. The logic of transformation was as follows. First, we had to set up all the necessary state institutions within a very brief period of time and create the mechanisms of a strong power structure. Second, we had to rehabilitate the economy through reform, tame inflation, achieve stability of the national currency, and expand the private sector through forced privatization. Third, as inflation decreased to about 15 percent a year, it was planned to bring down the National Bank's interest rate correspondingly. Under these favorable conditions, investments in and credits for domestic production would be intensified.

Today, Kazakhstan is nearing the end of the second stage. Inflation was sharply brought down last year already: It amounted to just 60.3 percent. This year we plan to bring it down to 28-30 percent. The tenge was stabilized. While in the first six months of 1995 its exchange rate to the dollar decreased by 28.8 percent, the corresponding figure for the first six months of this year is just 4.8 percent.

For the first time in the last five years decline in production ceased, and a certain economic growth was achieved. We also managed to increase retail trade volumes, of which the growth rate will amount to 109 percent by the end of the year (84.9 percent in 1994). Export of production has increased for the second year running: It grew by 154.5 percent in 1995 and is expected to increase by 130 percent this year.

Importantly, the average wage is also growing: The growth is expected to amount to 103 percent this year. In dollar terms, average monthly wages rose from \$44.8 in 1994 to \$105 last month, while the average size of old-age pensions increased from \$15.9 a month in 1994 to \$38.7 this year.

The second stage of reform has been practically concluded.

Let us go back to your question. Indeed, the press and TV rightly speak of such acute problems as the crisis of payments, irregular payment of pensions and wages, bankruptcy and liquidation of enterprises that have failed to adapt to the new conditions, and unemployment. But let us ask this question: These diseases of market growth, are they characteristic of Kazakhstan or Russia alone? Didn't other states that chose the path of market reform and integration in the world economy suffer from this disease in the past?

Unfortunately, there is less talk of privatization in the republic – by now, non-state-owned property already exceeds state-owned property in terms of volume. Almost all state-owned holding and shareholders' companies have been demonopolized, their negative impact on the market has been eliminated. In keeping with the new Constitution (we recently marked its first anniversary) and the Land Code, the first elements of private ownership of land have already been introduced.

In short, the principal manifestations of the profound systemic crisis have been overcome – and that is on the upside. There are, however, some items on the downside, too. Unfortunately, there are quite a few problems, primarily in the social sphere, which are solved extremely slowly, and I have quite a few things for which to reproach the government.

*Unlike in Russia, where powerful parties and blocs, including those of the opposition, have been formed or are in the process of formation, Kazakhstan does not know any powerful forces that would be in opposition to the president and the government. It is an old dictum, however, that if there is no strong opposition, it has to be invented, for any movement ahead is only possible through dialogue with a powerful opponent who criticizes your shortcomings and failures and proposes alternative economic programs. Don't you feel sorry that, figuratively speaking, no Zyuganov, Chernovil or Zenon Poznyak have emerged in Kazakhstan?*

I can take issue with you on that well-known dictum. Time changes everything, including ideas that have seemed immutable.

There is no dearth of criticism of our shortcomings and failures. There's a lot of criticism. We also have opposition. Political parties and social movements are freely set up in Kazakhstan. Our papers and TV channels, mostly non-state-owned, of which there are several dozen in the republic, more and more often act as "powerful opponents."

Opinions vary on whether the opposition is weak or strong. It is hardly appropriate to hold competitions on this score. I would compare society's social and political development with a complex chemical reaction as a result of which "final substances" are formed, of which the opposition is one. There are both positive and negative aspects in this situation. You have mentioned the downside – let me say a few words about the upside. As the social and state institutions of a young state are formed, there appears an objective need for a high degree of consolidation of society for the attainment of prime objectives. That is exactly what we observe in Kazakhstan at present.

*Kazakhstan is a unique country in the CIS in the sense that Kazakhs make up about half the population while Slavs make up the other half. In a case like this, the concepts of ethnic majority and ethnic minority are inapplicable. But you are an ethnic Kazakh. Is it easy for you to take into account and defend the interests of the non-native population? Don't you sometimes feel like a "hostage of blood"?*

Yes, we are a multinational republic. That is why we have worked out certain principles of the policy of civic peace and ethnic concord. These principles are effective, as proved by the absence in Kazakhstan of ethnic conflicts over many years and by the atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding between all the peoples inhabiting it.

Let me tell you the following episode by way of illustration. Recently I found, after a long search, Yelizaveta Shapovalova, an old-age pensioner from Almaty. My father, who learned the cobbler's trade from Shapovalova's father, told me a great deal about her and her family. In the years of famine during collectivization these two families, the Shapovalovs and the Nazarbayevs, helped each other to survive. So why mustn't we live in peace and love today?

Incidentally, some light should be thrown on statistics as well. It is no secret that many make judgments on the demographic situation in Kazakhstan relying on ten-year old statistics. This is characteristic above all of certain forces in Russia. But the situation today is different. In the last five years some two million people left Kazakhstan for their homeland. The people left after selling without any problems their houses and other property. Practically no one can say that they were forced to leave. And if there are people who do say so, the reason is self-interest: They want to receive refugee status or some privileges.

More than half a million emigrated to Germany. Another major group of people who left Kazakhstan consists of servicemen of the former Central Asian military district, where more than 500,000 used to serve. In no other region [of the Soviet Union] were there as many military towns and testing grounds as in Kazakhstan – and they weren't even shown on maps. Nowadays these towns (and their population amounted on aggregate to half a million, too) stand half-empty, as the people have left for their homeland or their new stations.

Young readers ought to be reminded that some 800,000 Volga Germans were deported to Kazakhstan, as were 600,000 people from various nationalities of the Caucasus. In the 1950s and 1960s, more than two million were resettled from the European part of the USSR to develop the virgin lands. Three and a half million people were thus resettled in a brief period of time. It would be hard to find any historical parallels of this migration.

Figuratively speaking, Kazakhstan was regarded as a giant testing ground and labor camp. What was the Kazakhs' great guilt in the eyes of the Soviet power to deserve this fate?

In recent years more than 200,000 descendants of Kazakhs who in the past ran away from famine and repression returned to their historical homeland. This process of homecoming continues. Some three million Kazakhs live in Central Asia, Russia, Mongolia, and a number of other countries; another million and a half live in China, and many of them intend to return. These are forced migrants and their descendants, and we feel obliged to receive them.

On the whole, Kazakhs make up more than half the population now; some 30 percent are Russians, while the rest are members of a hundred nationalities, of which the major ones are Germans, Uzbeks, Tatars, Uigurs, Ukrainians, Koreans, and Poles. The so-called fifth paragraph [on IDs. – Tr.] has been abolished in Kazakhstan, and there is no discrimination whatever. That is a constitutional norm with us. Whether you are a Ukrainian, Belorussian, Jew, Greek, or Pole – you have the same rights as everybody else. As the economic situation improved, those who had left began to return, and we welcome them back.

I'm convinced that the president of a multinational state must not be a "blood hostage" – he must be a "hostage" to the balance and harmony of the interests of all the peoples of his country. A mature politician must see the line beyond which lies the beginning of conflicts, and we all know what these conflicts end in.

I deliberately replied to this question in such detail because I believe that maintaining confidence and trust between people of whatever nationality is the duty of every honest politician. It is particularly important to maintain the potential, accumulated over centuries, of friendship and brotherhood between Kazakhs and Russians, between Russia and Kazakhstan. The treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance between our states signed in May 1992 makes this imperative for us.

*You admitted on more than one occasion in your interviews that you were brought up in the spirit of atheism. Doesn't this interfere with your leadership of a country in which religious traditions are now actively restored? How do the two religions get on with each other on the territory of one state?*

Indeed, just like all my generation, I was brought up in the spirit of atheism. But my parents were believers, they acted in accordance with Islamic commandments and inculcated them in their children. The revival of religious traditions is a great help rather than a hindrance. A believer as a rule has a good idea of his predestination on this earth. Is that bad? Does that interfere with anything?

Then again, the revival of religious traditions and the state's aid to religion is also a form of the state's repentance for past suppression of the faith and convictions of millions of people and each concrete individual. It is both penitence and purification.

The two religions get along quite well in Kazakhstan. The state pays them equal attention and provides equal aid for them. For instance, not long ago I signed the decree on the return of the Ascension Cathedral (it was a historical monument during many years) to the Orthodox Church. Incidentally, His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, who came to Kazakhstan at my invitation, officiated at one of the first liturgies there. All over Kazakhstan, hundreds of mosques and churches have been returned to the believers, and new ones are being built. Mark you, they are built with voluntarily collected money, although the state is also doing its best to help.

There is an objective law about the way the two religions get along in this country. As a Eurasian state, Kazakhstan is equally inclined toward the Christian West and the Moslem East. It would be silly not to take advantage of such a precious gift of fate. We know examples from history where reliance on Oriental traditions and way of life, on the one hand, and intelligent application

of the fruits of Western progress, on the other, resulted in an economic miracle.

*This is what I read in your book "On the Doorstep of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century": "We have to change ourselves, in order to change the world." Tell me, have you changed a great deal in recent years, when you became president? What sort of changes were they? Do they please you, or do they sometimes distress you?*

Yes, I have changed. I don't know if I've changed a great deal or not – it's not for me to judge. In general, it's difficult to speak of oneself, and twice as difficult of changes in oneself. Too much time is spent on analysis of extremely varied information, circumstances and situations, so there's simply no time left for self-analysis. Although I realize that one must find the time.

My views of a great many things have changed, for the world has changed, the people have changed. We see now the way people in other countries live, and we feel upset that we are lagging behind, that we wasted so much time building communist sphinxes.

Then there's the responsibility. The greater it is, the stronger its impact on man. I notice that earlier I was a bit more hot-headed about making decisions. Now there's more contemplation and balance. But I believe that this is a characteristic not only of statesmen but of mature men in general.

My heart rejoices at any sign of success in improving the people's lives. I constantly have this feeling that we are not moving ahead fast enough, that we are slow at overcoming the crisis. But I realize that you cannot cheat the logic of reform, you can't leap over this logic.

*You are a busy man. But you have a family, you have children and grandchildren. Do you have the time to spend with them? Does the notion of leisure exist for you at all? If it does, what do you fill it with?*

Unfortunately, I cannot spend as much time with the family

as I would have wished to. That is why I value so much the hours and minutes that we spend together. I have three grandchildren. The time I spend with them gives me real joy.

On weekdays I come home late. On Sundays, the whole family – children and grandchildren – gathers around the dinner table. Outside work, what I like best is being with the family. I like reading, too. My favorite sports are riding, playing tennis, skiing, and swimming.

*According to legend, you first tasted alcohol at twenty, when you got your first pay packet and treated your team to some strong stuff. Since then you must have had occasion to taste strong drink, and not only because you want to relax with your friends from time to time: Your very office implies the ability to drink not only kumys or mineral water. What kind of drink do you prefer? And how much can you take on board?*

I believe that Kazakhstani readers of Trud will be grateful to you for this question, for local journalists never ask me about that sort of thing. Maybe this topic is not as popular in Kazakhstan as in other CIS countries?

I have never been a particular admirer of alcohol, although I could take a glass or two on celebration days in the company of friends. When I worked as a metallurgist, I preferred stronger drink – the guys mostly drank vodka. Nowadays I mostly opt for dry wine, and don't take strong drink at all. I prefer water to vodka, if you'll pardon a very poor pun. And I mean cold water. That's the work of my wife Sara. She converted me to the health system of Porfiry Ivanov. It's a wonderful thing, you know. It keeps you in excellent form and fine spirits. I recommend everybody to take icy showers in the morning, straight out of bed, and at night, after work, before supper. It's just marvelous!

*A president's burden is not an easy one. Don't you dream in secret of the time when you'll be able to retire into private life*

*and take up fishing or domra playing? What's your most cherished dream?*

As far as the domra and the fishing-rod are concerned, I must complement you on your excellent sources of information, but I do take them up from time to time, when I get the chance and when the mood is right.

As for my most cherished dream – I mean no offense, but let it remain my own cherished dream, not a public one. Don't you feel that a dream, once made public, becomes something of a request?

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## **I LOOK WITH GREAT OPTIMISM AT THE FUTURE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN KAZAKHSTAN AND RUSSIA**

*Mr. President, in recent weeks and even months some people got the impression that the president of Kazakhstan somehow disappeared from the political map of Moscow where he has figured all these years, even if he didn't come to Russia's capital. What is the reason for this? Have you become disappointed in the policy of integration? Have you lost touch with the president of Russia? Have you turned your back on Russia and are facing Asia only?*

Naturally, I have not become disappointed in the policy of integration, nor have I lost touch with the Russian leadership. As for Kazakhstan turning its back on Russia to face Asia, this point needs clarifying. We have always favored a multidirectional foreign policy. Despite the widely current view, East and West have long met, especially in the economy – on mutually advantageous if competitive terms. We have a natural desire for developing close and friendly ties with our nearest neighbors – Kirgizia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, all the Turkic-speaking countries. After all, we have close economic interests and close historical and cultural ties. Incidentally, a meeting of Turkic-speaking countries attended by Turkey was held in October in Tashkent. As usual, the Moscow media “failed to notice” this important event – no offense meant. And it should have noticed it, for there was a serious and substantive discussion of integration possibilities at that summit. And you can take it from me that problems were

discussed there in the solution of which Russia is interested, too. Definition of the status of the Caspian Sea, transport of Kazakhstan's oil, development of communications and the infrastructure of tourism were all on the summit agenda. In general, whatever issue one may take, its positive solution would be to the advantage of Russia and the entire Eurasian region.

We look at relations with the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, the United States, China, South-East Asian countries in the spirit of mutual understanding. You take China. Recall how many years the problem of the border between the USSR and China remained unsolved. In 1994, however, practically all controversial issues about the demarcation of the Kazakhstani-Chinese border were solved through serious purposive efforts, and the necessary documents were signed. The logical conclusion of this work was the signing this year in Shanghai of an unprecedented agreement between China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan on trust-building measures in the border area.

As for Russia itself, it remains Kazakhstan's most important economic partner. Our relations are always among our state's priorities.

As for my absence from the political stage of Moscow — What can I say on this subject? One sometimes gets the impression that there's so much fuss on those crowded boards that one simply doesn't like the idea of appearing there.

*It's been five years since the Commonwealth of Independent States emerged on the ruins of the USSR. What is your view, in the most general outline, of the results of the past five years? And, much on the same subject, what is your assessment of the first results of joint work on the "treaty of four"? Haven't there been any disappointments there? Has this treaty given anything really new compared to the already known documents within the CIS framework and bilateral agreements between Russia and Kazakhstan?*

If you remember, I'm one of the most consistent critics of the ineffectiveness of Commonwealth structures. We have signed quite a few documents, but are they being implemented? But that does not mean that yours truly is an opponent of the CIS. On the contrary, I believe my task to be to set in motion the flywheel of effective and mutually advantageous cooperation and to speed up integration processes.

That is why I sincerely rejoice at even the most modest advances in this direction. In actual fact, we have achieved extremely significant results in these five years. Let me point out just two of these results, the most important ones in my view. The first one concerns changes in the politicians' and ordinary citizens' worldview in the new independent states. The idea of the Eurasian Union of States after the model of the European Union continues to be actively discussed in various circles in our countries. This idea has deep roots and is in the peoples' interests. I am convinced that as the situation in the economy improves, we will all want to have a Common Market of our own, with mutual advantages and equal rights for all.

It is in the economic area that the second result lies, too. Economic links are gradually restored and put in order, and cooperation between the various regions is revived at a new level. You take Kazakhstan. We use electric power from Kyrgyzstan and natural gas from Uzbekistan. Russian oil and power companies are taking part in the privatization of various facilities in Kazakhstan, and vice versa. Our republic delivers ores, metals, mineral fertilizer, and agricultural produce to Russia and other countries of the Commonwealth, receiving in return a wide range of the commodities we need. In this way a market-oriented model of mutual relations based on real partnership is being built on the ruins of the planned distribution system.

The third result may be mentioned as a curious side-effect. Five years ago the term "integrationist," firmly associated with my person, was uttered by some politicians with a great deal of iro-

ny, whereas now nearly every member of the national political elites, including the former scoffers, is in a hurry to join the ranks of those same integrationists. This is a joke, of course, but every joke has a grain of truth in it.

As for the treaty between Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia on deeper integration in the economic and humanitarian areas, that alliance has become the highest stage of integration within the CIS framework. What sort of disappointment can we talk of in this connection? Besides, I would like to see here a further movement closer to the Eurasian idea. After all, the treaty was concluded between European and Asian states. We have achieved quite concrete results. After the customs union and the "4 + n" treaty were concluded, trade between Kazakhstan, Russia, and Belarus grew by 50 percent. Let others judge if that is much or little: These things are better seen from the outside. For my part, I would like to point out that each major political or economic alliance has its own bias determined by a great many factors. They cannot be expected to bring instant profit: They must first fully mature (which may take quite a long time) and only after that be realized, bringing concrete results. This applies to the "treaty of four," to the bilateral Kazakhstani-Russian agreements, and also to the multilateral agreements adopted within the CIS framework, whose potential is truly unlimited. This process does not much depend on someone's desire to develop or, contrariwise, curtail cooperation. After all, as an O. Henry character said, the point is not the roads we choose but the roads that choose us.

*From time to time the issue of the realization of the plan for moving the capital of Kazakhstan to Akmola comes to the surface. Many people in Russia believe that the purpose of this move is, among others, to change the policy with regard to the almost entirely Russian speaking northern regions of Kazakhstan in favor of their "Kazakhization" or, as they used to say in the past, "nativization."*

Yes, I'm an active supporter and, as a matter of fact, initiator of the transfer of the capital to Akmola, but not for the reasons outlined in your question. It is above all a question of strategic priorities in our country's development. The prospects for the expansion of Almaty have already been exhausted, for the city is sandwiched within a semicircle of mountains – and the issue of expansion inevitably surfaces if the metropolitan status of Almaty is to be maintained. Its economic potential has practically been exhausted. Furthermore, the old capital lies on the periphery of the republic, whereas Akmola, lying as it does in the very center, has excellent communications potential. I believe that Russia, too, will in the future have to think of moving its capital closer to the center of the state. When I'm criticized on this score, it is only for the high cost of this project. But the figures show that, should we begin to spend funds on further expansion of Almaty, more money will be spent on it than on the development of Akmola, which was built in the 1960s precisely with the aim of moving the capital to that city.

There aren't any "entirely" Kazakh-speaking or "entirely" Russian-speaking regions in Kazakhstan. Nor do Russians predominate in those regions of which people who do not know Kazakhstan at all are speaking. And it must be said that Kazakhs and Russians live peacefully together. The state cherishes this friendship, and that will be our policy in the future as well.

The issue of the capital is a purely internal affair of Kazakhstan. The Russians, for their part, may notice the fact that the capital of Kazakhstan will become closer to them.

*From time to time people are tried in Almaty and other areas of Kazakhstan on various charges, mostly criminal, against leaders of a number of public organizations who are ethnic Russians, in particular Cossacks. Right now, too, a trial is being prepared in the case of Galina Sidorova. Some politicians in Moscow believe that these are symptoms of the "policy of oust-*

*ing” of persons belonging to non-native nationalities. What do you think on this score?*

*Besides, some CIS member countries obviously implement the hidden policy of “squeezing out” Russians from various areas including state structures. What is the policy of Kazakhstan in this respect?*

And what do you think would be the policy of any country, if its Constitution were to be violated? After all, it's a question of formation of paramilitary units, and that is expressly prohibited by law. Calls are heard for redrawing the borders, although the treaty between Kazakhstan and Russia stipulates the building of relations on the principles of mutual respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity. What do you think the attitude of my compatriots may be to calls and slogans like “Kazakhstan is part of Russia,” “Cossack lands for the Cossacks”? The same attitude that Russians would take to slogans like, say, “Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands for Japan!”

Not long ago I had a meeting with the Cossacks of North Kazakhstan Region. And you know, the people's mood is mostly quite normal and peaceful. They don't need any skirmishes or conflicts. The people have complete freedom to restore traditions, develop original folklore, and create cultural centers.

Incidentally, 30 such centers function in this country. All of them are associated with the Assembly of the peoples of Kazakhstan. The state helps in every way to preserve the language and culture of the peoples. More than 20 Russian theaters are open in the republic, as are German, Uigur, and Korean theaters.

As for court trials, they occur in any state. Criminals are tried. According to our laws, only the courts can say whether a person is guilty or not. People are not tried for their nationality or membership in some estate but for violations of law. Some two million Kazakhs live in Russia. Haven't some of them ended up in the dock? Of course they have. But no one is picketing the Russian embassy in Almaty for this reason.

Just look who is being tried. The accused Sidorova beat up a woman – a public prosecutor’s officer performing her duties. One of the Cossack “functionaries” rigged up an explosive device in a telephone exchange building. Others started drunken brawls. Isn’t it absurd to pronounce them not guilty simply because they call themselves “freedom fighters”?

One is simply getting tired of all this rubbish. I mean the second part of your question, the one concerning the “squeezing out.” I’ll be brief. Every week I sign decrees restoring Kazakhstani citizenship of Russians, former Kazakhstanis, returning from Russia. Let us turn to simple statistics: In more than five thousand schools in Kazakhstan education is in Russian entirely, and only in three thousand schools children are educated in Kazakh. Just one institute, the Almaty Women’s Pedagogical Institute, uses only Kazakh as the language of teaching. Teachers are trained to teach not only in Kazakh and Russian but also in Azerbaijani, Uigur, Turkish, Korean, German, Polish, and Uzbek. More than half of all the papers and magazines published in the country appear in Russian and other languages. Among other things, the state finances the publication of a paper in Ukrainian.

It is not difficult to understand therefore why we are seriously working on raising the role of the Kazakh language, and why we’ll do all we can to increase its application in public service, at plants and other enterprises, in science, and in education. Of course, this is not done to the detriment of other languages.

More than 30 percent of the membership of our government are non-Kazakhs. The situation was the same even in the Soviet times.

The point here is that some public figures in Russia cannot reconcile themselves to the fact that the former republics of the USSR, Kazakhstan included, have become independent states, and that our relations must be built along the same lines as in the entire world – based on respect for each other and non-interference in each other’s affairs. Even some politicians permit them-

selves verbal attacks, and unjustified attacks at that. This evokes a feeling of suspicion, some people – especially young people – are beginning to think of some kind of confrontation. That is what worries me more than anything else.

We keep talking of friendship with Russia and the people of Russia not because we are afraid of something but only because the centuries-old mutual understanding, good-neighborly relations, and trust in our relations are in keeping with the basic interests of the Kazakh people. And aren't such relations with the closest and strategically important neighbor in the interests of Russia, too? If that is so, I'm amazed at the skill with which the seeds of hatred between the young people of our countries are being cultivated by some Russians. I'm sure that this is to the detriment of the interests of both Russia and Central Asia.

