

Unrepeated precedent for the sake of peace

August of 1991 was full of epochal importance events. Soviet Union has collapsed and once considered permanent moral principles went back to history. The interest of the whole world was tied to one sixth part of the planet, where developed the processes that dramatically influenced development of humankind for many years to come.

On August 29th, President Nursultan Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan signed a historic Decree on closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear polygon - rightfully the most sad-known in the world nuclear testing complex. It can be confidently stated that precisely this decisive move of Kazakhstan's people and its leader begun the start of Soviet totalitarian system demolition and foundation of new Kazakhstan statehood.

Decision to close down Semipalatinsk polygon has predetermined later the only correct strategic choice in favor of non-nuclear status of our country. As years have past the correctness and wisdom of that decision become more and more obvious.

Considering the nervous international situation of that time, the readiness of leading states for decisive actions to prevent Soviet nuclear arsenal spreading, it is difficult even to imagine the possible catastrophic consequences of world security system balance disturbance that formed in early 90th, if Kazakhstan would start dangerous games around nuclear weapons located on its territory.

Clear understanding of deadlock future of that path, but most importantly – understanding that only non-nuclear policy serves interest of Kazakhstan people that experienced unrecoverable loses as a result of almost five hundred nuclear tests at Semipalatinsk polygon clearly determined our choice.

The decision of the Head of Kazakhstan state created the first precedent in the world history of voluntarily nuclear polygon closing. That was a decision of exceptional importance not only for the forming young country, but also, without exaggeration, for the whole international society. After shutting down the nuclear test range in Semipalatinsk the polygons in Nevada, Lob Nor, New Land became silent. Beginning of French nuclear tests at Mururova atoll on September 1995, on the other hand, created negative resonance among international community and even triggered adoption of UN's special resolution. Protests all around the world have forced Paris to stop tests earlier than it was planned.

The process of termination of nuclear tests, which was started by the principal step of Kazakhstan, was marked with the signature of Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty at 51st UN General Assembly session on September 24th, 1996. From that date it's open to join for all countries and shows international community determination to prohibit nuclear tests forever.

Our country has showed example of high responsibility to humankind and future generations by persuasively demonstrating with its own example, that real security asset is not a nuclear arsenal, but peaceful foreign policy, internal stability, sustainable economic and political development of state and patriotism of its citizens.

It is important to underline the significant role of Nevada-Semei international anti-

nuclear movement that was founded by a famous poet, diplomat and public figure Olzhas Suleymenov.

Creation of this unique public movement became possible due to a good will of the Head of our state Nursultan Nazarbaev. It was joined by more than two million Kazakhstan citizens that put their signatures under anti-nuclear appeal and participated in processions, protest marches, demonstrations of peace in Kazakhstan, Russia, America and Japan.

People of Kazakhstan that opted for non-nuclear world in 1989 stopped 11 of 18 planned explosions on Semipalatinsk polygon and stopped forever the inhuman experiments on Kazakh soil. Activities of the movement members and world community in the field of nuclear disarmament have established non-nuclear silence on the whole planet.

Although polygon is silent for about 17 years now, new generation have to live with consequences of 40-year nuclear tests. Today, health rehabilitation, polluted territory re-cultivation and financing of post-conversion projects are among the most vital problems of citizens of the region.

Necessity to solve polygon problems is recognized by the international community. We are appreciated to United Nations for the support of Semipalatinsk region. On 52nd and 53rd sessions of UN General Assembly resolutions were adopted that gave international status to the problem of Semipalatinsk region sonation.

Nevertheless, in our opinion, international assistance to the suffered region is implemented with inadequate speed. Kazakhstan has to solve inherited radioactive pollution mainly with its own means. In July 2006 the inter-agency committee was formed to coordinate international expert-consultation and grant assistance, as well as state agencies' activities regarding a complex problem solution of former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing polygon. In 2007 the government of Kazakhstan, instructed by President Nursultan Nazarbaev, started paying compensation to all citizens of the region. The government has developed the state program on complex solution of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear polygon problems that includes development of infrastructure, involvement of people in starting of small and medium enterprises and construction of new objects. The development program of Semipalatinsk is being implemented.