

Basle, 16/5/2005

Kazakhstan Coalition

Dear Madam,

Dear Sir,

We would like to ask you if you could join and support the Coalition, which aims to bring back to Kazakhstan money, which is presently blocked on Swiss bank accounts and is suspected to stem from corrupt acts.

The background of the affair is as follows: Since August 1998, over 120 mio. US-dollars are blocked on bank accounts in Geneva belonging to high-level Kazakh officials and the State Treasury of Kazakhstan. The sum is suspected to be part of a corrupt deal, organised by a US-citizen, between US-oil companies and Kazakh officials. The US-intermediary in the meantime faces charges in the USA of corrupting foreign officials. The US-court suggested the confiscation of the money to the US-treasury.

During the hearings evidence has been produced that the intermediary worked in close relation with the US-administration and effectively used his position as an assistant to President Nazarbayev. Therefore, when he *«defrauded the people of Kazakhstan out of the honest services of its officials, defrauded the Republic of Kazakhstan out of millions of dollars from these oil transactions, and laundered money to promote and conceal his crimes»* (as in the US-court indictment, dated 2/4/2003), this might have been approved by certain US-officials.

It seems paradoxical and an arbitrary use of the law that the US-court suggests the confiscation of the money while the people of Kazakhstan have been the only victims of suspected corrupt acts. However the US-court does not raise the question that if oil-contracts were achieved through corrupt practices then upon proof they ought to be declared invalid. Moreover there is growing evidence of continuous use of the US-investigation as a tool of political and economic pressure on Kazakhstan. Court hearings and thus a verdict were over the years regularly postponed. The new date of the next court hearing has been rescheduled from April 2005 to January 2006.

An initiative of Kazakh citizens has been formed in 2004, including members of Parliament belonging to the opposition, which tries to achieve the de-blocking of the money and its return to Kazakhstan. Aktion Finanzplatz Schweiz supports this aim. We are of the opinion, that the money has been an integral part of proceeds from Kazakh oil bought by foreign companies, therefore that it belongs to the Kazakh people and not to Swiss authorities or the US-treasury. In aiming to bring the money back, we are looking for guarantees that it is not misappropriated but used for projects, which are in the interest of the country and its population – for instance those promoting freedom of speech and supporting institutions of the civil society.

We would like to explore and propagate this aim and create political pressure to achieve it. At the same time, several international bodies have declared that to fight corruption must be an utmost priority, and Switzerland has signed several declarations in this regard. Furthermore, Kazakhgate might be a precedent for a region, which might become even more prominent concerning questionable business practices.

Out of these reasons we would be interested in building a coalition, which brings together different organisations and movements from Kazakhstan and Switzerland. We are looking forward to a positive reply from you.

Yours sincerely,

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