For our part, we are going to consolidate our friendship. Just look what a great deal is being done toward this goal. In Akmola, the Eurasian University named after Lev Gumilyov was opened to honor the man who did a great deal to restore the historical truth about the Steppe. Monuments to Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and other great Russian cultural figures have been erected. Believers were given back their churches, which the Soviets had turned into warehouses. In particular, right in the center of Almaty the magnificent cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church was re-opened – the cathedral of which Yuri Dombrovsky in his novel "Guardian of Antiquities" wrote. Patriarch Aleksiy of All Russia came here for the opening of the cathedral.

We know that there is a movement to meet us halfway in Russia, too. Moscow and St. Petersburg marked the anniversaries of our great compatriots Abai and Jambul. Recently, a mausoleum for our great composer Kurmangazy was opened in his homeland in Astrakhan Region. Viktor Chenomyrdin, chairman of the Russian government, took part in those celebrations together with me.

Reports on the opening of the mausoleum were joyously

welcomed throughout Kazakhstan and by our compatriots in Russia. I would like to say that events like this undoubtedly promote friendship between our peoples. There must be more of them.

*We all know of your fine relationship with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia. The time of his illness will apparently be far from simple as far as Russian-Kazakhstani relations are concerned. What is your view of the nearest future of relations between our states? What are the tasks that should be solved immediately, without heeding the subjective factors?*

Yes, our personal friendship, tested by the trials of the last few years and by objective tendencies and dictated by the need for collaboration, is a good basis for long-term, good-neighborly relations between our peoples. There has long existed a field of attraction between Russia and Kazakhstan. So I believe that the good-neighborly relations between our countries will not undergo any changes in the fairly short rehabilitation period after the operation. On the eve of the operation Boris Yeltsin received a letter from me in which I expressed my support. I sincerely wish Boris Nikolayevich, with whom I have the warmest ties, speedy recovery. Don't take this for a hastily put together aphorism, but Kazakhstan and Russia have friendly relations not because Yeltsin and Nazarbayev are friends but, contrariwise, we have friendly ties because our countries are friendly with each other.

I'm looking with great optimism at the future of Kazakhstani-Russian relations, if only because my country mustn't lose the Russian market. Russia, too, profits by buying our goods and transporting our raw materials. Businessmen on both sides must take a more active part on a mutually advantageous basis.

We have one misfortune in common: many decisions are not carried out. We sign a document, we sprinkle it with champagne, but we do not take care to create a mechanism for its realization. The result is something out of the Griboyedov play: It's

signed, out of sight, and out of mind. I hope we'll overcome this.

*What is your view of the political crisis in Belorussia? What are your relations with President Lukashenko?*

I would not like to pronounce judgment on political processes that are possible in any country. That is an internal matter for that particular state. As for President Lukashenko, I have quite businesslike relations with him. But not more.

True, I believe that here, just as in the answer to the previous question, we ought to be speaking of relations between peoples and states rather than those between individuals. As I have said on more than one occasion, relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan are developing quite fruitfully. This year I went on an official visit to Minsk, and I saw for myself once again how great is the peoples' desire for closer ties and for restoration of broken relations. In my speech in Minsk I quoted a letter I had received from Belorussian war veterans. They wrote to me that the ideas of closer ties between our states were close to their hearts. And they don't at all want the old Soviet Union to be restored. That is a senseless idea, in their view. But living in peace and friendship, working together, exchanging cultural values – all this is the people's greatest need.

*What can you tell the readers of Nezavisimaya gazeta on the episode involving your "letter to President Karimov"?*

How can I comment on an obvious canard which was launched from a well-known nest of disintegration? I hope that my answers to NG questions have to some extent convinced the readers of the sincerity of my inclination toward integration.

*Developments in Afghanistan can abruptly change the situation close to CIS borders, and there is danger of exacerbation of confrontation within Tajik society with unpredictable consequences. What you as the leader of one of the largest states in the Central Asian region think about the forecast, quite popular these days in the widest political circles, including those in Russia, about the*

*coming conflict between the "civilized" world order and Islamic fundamentalism?*

Unfortunately, it was the arrival of Soviet troops that made the flywheel of this conflict spin out of control. Ever since then misfortunes have never left that country.

As you may remember, early in October the summit in Almaty, attended not only by the Central Asian states but also by Russia, discussed the situation in Afghanistan. Naturally, we accepted the view that that conflict could only be solved by political means.

Besides, President Faruq Legari of Pakistan recently visited Almaty. The Afghan theme was one of those discussed with him, for President Legari's authority in the region is extremely high. The Pakistani leader stated in particular that his country, which has close contacts with the participants in the conflict, sees the solution of the problem in an immediate cease-fire and demilitarization of Kabul. In the president's words, Pakistani politicians hold meetings with all parties to the conflict.

For my part, I believe that if the Afghan conflict goes beyond the country's borders, CIS nations will have to put into effect their treaty of collective security. Finally, a conference of all the forces now in conflict must be convened, as well as a conference of all the countries of the region under the aegis of the United Nations.

Everybody, including Russia, needs peace in Afghanistan. If it were possible to lay transport routes and oil and gas pipelines across that country, that would be the shortest road to the warm seas not only for Central Asia. Russia's oil and gas pipelines have already reached Uzbekistan, and the resources of Siberia could in this case gain access to solvent markets in the most convenient way. Just look at the map, and you'll see that. At present, though, Siberian products are dragged across the whole of Russia to Europe.

So we are speaking here of quite concrete things that are of

great concern to everyone and require constant attention: of problems of war and peace, of saving people's lives, and of the unity of Afghanistan. All political forces must act decisively here and not engage in endless counterproductive talk of the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism – especially since the world is not moving in the direction in which a global confrontation is possible between a “civilized” world order and Islamic fundamentalism.

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## **RUSSIA COULD HAVE BECOME THE CORE OF THE COMMONWEALTH, BUT IT HASN'T**

*Moreover, the president believes that on some issues Moscow conducts destructive policies within the CIS*

*Mr. President, we hear more and more often that the Commonwealth of Independent States has failed to establish itself as a real new form of the community of the republics of the former USSR. Five years ago the newly independent states were closer to each other than now. What force is driving us into our separate "national" apartments? How long is the CIS going to develop in keeping with Lenin's immortal formula: In order to unite, we must first disunite? If we avoid the inevitable anniversary optimism and treat the CIS as the patient from the well-known fairy-tale, is the patient rather alive than dead?*

In order to understand in what state the patient is now, we must go back to his case history. I believe the present situation in the CIS to be a logical consequence of the processes occurring in each of the Commonwealth states.

At the beginning there was an element of mistrust. Everybody was busy consolidating their own statehood, and they wanted to see just how equal the declared cooperation would be.

Of considerable importance was also the degree of effectiveness of the economic reforms in each of the Commonwealth countries. The reforms are implemented in different ways, at different speeds and standards, and most importantly, with different end results in different countries. I find it difficult to give a comprehensive assessment of these processes in each of the Commonwealth countries. But I will not err, I think, if I say that the speed and quality of integration within the CIS depend on the member states' advances in market reform.

Today we can really integrate only those portions of our national economies which have assumed a truly market character and which must, in the ideal case, be automatically incorporated in mutually advantageous economic relations. I hope that it is this that will gradually pull our states together within a new community, be it the CIS or some other alliance. Purely economic rather than political factors will move into the foreground, such as the identity of the character, direction, quality, and tempo of market transformations.

Of course, the effectiveness of integration processes was inevitably affected by the absence in most newly independent states of educated and skilled teams of reformists. No people could be found in the former USSR which would be capable not only of correctly outlining the goals and tasks of market reforms but also, most importantly, properly realizing them in practical life and adjusting them to the national specifics and the country's interests.

*Do you mean Gaidar and his team? They have been charged with a variety of sins, but so far no one has accused them with the failure of CIS affairs*

On the contrary, I believe that it was these people who really started reform in Russia. Ambitious and well-educated, they knew what to do but, unfortunately, they didn't know how. After the disintegration of the USSR their approach to integration was

based on this principle alone: Russia must get rid of ballast. “Ballast” was taken to mean most former republics of the USSR.

Repulsing the neighbors in a sharp and often humiliating manner, the then Russian government believed that it would outstrip everyone on the path of reform. They believed that the neighbors would remain standing on their knees, degrade, and then line up to have their little car coupled to the Russian locomotive of reform. Right now I can speak of this quite frankly, for five years ago I was a participant in this drama myself.

This may have brought a tactical gain to the team of young Russian reformers in the narrow economic field. In the end, though, it led to a strategic defeat in the political field. The Russian government’s “economic egoism” was linked above all with rejection of a unified currency and an integral economy. This had an irreparable effect on integration processes above all.

Indeed, at that time we, Russia’s neighbors and allies, ended up “overboard.” Today, too, life isn’t easy for some of us. But the difficulties did not make us give up independence and statehood – on the contrary, they were an incentive for persistently consolidating them.

CIS countries are gradually overcoming the crisis, and in some respects they begin to outstrip Russia on the road of reform. If we are to be perfectly frank, the Russian locomotive of reform is barely hauling the train. Who will want to thoughtlessly get coupled to such a train? Believe me, I’m speaking of this with pain and regret. I want to believe that Russia will be able to move forward more vigorously. We will then have a natural desire to be at her side and follow the path of reform together. For the time being we are forced to move under our own steam. It’s slow and hard, but it’s our own effort.

*Mr. President, why do you think reform has begun to slow down in Russia now?*

The rate of reform began to slow down under Gaidar already. There are a great many causes for that, both objective and subjective, and it is the task of Russia's leaders above all to pass judgment on those. I believe that a significant role is played in this by political struggles, the split in the Russian political elite into several groupings, and permanent election campaigns which, as we know, waste a great deal of effort and money.

*All these years you have been an active proponent of integration, a "spiritual father" (this phrase is very much in vogue in Russia now) of various agreements, unions, and alliances. In recent times, however, you you have mostly been silent. Have you finally lost all belief in the possibility of integration, real integration, not the election campaign kind, so easily forgotten? What is your opinion, Mr. President: Will the CIS still be in existence in the year 2000?*

I would tentatively divide the five-year long history of the CIS into two periods. The first period fell on the years 1991 and 1992. At that time, the desire for unity within the Commonwealth was due to several causes. On the political-psychological plane, there was a natural nostalgia for the familiar great unified state in which we all felt ourselves to be comfortable and untroubled in several economic and political respects. Incidentally, the first package of CIS documents was in keeping with this attitude. They clearly outlined a common economic, legal, and defense space, there was also a common currency. The basis of all this was the still functioning All-Union industries, effective technological links and division of labor in all the main branches of the economy. At that time there still were things that we could preserve. I did all I could, and more, to keep Kazakhstan in the unified currency and technological space together with Russia and other Commonwealth states. Alas, the vector of Russia's development pointed in a different direction. The Russian leadership missed the chance

of becoming the center, the nucleus, the natural core of the Commonwealth. In the years that followed, as the economies of all CIS countries without exception disintegrated, the chances of consolidating the CIS on the old basis kept diminishing.

In 1993 we entered the second stage of the existence of the Commonwealth characterized by a catastrophic decline in production, industrial giants coming to a standstill everywhere, liquidation of numerous medium and small-scale enterprises, plants and factories, and final destruction of the previous production cycles. There were increasing signs of crisis in such apparently unshakable super-systems of the former Soviet Union as the integrated energy system, transport, and communications. Ethnic elites' regional interests – a factor that is mostly glossed over these days – played an increasingly destructive role. They began to affect significantly not only politics and the economy but also ideology. There was a deliberate attempt to undermine the healthy centuries-old cultural and spiritual links between the peoples of Eurasia. The ugly symbiosis of criminal and power structures began to take shape in the CIS countries. It was these tendencies that made me propose in 1994 the idea of the Eurasian Union.

However, calls for integration and declarations about the common historical destiny of our peoples largely contravened the interests of the new elites. At that time the criminal components of statehood were laid in most CIS countries which soon slowed down the economic and political reforms practically everywhere. What chance could reforms have when raw materials and capital were criminally exported on a mass scale, and when financial pyramids and “banks in the air” were built? Fraud, corruption and immorality began to rule the economies of the Commonwealth countries. It is only natural that the idea of the Eurasian Union was skeptically received against this background. What might be called the criminal period in the history of the

Commonwealth continued until the end of last year (one would like to believe that it is over).

Now, in 1997, we are entering a new period of the existence of the CIS. If the Commonwealth does not collapse in the nearest future, it will probably last another 5-10 years. I hope that precisely in this period the foundations of real integration will finally be laid on the basis of genuine mutual interests of all member countries of the Commonwealth. Only then will full-fledged, civilized integration processes begin of the type we observe today in Western Europe and in the Asian-Pacific region. It would be best for CIS countries to take the experiences of Western Europe as a model and follow the path of Eurasian integration. But it must be integration of equal partners, without any division into junior and senior brothers.

*In a word, you believe that the current numerous offices which coordinate and direct the activities of the CIS are not working effectively enough?*

I don't see any need to stop the activities of the existing integrated CIS bodies simply because they are ineffectual. Let them operate as purely consultative bodies, modeling "from above" the mechanisms of our future relations. But all this will only come in handy when life itself fills the currently dry channels with life-giving water.

It is a question of a qualitatively new level of understanding of the tasks we face. From the very beginning whole systems of myths began to form around the CIS, its past, present, and future – myths that politicians use for achieving their own goals, say, in election campaigns. We are no longer speaking of actually operating CIS institutions but of something ephemeral, something that exists either in the politicians' imagination or on paper, something that changes with the situation in which Commonwealth leaders happen to be.

On the eve of the summit meeting I tried to make it clear in my own mind what factors may promote the principle of integration.

First of all, all participants could be united by a common internal or external threat.

Second, it might be an idea that would be close to all the participants in the proposed alliance without exception.

The third option is a common economic interest that would offer each participant some real, practical profit or gain.

Another obligatory condition is a real center of attraction. A dynamic, prosperous state may become such a center, a regional leader whose economic model of development seems attractive to the neighbors, and they naturally begin to gravitate toward it.

Does an obvious threat to CIS countries exist today, one that would make them discard national and regional ambitions and unite in order to jointly oppose that threat? It may be possible in the future, but so far we don't think of any such threat as an obvious and common one. Each CIS state has its own problems that are of little concern to the rest. This factor is therefore by no means an incentive to early unification.

Nor do we have at present any common ideals or attractive ideas which might push us toward integration. I refer here to global ideas equal in scope to those which united us for over 70 years.

It would also be hard to single out a constant, mutually advantageous economic interest in our relations that could be remotely compared with the incentives for the integration of the European countries.

Finally, is there a country among CIS members that would be the center of voluntary attraction for the neighbors?

*What about Russia, which has been declared "stable" in*

*1997, and in which the president, the prime minister, and even the opposition are all for reform, differing only on the issue of the methods of its implementation?*

Following the logic of all our previous life in the Soviet Union, it was Russia that could, and had to, become the core and the center of the CIS. But – and I say this with great regret – it hasn't, for a number of objective and subjective reasons. Moreover, on some issues Russia conducts destructive policies within the CIS, repulsing rather than attracting potential allies.

*What are the specific manifestations of this, in your view?*

Russia might exert a much greater positive influence on the situation in the CIS than it is doing now. Analyzing, in the most general terms, the attitude of the Russian leadership toward the Commonwealth, it is impossible to miss several obvious contradictions.

On the one hand, we sign a great many documents and work out joint projects and programs; that is to say, constructive work appears to be in progress. On the other hand, there's the clearly unfriendly attitude toward the closest allies. Consider the major Russian media. It is really hard to find any objective stories about the former Soviet republics in it. As a rule, only negative materials are published or neutral articles at best, but even these are full of irony.

Russia has inherited a vast information space; Russian TV dominates the entire post-Soviet space. However, information influence can only be maintained if Russia really becomes a great state treating its neighbors and potential allies with respect. But even in this case monopoly on information is impossible and unacceptable.

And what do we see now? ORT executives pulled the Mir (Peace/World) program from the First Channel, thereby violating an inter-state agreement and eliminating the only objective source

of information on CIS countries. And how does Russian TV report on major international forums, like CIS summits? Does Russian TV show all the presidents of the Commonwealth? Does it report to the TV viewers – and these are not Russian citizens only – just the topics of their speeches, if not the speeches themselves?

Yes, a great many fine words are said about a unified information space. But what do we need that space for, if our interests are not represented there?

Or you take the recent conflict in Belarus. It would appear that Russia has no ally that would be closer to it than Belarus. But it was the Russian media that lambasted Lukashenko. It seems that Russia's state interest means nothing to them. It is through the Russian media that our peoples learn that there's near famine in Kyrgyzstan, that Uzbekistan does not want peace in Tajikistan, that Kazakhstan owes Russia \$300 million for electric power—

*Isn't that a fact?*

No, it isn't. Besides, the people have the right to know that Russia owes Kazakhstan \$345 million for the lease of the Baikonur space-vehicle launching site, \$126 million for renting military testing grounds, and \$65 million for Ekibastuz coal. We have no chance at all of publishing these figures or reply to any other grudges against us through our “common” information space. I might, of course, look at this as certain inevitable drawbacks of the freedom of speech in Russia, but we hear practically the same things from some of the Russian statesmen.

Is confrontation between Russia and Ukraine in the interests of the CIS? Why not solve the problem of the Black Sea Fleet in the same way as that of the Baikonur space-vehicle launching site?

The continued conflicts in Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia, the Dniester Republic, and Tajikistan prove that the CIS in its present state is incapable of resolving them. These conflicts can

only be resolved by an exercise of political will. But that is exactly what is in very short supply.

The topic of the "long hand of the West," which has allegedly reached out far into the CIS, is eagerly and copiously discussed. Yes, the West has its interests here. For instance, Western businessmen take an active part in privatization in Kazakhstan. We hold open tenders. But these tenders are won by those whose offers promise the greatest profit to Kazakhstan, by those who offer us profitable terms. The doors are open to Russia, too, but Russia is in no hurry to come in. So far, we have heard nothing but unjustified claims from Russia, but we do not feel any real desire for mutually advantageous partnership. No one is ever going to betray Russia if it offers cooperation on genuinely equal terms. We get the impression, however, that Russia does not have any clear notion of its political interests yet, and that it hasn't yet worked out a long-term policy either in relation to the CIS as a whole or to the individual Commonwealth countries.

*Mr. President, a different viewpoint is also current. Twenty-five million Russians outside Russia, mostly in CIS countries, live miserable lives deprived of basic civil rights. In Russia, any ethnic group, even if it is extremely small, has an almost state-level autonomy. Can the same be said about Russians in CIS countries?*

This approach to the problem by some politicians who have nothing to offer Russian citizens by way of actual improvement of their everyday life is a really embarrassing gift to the Russians living outside Russia. That is a short-sighted policy that does not promote sympathy for Russia in the CIS and creates problems for Russians on the everyday-life level.

You journalists simply astound me. How long are you prepared to make so much noise on this subject? And why don't you pester with these questions those leaders who really have ethnic

problems in their states? In Kazakhstan, which, according to its Fundamental law, is a unitary state, the rights of all nationalities are clearly protected by the Constitution. Russian is an official language equal to the state language. You will not find a single Russian word on any bank-note in other countries, whereas the inscriptions on our tenge are in two languages, Kazakh and Russian.

I will admit that some two years ago my reaction to such questions was rather pained. How long do I have to go on proving that sugar is white! If a person has work, if the rights of man are constitutionally guaranteed, if his children's future is assured, then that person has no reason to migrate. Many people come to realize that. Last year alone about 100,000 Russians returned to Kazakhstan.

The issue of autonomies, now. I believe that each concrete case must be approached on its own merits, with due consideration for the historical past and today's realities. The main thing is to avoid bloody conflicts. Let us recall the sad experiences of Karabakh, Abkhazia, the Dniester area, or the tragedy of Yugoslavia. Everywhere the bloody mess began with bloated national ambitions eventually developing into frenzied separatism. What is more important to us today, peace between our peoples or the triumph of abstract principles at any cost? The answer is obvious. Ordinary people need peace and concord. Our principal task now is to overcome the economic crisis and improve the people's life.

You know that I have always been an active supporter and in some cases initiator of integration processes within the Commonwealth. Today, as I think back on the five years of CIS history, I arrive at conclusions not all of which are bitter – some of them inspire hope.

Five years ago we, the leaders of what then was the Soviet

republics, the national political elites of the new states, could not properly realize the depth and tragic tenor of the cataclysm we were going through. No one before us had experienced events of such scope, no one had seen changes as rapid and irreversible as we did. The world had not known similar historical experiences.

I believe it is indubitably to our credit that we managed to avoid massive bloodshed in the relations between states. We avoided what went down in history as the "Yugoslav scenario." It is also to CIS leaders' credit that they have managed to keep their more or less warm relations between both the presidents and our peoples. The fact itself that the meetings of Commonwealth states are held regularly and that reasonable decisions are adopted by these meetings confirms this.

*So far we have spoken of the Commonwealth as a whole. What is your vision of Kazakhstan's place in the CIS? Are you satisfied with the development of links between Kazakhstan and Russia, between Kazakhstan and other CIS countries?*

Just like everybody else, we have problems in the economy. The most difficult problems we face are social ones. I believe that we have laid a good foundation for their solution. In 1996, we largely concluded the reform of the raw materials industry and the heavy industry. For the first time in seven years the decline in GDP was stopped. Some sectors of the economy saw an upturn. Average wages increased almost twofold in real terms in two years. In the past year, inflation fell to half of what it had been before. Prices in Kazakhstan are not regulated by the state; more than 70 percent of the industry is in private hands. The population's deposits in the banks show a stable tendency toward growth. In 1996 alone they increased sixfold. The exchange rate of the tenge became stabilized. Export policy is in the interest of the state. Agreements on the privatization of in-

dustrial facilities are guaranteed by obligations in the form of direct investment to the tune of \$6.5 billion. These are considerable sums for Kazakhstan, and they will be paid by the year 2000.

In accordance with the medium-term program of development, starting in 1997 the emphasis will be shifted to support light and foodstuffs industry and machine-building. Considerable funds were earmarked for these purposes in the budget.

You don't have to be a great economist to understand that the development of these industries will necessitate Kazakhstan's practical steps toward technological cooperation with our neighbors and offering our products on their markets. These will primarily be CIS markets. That is why I as the president of Kazakhstan will press for the lifting of customs barriers and the establishment of an integrated currency market – not out of political populism or the desire to shine as the author of another brilliant initiative but in keeping with purely economic interests of the Republic of Kazakhstan. I'm sure that this will also be the desire not only of the presidents and governments of Kazakhstan's neighboring countries but also of the executives of individual firms, enterprises, and financial-industrial groups.

