

Statement by
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The countries of the Caspian basin possess huge mineral recourses. It brings the prospects for prosperity of the nations and economic development but at the same time potential for political and even military conflicts.

I would like to draw the attention to **the efforts undertaken by the states of the Caspian Sea region to enhance their security and stability**, to meet these numerous challenges.

Speaking about my country I mean first of all the initiative of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to create an Asian security mechanism - Conference on Interaction and Confidence building measures in Asia (CICA). It was launched 10 years ago at the 47th session of UN General Assembly in 1992. In his speech President Nazarbayev said "... we must make a collective search for the best way to meet the challenges of the future and lay new foundations for mankind's existence in a world more integrated than ever before." The idea was to create a forum where the matters of common concern of Asian states could be discussed.

But by many it was perceived at that time as just an aspiration of the new member of the world community to announce itself, to become known. One could hardly imagine that a new, just born baby-state, could realize such an immense task that no one could do before. Indeed from Kazakh side as the initiator of the process it demanded titanic efforts, sometimes stubbornness, sometimes patience to carry it on. But most important - mutual efforts and political will of the States were crucial for the whole process.

16 Asian nations responded with understanding to the call of the young state. This understanding based on the provision that sustainable development and prosperity of nations of the planet is defined not only by global but also in many aspects of regional security systems.

Now CICA includes among others 4 nuclear powers - Russia, China, India and Pakistan - and speaks for nearly half the world's population. With Israel and Palestine it also includes the participants of the two hottest crises - the Middle East and Kashmir disputes.

Neither one of regions on the planet has such a diversity as Asia. It is the concentration of various civilizations, religions, cultures, nationalities, ethnic groups and political systems. The countries of this region have an ancient history and traditions, their own national interests and their own vision for the solutions of existing problems. The danger of nuclear arms race and local wars keep posing a threat to the peace and stability in Asia. The political situation in the region can be characterized as tense because of international terrorism, regional extremism and separatism, illicit drug and weapon trafficking. The task to secure the environment in order to prevent ecological disasters becomes more and more important. Establishing peace, mutual understanding, trust, - these are the things which can open the road to prosperity of all nations on this subcontinent. The viability of the goals of the CICA process is based not only on the initiative of one or several states, but mainly on aspiration of all peoples of Asia to peace and stability.

Each year was bringing new convincing evidences that the idea of N. A. Nazarbayev concerning CICA is perspicacious. The problems which were considered as the inner affairs of one or more countries at the present time become the prerogative of multilateral, regional and global cooperation. Public opinion of the whole planet was worried by the financial crisis, influx of illegal

migrants and narcotics, nuclear tests in India and Pakistan in 1998, when the ghost of nuclear conflict appeared in the region. The saddest examples were barbarian terror acts in USA in September 2001, which killed thousands of people and became the challenge to the whole civilized mankind. It has shocked the world and the following developments in Afghanistan indicated, that the international terrorism has almost put our region on the edge of humanitarian catastrophe.

Such a variety of interests of in some cases conflicting parties made the process of the CICA creation difficult and controversial. Nevertheless on the 10-years long way the member-states came to an understanding for a need of a forum which will contribute to promotion of a dialogue on various issues, representing mutual interest of states of the Continent, where Asian states can discuss security issues in an atmosphere of trust and cooperation.

This understanding resulted in the first CICA summit, held in Almaty on the 4th of June this year. The Summit itself was a unique event of a historical significance. For the first time ever the leaders of 16 Asian states gathered together to state their firm will to bring peace and stability to Asia. The major task of the summit was completely fulfilled. The main document of the Conference - Almaty Act - was signed. This document would serve as a basis for the future activities of the Conference, a starting point for the practical steps of the Asian security structure. The document contains the member-states' views on the whole complex of security issues - challenges to security, non-proliferation, disarmament, confidence building measures, etc. The participants of the Summit agreed that Almaty Act has become a unique document in which the views of the participating states on the Asian security have been integrated reflecting the complexity-and specifics of the region.

Political and economic potential of CICA member-states, and its ability to influence on the global and regional processes make the Conference one of the most important regional forum.

Innovation of the CICA idea is in its call-up to speak about Asia as about united integrity with all its diversity and contradictions. As we can see, the international organizations, which are now represented in Asia, were created weather for geographic principal or other separate criteria of political and economic similarities. At the same time, in spite of definite experience, which was acquired on the sub regional level, there is no such structure, which could become the searching mechanism for real and comprehensive solutions for the entire Asian continent.

It is still too early to speak about CICA as a sort of an international entity. There is still a long way to go. At the Almaty Summit the member-states agreed to work on arrangements related to the creation of the CICA Secretariat and to start elaboration of the Catalogue of the Confidence building Measures. It seems practically impossible to make all variety of CICA member-states to take obligations in military and political spheres. In this regard we would have to try different approaches, principals, methodologies applicable in that sphere to the current situation in Asia. I see a great potential for cooperation between CICA and the Club of Rome in that particular field.

At the end I would like to bring to your notice one fact. Even not being created the Conference contributed to the peace and security hence fulfilling its task. At the peak of the crisis in South Asia it was CICA Summit which brought together the leaders of India and Pakistan. Although there was no immediate solution found in Almaty I think it would be naive to expect CICA to solve decades--long conflicts in one day. The idea is to create favorable conditions, an appropriate atmosphere for constructive discussion, to give another chance to the countries to get their positions closer. After the meeting in Almaty, and here I refer to the words of President Musharraf, the tension between India and Pakistan has started to downgrade. One can say that it was not CICA that decreased the tension, President Musharraf and Prime-Minister Vajpayee would meet at some other place anyway. I would agree with that skeptic. But if the Almaty Summit contributed to speeding up the reconciliation process for even a few days, if there was one artillery exchange less taken place, one less house destroyed, one human life saved - the whole thing was worth it, 10-years long efforts were worth it.

That what makes us proud of what has been done and optimistic about CICA perspectives.

Thank you for your attention.