

April 27th, 2010

Dear colleagues, dear guests and friends,

I am opening the ninth Eurasian Media Forum and from the bottom of my heart I welcome you to our beautiful city, the south capital of Kazakstan - Almaty!

Unfortunately, due to eruption of the Icelandic volcano, having an amazingly melodic name Eyjafjallajokull, several guests failed to get to Almaty. We understand these challenges and we'll be glad to see them at the next jubilee tenth conference.

And to all whom the terrible clouds of the Icelandic ashes did not stop, to all the attendees and guests of the ninth Eurasian media Forum we say hello!

Welcome!

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to express gratitude to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev for the attention he's been paying to our Forum, and for his always high valuation of our joint efforts. On behalf of the attendees and guests of the Eurasian Media Forum I welcome and thank you, Mr. President!

This is the ninth time we are gathering here at the Eurasian Media Forum in order to look back at a prior year, trying to grasp contradictory events and phenomena, reported by the global media. And every time we hope that by grasping the past we will forestall the future events, meeting them absolutely prepared. To be honest, sometimes that does not happen. Our world is unfortunately becoming more unpredictable.

So another media year is behind. What did it bring to all of us, how did it console?

The year 2010 is a special year to Kazakhstan. Our country was very privileged to chair the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is the first time a CIS country, a Central-Asian country became the chair of such a very authoritative international organisation. This is of a profound historical and symbolic significance.

The chair of the OSCE is perceived in Kazakhstan as a big responsibility and a big job. The ability of our country to efficiently chair the OSCE was demonstrated in April during the events in the neighbouring Kyrgyzstan. In many ways thanks to efforts by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and activity by the Kazakh diplomats there was prevented a potential large-scale civil clash, whose effects on both Kyrgyzstan and the entire Central-Asian region could be catastrophic.

However, it is premature to calm down. The situation in Kyrgyzstan, whose sovereignty is currently being actually tested, is still complex, requiring continuous attention.

Kazakhstan as a chair of the OSCE is the subject of the first plenary session of the ninth Eurasian Media Forum.

We titled the second plenary session "Unknown Iran".

The probability of the nuclear terrorism is increasingly concerning the international community. The fact of such a concern was also explicitly evidenced by the Washington summit on nuclear security, the summit which was amazingly unanimous and efficient.

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he situation around Iran, around its nuclear programme, political developments in that key Eurasian country have been in the focus of attention of our forum for more than one year. Today we want to speak about distinctive features of coverage of the events in Iran by the international media. What do the media know about Iran and how adequately do they reflect the essence of processes happening in this country and the phenomenon of its development?

On the other hand, how open are the Iranian authorities for a dialogue with the media. Is it easy to be a foreign reporter in Iran?

I think this is a very important discussion.

I believe that such discussions, suggesting a free, proactive and respectful exchange of views, represent a process, great and extremely important in the modern multi-polar world, that we call the Eurasian dialogue of civilisations.

Quite recently - this February - the First Kazakh President's Fund held in Moscow an international conference on Architecture of International Security in the 21st Century: New Concepts of Eurasia.

An idea, very clear to us here in Kazakhstan, was behind speeches of many authoritative scientists and researchers – the potential of the Eurasian idea as a basic one for the dialogue of cultures, nations, and faiths and for putting in place a security system in Eurasia - has not been just relevant, but to a large extent has not been properly grasped.

Meanwhile the Eurasian idea as an ideology of practical attitude to life, as a basis for ideology and philosophy of a huge subcontinent and as an example of peaceful co-existence of nations definitely deserves more.

The first decade of a new century is about to finish. It was rich in numerous threats and risks. They include unprecedented diseases, endangering the humankind. Last year was not an exception since there was the year of a so-called “swine flue”, which commenced stormy, frightening, but then somehow invisibly ended, leaving numerous questions unanswered. I hope that the answers to those will be at least partly given at our Forum.

We decided to devote the second day of the Forum to relevant challenges the media are facing these days. Such issue as the regulation of the media and Internet under law is still pressing. Legal collisions related to complex relationships between the media and authorities are common. They represent a lasting sign of a liberal society. However, universal mechanisms, which would harmonise such relationships, have not been found yet.

Last time we spoke a lot about global economic crisis and the respective significant changes in the world, as well as about emerging new multi-polar international environment.

The media as a global industry were also hit very much by the crisis. We see that in many countries the advertising market is shrinking considerably, and circulations and audiences reducing.

And the economic crisis commenced together with the crisis of conventional models of existence of the media in the modern world.

The media are on the eve of innovative revolution. The Internet, and new technologies of collecting, handling and transmitting data are creating fundamentally new media. They are becoming more interactive and personalised. Accordingly, the nature of professional journalists will be changing. The influence of virtual publications is increasingly growing. And this phenomenon has not been described and not been examined in detail.

I am confident that we are on the even of extremity exciting processes.

Dear colleagues, friends, partners, attendees of the Forum, guests and journalists!

From the bottom of my heart I wish all of us unforgettable minutes, heated debates, and bright strikes of mind, whose power can overcome any dark!

This is not the first time I am saying that, but every time I am excited: I am announcing the ninth Eurasian Media Forum open!

Welcome to Almaty!