This process may result in the formation of absolutely new joint industrial structures, which will lobby, in the better sense of the word, their common interests on new, market principles not only through the unified official bodies of the CIS but also in the governments and parliaments of their own countries. If CIS affairs take this course, this will give the Commonwealth a good chance for the future.

The main result of my thinking on the five-year history of the CIS is this: Today, not only the Commonwealth but also Russian policy toward its closest neighbors must be radically reformed. Until it becomes really responsible and friendly (naturally, I'm in no way calling on Russia to forego its national interests), CIS coun-

tries' orientation toward other geopolitical centers will continue. No one will doubt, I believe, that it is the Kremlin that still holds the keys to integration.

I have never concealed my sincere liking for Russia and its people. Today, Russia has the largest territory and the richest mineral deposits in the world, and its people are talented and hard-working. An effort must be made to put all this potential to work for the benefit of the people, lift the country out of the crisis and make it again the center of attraction for the whole of Eurasia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## **Speech on the Occasion of Awarding Boris Yeltsin the Order Altyn Kyran**

MOSCOW, MARCH 28, 1997

Dear Boris Nikolayevich!

Ladies and gentlemen!

I have the great honor of performing a pleasant mission today. The decision has been taken in Kazakhstan to award you, Boris Nikolayevich, the order Altyn Kyran, which means Golden Eagle, for an outstanding contribution to the strengthening of traditional ties of friendship and brotherhood between our peoples, for your undeviating efforts to consolidate the atmosphere of trust and partnership and to develop cooperation between our states. The status of this order corresponds to that of the Russian order For Distinguished Services to Motherland, First Degree.

I believe that this high title suits you. I'm convinced that you will continue uniting all progressive forces of Russia, that you will follow the path of democratic reform and justify the trust of the Russian citizens. This, however, also applies to the peoples of all the countries of the Commonwealth, for Russia has always been and will always be the principal link joining together our common interests in various areas, both in the economy and in the spiritual sphere.

The reason I'm saying this is, among other things, that the

five years of CIS history have proved that, despite the many difficulties, reason and trust dominate our relations. You are doing a great deal to achieve this, too.

But Kazakhstan and all the other Commonwealth countries have a great untapped potential for cooperation. I would like to look at our meeting today, which is taking place after a certain pause, as the beginning of a new state in the economic and cultural integration in which the Russian Federation can assume the role of a motive force.

There can be no borders between people. The borders between brotherly countries are also merely conventional – they are borders that unite rather than disunite. The mutual desire of the peoples of our states manifested itself in the bilateral treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance. It was signed nearly five years ago, but the conclusion may be drawn already that it has stood the test of time and is a solid foundation of mutually advantageous cooperation of equal partners in various areas.

I believe that this can also be credited to you, Boris Nikolayevich. Your consistent and firm stance on many occasions helped to solve the most important problems. It was in evidence during preparations for the Shanghai treaty on trust-building measures in the military sphere along the border between China and CIS countries, and that was also in evidence as we worked on mutually acceptable agreements on the Baikonur space-vehicle launching site and other testing grounds in Kazakhstan, as well as in the solution of many other problems.

I do not at all doubt that our relations have a fine future. The sources of my confidence are connected with you and the people who are working under you. That is why we are in such a fine mood today, the sort of mood which prevails when close friends meet. We are glad that you are full of vigor and energy, that you are actively performing your duties as a statesman, dis-

playing your inherent firmness, decisiveness, and optimism.

Permit me to hand you, on behalf of the people of the independent republic of Kazakhstan, the order Altyn Kyran. This is a sign of gratitude and a symbol of the unity and brotherhood of our peoples, a sign of high acclaim of your truly indefatigable activity.

## **NATIONAL INTERESTS ABOVE ALL FOR A STATE THAT HAS FOUND ITS IDENTITY**

*The President of Kazakhstan believes that all CIS charter documents must be revised, and all executive structures of the Commonwealth replaced.*

*As Nezavisimaya gazeta has already reported, on March 27, on the eve of the CIS summit, the president of Kazakhstan received me in his residence in Moscow. At my request Nursultan Nazarbayev commented on the problems facing the Commonwealth which has existed for five years now but has not achieved much either in the integration of the post-Soviet space or in the solution of conflicts on this territory.*

*Nursultan Nazarbayev spoke in a very forthright manner. So far as I understood, he was going to outline these thoughts in his speech at the talks in the Kremlin, especially during the closed sessions.*

*Below we present what is in fact a word for word record of Nursultan Nazarbayev's answers to my questions.*

The Commonwealth of Independent States is neither the best nor the worst invention of recent political history. An assessment of the last five years or so must not be utopian, nor should it

dramatize the situation. The only correct criterion of evaluation is a realistic coordinated position. And if we are to base our assessments on reality rather than on nostalgic projects, several conclusions suggest themselves.

First, if the CIS did not exist, it would have to be invented. Kazakhstan firmly adheres to the view that integration of our countries is a necessity. We wish to build integration on a solid, well-thought-out, serious basis. To do it, however, we need patience and time. All that I keep saying as I criticize the present situation in the CIS was prompted by a sincere desire to make our integration a civilized process with equal rights for all.

In the first place, the situation of 1991 had at least three possible outcomes: forcible reintegration, a bloody chaos of ethnic conflicts, or the setting up of a transit mechanism of coordinating the interests of independent states. The CIS proved to be that third option, and therein lies the historical significance of the Commonwealth.

Second, despite all our criticism of CIS institutions, we must realize that without this mechanism we would practically lose all incentives for integration, and the second half of the 1990s would be marked by the breakup of not only economic but also of civilization space.

There is, however, yet another side of the medal – the failure to solve a whole tangle of problems in the relations between CIS nations. The problems of Tajikistan, Karabakh, Dniester area, Abkhazia, Sevastopol differ in their causes, content, ethnic and religious nature. Can we speak of any serious advances in deepening political and military-political cooperation without solving all these problems in a civilized and definitive manner?

To move forward, we must formulate some very simple questions and give clear answers to them. Why is it, for instance, that some CIS countries are ready for a more effective cooperation with NATO or other military-political unions? Why is it that, despite the declared adherence to links within the CIS, the mem-

ber states' real priorities often lie in a different area? Why do the state-run media of one of the countries fan hysteria with regard to another nation? And why do the officials of a country seen as a strategic partner proclaim openly provocative and separatist slogans aimed at that partner? Are there any examples of similar commonwealths in modern history?

We might shrug our shoulders and laugh at these scenes from the theater of the absurd, but we have no right to do so. The answer to all these questions is absolutely clear.

Factor number one: When the CIS emerged, the newly independent states were extremely amorphous structures which had certain basic attributes of states only symbolically or historically. The design for and the notion of the Commonwealth were based on this obvious fact. Today we are looking at actually established states which, despite all the difficulties and hysterical prophecies, are now standing on their own feet and for which their own national interests are above all, certainly above chimera-like alliances and confederations. This difference between December 1991 and the spring of 1997 must be accepted as a given, and relations within the Commonwealth must be built on this given.

The second factor is the lack of trust in the relations between CIS countries. This is a derivative of the permanently unfulfilled obligations and promises. There is no need to cite specific examples here, but there are enough of them in any sphere of cooperation. I have a very high opinion of the political will and intellect of Boris Yeltsin who has spoken up in no uncertain terms on the issue of the Russian diaspora in the Baltic states. But don't certain political forces of Russia exploit this problem in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and in the Caucasus? Why not express the same attitude toward states that are closer to Russia than the Baltic states?

The problem of trust concerns not only relations between politicians. These are above all new stereotypes of relations between the peoples themselves. And here we observe increasing

growth of negative stereotypes. Suffice it to cite the phrase “person of Caucasian nationality” which is, by the way, officially used in the bureaucratic vocabulary. This is in fact an insult to a whole group of CIS countries. Or consider the Cossacks’ territorial claims on independent states, supported, overtly or covertly, by official structures.

These thoughts, not at all suitable for anniversary celebrations, have to be articulated precisely because of our concern over the possible future development of these processes. Yes, we all of us realize that on the long-term, strategic plane the integration potential of our part of Eurasia is not just great – it is critically great. Whatever the temptations of fully autonomous development, practical life will sooner or later point to the need for natural foundations of our integration.

However, passive optimism is worse than the most skeptical evaluations. That is why prospects for development must be absolutely concrete.

It must be recognized, in my view, that only those parts of the national economies that have become genuinely market-oriented are really amenable to integration. In other words, the extent of real rather than verbal readiness for integration is directly linked with the level of institutional reforms in the economy. It is simply impossible, not just unreasonable, to base integration on archaic rudiments.

We cannot keep looking back at our past. Serious motivation for integration is only possible if future common economic interests are found. We needn’t look for such an interest in some special projects. Our geographical, historical-cultural, and technological attraction necessitates the formation in the coming decade of an integral market of commodities, capital, and labor. It is here that the strategic prospects for the development of the Commonwealth lie, not in the search for some tactical political forms.

Apart from this, there's the external view of the CIS. Not just the world community as a whole but our immediate neighbors must know for sure that the CIS will not be a source of instability for anyone. The very existence of the CIS is increasingly determined by this fact. Finally, there is a series of clearly identified problems on which early decisions must be taken. A package of proposals for the realization of priority investment projects has been under discussion for over a year, but no decisions have yet been taken.

This is slowing down the introduction of the most favored status for financial-industrial groups that are working in this area. Many CIS countries have completed mass privatization programs. A fairly numerous stratum of small and medium property owners has emerged, but their profits are minimal, for the CIS market, so natural for small and medium-sized business is artificially divided, and huge profits on this market go to small-scale businesses from beyond the Commonwealth.

That is why we urgently need a coordinated program for the support of small and medium-size business on CIS territory. The most favored status and protection of the CIS common market are also tasks of the utmost urgency. That is why the need has arisen for the transition of our states to international principles of imposing VAT and excises. A single VAT rate, reduced to 15 percent, could already be introduced in the nearest future.

It would be senseless to conduct the debate at the summit in such concrete terms. The heads of state must define their positions on the major issues, the more so that all critically important problems are clear. It is time to act, and not in the style of bureaucratic memos but in substantive terms. The conceptual proposals for economic integration of the CIS do not satisfy these requirements. They were compiled on the basis of old views by people who are far behind the times. I therefore propose to define our positions on the following issues.

In the first place, all the charter documents of the Commonwealth must be revised. A group of experts must therefore be immediately set up to overhaul, within a period of several months, the entire mechanism of CIS operation, using the experiences of effective models of integration in the world—for example, those of the European Union. The effectiveness of NATO was definitely demonstrated in Bosnia. Of course, we do not lay claims to the status of an organization like that, but in our case it is a question of conflicts between a single Commonwealth's member states.

Kazakhstan proposes to work out, without putting this task off until the end of the century, a unified program for the resolution of all conflicts within the CIS and to start solving these issues. It is a question of specific and joint actions. Finally, we must replace all executive and controlling CIS structures. Personally, I have high respect for the executive officers of our integration organs, but their helplessness is really astounding. I can cite plenty of evidence to support my contention.

Article 10 [of the CIS Charter] says that measures permitted by international law will be applied to states which violate CIS Charter or decisions of Commonwealth bodies. Today, however, things have come to such a pass that fulfillment of our agreements is seen as an exception rather than the rule. We have not been able, not once, to put into operation those institutions that are called upon to supervise compliance with the Commonwealth Charter. The CIS executive secretariat fails to perform its primary function – organizing the fulfillment of the decisions of the Council of Heads of State and the Council of Heads of Governments. And now they are claiming the status of highly placed international diplomats.

Closely linked with this is another issue that has been raised on more than one occasion – that of territorial location of CIS executive bodies. We are a Eurasian commonwealth, and this is

not a metaphor but a strict geographical fact. This fact calls for part of the principal CIS institutions to be based in the Asian part of the Commonwealth. I may be speaking too forthrightly, but this is prompted by Kazakhstan's sincere desire for progress in integration. I believe that my colleagues the presidents of CIS member states share my concern. And we do have a chance of directing our integration along civilized channels.

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## **I WILL WELCOME THE UNION OF RUSSIA AND BELARUS, IF IT ACHIEVES A BREAKTHROUGH IN INTEGRATION**

*The last meeting of CIS heads of state laid bare the problems of the Commonwealth. For the first time it was openly stated that in the five years of its existence the Commonwealth achieved no particular success either in integration or in solving the conflicts on its territory. The question was in fact formulated as follows: Will the CIS continue to exist or will it not?*

*Why did things happen the way they did? What is the way out of this situation? These and other problems were discussed by Rossiyskaya gazeta with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan.*

*Mr. President, four years ago I had an argument with a scholarly acquaintance of mine about the Commonwealth's prospects. He said then that the CIS was a bluff, an Oriental ruse to calm the peoples after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, and that nothing would actually come out of it. It appears that he was right, doesn't it?*

The Commonwealth of Independent States is not the best invention in recent history, but believe me, neither is it the worst.

Moreover, if the CIS did not exist, it would have to be invented, given the situation of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. The fact is that after the events of 1991 we were facing the choice between forcible reintegration, with an attendant legal chaos of ethnic conflicts, or the establishment of a mechanism for coordinating the independent states' interests. Therein lies the historical meaning of the Commonwealth. Without it, we would have lost all interest for unification, and the second half of the 1990s would witness the final rupture not only of economic but also of civilized relations all over the vast Eurasian space.

*It would be hard to contest this argument. But what you have just said does not in my view refute my acquaintance's claim: The Commonwealth has really done very little. The documents that we have signed practically do not work, the conflicts on CIS territory have not been resolved, and some countries are more eager to cooperate with overseas countries than with their neighbors— not to mention various inappropriate statements by official persons regarding their strategic partners. And this doesn't seem to worry anyone unduly, except, of course, the peoples on whose shoulders the entire weight of the post-Soviet re-division fell. Isn't that so?*

There is a problem here, but there is also an explanation. What were the new republics like, when the CIS just emerged? Practically nothing, except for a few symbolic attributes of independent states. The design for and the concept of the Commonwealth were in those years based on this obvious fact. Today we are speaking of well-established states that, despite all the difficulties, are standing on their feet and place their own national interests above all. That is the principal difference between December 1991 and spring 1997. It is high time we accepted this as a given. And we must build our relations in the Commonwealth on the basis of this given.

We can't keep looking back at our past all the time. Seri-

ous integration is only possible if common economic interests are discovered, the more so that we don't even have to invent any special projects. Our geographical, historical-cultural, and technological attraction toward each other necessitates the formation in the coming decade of a unified market of commodities, capital, and labor. It is here, I believe, that the strategic prospects for the development of the Commonwealth lie. Whatever the temptations of the adherents of totally autonomous development, practical life with sooner or later point to the need for our natural integration.

*And still, Mr. President, for the time being the heads of state have refused to sign the conceptual framework for CIS economic integration. And you, so far as we know, set the pitch for that yourself.*

Boris Yeltsin's forthright statement at the closed session of heads of state was followed by total silence. He expressed in fact our common dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the CIS. I made an even harsher statement. Sure, we have to act. However, we mustn't act in the style of bureaucratic memos but address substantive issues. That was why I proposed not to sign the conceptual framework as it was presented to us. It does not satisfy today's requirements, compiled as it is on the basis of outdated views and notions of the CIS. The governments of Commonwealth countries will have to alter it drastically.

Besides, I proposed to revise all the charter documents of the Commonwealth. For this purpose I proposed to set up a group of experts to overhaul the entire mechanism of CIS operation, taking into account the experiences of effective models of integration in the world, such as the European Union, and adapting them to our conditions.

I received 100 percent support from Kuchma, Shevardnadze, and other presidents. That was when the decision was taken to carefully consider all the proposals made at the heads of

state meeting and gather together again in June this year in order to decide at last on the ways for creating a common economic market on our states' territory.

*At present there are quite a few officials occupying various posts in CIS structures. What is your assessment of their work?*

Frankly, I have great respect for good officials, including those in our integration and executive organs. I believe nevertheless that all CIS structures must be replaced. Their helplessness is simply astounding. For instance, we agreed (and this is recorded in the proper documents) that measures permitted by international law would be applied to states violating CIS Charter or decisions of Commonwealth organs. Today, however, things have come to such a pass that fulfillment of our decisions is seen as an exception rather than the rule. And mark that institutions called upon to supervise compliance with the Commonwealth Charter have never yet been put to use. Although the executives of the CIS secretariat increasingly claim the same status as highly placed international diplomats, to this day they have failed at their prime function, that of organizing the fulfillment of the decisions of the Council of Heads of State and the Council of Heads of Governments.

*It is easy for you to talk about these things. But consider the plight of the officials at the CIS executive committee. Immediately after the signing of agreements talk starts again about the member states' independence and sovereignty, especially as the Commonwealth is already an assortment of blocs. Isn't there a contradiction here? For instance, President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine believes that real CIS integration is more effectively promoted by development of bilateral relations than division into twos, threes, and fours.*

I'm convinced that there can be all sorts of alliances within the CIS. Integration at different levels and different speeds in no way contravenes the general logic and ideology of the Common-

wealth. On the contrary, it only consolidates the Commonwealth. Who has suffered, say, from the establishment of the Customs Union, of the so-called “foursome”? In the year since its signing trade, say, between Russia and Kazakhstan increased by 57 percent, not to mention the fact that wholesale searches of our citizens have stopped along the seven-thousand-kilometer long border between our states. Why give this up?

We also have the Central Asian Union of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kirgizia. We set up the Central Asian Bank. It attracts foreign investment. We implement 52 joint projects, 17 of which are already in progress, including automobile production in Uzbekistan, which will provide cars for all, and production of water, gas, and electric meters in Kazakhstan for all our member countries. This, too, is of great advantage to all. If alliances of whatever type – threes, fours, or fives – trust each other and draw nearer to each other, there will be more trust and cooperation between all CIS countries.

*Incidentally, Mr. President, what is your attitude toward the union of Russia and Belarus? Some observers believe that you do not quite like it.*

First, you mustn't go looking for a black cat in a dark room, especially if it isn't there in the first place. Second, I will remind you that I have advocated, from the first days of CIS existence, normal, civilized, and well-thought-out integration of the Commonwealth member states, although I realize that this task will require time, patience, and a good basis. That is why I will heartily welcome the union of Russia and Belarus, if it enables us to achieve a breakthrough in this kind of integration.

However, as a pragmatist concerned with the economy, I'm convinced that only those portions of the national economies are amenable to integration which have become really market-based. In other words, the extent of real rather than verbal readiness for integration is directly linked with advances in economic

reform. Building a unified economic space on old principles or political slogans is not just unreasonable – it is impossible.

*What is your vision, in this connection, of the place of Kazakhstan in the Commonwealth?*

Just as all the other member states, Kazakhstan has a lot of problems in the economy. But, having started the formation of market economy, we have created a good basis for the solution of those problems, I believe. Last year we completed the reform in the raw materials sector of the economy and in the heavy industry.

For the first time in seven years decline in GDP was checked, and an upturn began in some sectors of the economy.

We practice extensively the transfer of control over enterprises into private hands or concessions, on condition, though, that the bidders assume the obligation to solve all social problems and attract capital to activate production. These transfers have helped us overcome the crisis even at such industrial giants as the Sokolovsko-Sarbaisky ore dressing mill, the Yermakovsky ferroalloy plant, the Pavlodar aluminum plant, and practically the whole of the coal industry. Incidentally, even in the best Soviet times the coal miners of Ekibastuz never met me with flowers in their hands, but when I went there on March 4, they did.

We have set up a special bank for the financial purging and rehabilitation of enterprises that are of primary importance for the country's economy. In the agrarian sector, we suspended all kinds of subsidies for agricultural products. Instead, we set up a leasing fund and the state fund for financial support of agriculture, which provides pinpoint support for farmers and peasant holdings.

In a word, you don't have to be a great economist to realize that Kazakhstan's market economy will need to take practical steps toward technical cooperation with our neighbors and to offer its products on the markets. These will be, in the first place,

CIS markets, of course. Real life itself will therefore force us to lift customs barriers, improve the mechanisms of financial clearance, and the establishment of a unified currency market – not out of considerations of political populism but out of pure economic self-interest. It will be integration on equal terms, without division into senior and junior brothers.

*This last comment reminded me of your critical remarks about Russia. You are not satisfied with its role in the Commonwealth.*

I have never concealed my sincere liking for Russia and its people. Its role in the Commonwealth is hard to exaggerate. And still, some Russian politicians set the wrong pitch for our alliance. Their approach to integration was then based on this single principle: Russia must get rid of ballast, meaning the former Soviet republics. They hoped to achieve a breakthrough in reform. The neighbors, according to their reckoning, would remain standing on their knees and later line up to couple their little car to the Russian locomotive.

Alas, their calculations fell through. Ending up overboard, so to speak, CIS countries nevertheless did not give up their independence, they're overcoming the economic crisis on their own, and in some respects they're already outstripping Moscow. This policy, however, affected integration processes. As a result, Russia failed to become, to my great regret, the core of the CIS, although it might and had to become such a core. Moreover, in some respects Moscow is conducting destructive policies, repulsing rather than attracting potential allies.

*Could you specify some concrete manifestations of this, please?*

In the first place, there is a shortage of trust between CIS countries. This is a derivative of the constant failure to fulfill obligations and promises. There are enough facts of this sort in any sphere of cooperation. For instance, we were supposed to sign

the contract on the Caspian pipeline consortium in December last year. All problems have been resolved, but the papers are still drifting along Moscow's corridors to this day. Many documents that were signed long ago have not yet been ratified by the Russian Duma. Among these are the treaty on simplified citizenship, the treaty on military-technical cooperation, and others. On the other hand, we learned recently that the Russian government adopted a decree on conducting an experiment in non-military protection of the Russian-Kazakhstani border using Cossack units. This is nothing short of a red rag for Kazakhs. And mark, this was immediately followed by tendentious statements by several heads of Russian departments, adding fuel to these emotional flames.

I have a feeling that Russia has not yet worked out a clear notion of its strategic interests; it has not yet worked out a long-term policy either toward the Commonwealth or toward the individual member countries. Until Moscow determines its position, CIS countries' orientation toward different geopolitical centers of attraction will continue.

