

Kazakhstan's rejection of nuclear weapons ownership

After shutting down of Semipalatinsk polygon the testing tunnels were sealed. However, the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world after USA, Russia and Ukraine was still intact, as well as objects of nuclear infrastructure and industry.

On May 23rd, 1992, Kazakhstan signed Lisbon protocol of USSR-USA Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, where it rejected nuclear weapons ownership and fixed its obligations in the sphere of non-proliferation. All nuclear weapons were taken out from the territory of our country, all works that potentially could lead to military use of nuclear energy were stopped.

After rejecting the nuclear weapons our country has received security guarantee from such nuclear states as USA, Russia, Great Britain, France and China. With that we have insured our territorial integrity and confirmed respect of our independence by the most influential states of the world.

In 1993 we signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty - a key instrument against spread of nuclear weapons fixing non-nuclear status of our country and our non-proliferation regime adherence.

Threat of international terrorism provided the fight against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) currently with a new dimension. This is a new global challenge for the international security. It is important to set up a reliable barrier to WMD or materials that might be used in its production from falling in to the hand of terrorists. This important goal can be solved only with the mutual effort of states in the sphere of non-proliferation and national systems of export control.

Our country has welcomed UN's Security Council adoption of special resolution related to this problem in April 2004 and considered it as a timely answer to the threat of weapons of mass destructions falling in to the hands of terrorist organizations. Kazakhstan, on its side, has activated the work on improvement of current national export control system and joining to multilateral non-proliferation regimes.

The membership of our country in the Nuclear Suppliers' Group in 2002 was a result of Kazakhstan's effort in this matter. In 2005 Kazakhstan joined the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation as well as "Krakow Initiative" which is aimed at revealing illegal WMD exchange and delivery mechanisms. By having on its territory Baikonur space launching site and by owning space technologies our country supports and obeys all norms and principles of Missile Technology Control Regime, which membership is important from political as well as practical side because of Kazakhstan's natural intention to be involved in international space programs.

In September 2006, Kazakhstan along with other Central Asian states signed the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. Creation of the new non-nuclear zone is a significant contribution to stability and security in Asia. This successful regional initiative equally refers to potential strength of the Non-Proliferation Treaty as well.

By continuing fight with nuclear threat Kazakhstan, meanwhile, accepts the right of

any state to develop nuclear technologies for peaceful use under strict international control. It is obvious today that atomic technologies as a source of energy have big future. It has perspectives in energy industry development and global energy security. Kazakhstan supports strict control system in the field of peaceful use of atom in order to bar decomposable materials use from military use.

In this matter we pay significant attention to cooperation with International atomic energy agency (IAEA) which maintains control of nuclear activities on the global level. According to Agreement for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non- Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Kazakhstan's all nuclear objects are under control of IAEA and all nuclear activities are implemented according to Agency rules and standards.

The accession of Kazakhstan to the Biological Weapons Convention last June was yet another step that demonstrated the consistency of our national policy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

This material used extracts from the article of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.-J. Tokayev dedicated to the 15th anniversary of Semipalatinsk polygon closing.