

RELEASE IN PART B5

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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 13, 2012 11:50 PM  
**To:** H  
**Cc:** Hanley, Monica R  
**Subject:** Nazarbayev

Call not confirmed yet but we offered 8:30-10am window. monica will let you know when its locked.

**The Secretary's Call Sheet for  
Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev [nah-zahr-BYE-yeff]**

**Purpose of Call:** To support Kazakhstan's intent to hold open, transparent, and fair parliamentary elections January 15, and to welcome the decision to allow the national election to take place in Zhanaozen [zhah-NOW-zen], which remains under a state of emergency following December unrest.

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**Background:**

**Elections:** In accordance with Kazakhstan's Constitution, President Nazarbayev signed a decree November 15 to dissolve the lower house of parliament (Mazhilis) and to schedule elections for January 15. Nazarbayev announced in November that Kazakhstan needs a multiparty Mazhilis and a renewed government to accomplish wider modernization. This will be the first Mazhilis elections held under Kazakhstan's revised election code, which mandates representation for a second party if there are not at least two parties that exceed the required 7 percent threshold. The elections are expected to usher in Kazakhstan's first multiparty parliament.

**Zhanaozen:** At least 16 people died and over 100 were hospitalized due to unrest that began as authorities were preparing for a December 16 independence day celebration on the central square of the oil town of Zhanaozen. Both the government of Kazakhstan and an independent NGO eyewitness maintain that a group of protestors (possibly organized by overseas opposition groups), separate from the oil workers who have been on strike, started the violence. Additional violence claiming at least one life broke out on December 17 when protestors blocked several freight and passenger trains in the nearby village of Shetpe. President Nazarbayev declared a State of Emergency for Zhanaozen and established a commission headed by Deputy Prime Minister Shukeyev to investigate the incident and make recommendations to address underlying socio-economic factors. Although the situation has stabilized, the government extended the State of Emergency to January 31 and – consistent with the constitutional provision regarding regions where there is unrest – canceled the parliamentary (though not local) elections for that region, affecting 50,000 voters (out of 7 million or so). After A/S Blake and Amb. Fairfax urged reconsideration, President Nazarbayev announced January 9 that elections would take place nationwide on January 15, including Zhanaozen, a decision that was confirmed by the Constitutional Court January 11.

**NDI:** Ambassador Idrissov flagged in his January 11 discussion with Acting A/S Pyatt the Kazakh government's concerns about the activities of NDI and IRI, which he said were becoming "too active" in their engagement on social networking and "Arab Spring" type activities. He added that these concerns had been raised with Embassy Astana by the MFA; on January 11, Kazakh officials alleged to our DCM that the purpose of many U.S. policies in Kazakhstan, including support of organizations like NDI, is to foment revolution against the government. Pyatt told Idrissov that we welcomed the Kazakh government's commitment to transparency in the elections (and the investigation of the Zhanaozen events), but did not see anything irregular in the role/actions of NDI/IRI and urged them not to believe everything they read on the

internet (local press propaganda often targets U.S. NGO activities in Central Asia). The Kazakh government may also be reacting to the activities of a former NDI local employee who has been active in opposition efforts but no longer has any connection with NDI. During a January 12 meeting with Kazykhanov, Ambassador Fairfax strongly refuted claims that NDI was engaged in improper or subversive activities. Kazykhanov expressed GOKZ support for NDI's work in Kazakhstan, and admitted that the Kazakh security services (and not the media) had been the real source of the accusations made against NDI to the MFA. Kazykhanov agreed to have Kazakh Ambassador Idrissov meet with NDI Director Wollack to discuss further any concerns. Kazakhstan has suffered several small bombings (including its first car bomb ever) in the past year that – in combination with unrest in the oil patch, as well as events in the Arab world and Russia – has made it particularly skittish about stability. President Nazarbayev said January 11 that he thinks countries that have experienced such “coups” have gone “backwards” 10-15 years economically. (Note: IRI left Kazakhstan last spring.)