*I'm sorry, but we mustn't forget, I think, that Russia's actions are sometimes prompted by the need to protect the interests of its compatriots. Our paper, too, has quite a lot of evidence that even in Kazakhstan their rights are violated.*

Just a couple of years ago I was distressed whenever I heard comments on this subject. How long do I have to go on proving that sugar is white, even if there are particles of dirt in it? In Kazakhstan, Russian is an official language, and it has the same status as the state language. I bet that you won't find a single Russian word on any Commonwealth bank-notes, whereas the Kazakhstani tenge is in two languages, Kazakh and Russian. True, people are beginning to sort things out for themselves. Only last year, some 100,000 Russians returned to Kazakhstan. It is high time journalists began to search for things that unite rather than disunite us.

*Recently, Mr. President, talk of the Eurasian idea, initiated by you, has somehow died down. Could it be that you have grown cool toward it?*

Of course not. Whether we want it or not, CIS development follows the Eurasian space scenario. Sooner or later the vast potential of the Asian continent will combine with the technological possibilities of Europe to work for the prosperity of the two continents. It is no accident that Kazakhstan's initiative to convene a conference on confidence-building measures on the Asian continent was supported by 27 states of that continent. Soon we are going to invite to Almaty deputy foreign ministers to discuss the same problem. The idea of the Eurasian Union is thus still on the agenda. Regrettably, we have not been able to set up and finance a scientific center to do serious research on Eurasianism. If ever I abandoned big politics, I would devote the remainder of my life to this noble idea.

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**Speech of President  
Nursultan Nazarbayev  
of the Republic of Kazakhstan  
at the Ceremony of Signing  
the Agreement Between the Republic  
of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic,  
the Russian Federation, and  
the Republic of Tajikistan  
on Mutual Reduction of Armed Forces  
in the Border Area**

MOSCOW, APRIL 24, 1997

Esteemed heads of states!

Ladies and gentlemen!

A year has passed since the meeting in Shanghai and the signing of the agreement, unprecedented in world history, on confidence-building measures in the border area.

There is no precedent to these agreements in terms of geopolitical consequences and geographical scope. I believe that our agreement will set an example for all countries as a manifestation of good will and concord and as a factor of consolidating stability and trust in this vast region. Finally, it is a question of peace and friendship, a question of quiet in our citizens' homes.

In effect, our decision addresses the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is in keeping with the interests and hopes of the peoples of all coun-

tries. We have the right to assert that a universal mechanism is being set up on the Eurasian space that guarantees stability and security, peace and harmony, trust and good-neighborly relations. Military superiority and military confrontation are forever excluded from our mutual relations.

We have met here for the sake of triumph of common sense. I recall in this connection the dictum by a Chinese philosopher: "A sensible statesman is marked by his ability to achieve a balance of forces."

I hope that honesty and responsibility in the realization of adopted decisions will ever triumph, from now on, in our mutual relations.

In conclusion I would like to express gratitude to our states' experts, who have worked for several years on these documents.

I'm firmly convinced that this agreement, just as the one signed in Shanghai, will go down in the annals of world politics, above all because it demonstrates our common desire for peace and good-neighborly relations.

My congratulations to all on this event! Thank you for your attention.

## **Speech at the Russian Academy of State Service**

MOSCOW, 24 APRIL, 1997

Dear Colleagues!

The atmosphere in this Academy inspires one to incline toward the higher style, so I would like to start with a quotation from Titus Livius, so beautifully laconic and pithy: "It is easier to condemn the past than to correct it." I would therefore like to concentrate on constructive aspects of economic policy in present-day Kazakhstan rather than lapse into nostalgic reminiscences about things that have receded into history.

I am glad to have this meeting with the instructors and professors of the Academy, with people who have on many occasions supported me in my quest and, I dare hope, share many of my views. To some extent these views and these economic preferences stem from your school of scientific thought.

### I. KAZAKHSTAN'S PRESENT-DAY ECONOMIC POLICY

It should be noted that the process of transformations in my country has entailed certain losses. Since the beginning of the reforms, a tangible decline in all the spheres of the economy has taken place, and the population's standard of living has fallen. In other words, we have passed, and in some aspects are still passing, through the same valleys of economic fluctuations that all the newly sovereign states have passed or still passing through.

At the same time the situation has begun to improve. Judge for yourselves: In the past year we have managed to achieve a growth in our GDP – 1.1 percent at the end of last year. For the first time in seven years the drop in production has been checked, while some sectors have even shown a growth in production: 0.3 in the industry and 3.2 in agriculture.

For the second year running we achieved a growth in our exports, with a \$1.9 billion gain in our foreign trade balance. According to our estimates, this year exports will rise by another nine percent to reach the \$6.4 billion mark.

Inflation was brought down from 2,200 percent in 1993 to 28 percent in 1996. The average monthly inflation rate declined from 4 to 2.1 percent.

The tenge is growing stronger and more stable. At the end of last year our currency's exchange rate was 73 tenge to the dollar, whereas at the end of 1997 the projected exchange rate is 73 tenge to the dollar.

The results in the social sphere are not bad, either: In 1995, real earnings began to grow and now equal on average \$112, which puts Kazakhstan in second place in the Commonwealth after Russia, Ukraine coming third with \$88.

Last year, consumer prices rose by 28.7 percent, whereas this year their rise is estimated at 17.5 percent in relation to December 1996.

We have reason to believe that the restructuring of our monster enterprises, which hold the monopoly in their sectors of production, and the discontinuing of financing of housing and utility services from the state treasury have considerably advanced the country along the path of reform, taking it to a new level of economic and, above all, financial stabilization.

By the middle of 1998, Kazakhstan intends to conclude the second stage of stabilization as well, taking privatization to a logical conclusion, completely reforming the enterprises and the financial sector and solving the problem of non-payments. This

will enable us to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a healthy and reformed economy, bring down annual inflation rates to 4 to 6 percent, achieve economic growth of 3 to 5 percent, achieve a stable growth of social indicators and, finally, improve the country's investment climate still further.

I must say that attracting investment is the focus of constant attention in Kazakhstan. Not to appear biased, let me quote United Nations files. According to their data, long-term investment in our country's economy, above all in its raw materials sector, amounts to \$50 billion. (To compare: Russia has only \$39 billion in its long-term investment portfolio).

Between 1993 and 1996, \$6.898 billion's worth of foreign investment (in the form of direct, portfolio investment, loans and credit funds) was utilized.

The principal investor is the United States, its share amounting to more than 44 percent of the total volume of investment. It is followed, in order of magnitude of investment, by South Korea, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and France. Russia is not on that list; it is listed under "Other investors" in the very last section. And this is not our fault at all, for it was precisely the Russian Federation that was invited to invest in the leading sectors of our production and at major enterprises of Kazakhstan. With its passive position, our northern neighbor found itself the loser.

As far as our short-term program is concerned, Kazakhstan intends to attract investment to the tune of \$15 billion in the period before the year 2000.

Just two months ago our parliament adopted, and I signed, the law "On State Support for Direct Investment," which takes into account the proposals of the International Center for Taxes and Investment aimed at further improvement of the investment climate in the republic. This document protects investors' rights, which ought to sharply enhance the motivation for investment of capital in our economy. The new guarantees insure the investors' right to competition, that is to say, their rights in relation to

their competitors, on the one hand, and freedom of entrepreneurial activity, or their rights in relation to the state, on the other hand.

The law also offers investors considerable benefits and preferences – a system of incentives for the realization of investment projects. Besides, this document establishes the procedure for licensing investors and deadlines for the necessary expert evaluation. This provides reliable guarantees for the potential investor in our economy against bureaucratic abuse of power and creates a situation of compliance with laws and openness in any activities connected with investment projects.

I signed an edict to endorse a list of top priority sectors of the economy to which direct domestic and foreign investment must be attracted. It includes production infrastructure, manufacturing industries, facilities in the city of Akmola, housing, social and tourist facilities, and agriculture. This clearly outlines the areas in which we are ready to cooperate with owners of foreign capital.

Considering all this, I think I have the right to say that today Kazakhstan's economy is the most attractive field of capital investment in the CIS, which is, if we are to be frank, an extremely important fact in a situation of increasing competition over investment.

Kazakhstan is now attracting special attention in connection with a new form of economic activity – transferring managerial control over enterprises to foreign firms. Frankly speaking, I constantly keep an eye on polemics over this form of work both at home and abroad, and I am surprised to learn how many advocates of protecting the riches of Kazakhstan have suddenly appeared both in our country and in Russia.

But what's all the fuss about, gentlemen? Say, the United States takes quite calmly the presence of Japanese capital on its market. It's profitable to the country, and it's profitable to the people. The same thing is happening in our country.

Let us cite some figures. Managerial control of some 50

enterprises has been transferred to foreign firms, including such major enterprises as the Karaganda Iron and Steel Works, the Pavlodar Aluminum Plant, the Sokolovsko-Sarbaisky Ore Dressing Plant, the Zhezkazgantsvetmet Association, the Donskoy Ore Dressing Works, and others. At all of them, pay arrears were cleared off on time, money was paid into pension funds, and problems were solved in the matter of returning debts to the energy sector, the transport sector, and other partners.

Production aspects of this undertaking, now. After the break-up of economic ties with CIS countries, all these enterprises were down and out, so to speak. These days, the production at Zhezkazgantsvetmet has increased by 65 percent in the past six months, and labor productivity, by 28 percent. In the past year, Ispatkarmet increased production by 12 percent. The same picture prevails at other enterprises as well. Thanks to foreign firms, nearly \$1 billion has been invested in Kazakhstan.

The political aspect, the vast impact of this new form of work on the social sphere is the main thing here. More than 200,000 workers regularly receiving high wages are employed at enterprises whose management was handed over to foreign firms. They and the members of their families, about a million citizens of Kazakhstan in all, have personally experienced the benefits of this transfer scheme. For instance, the average wages at the Sokolovsko-Sarbaisky Ore Dressing Plant amount to 20,000 tenge, or roughly \$300. As for highly qualified specialists, they receive more than \$1,000.

Cooperation with foreign firms is extremely profitable for the republic at this transitional stage. There can be no question here of wasting our resources, for the terms of the contracts favor the development of Kazakhstan's industrial potential. The more so that, when the stratum of Kazakhstani property-owners gets on its feet, they will always be able to buy these enterprises back.

The new Tax Code also serves to optimize the budget. All experts agree that it is based on the classical principles of sim-

plicity, justice, neutrality, decreasing tax pressure on the producer, while at the same time substantively restricting newly introduced taxes. Besides, the problems of the budget are largely solved through successful housing and utility services reform. I know that other CIS countries are also tackling this problem, attempting to reform this extremely important and, which is most important, extremely fund-consuming sector of the state economy. In Kazakhstan, we have already set up cooperatives of apartment owners. In other words, we have handed over to the people their housing, which is theirs by right. So now they manage the housing themselves.

Partial transition of health services and the education system to operation without subsidies has also lifted a considerable load off the budget. At the initial stage this naturally causes considerable difficulties in the functioning of these facilities, which have always been funded from the budget, and has a painful effect on the psychology of workers of these spheres. However, this will inevitably bring positive results. We are not just calling on the people to work under market conditions – we are creating the conditions for such work.

I believe that this brief economic excursus characterizes clearly enough the tactical and strategic priorities of present-day Kazakhstan. Let me now proceed to a different subject, one that is now of great concern for millions of our compatriots both in our countries and throughout the entire Eurasian space.

## II. QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS OF INTEGRATION

Probably no other term has suffered the same weird aberrations in the last decade as the word “integration.” However, playing on words and meanings is the divine prerogative of poets, not politicians. In politics, absolute accuracy of formulations is required.

We have learned to interpret integration as a mutually advantageous process along many vectors and at different speeds. To a considerable extent, Commonwealth strategy was the basis for forming bilateral relations, which outstripped the overall CIS dynamics, and for creating more integrated structures such as the Central Asian Union and the four-sided treaty on the deepening of integration in the economic and humanitarian areas. Our relations as allies have been tried and tested. The last such test came during the events in Afghanistan, to which Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan responded with a joint statement of October 4, 1996 on their readiness to take collective measures to protect the Commonwealth's common borders.

In recent times, the councils of heads of states and governments, the councils of defense ministers, of foreign and interior ministers, commanders of border troops, as well as inter-state and inter-sectoral bodies on various problems of economic cooperation began to act in a more or less systematic and purposive manner. There have also been certain improvements in the work of the Inter-state Economic Committee.

It is clear that the Commonwealth that we planned to build has not materialized, and the potential for integration that we all perceived as an absolute given has not been utilized and has even been wasted. And that is not just my feeling, which coincides with the feelings of many of those present. That is the conclusion of many people whose will we are called upon to fulfill – the millions upon millions of CIS citizens. The Commonwealth was, after all, created not just out of objective necessity prompted by the need to find a way out of the economic crisis in each of our countries and in the CIS as a whole – it was also created by the will of the peoples of our states.

Today, disintegration is not just a predictable danger but a tendency that is becoming more and more stable. Refusing to accept it means deceiving both ourselves and the people. And

the people believe less and less in official statements on the desire for deepening integration.

Our declarations on our desire for integration are of the same bravura quality as of old, while politicians are creating the impression of vigorous activity or pretending that nothing is happening. That is why I openly criticize the Commonwealth, and there's no need to look for some hidden meaning behind this criticism: It is time to honestly admit that complex processes are taking place in the Commonwealth that contain the threat of full-scale disintegration.

Our countries have been carried away by their own problems to such an extent that everything that happens to their neighbors seems to them to be outside events that have nothing to do with them. Bilateral relations are focused on regulating critical confrontations, diplomatic or even military, around Tajikistan, Karabakh, the Dniester region, and Abkhazia. In some cases third and fourth countries and various international organizations take part in these settlements. In none of these cases, though, do we observe the authority of the Commonwealth in the full sense of the word and in the full manifestation of its high status.

The Commonwealth is becoming a conglomerate of separate states dominated by tactical interests. These states have been pulled apart so far that the positions of third countries are given greater priority, while the official documents of the CIS are merely formally taken into account, and not always even that. CIS mechanisms are not working even at half strength. The creation of an increasing number of new CIS institutions cannot conceal the deepening process of disintegration.

An apparently paradoxical situation is taking shape. In all CIS countries, the attitude toward the implementation of decisions adopted by the CIS is seen as something of secondary importance, although these decisions are mandatory. But when the danger of internal political destabilization becomes real, or arguments with neighbors go too far, it is customary to call for support

from the CIS. Only then do people recall that the CIS is an authoritative and respected instrument of integration, and that its position is one of the primary arguments in influencing public opinion in each republic. At times like these, noisy initiatives are born, which are later easily forgotten. And there is no paradox here. CIS countries still lack a unified integration strategy – hence the spontaneous and leap-like character of the integration.

Under these conditions, the building of equal partnership as a basic condition of allied relations requires that we all show an equal interest and equally comply with our priorities.

I cannot but be concerned over the fact that 12 treaties between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation have yet to come into effect, while Kazakhstan ratified these treaties as a top priority. Of these treaties, the most important ones for further development of bilateral cooperation are the following:

- Agreement on the Customs Union (ratified by the Republic of Kazakhstan on September 15, 1995);

- Treaty between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on Military Cooperation (ratified by the Republic of Kazakhstan on October 6, 1994);

- Agreement Between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on a Simplified Procedure for Acquiring Citizenship by Citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan Arriving for Permanent Domicile in the Russian Federation, and Citizens of the Russian Federation Arriving for Permanent Domicile in the Republic of Kazakhstan (ratified by the Republic of Kazakhstan on February 28, 1995).

I'd like to hope that these and some other agreements will be ratified by the Russian side in the nearest future. I must particularly stress that the agreement on a simplified procedure for acquiring citizenship will ease an acute problem that is of concern to both states.

Of serious concern for Kazakhstan is also the experiment involving protection of Kazakhstani-Russian border by Cossack

militia units, conducted by the Federal Border Service [of Russia]. First of all, this act contravenes the existing status of the border that is, in accordance with the existing agreements, still open. Such actions undermine trust and good-neighborly relations. Their consequences can be extremely negative, and there are certain signs of it already. The number of unjustified detentions and unjustified demands for customs declarations has increased.

Russia remains and will assuredly be Kazakhstan's key economic partner. Despite all the complicated and ambivalent tendencies, the share of Russia in Kazakhstan's foreign trade balance has increased rather than decreased.

Some 50 percent of all energy received by Kazakhstan from abroad comes from Russia, also 95 percent of oil and oil products, 60 percent of machines, transport vehicles and apparatus. Kazakhstan supplies Russia with iron ore pellets and concentrates, alumina, chromium, ferroalloys, power-generating coal (about 100 power stations in the Urals and Siberia use coal from Ekibastuz), grain, meat, and other commodities.

Analysis shows that 1995 marked the beginning of stabilization of commodity turnover levels, which rose in 1996 by almost 30 percent. Some 70 Kazakhstani-Russian joint ventures have been set up in Kazakhstan, and work continues on creating financial-industrial groups and developing production cooperation. These are proofs of the positive effect of the functioning of the customs union established in 1995.

Strategic economic interests, a parallel course of reform, a general modernization of the financial and monetary system, and a number of serious institutional changes that proceed along the same vector in Kazakhstan and in Russia create a serious basis for a real rather than declaratory integration in the future.

As we speak of CIS institutions today, we must seriously analyze the real state of affairs rather than press for designing new forms of political integration.

It will be logical at this point to pay attention to our ability

to effectively comply with the Commonwealth Charter. What new unions can we plan when we have failed, say, to implement Article 3 [of the Charter], to the effect that CIS countries build their relations in accordance with the principle of territorial integrity of states and rejection of any actions aimed at dismembering an allied state's territory? Relations have yet to be normalized between certain CIS members that have practically lost their faith in the Commonwealth's ability to change the situation and prefer to rely on the backing and support of interested states of the "far abroad" and of various military-political blocs.

Why do Commonwealth countries play such unequal roles in the settlement of the Tajik conflict?

How are the principles underlying the CIS Charter to be correlated with verbal attacks and territorial claims in the mass media, as well as the unrestricted functioning of extremist political groups openly calling for changing the borders between states? In which countries have any measures, however symbolic, been taken to subdue the agitators? It may be objected at this point that all this takes place within the framework of the democratic process and is in keeping with the principles of the freedom of speech. But the laws of each state forbid propaganda for changing the constitutional system and territorial integrity and endangering national security. And if propaganda against the sovereignty of one of the states exists, that implies a threat to the entire Commonwealth. Otherwise why should we have concluded agreements on the principles of collective security?

Article 4 of the Commonwealth Charter is intended to coordinate our activities in foreign policy. Today, bilateral relations among CIS members are reminiscent of the worst years of the Cold War. In some CIS even statesmen are already openly discussing future integration within post-Soviet space in terms of various models of Slavic or European integration (within the CIS framework). Progress in integration achieved on the Asian part of the Commonwealth is looked at with considerable displeasure.

But we all of us consider our Commonwealth as a model for Eurasian integration. We must reach an agreement, once and for all, on the basics that would help us avoid scattering and hiding – this time not in national nooks and crannies but in racial and geographical ones.

Article 10 contains the stipulation that measures permissible under international law will be applied to states violating CIS Charter or systematically failing to comply with agreements concluded within the framework of the CIS or resolutions of CIS bodies. Today things have come to such a pass that compliance with our agreements is seen as an exception rather than the rule. And there has been not a single instance of institutions called upon to supervise compliance with CIS Charter going into action over these violations.

Article 19 embodies the member states' agreement to form a unified economic space on the basis of market relations and free movement of commodities, capital, and labor. However, in the past five years we have been unable even to eradicate abuse of power by customs officials and double taxation, and we have failed to overcome the non-payment crisis, although everybody realizes what damage all this inflicts on economic relations between states. The CIS executive secretariat fails to perform its primary function – implementing the decisions of the Council of Heads of State and Council of Heads of Governments.

Should I go on with this list? It is simpler to list the provisions of the Charter that we do carry out. And this list is much more modest.

Despite this state of affairs, not one country has yet left the Commonwealth. The reason is quite simple. Compliance with the fundamental obligations toward the CIS is not binding at all. There is a lack of not just disciplined partnership but also of mutual trust among partners.

That is why the Commonwealth doesn't work, and its executive bodies have practically become amorphous structures, a sort

of "volunteer public service." Not long ago a treaty was signed by four countries on deepening integration in the economic and humanitarian areas. I fear that this treaty will share the fate of the CIS. You know that in the past there was a great deal of criticism of that project. The good will and the true motives of the "integration wave," unexpected by many, were particularly called in question. At the time I spoke up against such arguments, attempting to prove that the signing of this document was a natural result of an objective process of integration, and that that treaty had long become an urgent necessity.

But the positions of the Treaty signatories make one doubt the viability of this project, too. To begin with, it hasn't been ratified yet. So what was the reason for unprecedented integration activity then, and what is the reason for it now? You know very well that I have always been a supporter of integration, but I have also been against radical solutions. Let us really decide, with due consideration for the interests of both the CIS and our unilateral geopolitical interests: In what direction will our Commonwealth move next? If we have endowed our inter-state institutions with functions that are beyond their strength, let us think together about how to change them. We cannot impose insoluble tasks on the CIS.

Let us think about the content and form of CIS institutions' work. Maybe we will set up new inter-state bodies with fewer powers which, however, must be clearly identified and unreservedly respected by all Commonwealth members.

The only condition for that is understanding of and support for our position and a readiness for cooperation on the part of our colleagues, above all of Russia, which fate decreed to be the locomotive of integration of Eurasian space.

I hope that this understanding will prevail among Russian politicians and in Russian society.

Dear colleagues!

There is an interesting character in Greek mythology – the

famous Cassandra. This character may be interpreted in two ways, as a gloomy mystic clairvoyant or as a sober forecaster. Many politicians turn these days to this symbolic figure, and it would be desirable for the second interpretation to prevail. As never before, we need a realistic assessment of integration realities. A healthy, at times skeptical, realism oriented toward a reinterpretation of the situation is undoubtedly more preferable than euphoric optimism leading nowhere.

So let's be realists, dearest friends, for only on this basis is true integration possible.

Thank you for your attention.

## **Transcript of the Meeting between President Nursultan Nazarbayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Leaders of the Russian Media**

ALMATY, RESIDENCE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

MAY 16, 1997

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** In April, a traditional meeting between myself and leaders of the Russian media took place at our embassy in Moscow. Today, we are sitting at a round table again. I'm grateful to you for accepting my invitation to visit Kazakhstan and attending it in such a representative body, headed by the chief of the RF president's press service Sergei Yastrzhembsky. We wish to make your stay here comfortable and are prepared to give you all the information you need.

I hope that the meeting of leaders of the mass media of Russia and Kazakhstan will serve to strengthen the traditionally good relations between our countries and peoples, a position of which Kazakhstan is a staunch proponent. You know that we do not hold this position merely to suit the political exigencies of the day. We consider our relations as a strategic partnership. A democratic, developed, friendly, allied Kazakhstan is very important for Russia. Close relations with Russia are also highly important for Kazakhstan. This is in the interests of both our peoples.

After all, partnership and cooperation form a vast launching pad for market reform and the market in general. People fight for markets all over the world. We as close neighbors must also have a common market.

I want to speak briefly on two issues: the course of economic and political reform in Kazakhstan and the state of Russian-Kazakhstani relations and prospects for our cooperation. I believe that today and tomorrow you will receive enough information on these subjects, on the present stage in our reform of the economy and politics. For my part, I would like to point out the main aspects here.

For the first time in seven years the decline in production was checked and a 1.2-1.5 percent average growth of GDP was achieved throughout the country. Macroeconomic stabilization has also been achieved, as indicated by the fall in inflation. In 1993 inflation in Kazakhstan ran at 2,258 percent, whereas at the end of last year it was down to 28 percent. In the first four months of the current year inflation amounted to just 17 percent, but we intend to bring it even lower. Our program for the years 1996-1998 envisions a stable inflation rate at 9-12 percent, while by the year 2000 it must amount to 3-4 percent only, which will enable Kazakhstan's economy to begin a sustained growth.

Our national currency, the tenge, has been stable for three years already. Our currency market has been totally liberalized. You can check that out yourselves, exchanging your rubles for the tenge anywhere in the city and exchanging the tenge for any other currency at any exchange bureau. We have achieved a positive trade balance, finishing last year with \$2 billion on the credit side. This year, export will exceed import by 10 percent. The privatization of housing, trade, everyday services, and other sectors has been completed.

In 1995, wages began to grow in real terms; currently, the average monthly wages amount to roughly \$125. We are inferior

to Russia in this respect, but the only reason for that is that many Russians receive high wages for working in the country's harsh northern regions. If both the territory and the population are taken into account, we have outstripped Russia in terms of average wages.

Next point: We have no monopolies at all. All the holdings that we used to have in this country have been entirely liquidated. The anti-monopoly committee, which began work in 1996, implemented a very tough policy in this respect.

On investment, now. Kazakhstan pays great attention to attracting foreign capital. Let me cite United Nations files. According to UN statistics, long-term investment into our economy, primarily into its raw materials sector, amounts to \$50 billion. To compare: Russia's foreign investment portfolio amounts to just \$39 billion.

Between 1993 and 1996, the foreign investment (mostly in the form of direct, portfolio investments and credits) utilized in the republic amounted to \$6.898 billion. Among the post-socialist states, Kazakhstan is second to Hungary alone in terms of foreign investment.

Seventy percent of the investments are direct investments. Kazakhstan has passed the law "On State Support for Direct Investments," aimed at improving the investment climate in the republic. That law protects investors' rights, which ought to sharply increase the motivation toward investment of capital in our economy. The new guarantees secure the investors' freedom of competition, that is, their rights in relation to competitors, on the one hand, and freedom of entrepreneurial activity, that is, their rights in relation to the state, on the other.

The law also offers the investors considerable privileges and preferences, which form a system of incentives for investment projects. In other countries, investors enjoy privileges for periods between three and seven years, and tax exemptions between

20 and 80 percent; whereas our law envisions tax exemptions of up to 10 years, the exemptions amounting to 100 percent of all taxes and duties in the first five years and up to 50 percent in the next five years. The concrete figures depend on the importance of each project.

Besides, this document sets out the procedure for endorsing the choice of the investor and the deadlines for the required expert assessment, thereby reliably protecting the potential investor in our economy against bureaucratic abuses.

A new form of economic activity in Kazakhstan – the transfer of control over enterprises to foreign firms – attracts special attention these days. Admittedly, I closely follow the polemics, both domestic and foreign, around this work, and I'm astounded to discover that there are so many people in this country and abroad, including in the mass media, who are eager to protect Kazakhstan's riches.

To be quite accurate, we no longer use the term "control." All our enterprises are privatized; they all have owners. They include major enterprises that practically came to a standstill after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I'd especially like to single out several enterprises that have a direct bearing on Russia and affect its economy, such as the Sokolovsko-Sarbaisky ore dressing plant. It was the principal supplier of iron ore to Magnitogorsk. As Magnitogorsk's solvency dropped to zero, the plant stopped, and the town of Rudny, whose life support depends entirely on that plant, was practically left jobless.

Next, the chrome industry. Kazakhstan produces 40 percent of the world's chrome, and 95 percent of the former Soviet Union's output. But the Russian enterprises got the ore practically free. The republic lost 80 percent of the cost of each tonne of ore, while two of our own ferroalloy plants were idle.

Ekibastuz, now. One hundred power plants of the Urals and Siberia burned Ekibastuz coal for fuel, but the payment ar-

rears reached such a level that the vast open-cast mining field was also practically brought to a standstill.

Then take the Karaganda iron and steel works, where I worked for many years. It employs 37,000 people. Its production capacity is 8.5 million tonnes of steel and 4.65 million tonnes of rolled stock, including 70 percent of the Soviet Union's production of tin-plate for the canning industry. The works came to a standstill because the market for its products disappeared.

It was in order to revive these enterprises that we began looking for investment. First, we made offers to Russia, its government and the enterprises with which we had close ties. There was no response, though. We can't reproach anyone, for Russian companies did not have the funds to buy these enterprises. We then announced a tender and transferred control of these plants to those who offered the most advantageous terms. What were those terms? The people who took control of the enterprises were to pay all debts – to power suppliers, railway companies, and the budget. Besides, they had to pay the workers' wages in full and provide working capital. The contract also included provisions concerning investment to revamp production and introduce state-of-the-art technologies.

On these terms we transferred control of these enterprises to foreign firms for periods between five and ten years, and of the most destitute ones, for even longer periods. Let me cite just one example: The Sokolovsko-Sarbaisky plant needed \$190 million in the first year only.

We began selling stock. I can assure you that there is not a single enterprise in Kazakhstan that is not under the government's control. Incidentally, half of the control packages of shares are in our hands. So we did not just give away our plants and factories for nothing. Only in the case of the worst hit enterprises did we hand over 60 percent of shares to the investors. This concerns above all aluminum production. The papers often write about it,

as the Pavlodar aluminum plant processed bauxite and produced a million tonnes alumina for the Bratsk aluminum plant. But Bratsk stopped buying our bauxite, saying that Australian alumina cost them less. What were we to do? We began looking for ways of entering the world market and found them. The company that assumed control of the aluminum plant is doing well in Pavlodar.

This is happening everywhere. Production at the Karaganda iron and steel works is up 12 percent. In the period of one year copper production increased by 50 percent, production of aluminum, by 18 percent. On aggregate, some 200,000 people are working at the enterprises controlled by foreign firms. Counting their families, about a million people are quite satisfied with these enterprises' new form of operation, as wages there amount to \$400—1000 a month.

Assuming that the task of plants and factories is to work normally, give employment to people, pay taxes to the state, and modernize production, what else might the state need? In many countries part of their property is in the hands of foreign companies. You know that better than I do. But Americans are not worried that all major buildings in downtown Los Angeles belong to Japanese companies. In central London, too, Arabs own the most prestigious buildings. It's not for me to tell you how transnational companies work.

Let me repeat that we always invited Russian companies to take part in the realization of these projects. But we couldn't wait, for the workers of these major enterprises were out in the streets. Last year we privatized coal mines – successfully, I believe. All through the winter we haven't heard even once of any coal miners striking. We produce 150 million tonnes of coal, and we have 26 underground mines. The Indian company Ispat Karmet, which privatized the Karaganda iron and steel works, also took up coal mining. We sold it 15 coking coal mines. The

investors worked according to the plan I described: They paid the workers' wages and the enterprises' debts and began production development. The coal miners have work. In the good old Soviet times, miners never met me with flowers in their hands, as they did in Ekibastuz in the spring of this year.

Our coal companies took into account the interests of Russia, as Ekibastuz power goes to Siberia. We invited the Russians. Of the three major fields, Russia took one, with the capacity of 50 million tonnes, and two others were bought by an American and a British company respectively. Tomorrow you're going to Ekibastuz, just take a look at how they're doing. I'm afraid that the Russians won't be able to hold on to the field they bought: The conditions are more difficult there than at the other two fields. I believe they're ready to sell their shares.

I wouldn't like to have you think that we're sitting just pretty. No, we do have problems. But the fact is that our enterprises are alive and operating. That's the whole story of transferring control over them to foreign companies. Tuleyev makes noises every day on TV about the sell-off of Kazakhstan's riches, but he simply has no notion of economics. It's a pity that CIS affairs are in the hands of people who are totally impervious to the idea of market relations and market reform. It is announced, for instance, that Kazakhstan owes a debt to Russia. But right now Kazakhstan owes Moscow nothing. On the other hand, Russia has paid nothing in the last three years for renting either Baikonur or any of the other military testing grounds, although international agreements have been concluded and signed on this score. I can tell you that Russia owes Kazakhstan \$488 million. There was a time when we also owed something for electric power, but right now, with the privatization of Ekibastuz, these problems have been ironed out – the more so that there is the possibility of transporting electric power from Western Siberia toward the Urals across

Kazakhstan, since the only power line of this kind is in Kazakhstan. Otherwise Russia would have to build new power lines. What for, I ask?

Our reforms, now. Following the law on public service adopted in Kazakhstan two years ago, we reduced our bureaucratic apparatus. The number of ministries and departments was halved. Of the 38 members of the government, only 18 remained. The country's territorial-administrative division was optimized. Five regional and 28 district divisions have been eliminated through mergers. As a result, 10,000 officials were fired, and some three billion tenge (which equals \$50 million), previously spent on the upkeep of the apparatus, was saved. I believe that the situation in Russia is the same. With a population of 16 million, we have an extremely high number of public servants, about a million, receiving their salary from the state. This includes servicemen, teachers, and officials. I believe that the situation is the same in Russia.

Before taking drastic measures, we explained the situation to the people of the republic. And we will continue the optimization of the administrative-territorial structure and administrative bodies.

We are now on the threshold of the pension reform, for which everyone is preparing now. The professional pension system invented in Germany in the last century along the lines proposed by Bismarck still survives in Russia. Its main principle is that of the "responsibility of generations." In other words, the generation working now provides pensions for old men and women, and so it goes on, generation after generation. Under the market conditions, however, this system no longer works. That is why we adopted a new pension law last year, raising the pension age to 63 for men and 58 for women. The law on the new pension system was passed on to our parliament yesterday. I'm sure it will be adopted in the period until July 1. What is the law

about? The innovations do not concern at all the current recipients of old-age pensions. Then there are those who still have to work for 5-10 years before they reach the pension age; they have been paying a portion of their salary into the pension fund, and in the time that remains they will earn the balance of their pension themselves. As for young people who are just beginning to work, they will receive a three-level pension. Level one: The state obligates the employer to pay, say, 10 percent into the pension fund. Level two: A non-governmental pension fund in which the person invests his or her money. Level three: the citizen's own savings. It's all the way it is done throughout the world. The law goes into effect on January 1, 1998.

Recently we held a congress of cooperative housing owners in Kazakhstan. There are 360 of these in the country. Dependence on the state has vanished as if by magic. The cooperatives' demands on the state are quite real and specific: Produce water meters, gas ranges, electric stoves, and so on, as fast as you can.

Incidentally, when the owners began to use meters, it transpired that the cost of water fell by 30-40 percent. In this area, too, we made a special effort to explain the situation to the population. It must be noted that war veterans enjoy all the special benefits. If you are interested, you can find out for yourselves that World War II veterans in Kazakhstan enjoy the highest privileges in the CIS. True, the number of war veterans diminishes with each passing year by about 20 percent.

We have completely privatized the energy sector. It is now a question of privatizing the national power grids — the electric power stations. I believe that we mustn't keep the state power networks in the state's hands. The state must become an operator, it must sell and buy electric power to the population and industrial enterprises.

On Kazakhstani-Russian relations. Our positions are clear, but I would like to clarify certain issues.

Because of the rupture of economic ties in 1995, our trade with Russia declined by 50 percent. Accepting that in 1992 trade between Kazakhstan and Russia amounted to \$8.8 billion, in 1995 it was down to \$3.9 billion.

Only when we finally signed the Customs Union and lifted the customs barriers did things start moving. In the last year alone trade between Kazakhstan and Russia grew by 30 percent, amounting to 5.1 billion. In other words, we stopped robbing the people living on both sides of the border. Frankly, both the enterprises and the people crossing the border expressed sincere gratitude for this.

In May 1992 President Yeltsin and I signed the treaty of friendship and cooperation between our countries. I wish you might study it. In terms of content, neither Kazakhstan nor Russia has a treaty like it with any other country. In actual fact, this is a treaty between allies. It contains the provision that in case of attack on one of the states, both countries defend the other by every means, including military force. What is it if it is not an alliance? The treaty also clearly outlines all the other relations – political, economic, humanitarian, and cultural, creating a lot of room for cooperation.

If you remember, in 1994 the treaty was signed, on my initiative, on simplified citizenship between Russia and Kazakhstan. No similar treaty with other countries exists, either. Putting it simply, the essence of this treaty is that each Kazakhstani citizen moving to Russia can get Russian citizenship without any delays, and a Russian citizen desiring to live in Kazakhstan also receives Kazakhstani citizenship without any hindrance. By adopting this act we wanted to assuage the people's worries and give them a chance to make a well-thought-out decision on the choice of their residence, rather than pack their suitcases in a hurry. This fully conforms to our common desire to build democratic, free, and open states.

Unfortunately, the Duma ratified this agreement only after countless reminders, notes, and messages. It took it three years to do so! I'm grateful to Boris Yeltsin who held special talks on this subject with both chairmen of the Federal Assembly's chambers.

Now on the subject of our investment relations. Of all the investments I discussed above, 44 percent belong to the United States, followed by South Korea, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and France. Currently, Japan has become more active, too. To my great regret, Russia is among the "also ran," as far as investments go. You know of my relationship with Boris Yeltsin. They are really friendly relations, and they are characteristic of the relations between our states and peoples. I have also known Viktor Chernomyrdin for more than twenty years. I also know all the second-level politicians, as I worked with them before. We are all friends, and we never had any tiffs on any grounds whatever.

But the former Soviet republics became independent. At that time people on the lower rungs, like Russian industrialists, state ministries, people in the energy and gas industries, in the Transneft oil company suddenly felt they had to slap us down and bring us to our knees. "Stupidity" is the only word I can think of in this connection. This sort of attitude could have only one result, the breakup of all relations. This was in the first place a bad blow against producers who had profited from cooperation and trading.

Consider for instance the Caspian pipeline consortium. Incidentally, the concluding documents on it will be signed today at 10 Moscow Time. Mr. Yastrzhembsky knows that, on learning of the bureaucratic red tape in this matter, Boris Yeltsin literally raised hell.

The gist of the story is this. In April last year, Boris Yeltsin stopped off in Almaty on his way from Shanghai to Moscow, and I asked him why wasn't Russia joining the Caspian pipeline con-

sortium. It was really astounding: There was all this talk about geopolitics, about all the advantages – economic, political, whatever – which transport of oil and gas brought. It was obvious to all – except Russian industrialists. They looked at the pipeline project with Olympian serenity. But when we began to look for alternatives, they grew worried. But what are we to do now? Kazakhstan is now producing annually 25 million tonnes of oil, our own demand amounting to just 12 million tonnes. In the year 2000, we will produce 100 million tonnes; in 2005, 140 million; and in 2012, 170 million tonnes, while our own demand will grow to just 20 million tonnes. Those countries through which this vast stream will flow will get enormous dividends. So why hasn't the agreement on the Caspian oil pipeline consortium, fully prepared four years ago, been signed by Russia? That is what I said to Boris Yeltsin.

When I was Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Kazakhstan, I was a member of the Ryzhkov government, and I remember well that the Soviet Union then produced 610 million tonnes of oil a year. Russia now produces 320 million. Now, where have all the pipelines gone? Why aren't they given to Kazakhstan? We are asking for a quota of five to eight million tonnes, but we are asking in vain. In other words, we are forced to look for alternative ways out. We have found one, and the problem is no longer as acute as it was. Kazakhstan is sending two million tonnes of oil to Iran across the Caspian Sea. This week, the first 100,000 tonnes of Kazakhstan's oil will appear in the Persian Gulf. This is a historical fact and a sensation on the international market. Kazakhstan's oil in the Persian Gulf! Just think: If Russia participated in the Caspian pipeline consortium, the profits would be Russia's, not the Persian Gulf's countries.

Next, we have already transported 200,000 tonnes of oil across the Caucasian corridor, and this figure will rise to two and a half million tonnes in the future. China's leaders are asking us

to transport oil by railway. The Trans-Asian Railway has linked Kazakhstan with Pacific ports. Japan alone has recently invested \$75 million in the development of this country's railway system, including the reconstruction of the Druzhba railway station at the junction of the Kazakhstani and Chinese sections of the Trans-Asian Railway. This railway's capacity is going to be 20 million tonnes a year, and Kazakhstan will be able to send all its freight across China to South-East Asia.

In a word, only after Boris Yelstin's intercession did the relations with Transneft become stabilized. But I cannot help feeling astounded. The country providing the pipeline is getting money for each 100 kilometers of the transportation, for the volume of shipment across its territory, while actually doing nothing at all. And still people don't show any interest!

Today the documents on the Caspian pipeline consortium will at last be signed. That means that 65 million tonnes of oil will pass through the consortium's hands. This will solve Kazakhstan's problems in this respect in the next few years. According to expert evaluations, Kazakhstan and Russia will get respectively \$8.2 and \$2.3 billion as profit and dividends in the 40 years of the pipeline's operation.

But Kazakhstan will have to go on looking for new routes to reach the world markets in any case. I can honestly tell you that we would like to do so together with Russia. It is profitable for our countries to have common pipelines, wherever they might go – to the Persian Gulf, the Pacific Ocean, or any other region. All states profit from being co-owners of pipelines.

This is also true of the development of the Caspian shelf resources. But the problem of the Caspian remains. If we look into the CIS records, we will see it stated there that all Commonwealth states recognize the administrative borders that existed in the Soviet Union. As far as the Caspian is concerned, these borders lie along the median line. To rule out any possible conflicts

on the Caspian and make it a sea of peace and cooperation between the Caspian states, I proposed to divide the sea into sectors along the median borders stated in the CIS records. And later we might sign a special contract on joint development of these resources. I'm sure that if Russia and Kazakhstan arrive at a common solution, the other states will join them unquestioningly.

Again, while we come to a complete mutual understanding at the heads of state level, endless talk begins at the diplomatic one. Let's do it this way and not that, they say, or maybe in a completely different way.

At the same time the world's major companies have an interest in working on the Caspian, and, seeing our strife, they just go ahead and begin to work. In Azerbaijan, they are already producing oil, and will go on doing so, without asking anyone, much. And we go on arguing instead of reaching an agreement.

There is yet another field that causes problems in our relations – the Karachaganak gas field in Western Kazakhstan, 300 kilometers from Orenburg. Viktor Chernomyrdin knows it well. He was working in the gas industry when it was discovered. This is a unique field. There are trillions of cubic meters of gas at just the first kilometer level (and there are five levels in all). Ask Chernomyrdin, and he will tell you that there isn't any other gas field in the world like that.

The known gas resources stand at present at a trillion and a half cubic meters, plus 800 million tonnes of gas condensate, which is in fact gasoline, only it needs a little refining. To develop the resources of the Karachaganak field the Orenburg gas refinery was expanded. And what do you know? Gas is refined in Orenburg, and gas condensate, in the Bashkir town of Salavat, on terms that leave Kazakhstan 13-17 cents to the dollar. But why should we produce gas at a loss? Where else in the world have you seen that sort of thing?

I have given orders to close down all the fields, all the bore-holes. Three companies – the *Italian Agip*, the *English British Gas* and the *American Exxon* begin work on the construction of a gas refinery on the territory of Kazakhstan. We will build a pipeline leading eastward, toward Western China. And what else can we do? It's a wall, a real wall. I raised this issue a hundred times, I even went to see Vyakhirev especially for this purpose. I told him outright: This is profitable to Russia, what do you think you are doing? Would Russia ever consent to accept 17 cents for a dollar's worth of gas?

That's about all I can say on this subject.

I would now like to touch on some issues connected with the functioning of the media. The presidential press service will tell all you who participate in this meeting how the press and TV operate in Kazakhstan, what atmosphere they work in — the atmosphere which in fact reflects the country's sociopolitical climate.

Let me make a brief digression here. Take a stroll around the city in the evening. Recently Mr. Akayev came here on a visit. Between times he told me that his children study abroad. As soon as they come home, they drop their suitcases and go straight to Almaty. It's just 220 kilometers from Bishkek to Almaty, the road is a good asphalt road. Why do they do that? The children explain that Almaty is like Paris compared to Bishkek. Apparently the young people are attracted by the numerous discotheques, restaurants, and hotels. In the past three years we have built two five-star hotels and seven four-star ones in a city of one million. There are quite a few entertainment establishments.

This is just a small detail that characterizes the atmosphere in this country, even if it's from the young people's point of view. But that is just in passing.

Our Constitution proclaims the freedoms of expression and conscience. Some 600 political parties, movements, and public

organizations are active in this country. The current year is declared by presidential decree the Year of National Accord and Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repression. At a joint meeting, political parties and movements supported this idea, except for the Communists. But the Communists do not have the same political influence here as they do in Russia. Incidentally, practically all public forces support the reforms we conduct – except, again, for the Communists. They harshly criticize us but propose no alternatives.

The media, now. At present, almost all Russian media have their bureaus in Kazakhstan, and the papers' circulations aren't all that bad: Argumenty I fakty ("Arguments and Facts"), some 130,000; Komsomolskaya pravda ("YCL Truth"), 47,000; and Trud ("Labor"), about 7,000.

**A. Druzenko, first deputy editor in chief of Izvestiya:** *We have a circulation of 122,000.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Maybe you had that circulation in the past. However, I read Izvestiya every day, as I do Komsomolka and Trud. I also pay attention to publications on economics. Russia has fine papers. I regularly get Interfax reports, and I know Delovoy mir ("Business World"), Rossiyskaya gazeta ("Russian gazette"), and Rabochaya tribuna ("Workers Tribune").

ORT programs are received on Kazakhstan's entire territory. You will most likely ask questions about the Russian RTR channel. Believe me, there is no political reason for the cessation of its broadcasting. There are financial problems only, which have to be resolved through negotiations. And although I have little to do with these problems, I can tell you that we have bought four INTELSAT facilities; they will go into operation on May 20 – hundreds of reception devices have already been prepared. By October, Kazakhstan will be fully independent in information terms; all foreign media will have to sign contracts and broadcast

their programs from our satellite and transmitters. This is only natural, I believe.

As for the information space, I believe that we will lose a great deal if the Russian media ceases to be present in Kazakhstan. Without information, there is no development. Russian media is one of the most important sources for us, since everybody in Kazakhstan understands Russian. The Kazakhs know very well that that is their advantage, not a shortcoming, and we will never lose this knowledge. I say this to all kinds of audiences. For my part, I will do everything for Russian mass media to be active in Kazakhstan. That is my official standpoint.

I would like to use this opportunity to say that your correspondents are our citizens, they work under normal conditions, they accompany me on my visits abroad and on tours of the country, and they are invited to all press conferences and other events. It is also my duty to express my gratitude for the recent publications in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, *Rabochaya tribuna*, *Argumenty i fakty*, and other periodicals. These are serious articles analyzing the state of affairs in Kazakhstan in objective terms.

But I can't help commenting on facts of quite a different nature. Some publications simply leave one dumb-founded. *Izvestiya* stated that Nazarbayev was secretly plotting with Kariimov to leave the CIS. Absolute rubbish. *Moskovsky komsomol* has the habit of discoursing on the subject of confrontation among the *zhuz* (clans.—Tr.) in Kazakhstan. Kazakh media feel puzzled: Should they, perhaps, also start a debate on the subject of medieval principalities in Russia and their strife in days long gone? In a word, these obviously tendentious articles written on someone's orders do not at all promote better, closer relations between our peoples.

Here are some figures that have a bearing on the subject of our talk. Today, 467 papers appear in Russian in Kazakhstan. These are national and regional papers. Only 211 papers appear

in Kazakh – mark that, please. And there are 512 periodicals published both in Russian and Kazakh.

Furthermore, 37 papers appear in Ukrainian, German, Uigur, Korean, and other languages. Thirty-two TV companies broadcast in Russian, five in Kazakh, and 155, both in Kazakh and Russian. If we take all the independent media outlets operating in Kazakhstan, there are three times as many of them here as in all the other Central Asian countries, with the possible exception of Kyrgyzstan. We have just come back from Turkmenistan. Just talk to the people who went there with me, and they'll tell you what they saw. There are eight and a half thousand schools in this republic; in 42 percent of all these schools, education is in Russian only, although Russians make up just 29 percent of the population. The situation is the same at higher educational establishments: Twenty-five percent of students in them are Russian boys and girls. You also know that the Lev Gumilyov Eurasian University has been opened at Akmola. I personally took the decision on that. Recently, I visited the university. What is its distinctive feature? We are going to invite, at state expense, young people from the neighboring regions of Russia and from other CIS countries. Let them live and study together and consolidate our relations, strengthen our friendship.

The Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan has been set up in this country, and cultural centers of all the peoples inhabiting Kazakhstan are active here, too. On June 6, the Assembly will hold its regular session to discuss important matters of state. These issues include endorsing the quotas for representatives of different nationalities entering higher educational establishments. These quotas account for ten percent of the overall number of students enrolled. Incidentally, this practice is extremely useful, for representatives of ethnic minorities often find it very difficult to enter an institute or university. And now they compete only against each other, quite separately from the rest.

To go on. The government now includes 57 non-Kazakh members, such as Public Prosecutor General Shutkin, Justice Minister Kolpakov, Finance Minister Pavlov, Minister for Social Security Korzhova, Ecology Minister Bayev, Health Minister Devyatko, Education Minister Shkolnik, Energy Minister Khrapunov [all Russian-sounding names. — Tr.]. It would take too long to list all the others. Can you find examples like this in other CIS countries, including Slavic ones? You won't.

I believe that we have chosen the right course. Kazakhstan is the most multiethnic state of them all. Having proclaimed the unity of the people as a provision of our constitution, we also implement this policy in practice and take into account the interests of all nationalities, preserving in this way political stability and ethnic concord. It is not just untrue that Russians' rights are violated in Kazakhstan. Russians live better than the native population, for the Kazakhs mostly live in the rural areas, where the greatest number of socioeconomic and ecological problems has accumulated. The urbanization of Kazakhs, their arrival in the cities, is merely beginning. And life is hardest in the rural areas.

Migration, now. Is there a country where there is no migration? But why don't Jews raise any noise when people emigrate to Israel, mostly from Russia? Before you write of migration of Russians from Kazakhstan, just take a walk round Moscow embassies, where Russians are lining up to wait for visas to countries of their choice. Why don't the Greeks grow indignant? The Germans aren't feeling indignant, either, although they accepted during three years 450,000 people from Kazakhstan alone.

It must be noted that this is not a new topic. I looked at past statistics. In 1980, 1982, 1983, some 150,000 people a year left Kazakhstan and some 56,000 arrived there. No one raised any noise at the time, for it was a natural process. We all remember, especially people of roughly my age, Khrushchev's times when about two and a half million people went to Kazakhstan to

develop virgin lands from all over the Soviet Union. These people had left their parents, all their relatives in their homelands. Reaching a certain age, they began to return to their homeland. No one was in any doubt about their motives for departure. And I'm grateful to the people who left that not one of them said that the move was caused by pressure or discrimination. Not one.

It must also be taken into account that many people feel stressed out by the difficult economic situation, the demise of the Soviet Union that was like a common roof over our heads, the rupture of links between relatives. Then there was this aggravated situation in nearby Tajikistan, where 40,000 people died for nothing in the years of civil war. Refugees appeared. So people are deciding to move back home. So what?

As I prepared for this meeting, I looked up some statistics. Between 1992 and 1996 (the data for 1997 aren't final yet), two million three hundred thousand people left Kazakhstan. What's the breakdown on these figures? As I said, half a million of these are Germans. Incidentally, Helmut Kohl recently visited Almaty. Germany doesn't have any special desire to receive our migrants. Our Germans are fourth-grade Germans to them. Between eight and ten thousand people already asked our embassy in Germany for permission to return. And they do return.

The military is quite a separate subject. We had here the Central Asian Military District, where a powerful army group was concentrated. After all, the USSR was going to fight a war with China, do you remember? There is a passage across the Tien Shan mountains in southwestern Kazakhstan known as the Jungar Gates. They seem to have been especially invented for military action. High mountains all around, and right in the middle, a plain one kilometer and a half wide. We know from history that our forefathers always repulsed invasions here. In Soviet times, tanks were dug in here, their guns trained east, in the direction of China. There was a huge arms depot here, probably the biggest

on the Soviet Union's territory, and 500,000-strong army group. Kazakhstan's armed forces number a mere 100,000. Where are all the other men wearing shoulder straps now? They left, although they counted as Kazakhstanis. There's another migration flow for you.

Then again, there was this town of Kurchatov, where nuclear tests were carried out. It was closed, and all the people – the military and the scientists from Russian and Ukrainian research institutes – left, too. Of the 80,000 inhabitants, only 20,000 remained in Kurchatov. Similarly, the town of Priozersk (not to be found on ordinary maps) was the site where cruise and other intercontinental missiles were tested; after the testing site was closed down, only 10,000 people remained there out of 80,000. We had to close it. Divisions of ballistic missiles were based at Zhangyztobe and Derzhavinka. They were huge military towns, with a population of 20,000 each. They no longer exist. You never read about the former town of Emba either. At the Baikonur space-vehicle launching pad, only 40,000 out of the former 110,000 remained after the military left.

If you sum all this up, you'll see who the migration wave from Kazakhstan consists of. To this should be added that thousands of specialists and workers once came to build major enterprises that I told you about. But there is a positive element here. Plants and factories are getting back on their feet, and people begin to return to Kazakhstan. On aggregate, 670,000 people have already returned. Last year, the number of people wanting to leave Kazakhstan dropped by a factor of three and a half. So we receive the people who are returning, and we will continue to do so, even if that is not a very simple task for them, as they had sold their homes and took away their property. Well, they'll just have to settle in again.

Now the last point: the Cossack problem, which is very often raised and is a very acute one in the relations between Ka-

zakhstan and Russia. On the whole, no one infringes on the rights of the Cossacks or of any other associations. There are registered communities of the Semirechye and other groups of Cossacks. No one interferes with their gatherings, revival of traditions and their ancient culture. Just as any other citizens of Kazakhstan, they get land from the state, as land can be both state- and privately-owned, according to Kazakhstan's laws. But dear friends, the whole point is that Kazakhs, like my father or people of his generation, have a very good memory of what Cossacks did to Kazakhstan.

The Cossacks established the Tsarist rule in Kazakhstan by sword and fire. The local dwellers were driven off the best lands, their best pastures were taken away from them, and the most recalcitrant ones, whole auls, were driven deep into the steppe. For example, at spawning time on the river Ural Cossacks were permitted to kill, without investigation or trial, any Kazakh who dared to bring his horse for watering to the river.

All these things are recorded in history books. As late as 1881, the historian N. Khoroshikhin, a student of Cossack history, wrote in his book "Cossack Troops": "The Cossacks are vigorously fighting against Asiatic tribes – a struggle which they inherited from the Russian people." The author stressed that the Cossacks performed three vital tasks: They actively implemented the policy of Russian colonization and Russian influence; they protected the new lands; and they provided mounted troops for the state's armed forces.

On the whole, all researchers agree with this view. For example, the fundamental work "Russia. A Complete Geographical Description," published in 1903, comments that, beginning in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the "Ural Cossacks did the state a great service in the conquest of Kirgiz [Kazakhs were called Kirgiz before 1917. — Tr.] steppes and in the Central Asian campaigns: They were carriers of the Russian movement into Kirgiz hinterland in

much the same way as were the Irtysh servicemen and local freebooters in the east.”

Naturally, this harsh policy caused the steppe people's discontent, which erupted on many occasions in large-scale armed conflicts. Suffice it to remember the rebellion in 1836-1846 led by Kazakhstan's last Khan Kenesary Kasym-Uly, grandson of the famous Ablai Khan, who fought fierce battles against the Tsarist army, against colonization, and also Imangeldy Imanov's rebellion in 1916, sparked off by the fact that Kazakhs were not recruited into the army during the First World War but to work in the rear. However, all discontent on the Kazakhs' part was harshly suppressed.

That history is gradually forgotten by Kazakhs, especially the young ones. We are trying to remember the history that brings us together. But the Cossacks keep reminding us of that old military and colonialist history. Tell me please, would the Russian authorities ever consent to, say, the Poles starting to build Polish armed forces on Russian territory? Our Constitution forbids military formations outside the army. It is not permitted to swagger about town with sabers and guns. I fail to see why Russia's border service took the decision to use Cossacks to protect the seven-thousand-kilometer long border between Russia and Kazakhstan. These “fire-eaters,” or rather petty looters, stand guard over the border and shake out the bags of old women going to visit their relatives, say, from Kokchetav to Omsk. I wrote a memo on this to Yeltsin, but have received no answer yet. The case was handed over to Chernomyrdin.

On the whole, these measures are not in keeping with the Customs Union or with the treaty between Russia and Kazakhstan; the main thing is that they sow mistrust among the peoples. And I want this trust to exist. I and my generation, we'll be OK, we were brought up to respect Russia, we shared our food, grew up together, and we know each other's worth. But what about

the young, the kids who now go to school? Either they will grow up liking Russia and the Russian people and seeing them as their close friends, or the mass media will bring them up in the spirit of dislike for all things Russian. That is the gist of my thinking on these matters.

We are not against Cossacks as an estate. If the Cossacks wish to do so, they can unite on the estate grounds. Who's against this? But we are against military formations. If we have agreed that the border between Russia and Kazakhstan is transparent, why set up these extra-military guards' units? Yes, we do need customs controls: Weapons mustn't travels across the border, drugs, too – we watch out for this on all the roads. There must be highway patrol checkpoints. But protection of the border between Russia and Kazakhstan by Cossacks, that's absurd! Under the sultans and khans, there were sardars in Kazakhstan – the same kind of militarized formation as the Cossacks under the Tsar. So now I hear proposals to organize sardar posses in all the regions, to counterbalance the Cossacks. Who will profit by this?

Unlike the Russians living here, Kazakhs, wherever they might live, have no other land except their native land. The famine of 1929 and Stalin's reprisals forced very many Kazakhs leave Kazakhstan and head for foreign lands. Roughly speaking, about two million Kazakhs now live in China, some two million in Russia, and another two million in Central Asia. There are also Kazakhs in Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and other countries. Taking into account this demographic situation and guided by the existing legislation, we permitted those who wanted to do so return to their homeland. A total of 300,000 returned already, and this process is still continuing. Considering all these demographic changes, the population of Kazakhstan now includes 51 percent of Kazakhs and 29 percent of Russians. The remaining 20 percent are Germans, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Koreans, Uigurs, Greeks, and members of other nationalities.

It is for these reasons, my friends, that I want your stay in Kazakhstan and this meeting to build confidence between our countries. During my last visit to Moscow I suggested to Boris Yeltsin that we set up some sort of Russian-Kazakhstani public council (in the past these structures were called societies of friendship and cultural relations) and elect to this council the most authoritative and objective people from both sides. Should any problems arise between Russians and Kazakhstanis, between Russia and Kazakhstan, let the council members gather together and tell me and the president of Russia: In order to secure peace and harmony, you have to do this and that. That's what I want. And I also want our Constitution to be fulfilled. Our Constitution states clearly that no one in Kazakhstan can be discriminated against on the grounds of nationality or failure to know some language. Incidentally, Kazakhstan is the only CIS country in which Russian is an official language. Kazakhstan is also the only state whose banknotes are inscribed in Russian, too. There isn't anything like this either in Ukraine or in Belorussia, not to mention other Commonwealth countries.

Thank you very much indeed. I guess I've talked too much, but when am I going to get another chance like this? You aren't yet tired of me, Mr. Yastrzhembsky?

**Sergei Yastrzhembsky:** *With your permission, Mr. President. Neither the mass media nor their leaders authorized me to speak on their behalf (they're all independent now, so each of them will say something, I guess), so I will only speak on my own behalf and on behalf of the presidential press service. I would first of all like to thank you for the invitation to come here, to friendly Kazakhstan, and see for ourselves the changes that are occurring in this republic. And I would especially like to thank you for this talk. In my opinion, the opinion of a former journalist, it is very interesting in that it was extremely frank and expressed the pain you feel about certain problems in the way of*

*cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan in many areas. It is an extremely instructive conversation.*

*I hope there will also be some practical results in terms of state policy. It is of course very difficult to imagine the motivation of the people who are, as you have convincingly shown, slowing down our cooperation which is of the utmost importance for both Russia and Kazakhstan.*

*You have also touched on a very sensitive area that we in Russia are constantly aware of, the sphere of relations between the government and the mass media. I believe that we can say with some justification that you and Boris Yeltsin have created a situation in which the mass media act in an extremely independent manner and often aggressively with regard to the power structures. I believe this is normal, as it proves that democratic conditions prevail in Russia. I think that your speech has pointed to the only path to assuage the confrontation, if it exists, between the government and the mass media and to create the conditions for improving their mutual relations. That path lies through open dialogue between the powers that be and the mass media, between government and society. We all of us need as much information as possible, as many meetings as possible, and as many answers as possible to the questions with which society is concerned. The fact is that, if we avoid this sort of dialogue, we feel as a result that doubts and misunderstandings arise. And where there are doubts and misunderstandings, interpretations of events appear in the press that the government naturally sometimes dislikes. So I thank you again for this badly needed dialogue. It is very important to me as someone who runs the information support for President Yeltsin's policies, and it confirms yet again how useful such informal, frank, and sincere contacts with the media are. Not long ago, President Yeltsin held such a meeting in the Kremlin. So far as I can see, many of those present here also attended that meeting. Judging from the press,*

*that meeting was a success. I believe that that was one of the most interesting meetings of the first six months of this year that Boris Yeltsin held in the Kremlin with representatives of Russian society.*

*I'd like to say once again that we are extremely grateful to you for the invitation to come here and for the talks we've had, and we are confident that our stay in your republic will help answer many questions which still probably exist and lift misunderstandings on certain points which definitely exist. Thank you very much.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Thank you. The press secretaries of the presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia should perhaps set up some organization uniting the heads of the two country's mass media. This organization would help journalists to go to the various areas and see what goes on there. We certainly don't want any conflicts in this area. I believe that Russia must value Kazakhstan just as much as Kazakhstan values Russia. For Russia, Kazakhstan is a gateway to Asia, and what a gateway! We have built a railway to Iran, and now Russian freight travels to Iran along the shortest route. We have joined our railway system with the Chinese one, and Russian freight goes from Siberia to China across Kazakhstan. And we are pleased with that, because transportation across our territory is, first, profitable economically, and second, it strengthens our ties with the neighboring countries.

I meet the leaders of Kazakhstani mass media quite regularly, once a month. The lower chamber of parliament has already discussed the new Criminal Code: On my suggestion, an article on the protection of the mass media was added to it. The code envisages criminal liability for illegal interference in the affairs of the mass media.

I wanted to begin this meeting with introductions, but now I see that I know many of you. You can now ask me any questions you please.

**V. Markov, chairman of the RIA-Novosti agency board:**

*I would like to touch on two points. One of them is rather in the nature of well-wishing addressed personally to you as the leader of the state. I first came to your wonderful capital city 30 years ago. The last time I came here, that was some five years ago. And now we've come and we see changes, considerable changes. I like the city very much, it evokes many pleasant memories, and I see that the city is doing fine. The talk you gave us on the reforms in the economy merely confirms this.*

*Point two. As far as the problem is concerned in which I as head of a press agency am interested most of all, what seemed to me to be most convincing were the figures regarding Russian-language newspapers and the significance you attach to information from and about Russia and to information exchange in general. I would like to propose stepping up the activity of the RIA-Novosti agency in Kazakhstan. We have an interest in opening a bureau here, not just a single correspondent's office but a whole bureau with the necessary staff. We will of course need some support from you, including support in renting premises — on generally accepted conditions, of course. We would like to send here our specialists from Moscow, but it would also be desirable to have your support in finding local journalists who would agree to work with us.*

*We are interested in two areas. One is provision of free information from Russia for Kazakhstani newspapers, or maybe provision on some other basis, depends how we'll arrange it all. In any case we are ready to provide this information free, and that's exactly what we're doing. The second area is, of course, information about life in Kazakhstan, which we will distribute primarily in the Russian media, although in principle we operate as an international agency and can pass this information on to other countries as well. That's the sort of active cooperation that we would welcome.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Mr. Sarsenbayev, chairman of our Agency for the Press and Mass Media, is present here, and he will hear that I'm all for it. It is a useful thing. Discuss it with him in more specific terms.

**I. Klimenko, editor in chief of the newspaper Delovoy mir:** *Mr. President, you are on the whole a supporter of and active participant in all integration processes now taking place throughout the post-Soviet space. Could you tell us what is slowing down these processes, in your view?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I've had occasion to discuss this in the Russian media, in particular in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* before the summit scheduled for January. At the last meeting of CIS heads of state in Moscow, when we had a closed discussion, a significant event occurred, I believe: We spoke as sincerely as never before. I said there roughly the same things that I told you here today. I did not tell you anything new about our relations. Of course, there are enough outrages and shortcomings on our side, too. The whole world is talking about the planet's development in the next 50 years being determined by integration processes. All those who believe they can go it alone will be left by the roadside, whereas they who join the integration process will achieve progress. That is why it's not just someone's nostalgic dreams or a policy designed to achieve certain gains for oneself. Just watch how steadily the West European states are moving toward a single currency, to be introduced in 1999. Recently, on May 10, Helmut Kohl came here. He said that six or eight, if probably not fifteen, countries are already prepared to join the single currency alliance.

Why integration is wheel-spinning is a subject that is constantly on my mind. Why are new alliances, like twos, threes, fours, and so on, constantly invented? The unification process

can only proceed at different speeds in the case of different countries, and only those economies can become unified that are at an approximately the same stage of reform. If one country is at the socialist stage, while another lives under market conditions, what unification can we talk about? This is something that I can't understand. Today, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and probably Georgia (true, the situation there is more difficult) are running neck and neck in the reform stakes, although, if you will pardon my saying so, we have outstripped you in some respects. It is these states that can be integrated, in objective terms. In other words, I believe that only the economy, the common market, can be the initial basis of integration. The rest will fall in place of itself.

President Yeltsin's policy, the way I understand it, is aimed at Russia developing along the path of democracy, market reforms, noninterference in the affairs of other states, respect for neighbors, and so on. That's exactly what we all of us need. However, in terms of our education, we are still Soviet people in many respects, especially here in the Asian region. And the Soviet people are accustomed to believe the printed column and the things broadcast on radio and TV. How was it in the past? If the newspaper Pravda pronounced a judgment on something, that meant that the judgment was objective. If Central Television announced the beginning of some campaign, that meant that on the following day there would be some action. Even people of the highest echelon are sometimes reproaching me: Why do you keep talking about Russia's imperial ambitions all the time? Neither Yeltsin nor Chernomyrdin have them, but many Russian politicians do. Broadcast through the media, these ambitions simply scare away the new generation [of Kazakhs] from Russia.

Russia is the biggest country in the CIS and in the entire world. No other country of the world can compare with Russia in terms of natural wealth. Don't get me wrong, but I believe it is

Russia that impulses toward equality must come from, in the same way as Germany does this for Belgium or, say, Luxembourg or France does it for Austria. The partners of the major European countries know that progress and prosperity are built precisely on the basis of unshakable equality.

What did Russia again need chairmanship of the CIS for? I don't understand this. The Charter provides for annual rotation. Why are all CIS centers located in Moscow? True, this is convenient for some people: The Muscovites are good hosts, they provide all the creature comforts, they feed you well, and it is warm and light there. When I proposed the Eurasian Union model project, I suggested we did not try to reinvent the bicycle but studied integration affairs in the world, especially in Western Europe, and, factoring in our own specifics, moved along the trodden path of economic integration. We haven't yet licked the Customs Union into shape, can't get the Clearance Union properly started, and we haven't set up an inter-state court – and it is this court, not the presidents, that must resolve all controversial issues. When the foundation has been laid, when the economy is integrated, the common market established, there are no borders, trade flourishes, capital and labor move about unhindered, when all is peace and quiet, then any kind of political superstructure may be created. And the people will have no objections, because they will see that it is to their advantage.

And what do we see in real fact? Why don't we move CIS integration bodies, say, to the Volga, if not the Urals – this would be convenient for both the Asian republics and European ones. I once proposed that Saratov or Samara (former Kuybyshev) might be the CIS capital. Kazan or Astrakhan or even the Kazakhstani city of Uralsk could perform that function quite well. The people would realize that the integration is on a really equal footing. As it is, they are saying that Moscow is still the capital, just like it used to be.

Big-time politics is made up of little things like that. That is the reason why there is no absolute trust between CIS countries and even CIS heads of state. East European countries have no particular confidence in Moscow, either. Why do you think they have all of them made a rush for NATO?

I'm convinced that we mustn't give up the CIS, but we must improve it. In March, we the heads of state agreed that by our next meeting we would act on the suggestions then made and prepare documents which would reform our Commonwealth and help build it anew. What does "anew" mean? I'm absolutely sure that all CIS officials must be replaced. It would also be desirable to replace the people in charge of CIS affairs in Russia. After all, it's impossible to create a normal community and develop cooperation with the aid of pro-Communist slogans. I'm sure that eventually we will arrive at the Eurasian idea. Russia, too, will achieve prosperity sooner if it looks this way, not that. Then "that" side will respect all of us much more than now.

**A. Druzenko, first deputy editor in chief of the newspaper Izvestiya:** *Mr. President, I was particularly interested in that part of your speech where you discussed oil and gas affairs. I realize that it would be awkward for you to say more than you did. But, if I understood you correctly, you were referring to the existence of some sort of anti-Kazakhstani lobby, right?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I don't have the facts, so it wouldn't be fair for me to put it like you did. I don't believe there is an anti-Kazakhstani lobby in the government. But some industrialists do have this desire to force Kazakhstan down on its knees, in the certainty that we would come crawling to them. No one is going to do any crawling anymore.

**A. Druzenko:** *That was roughly what I had in mind.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Not even Tajikistan will come

crawling, despite the presence of the Russian army on its territory. I don't know why these troops should be there at all, why there should be any Russian armed forces anywhere outside Russia – in Tajikistan, Armenia, the Dniester area. Why? To make the states with which they are in conflict hate all things Russian? We have here the same old desire to keep others down. And I have already mentioned the results of this keeping down: We're left with 17 cents to the dollar. This is what we are being forced to accept. I can tell you even more: If, say, our gas producers greased somebody's palm – I don't know whose – all difficulties could be overcome. But I forbid them to do so.

**A. Druzenko:** *Now the second question, if I may. What is the reason for Kazakhstan's attractiveness as an investment field? How does it differ from Russia?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** We have an effective power structure from top to bottom. We have stability. We have laws which investors like, because they protect their interests. These are the three answers to your question.

**E. Gindeleyev, deputy chairman of the All-Russia State Radio and Television Company:** *Mr. President, I would like to join Mr. Yastrzhembsky in expressing my thanks for the invitation. Our dialogue has proved very interesting, and it confirms once again that Mr. Nazarbayev is an adherent of real integration. I would like to ask you, in this connection, a question concerning the possibility of closer relations between state TV and radio companies. You know that the [Russian] second channel is not received in Kazakhstan. Your colleague, President Lukashenko of Belorussia, whose relations with Russia's electronic media are rather strained, nevertheless permits the broadcasting on the territory of his republic of all channels, both the first and the second, without any preconditions.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** In my introductory speech I said already there is no policy of squeezing out involved here; you have to believe me. I'm telling you, ORT [Public Russian Television. — Tr.] is broadcast in Kazakhstan in full, exactly the way it is broadcast in Moscow. I'm not too well up on these things. It's a purely financial issue. If you can solve it, you will operate, that's all there is to it.

**A.Sarsembayev:** *I'd like to offer a brief explanation here. I personally went to Moscow, and my deputies twice went to your company. As a last resort, we made this offer to your company: You pay for the three hours during which the major commercials are shown, and we pay for the daytime ourselves. No one even wanted to talk to us. In short, I just want to confirm that there is no politics involved here, seeing that we went to Moscow three times with our propositions. We are paying for six hours, you pay for three, for the advertising rates of the Russian channel are apparently high enough to enable you to find the funds. When we saw clearly that no agreement was possible, we had to make the decision [to cut the broadcasts], for we had to pay the workers their wages. What you're saying about Belorussia offers no way out. In a year's time this issue will inevitably surface again, for we will have to pay for the fuel, the maintenance costs, and so on.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** We're not talking here of news programs and the like. But, by covering Kazakhstan's territory, the channel increases its commercials' audience by 17 million people. If I remember right, we have now bought equipment that will enable us to insert our own commercials in the Russian programs. I repeat that none of this concerns information programs. So you will have to come to an agreement. We have just talked of friendship and trust. There must be complete parity in TV broadcasting as in everything else. Take Americans, for instance. When they broadcast to Europe or Russia, they pay for it

themselves. There are the systems of electronic communications, there are channels, and their operation costs a pretty penny. I'm telling you that, in quite objective terms, you'll have to be prepared for the time when all broadcasting to Kazakhstan will be done via a Kazakhstani satellite. It is therefore desirable that the Kazakhstani and the Russian sides should resolve all outstanding issues now. I'm ready to support you on this.

**G. Shalakhmetov, chairman of the Mir Inter-state Television and Radio Company:** *Mr. President, as long as we began talking of the electronic media, I must say that extremely difficult problems arise here, which have to be looked at from two sides, as it were, to evaluate them objectively. I would therefore like to know what you think of the inter-state media in which two, three, etc., states have shares, such as the Mir Inter-state Television and Radio Company. You know the situation there thoroughly.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Russia's first channel, which is now called the ORT, could become a powerful instrument of inter-state broadcasting. If only Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Georgians, and members of the other Commonwealth states were allowed there! Only they aren't. The Russian TV channel could also assume this role, on condition that our voices could also be heard there. You're professionals – just look at what is being said on Russian TV about Kazakhstan; and we have no way of responding. We are simply not allowed in there. Or, say, they record an interview with me, and then they air it some fifteen days later – out of respect for me, perhaps? And not more than ten percent of what was originally recorded is broadcast. What is there to talk about, dear friends?

Incidentally, this is true of newspapers, too. We say: If you wish your circulation to extend to Kazakhstan, you'll have to let us speak in your publications, too. Not just me personally, but our people, the Kazakhstanis. Uzbeks, Kirgiz, Azerbaijanis, Ukrainians, Belorussians, they all of them say the same. But you are

not offering any such opportunity. This must be a two-way street.

When we failed to make ORT an inter-state channel, I proposed to my colleagues the presidents to set up the Mir company. But it is also being kept down, it's being squeezed out and thrown off the air. And this is the only company that speaks every day about the CIS. Its programs, however, are aired in the daytime, when people are at work. It is not allowed anywhere near prime time. This is a big issue, too. That is why, if we wish to consolidate the Commonwealth, and if we intend to properly structure the CIS, we will need a mass media tool that might be an objective mouthpiece of all of us, where representatives of all the CIS members might have the right and opportunity to be heard.

**Kasayev, deputy editor in chief of *Nezavisimaya gazeta*:**

*Mr. President, your reference to Russian troops in various CIS countries suggested this idea to me. I believe that you and President Yeltsin of Russia participated in and initiated peace-making actions three times. For a long time there have been no joint actions in this area, although a Kazakhstani battalion continues to operate in Tajikistan. There is no progress either in Abkhazia or in Nagorny Karabakh. Or could it be that there are some initiatives, but something interferes with their implementation? Thank you.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** This problem was thoroughly discussed during the closed session at the last CIS summit meeting. If you wish to know my personal opinion, I'm convinced that we have the potential for establishing peace within the Commonwealth. These issues must be discussed openly, honestly, and straightforwardly, without taking offence at each other. If, say, Armenia secretly receives weapons [from Russia]... (That's what they're saying, I don't know if this has been proven beyond doubt. The other day I met Aliyev in Ashgabat, and he insists it has been fully proven – not to mention legal deliveries). But both

Armenia and Azerbaijan are CIS members. How are we to view Russia's attitude toward Azerbaijan, then? Or do we wish to expel it from the Commonwealth?

Or take this issue: The order of Chairmanship in the Council of CIS Heads of State is determined by the [Russian] alphabet. It would appear that Azerbaijan must be the first, to be followed by Armenia, then Belorussia, and then Kazakhstan. We are told, though, that Azerbaijan cannot be in the chair because it is at war with Armenia. What does war have to do with it, if this provision is in our Charter? No, we can't stick to the alphabet because they're at war. But, the devil take it, what sort of commonwealth is it if its members are at war?

You take the last version of the Russian-Belorussian Charter. It is quite an acceptable document, from the Commonwealth standpoint. But if the first version of it had been adopted, that would have led to a total collapse of the CIS on the following day, I can assure you. For that would have meant that Russia was turning away from us. We used to have all sorts of fears, now we have none: Everybody has grown wiser, and no one is afraid of anything. You know, relations between states and nations brook no headlong actions – it's an extremely subtle and delicate area, and it has to be approached scientifically.

Since this answer can be judged a diplomatic one, I can make it more specific. I'm stating, for instance, that I'm ready to resume peace-making efforts. This last time I suggested to my colleagues that I might head an appropriate group within the CIS, go to Western Europe, study yet again their integration experiences, and report to the heads of state on the ways of further building the Commonwealth in such a way as to avoid disintegration and achieve consolidation on the basis of trust, mutual advantage, good-neighborly relations, and non-interference in each other's affairs. Closer relations are an entirely voluntary affair. Today, no one is going to take part in any integration processes

under pressure. Do you think it's an accident that six CIS countries – exactly half of them – formed the Organization of Economic Cooperation? Recently, we held a regular meeting in Ashgabat. Besides, we set up the Central Asian Union, which brought together Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. I ask you: If the CIS were a solid, normally functioning alliance, why should we have created all these structures? There's food for thought for you.

**B.Zverev, first vice president of the Interfax agency:**

*Properly speaking, Mr. President, what I want to say is not a question. I want to say that all that was touched upon here is perhaps particularly close to me, for I was born in Kazakhstan and spent my childhood here. Many of my friends still live here. My parents were among the people who came here to develop the virgin lands, those whom you have mentioned today. I would like to liven up a bit the somewhat gloomy picture of the Russian media operating in Kazakhstan. I can report that we have already made the first step to meet you halfway: Six months ago we registered the Interfax Kazakhstan agency here. It is a Kazakhstani agency. In June, you will already receive the first report from that agency along with the one from Moscow. I hope that it will prove useful to the Kremlin, too.*

**Pavel Gusev, editor in chief of the newspaper Moskovsky komsomolets:** *Mr. President, today you haven't touched on a topic that seems very important to me and has a bearing on human rights. What is the crime situation in Kazakhstan, and is there the so-called Russian Mafia connection here? This connection is now discovered in almost all countries: They keep arresting people – in Italy, other places... And, by way of a follow-up: What is the breakdown on the nationality criteria of the known criminal groups and among those already condemned?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** The post-Soviet situation which all the newly independent countries are now going through ex-

ists in this country, too, of course. Delays in the payment of wages and pensions, unemployment, and an adverse crime situation – these are all our common diseases. But I can tell you that we are not watching it idly. Last year, 38 organized criminal groups were crushed. Where the operation of these has not been cut short in some regions, where they haven't yet been routed, I can assure you that law-enforcement agencies know all about them. The police can smash them at their will. But sometimes the will is lacking, because someone profits by the situation. When things like that are discovered, the heads of the regional Interior Ministry departments, of the National Security Committee, and the public prosecutors are immediately fired.

We have largely suppressed racketeering. As for the nationalities that make up the Mafia, I'd say that the republic's entire nationality spectrum is represented there. I don't know about the Russian connection, but there was a time when Chechen organized crime became quite active, and we took some vigorous action to combat them. Then there was a wave of Tajik crime; we caught some 450 Tajiks, put them on a train and sent them home under guard. Of course they can crawl back across the mountains – after all, the border is transparent. So we are fighting crime, and official statistics point to a decline in crime rates.

As I have said already, our draft Criminal Code has already passed through the Lower House of our parliament and is now in the Senate. Certain new concepts have been introduced there that are not to be found in the criminal codes of other CIS countries, such as the provision on necessary self-defense. The code states clearly that if someone breaks into your apartment, you can kill the evildoer and still not be liable to criminal prosecution. We argued for a long time about whether this will lead to various abuses, but if the state cannot protect the citizen, he must be given the chance to protect both himself and the state. Similarly, if the policeman feels he's in danger, he isn't obliged to shoot three

times at the skies – he must shoot to kill. Last year 61 policemen died, but 25 policemen shot criminals attempting to escape dead, and they were not punished in any way.

Currently a law came into effect in this country that Russia also doesn't have: It cleanses the administration of justice from the Stalinist principles incorporated in it by Vyshinsky. The point is this: Our Constitution separated investigation from the courts and public prosecution. The public prosecutor no longer holds denunciation, investigation, and prosecution in his hands. Instead, the State Investigative Committee has been set up whose job is to conduct investigation. Neither the police nor the public prosecutor nor the courts interfere in investigation anymore. The State Investigative Committee handles the most grave criminal offenses – corruption, economic crime, banditry, robbery, organized crime, and so on. All local-level petty crime is investigated by the police. Say, if someone is caught red-handed committing hooliganism, assault and battery, or petty theft, eyewitnesses are interrogated, a report is filed, and the policeman hands the case over to the courts without any long-drawn-out red tape. I believe that all these measures will help us deal with crime.

**V.Sungorkin, editor in chief of Komsomolskaya pravda:**

*Mr. President, we are still your friends and are always glad to see you. You said just now that the Communist opposition in Kazakhstan is fairly weak. What's your explanation of this?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Personally, I did nothing to bring this state of things about. If there were fewer Communists in Russia, we wouldn't have any of them here at all.

What can I say about this... When I issued a decree declaring the year 1997 to be the Year of National Accord and Remembrance of Victims of Political Repression, representatives of 58 political parties gathered, without any calls from "up top," to discuss this document. Only two leaders, the Communist one and the leader of some extremist radical movement, refused to sup-

port this action, which is so important for social consolidation. It became clear at once who is in favor of public accord and who is intent on seizing power at all cost.

Although the Communists declare that they have dozens of thousands of supporters, these are mostly people of the older generation. The government has been assigned the task of paying old-age pensions regularly beginning in July. True, there will at first be a month-long lag, but we intend to pay all our debts by January 1. If we solve this problem, the Communists will have no basis for further activity. That's all.

Not one political party and not one public movement in Kazakhstan openly opposes the political and economic reforms now being implemented. That is to say, they do not offer any alternative scenarios of development. Except for the Communists, of course, who are calling for a return to socialism. Well, in Russia the Communists have gone on a rampage, virtually. According to our laws, their calls for changing the existing constitutional order would immediately result in a ban on the party. Without registration, their party would be outlawed, with all that that would entail. There's nothing like that in Russia. We have taken away the Communists' license twice, and each time they repented and vowed to operate exclusively within the constitutional framework. Well, they're welcome to – within the constitutional framework. Recently, a right-wing party emerged in Kazakhstan that the Communists don't like at all. Representatives of that party come to their gatherings and call things by their proper names, telling them outright what each of the Communists is worth. They don't like that at all.

**Yu.Sovtsov, first deputy editor in chief of the newspaper**

**Trud:** *I would like to add my voice to those that have already expressed their gratitude for this meeting and the warm welcome we have received. The question I have is this: The union of Belorussia and Russia is imminent. I would like to hear your opinion on this score.*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I've already spoken on this issue, but I can say it clearly again: I'm all for integration of any kind, for any rapprochement, for any commonwealth, community, or alliance – provided international law is observed in these integration processes and equality, independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, mutual advantages and trust are maintained. The reason is not that these things have become an *idee fixe* with me but because all the other constructions are simply ephemeral. You must agree that even the Soviet Union, which seemed to be such a success at resolving ethnic problems, eventually collapsed. If this is a unification of two states in one, I can understand that: It is the right of the Belorussian and Russian peoples, and they can unite to form a single state. In this case I see Belorussia as forming part of Russia, just like, say, Tatarstan.

Recently Russia's chief treasurer Sergei Dubinin came here. We had a detailed discussion, and I asked him this question: Tell me, how can a single budget, a single currency, and a single citizenship coexist with continued independence and sovereignty of each of the two states? He said there could be nothing like that in nature. Forgive me, but I also believe that things like that just don't happen. That is to say, there must be some clarity here. It's either/or. But if some intermediate construction emerges, Belorussia's patriots will keep mounting street actions fanning the people's anti-Russian passions. Off the record, who needs this? Why not move toward a rapprochement in a normal civilized way, creating a common market and achieving economic integration first. After all, this doesn't call for any actions on the presidents' part. What we have to do is simply give our business people the chance to work freely within the framework of all the states, that's all. They will do the rest themselves. That's my opinion.

**V.Andriyanov, editor in chief of the newspaper Rabochaya tribuna:** *Mr. President, our most cordial thanks for the chance to be here and for your kind words about our newspaper.*

*We continue to publish a supplement on the Commonwealth, covering the life of all the CIS member republics. My question is this: In what areas is the economic cooperation between our countries most effective?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** At present, 158 joint Kazakhstani-Russian enterprises are in operation. The largest of them operate in Kazakhstan's oil and power industries. The Russian LUKoil company has considerable property here. I don't remember the accurate figures, but it appears to own oil resources amounting to about 300 million tonnes, which will yield a \$0.5 billion profit in the coming five years. Cooperation at the Ekibastuz coal field, that's number two. And finally, we continue delivery of our iron ore to Russia, that's number three. That's all. And what we really need is mass cooperation between our small and medium-size businesses to fill niches currently unoccupied. For example, Roskontrakt concluded agreements with 50 Kazakhstani agricultural enterprises; it finances production of grain there and freely exports its share of the produce.

Unfortunately, Russian banks have not yet come to Kazakhstan, although we concluded agreements on this score. Big Russian business, which has the potential for investing in joint projects, is in no hurry to come to Kazakhstan either. When we declare our intention to privatize oil and gas companies (and privatization in Kazakhstan is precisely on an individual basis), we hold international tenders in which international financial organizations act as consultants. I am responsible to the population of Kazakhstan for the country's mineral deposits, and these authoritative organizations guarantee that a given contract meets world standards. They can prove at any time before any court that an honest tender was held, and that they provided honest consultations for us. This can always be printed in the media. Russian companies sometimes took part in these tenders, but they have yet to win a single one. And I have no right to interfere in

these affairs, for all our tenders are open and absolutely transparent. Russians therefore have no end of work to do here.

The organizers of this meeting allowed an hour and a half for it, and we have been talking for two hours and five minutes already. I'm afraid that my aides and your colleagues won't have the time to talk to you. So I won't take away their bread and butter. You have quite a few meetings planned for today. In the evening you're flying for Pavlodar, where you'll be able to see everything for yourselves.

**A.Druzenko:** *A couple of words in conclusion. I've heard that recently Kazakhstanskaya pravda published a review of your mail, including a letter from a woman proposing to call the future capital Nursultan, not Akmola. What's your attitude toward this idea?*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** I've just come back from Turkmenistan! (Laughter, applause). There are a great many proposals like that. But I'm an Oriental person myself, and won't be caught with a ruse like that.

**A.Druzenko:** *But that's a request from the working masses!*

**Nursultan Nazarbayev:** Don't, please. Leonid Brezhnev was also asked on many occasions to stay [in his post]. By the way, following the example of the Uzbek and Turkmen parliaments, our parliament recently voted to award me the title of Khaly Kakharmany, or People's Hero. It's like your Hero of Russia star. I went to the parliamentarians, thanked them, saying that I would remember their high trust in me all my life, but refused to accept the award – the more so that decisions on state awards are the president's prerogative. There have also been proposals to place my portrait on the national currency's bank-notes. I assure you that I will never yield to this sort of tricks. Like they say, we've seen all this already.

I'd like to say this in conclusion: I don't believe politicians who say that they awfully like criticism. I'm a human being like

any other, and I don't like it at all when I'm criticized. But over several centuries of totalitarianism, first Tsarist, then Soviet, the powers that be shut the mouths of our peoples, Russians and Kazakhs included. If we, the leaders of today (and I know that Boris Yeltsin is of the same opinion), do not create a precedent, stifling our displeasure, we will never arrive at a democracy. They say that if there is a panacea against all ills, that panacea is glasnost. I'm sure that of all their conquests the people will remember glasnost and freedom more than anything else. That is why we must go on creating the conditions for openness and freedom of expression and the press, however difficult it may be.

Unfortunately, we are at a stage of development right now when everything is shaky, the state is not solid enough, and many people have not yet realized the need for reforms. That is why we have to implement reforms from the top in Kazakhstan, and I do not conceal this. In the past we believed that as soon as there was a chance, the people would rise by themselves and build a market economy. Nothing like this has happened. That is to say, the leader's task right now lies in taking the ship of the state in the chosen direction, ignoring the cries of "I can't" and "I won't." That is why we would very much like the mass media of both Russia and Kazakhstan to be on our side at this stage that is so difficult for their peoples. I believe that you must criticize us for our errors and shortcomings and never keep silence about our defects, but at the same time you should help society to move toward democracy and a market economy. Both you and I realize that there is simply no other way for us.

Thank you, dear friends. I wish you all the best during your stay in Kazakhstan. I also wish that the arrival of this sort of "landing parties" in the republic should become a tradition. Do not forget to give my greetings to all those journalists whom I met in April at our embassy in Moscow. Thank you once again.

## NURSULTAN NAZARBAYEV'S NEW INITIATIVES

IN AN INTERVIEW GRANTED TO NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA  
THE PRESIDENT OF KAZAKHSTAN PROPOSED A REFORM  
OF THE RELATIONS WITHIN THE CIS

*On this occasion, as before, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan was true to his principles, offering new proposals on the improvement of the structure of CIS bodies ahead of the summit of Commonwealth heads of state to be opened tomorrow. Nezavisimaya gazeta has learned the essence of these proposals. The structure of CIS bodies, according to the new Charter, includes the Council of Heads of State (SGG), the Interparliamentary Assembly (MA), the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs (SMID), the Unified Defense Council (OSO), the Unified Socioeconomic Council (OSES), the Economic Court (ES), and the Executive Committee (IK).*

*The Council of Heads of State is the highest executive body in the CIS; its task is to coordinate political and military cooperation and insure the national security, independence and sovereignty of the member states. Meetings of the Council of Heads of State consider the most important decisions within the CIS framework. The Council meets regularly, twice a year. If need be, emergency sessions may also be held at the request of not less than three member states. The Council of Heads of Governments, which operates along with*

*the Council of Heads of State, coordinates cooperation in the economic, social, and other areas.*

*The task of the Interparliamentary Assembly is to harmonize and bring closer together the legislative acts of CIS members; the Assembly is made up of representatives of the parliaments of Commonwealth member states.*

*The Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs prepares draft directives of the Council of Heads of State and Council of Heads of Governments and passes inter-state and inter-governmental decisions on instructions from the highest CIS bodies. It meets twice a year.*

*The Unified Defense Council comprises the ministers of defense and handles issues of military policy and cooperation. Its main concern is maintaining peace on CIS territory. The Unified Defense Council includes the Council of Commanders of Border Troops.*

*The Unified Socioeconomic Council consists of vice premiers or ministers concerned with socioeconomic issues; it carries out the decisions of the Council of Heads of State and Council of Heads of Governments on economic and social issues. The sittings of the Unified Socioeconomic Council are chaired by a representative of the state whose head is chairman of the Council of Heads of State.*

*The primary function of the Economic Court is the hearing of disputes, primarily of economic nature, between Commonwealth member states. It consists of representatives of CIS member states.*

*The Executive Committee is formed on the basis of the Inter-state Economic Committee and the Executive Secretariat. The apparatus of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the Unified Socioeconomic Council, the Unified Defense Council, and of other CIS bodies (whose number must be reduced) form part of the Executive Committee and have*

*the status of its departments. The primary task of the Executive Committee is organizational and technical support for the meetings of the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Governments, the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, and other bodies stipulated in the Charter, as well as supervision of fulfillment of decisions taken. The Executive Committee is primarily based in Minsk, the Republic of Belarus; its chairman is appointed for three years, with subsequent rotation.*

*On the eve of the summit President Nazarbayev received an NG observer and replied to a series of questions.*

*The summit of CIS heads of states originally scheduled for March will open on April 29 in Moscow. In advance of this event practically all Commonwealth member states expressed themselves in favor of reforming the CIS. Mr. President, what is Kazakhstan's position on this issue?*

The year 1997 was a period of trials for the CIS. At the previous Moscow summit and later in Cisinou we, CIS heads of state, adopted no documents at all. Prior to that, numerous documents were adopted, and many of them are not implemented at all, for some heads of state sign these documents while others don't. Sixteen documents, mostly involving our governments, were prepared for signing at the Cisinou summit. Some heads of state criticized integration at different speeds, one speed for Russia and Belorussia, another for the Four. Why should there be first-grade integration and second-grade integration, they asked. I then made the proposal: Let's solve just one issue, the economic one. Let's create a unified economic space. Everybody is scared of political integration, of supranational structures in the Commonwealth. Everybody believes that that will be an encroachment on sovereignty and on state independence. This fear ex-

ists. They're right, for the CIS, just as other integrated alliances, must start with the economy. I was therefore told to study this question and table a proposal for the setting up of a unified economic space. I studied these problems in Western Europe, I studied the European Union, the North American, Latin American, and other integrated alliances. I studied the history of their establishment, and compiled a 39-page document in December last year. This document was sent round to all CIS heads of state. At the January 23 meeting of the Four, in which I'm chairman of the Customs Union, apart from the document on the establishment of a unified economic space, I tabled a proposal on "Ten Steps to Meet the Needs of Ordinary People." All these documents – the draft treaty on a unified economic space and the document approving the "Ten Steps to Meet the Needs of Ordinary People" program will be on the agenda of the CIS heads of state summit meeting.

As for reforming CIS bodies, the heads of state did indeed make some proposals. That is their affair. I respect the opinion of my colleagues. But Kazakhstan's proposal is this: The CIS staff, as endorsed today, stands at 2500 people. Of these, 1500 are already employed, although I don't know what they are doing, and no one else does. There are also 1000 vacancies. The question is: Do we need such a huge number of bureaucrats for the CIS structures? We have the Executive Secretariat and the Inter-state Economic Committee. We have the Economic Court, the Inter-state Economic Committee college, and so on. I propose to set up a single executive organ with various departments inside it – the Secretariat, the Economic Committee, the Economic Court, the ministers of defense, the ministers for foreign affairs, and so on. The number of staffers on CIS structures must be cut. As the integration committee of the Four is now moving to Almaty, I as the chairman of that committee will decide these

issues on the spot, to optimize the number of staffers. True, other people have different proposals concerning the permanent plenipotentiary representatives of CIS members. I believe the matter will be decided by all the presidents together. A collective decision will probably be taken on April 29, and we will learn the nature of that decision after the meeting.

*After the Cisinau summit in October last year you stated that CIS countries had failed to achieve the type of integration which they desired. In what direction must integration processes develop that might bring Commonwealth countries closer together?*

In 1991, at the very beginning, when the Soviet Union collapsed and the CIS was being set up, we all had the Soviet-Communist mentality, of course. Everybody saw the CIS as a way of maintaining the former Soviet Union. Radical nationalists and certain politicians in Russia particularly wanted to restore the former USSR. Naturally, all the republics rose against it. We've gone through that historical period, and everybody has realized that only economic integration can be the basis for all other kinds of rapprochement. Equality of all must be observed: There mustn't be senior or junior brothers or greater and lesser states. For example, in the European Union Germany regards itself as equal to Luxembourg, and no one has any doubts about that.

That's the way it is both in politics and in practical life. Unfortunately, things are different here. The "big ones" want to dominate. That's what people are afraid of. And that's why I believe that we must begin with the economy. Trade between CIS countries, including trade with Russia, is falling rather than rising. We are now trading more with the "far abroad" than with Russia. The reason is that we haven't yet regulated the problem of customs duties and customs tariffs. Here is a striking example: We are all of us preparing to join the WTO. The WTO insists that VAT should be charged at the destination of a commodity, just as

the world over, while Russia believes that VAT should be exacted at the place of production. The result is that Russia charges the tax at the place of production, and then we charge the same tax a second time at the point of destination. What we get is dual taxation, and this commodity can't stand any competition. That is why we are in very close contact with Russia on this issue. Seventy to eighty percent of the tariffs have already been coordinated. To eliminate any outstanding questions, we will probably sign a bilateral agreement on this issue. They are saying that Russia stands to lose a great deal in the event of giving up the VAT charged at the place of production. In actual fact Russia loses more because we haven't exported a great many goods which Russia needs, and Russia was unable to sell to Kazakhstan those goods that used to bring it a lot of money. This proves that economic integration must begin with the establishment of a common customs and economic space, of an electric power union, transport union, and so on.

*Mr. President, you are talking of negotiations with Russia concerning VAT and entering the WTO. But most of the more than two thousand documents signed within the CIS framework have not been fulfilled. Is there a guarantee that, if you agree on these issues, the decisions will be carried out tomorrow and will not be violated?*

Unfortunately, there is no such guarantee.

*Some politicians take integration to mean the setting up of supranational bodies in the CIS. What are the prospects for such ideas?*

There are no prospects – unless we achieve real economic integration, when goods travel across the borders of CIS countries, or at least those of the Four, without customs barriers; unless we coordinate all the tariffs; and unless we stop imposing increasing numbers of taxes on our producers, that they might

stand up to competition. What do we need supranational structures for, if we keep them but they obstruct rather than promote integration processes? For instance, we don't know what the Interparliamentary Assembly is doing. The Interparliamentary Assembly and the CIS just don't mesh. We don't know what the other CIS structures are doing, either. The reason for this is that we have put the cart before the horse. We wanted to solve problems of political superstructure in the absence of an economic basis. Today, only economic profit, equal rights, and mutual respect and trust can bring the peoples together. Each country pursues its own interests, and it will trade with those parties with which trade is profitable. It will court investment that is profitable. To believe therefore that we are brothers and we have to give each other some things for free is total nonsense. There will be nothing like that. The sooner we drop all these hopes, the sooner we will all of us fare better.

*You keep insisting on the need to set up the Eurasian Union in the post-Soviet space. Do you intend to air again such a proposal at the Moscow summit?*

On condition that we create an economic space, the way it was done in Western Europe. At first there was an agreement on coal and steel, on electric power, and railways, and all this brought about the European Economic Community. Nowadays it is called the European Union. And they are currently moving toward a single European currency, the euro. That is why we will also have to move in this direction, starting with the establishment of a unified economic space. We can establish a replica of the European Union here. We have five Central Asian states, and the rest are European ones. Why can't we call it the Eurasian Union? I feel therefore grateful that this idea has met with considerable response, and everybody understands what is involved, although again there's fear of the word "union." They don't fear to call the

European Union a union, nor are there any such fears about the North American alliance or the Latin American alliance. I recently talked with President Cardozo of Brazil; he says that Argentina, Brazil, and Chile have set up an economic union and now intend to bring all Latin American countries in it. A similar alliance is being established in Southeast Asia. So why can't we establish such a union? Some people in Russia don't like, perhaps, yet another proposal coming from Nazarbayev. Well, I can yield my laurels to anyone who wants them.

*One of the weaker points of the CIS is that the Commonwealth could not resolve the conflicts between CIS countries, as for instance in Nagorny Karabakh or Abkhazia. Will it be possible to resolve these conflicts in the future, reformed Commonwealth and prevent their spreading? After all, two CIS countries, like Armenia and Azerbaijan, cannot be integrated either economically or politically, being at war with each other. Can a formula be found for eliminating "hot spots" on CIS territory?*

Of course, both Azerbaijan and Armenia have their own interests, and it is not quite proper for us to interfere in their affairs. But I spoke up in a sharply critical manner at the October summit, saying that we couldn't call ourselves a Commonwealth if we couldn't put an end to conflicts within the CIS. Are there any integration alliances in which member countries are at war with each other? There aren't. That is why I proposed to set up a special committee for the overcoming of conflict situations within the CIS. If we all of us take a joint decision, we can resolve this issue. Just look, NATO and Western Europe are taking a very important decision for the benefit of the people. We too might take a similar decision, perhaps. Here Russia plays the man role, but not only Russia must take the necessary decisions in situations of conflict. We must all of us assume responsibility and outline the specific measures to eliminate a conflict situation and

bring about peace and quiet. I don't know what you think of all this, but this [the conflict. – Tr.] is extremely unprofitable for the Transcaucasian countries. They could trade with each other, as in Central Asia, they could collaborate with each other, and they could develop. If it weren't for this conflict, the pipeline could have crossed Armenian territory along the shortest route. The Armenian people would have gained a great deal from this. But today no one, not one world company will agree to build a pipeline across the territory of Armenia which is at war with oil-producing Azerbaijan. That is the political aspect of the issue, so to say, which prevails over the economy and damages the interests of the Armenian people itself. This must be realized, I believe. Both Azerbaijan and Georgia suffer, as the roads stand idle. Just look, the only railway which carried freight to Armenia across Azerbaijan is not in use. I've been in Baku, and I have seen millions of refugees living in the center and on the outskirts of the city in schools, under terrible conditions. Can these people be persuaded that everything may be forgiven? In Armenia, though, there are different forces at work. Observe: There were political conflicts there, the president has resigned; in other words, there is understanding that the future belongs to peace and cooperation. I believe that the CIS can play an important role in this issue. After all, it is the CIS that can involve UN and OSCE forces and that can play the main role in bringing these peoples closer together, eliminating the conflict situation, and creating an atmosphere of trust in the Caucasus.

*Mr. President, in December last year Akmola was declared to be Kazakhstan's official capital. You pointed out the fact that "in terms of transport and geography, Akmola is in the center of Eurasia as one of the causes for the transfer of the capital to the north. What will the republic's economy gain from the transfer of the capital to the country's geographical center? Can there be any negative economic consequences of the transfer of the capi-*

*tal? After all, the economic links between the former capital Alma-Ata and the provinces took decades to evolve.*

The fact that Akmola is in the geographical center of Eurasia is above all of a symbolic significance; it stresses out country's desire to be the bridge between Europe and Asia, to be the space where Western and Eastern cultures and, if you wish, civilizations vigorously interact and interpenetrate.

The idea of transferring the capital, however, did not arise out of these considerations. The reason was that the former capital Almaty had exhausted all possibilities for further development. Squeezed in between the foothills, its population rising to a million and a half, it had practically no future in terms of territorial proportionality. The ecological situation in Almaty was tense – almost at emergency levels.

But a capital is always attractive. Situated at a dead end, the former capital blocked the natural migration flows from the overpopulated southern areas to the industrially developed northern regions, effectively becoming an obstacle in the way of further development of the country's production forces. So the need for transferring the capital arose first, and only afterwards was Akmola chosen as a result of analytical research.

The new capital is closer to the major economic centers and has a greater potential for its own development, situated as it is at the intersection of major transport routes. The saving on simple optimization of freight and passenger transport and of telephone traffic can be considerable. Thanks to Akmola, economic links between the regions will become more optimal. The misgivings concerning negative economic consequences are entirely unfounded.

*In your speech at the joint sitting of the two chambers of Kazakhstan's parliament in October last year you said that the transfer of the capital will "help solve the problems of the country's ethnic and demographic development." What did you have*

*in mind? Your opponents insist that the main goal of moving the capital from south to north was the need to change the demographic situation in favor of Kazakhs, who are outnumbered by Russians in the northern provinces. What could you say on this score?*

What is important to us is not simply migration from south to north. It is rather a question of migration from the predominantly agrarian south to the industrial north, that is, from rural areas to the cities. There's a world of difference here. Nearly half the population of Kazakhstan lives in the rural areas, where Kazakhs predominate. Demographic stability is maintained precisely by the growth of the population in the Kazakh *aul*. Should we artificially check the arrival of young people from the rural areas in the cities, where higher educational establishments, industrial enterprises, and business are concentrated? Of course not. Young people must study, learn trades and professions, including those in the industry, and not join the ranks of the unemployed, from where it is but a step to the criminal environment.

So what we have here is an objective tendency. We are not trying to speed it up artificially. People shouldn't have the impression that we are taking trainloads of Kazakhs from south to north, following the pattern of the Soviet "All-Union construction sites."

The transfer of the capital can affect the ethnic and demographic situation in the northern regions to an insignificant degree and only in the long term. The officials of the central administration (some twelve to fifteen thousand people all told) represent less than a tenth of a percent of Kazakhstan's population, and their move north cannot directly affect the demographic situation.

*The south of Kazakhstan, Alma-Ata included, has seen a rapid growth of the number of Chinese settling in the republic*

*using roundabout ways, including fictitious marriages. According to expert evaluations, if this goes on, in some 10–15 years the Chinese will become the majority in the south of the republic.*

Indeed? And who are these experts? No, someone gave you unreliable information.

The scope of penetration of Chinese citizens in Kazakhstan is not that great at all. According to our statistics, their numbers grew until 1995, and then the growth stabilized. For instance, in Almaty slightly more than a thousand Chinese are registered. That is quite a real figure, reflecting the level of development of border trade, joint ventures, general contacts between the peoples of neighboring countries, and the degree of cooperation and openness between Kazakhstan and China.

True, there are also Chinese citizens whose visas have expired and they still stay on in our country. These illegal immigrants are difficult to trace, and they create a lot of difficulties for the law-enforcement agencies. No one takes care of their rights, and they often become the object of criminal attacks. From time to time whole groups of such victims are expelled from the country: Last year, there were 115 of them. On the whole, though, there can be no question of a massive inflow of the Chinese.

*You proposed to change the name of Akmola to Kazakhstan. Will that be done?*

Actually the proposal came from President Askar Akayev of Kirgizia, when he visited Akmola last year. Out of respect for the honored guest I publicly supported the idea. That was a spur of the moment gesture, of course, with which President Akayev wanted to stress his respect for Kazakhstan.

Our capital will keep its historical name. It sounds well, and it has a deep meaning. Akmola literally means “a white holy place,” and the word *ak* “white” also has connotations of “bright,” “noble,” “highest” for a Kazakh.

*The religious factor, the growth of both Islamic extremism and of other extremist religious trends is becoming a danger in many Central Asian republics. Does this danger exist in the case of Kazakhstan?*

Your conclusions are too pessimistic. Islamic extremism is not characteristic of Central Asia. The only exception is Tajikistan, where an internal political conflict assumed, not without outside influence, a religious coloring. Note that religious trends are only radicalized against the background of political upheavals and unresolved contradictions: in Afghanistan, because of the war; in the Arab world, after the defeat at the hands of Israel, and so on. Wahhabism in Chechnya, of which Russian papers write these days, could not have appeared, had the developments there taken a peaceful course.

In Central Asia, and in Kazakhstan in particular, there are no grounds for this sort of scenario. Our country's population does not display excessive religious zeal. As far as Kazakhs as the followers of the Moslem faith are concerned, historically shariah teaching has proved unable to displace in their minds the norms of adat – a more ancient system of social institutions and common law in which there is no room for religious radicalism. Religious tolerance, characteristic of Kazakh mentality, and the openness of Kazakhs' philosophical world-view and of the attitude toward reality make other religions, including Russian Orthodoxy, feel quite comfortable in Kazakhstan.

*Mr. President, you continually insist on the need to speed up economic integration between Russia and Kazakhstan. At the same time Kazakhstan's major industrial enterprises – iron and steel works, uranium and gold mines, oil fields, power stations, and the like – are aggressively bought by foreigners who don't want to have anything to do with Russians. Foreign investors control 204 major enterprises, and the impression is that Kazakhstan is gradu-*

*ally distancing itself, in economic terms, from Russia, changing its orientation toward the "far abroad." What could you say on this subject?*

I've already had several occasions to reply to this question. There's just one reason for the re-orientation toward the far abroad of which you speak – the availability of free investment capital there. At first, we offered precisely the Russian side to jointly raise the collapsed enterprises out of economic ruin. But nothing came out of it, for you had no money.

We waited for a while, but we couldn't wait until potential Russian investors accumulated large enough funds. Many Kazakhstani enterprises are "city-forming," that is, the very survival of dozens of thousands of people depends on them. In 1993 and 1994, whole trainloads of these enterprises' products went to the Russian plants, but no payments were forthcoming, for the partners also found themselves in deep crisis. Miners and iron and steel workers were paid no wages for six months and sometimes a whole year.

Only then did we begin to sell enterprises and transfer them to foreign companies' administration. Our terms for investors were always the same: payment of back wages, financial rehabilitation, investment into technological modernization and re-vamping, and profitable operation to increase the volume of taxes. We managed to find investors meeting these rigid terms, and gradually the situation was put right. At present skilled workers get \$2000-3000 a month, taxes flow into the budget, and the enterprises maintain kindergartens and holiday homes. What else do we need to make life normal?

I realize that not all enterprises privatized with the participation of foreign capital have retained their old economic links with their Russian partners, as their new masters may be interested in other financial and economic schemes. But this problem

cannot be solved on a voluntarist basis. One has to offer more profitable terms for doing business together. These issues must be regulated by the market. There are levers, naturally, which can be used to channel the development of the markets in one direction or another. But the principle of mutual advantage must be complied with, if we wish to revive cooperation between specific enterprises, sectors, and economies.

On the whole, Russia is Kazakhstan's biggest trading partner, and on our side enterprises in which foreign companies have shares are primarily involved in this trade. I can say that our government will continue to encourage the development of close ties with Russian partners. However, because the issue of exacting VAT was not resolved, the volume of trade with Russia fell by another 20 percent last year, amounting to not more than 40 percent.

*You are not afraid of strong dependence on foreign capital? Doesn't it appear to you that such dependence endangers Kazakhstan's national security?*

You see, we decided to rely on investors who, apart from providing actual money, leading-edge technologies, and international experiences, have a strong motive for effective investment. With an investor like that we become partners with a great interest in each other.

Such a partnership is no threat to economic security. Besides, Kazakhstan's potential for absorbing investments is so great that not even highly developed countries individually have the financial resources to meet it. Hence the objectively evolving diversification of investors that represent dozens of countries of Europe, Asia, and America and different centers of the world economy. Given a reasonable and long-term balance of interests, this diversification can in our view help consolidate economic stability in Kazakhstan and win effective and solid positions on the world market.

*How is Kazakhstan's regional cooperation developing within the framework of the Central Asian Union? How does the consolidation of this regional union agree with the idea of the Central Asian Union that you proposed four years ago? What is your vision of the prospects of the Central Asian Union, which seems to be operating more effectively than all the other regional organizations in the post-Soviet space?*

Indeed, cooperation within the framework of the Central Asian Union is developing dynamically and consistently. It is an example of how old links should be preserved and new ones, geared to market conditions, should be found. Having concluded a treaty on a unified economic space, our countries were able to work out a program of cooperation consisting of several dozens of concrete projects.

I believe it isn't bad at all that, to realize these projects, we are relying on experiences, accumulated in the Soviet times, of short-term production planning and establishing strong horizontal links.

Recently, Tajikistan joined the Central Asian Union. The Russian Federation received observer status last year. This means that our regional integration experiences are attracting interest and that they fully agree with the concept of integration at different speeds within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Basically, the purpose of the Central Asian Union in no way contravenes the idea of the Eurasian Union, although the difference between the part and whole, a subregional alliance and a continental one is obvious. The principal difference lies in that the Central Asian Union is primarily an economic alliance, whereas the Eurasian idea rests on more fundamental – cultural and civilization-related – foundations.

*Mr. President, this year will see the start of the imple-*

*mentation of the first five of the 32 projects within the UN Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). You were the initiator of this program, weren't you?*

Kazakhstan was the coordinator at the preparatory stage of the work. As a whole, the SPECA program was worked out by the UN European Economic Commission (EEC) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Ocean (ES-CAPO). This program sets two primary goals: Further consolidation of economic links between the states of our region and economic integration of Central Asian countries with Europe and Asia.

SPECA is a complex of projects for regional technological assistance in economic areas that are our top priorities. It is proposed to finance it from the funds of UN organizations promoting development, of donor countries, international financial organizations, and of the private sector.

The Tashkent Declaration signed in March this year by the leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, EEC and ESCATO defines four top priority areas of cooperation at the first stage of the realization of the program: development of the transport infrastructure and simplification of procedures for the movement of goods, services, and people across borders; rational and effective use of the energy and water resources of Central Asia; an international economic conference on Tajikistan, joint strategy for regional development, and attracting foreign investment; regional cooperation on the development of multiple routes for the delivery of hydrocarbons along pipelines to world markets.

This list is not just proof of the seriousness of intentions but also of the importance attached by the world to the development of Central Asia and its comprehensive incorporation in the economy of Europe and Asia.

*How is the long-term strategic program for the development of the republic Kazakhstan-2030 being realized? One of the leaders of Kazakhstani opposition Pyotr Svoik, co-chairman of the Azamat civic movement, called this program an exercise in political daydreaming and pronounced its realization impossible. What is your assessment of the program six months after the start of its realization? Would you like to change something in it?*

Too little time has passed since the publication of that program to sum up any results or change anything in it. A much more pertinent task is a promotion campaign for this program to bring it to the attention of every Kazakhstani. This program may be ambitious, but this doesn't detract from it as a guide to action and as a high and noble objective. It makes our efforts conscious and purposive. It lends us energy and enthusiasm.

Only he who is moving will come to the end of the road. Pyotr Svoik was a member of the government, he bungled his job there, and was relieved of his post for it. It's his hurt speaking. Can a man feeling offended be objective? Of course not.

Time will be our judge. I would like to quote a wise Kazakh proverb: "Dust won't settle on him who moves fast."

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**President of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

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