



UNDERSTANDING KAZAKHSTAN'S COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING THE GLOBAL NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME

At present, the nuclear non-proliferation regime includes five major international tools: the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) signed in 1968; the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguards system; nuclear export guidelines and associated national controls; nuclear testing prohibition such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which emerged in 1996 but is still to enter into force; and the regional agreements on nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ). The main purpose of the NPT, this landmark international treaty, and other elements of the non-proliferation regime is to limit the status of nuclear weapon states to China, France, USSR/Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Since gaining its independence, Kazakhstan joined all the main non-proliferation treaties – the NPT (1993) as a non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) and the CTBT (1996), signed the IAEA safeguards agreement (1994) and adopted its additional protocol (2004). The accession of Kazakhstan to these treaties has had an ultimate importance in a strengthened nuclear custodial system. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan inherited the fourth largest nuclear arsenal and housed on its territory a number of facilities and materials integral to the Soviet nuclear program. This legacy raised serious concerns of the international community, namely two: 1) the possibility of an increase in the number of nuclear weapon states (if Kazakhstan would have decided to join the “nuclear club”) that could have set a damaging precedent for the regime; and 2) the spread of nuclear materials, technology and know-how – accidentally, through theft, or due to poor security and safety. Therefore, when in 1993 the Parliament of Kazakhstan approved joining the NPT as a NNWS, and subsequently in 1996 all nuclear weapons deployed on Kazakhstan's territory were relocated to Russia, it has eased concerns of many external observers. The signing of the relevant agreements between Kazakhstan and the IAEA in July 1994 was also extremely important, placing all the above-mentioned facilities and materials under safeguards.

It has been suggested that Kazakhstan's decision to disarm was based on a series of factors, namely a combination of international pressure, a desire to integrate into the international community, and assured Western assistance with dismantling its nuclear weapons and facilities. In other words, the

retention of the Soviet nuclear legacy would have resulted in sanctions and isolation, whereas giving them up meant international recognition, respectability, investment and security. Perhaps more importantly, Kazakhstan took a path of disarmament because people of Kazakhstan had become allergic to nuclear weapons. This was based on the negative perception of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site that had caused immense harm to the Kazakhstani people. The USSR used an area of 18,000 square km there as its primary venue for nuclear testing. Between 1949, and the cessation of atomic testing in 1989, 456 explosions were conducted at the test site. The lives and health of approximately 1.6 million people fell victim to the Soviet nuclear program.

Kazakhstan's contribution to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime did not end in the early to mid-1990s when it joined the existing international treaties and agreements. In fact, Kazakhstan has continued, throughout the 2000s, to view non-proliferation and disarmament as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. In this regard, Kazakhstan has proposed and promoted several initiatives. One of the most significant efforts was the establishment of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ) with other regional states, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, in 2006. This is the first NWFZ located entirely in the northern hemisphere. The terms of the CANWFZ prohibit the production, testing or possession of any nuclear explosive devices, as well as receiving or providing any assistance in nuclear weaponization. Among other things, the CANWFZ serves as a powerful counterexample to the Iranian and North Korean nuclear brinkmanship. Another important initiative put forward by Kazakhstan was an offer to host the first IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank on its territory. Kazakhstani President Nazarbayev announced this idea during a joint press conference in Astana with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009. The IAEA Board of Governors approved this initiative, and on August 28, 2017, the fuel bank was opened at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant. The thinking behind this proposal is that countries could buy nuclear fuel from the IAEA bank if they cannot procure it at the international market, and therefore it would create incentives to refrain from building facilities capable of producing nuclear fuel, thereby minimizing the spread of sensitive nuclear technologies. In addition

to the fuel bank, Kazakhstan has focused its efforts on implementing one of the main CTBT's goals, i.e. to ensure no nuclear explosion goes undetected. Of particular importance is the presence of five monitoring stations in Kazakhstan certified and integrated into the CTBT International Monitoring System (IMS). The IMS correctly detected and assessed all nuclear tests carried out by North Korea in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2016 and 2017. These initiatives put forward by Kazakhstan illustrate that the country has played, and continues to play, a largely positive role in the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In addition to those factors that has already been mentioned, there is at least one more explanation why Kazakhstan is still active in global nuclear non-proliferation and has made pursuing it as a major foreign policy objective. In 2009, Kazakhstan became the world's largest producer and exporter of natural uranium and hence strived to build a niche for itself in the growing nuclear energy market. At present, the government of Kazakhstan not only plans to further increase uranium production and exports but also aims to produce value-added nuclear fuel rather than just uranium. A recent report by the IAEA shows that despite the Fukushima disaster in Japan in 2011 and safety concerns about nuclear energy use, there are 60 nuclear power reactors being built in 15 countries, while 30-35 new reactors are expected to be connected to the grid every year by 2025. This high rate was last seen in 1984 when 33 new reactors were connected to the grid. Moreover, within the next five years, a deficit of uranium ore is expected due to the increasing demand from such countries as China, India, South Korea and Russia. Hence, Kazakhstan has a vested interest in the further growth of worldwide demand for nuclear materials.

To sum up, the factors that drove Kazakhstan's approaches to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are linked to historical, economic and political considerations. The country seeks to position itself as a responsible and reliable supplier of nuclear products. Kazakhstan has an ambitious foreign policy and aims to become a key player in the global nuclear order. The country's non-proliferation record to date suggests that in the future, Kazakhstan is likely to continue its policy in support of nuclear non-proliferation.

Politics, Foreign Affairs and Security

- During his official visit to Baku, Finance Minister of Afghanistan Eklil Ahmad Hakimi met with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to discuss bilateral cooperation in the economic and investment spheres. The sides also exchanged views on prospects of further strengthening trade ties.
- During the 13th annual EU-Central Asia ministerial meeting, the foreign ministers of the five Central Asian nations and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini signed the Program on Mutual Cooperation for 2018-2019. The document outlines joint efforts to boost security, trade and economic cooperation, improving investment, transportation, energy, and tourism across the region.
- During his official visit to Dushanbe, Foreign Minister of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif met with President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to discuss a wide range of issues of mutual interest, including the development of cooperation in trade, investment, energy, transport, agriculture and industry. The sides underlined the importance of organizing a joint inter-governmental commission meeting on trade, economic and cultural cooperation.
- On the sidelines of the conference “Central Asia: One Past and a Common Future. Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity” held under the UN aegis in Samarkand, the foreign ministers of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan signed the treaty on the junction point of the state borders of the three states. This treaty will allow to finalize the international legalization of the state borders and create a solid basis for strengthening mutual respect, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of the three neighboring countries.
- According to the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, Army General Valery Gerasimov, over the past five years the country re-armed 16 air defense missile regiments with advanced S-400 surface-to-air missile systems. It was also noted that the share of advanced armaments in the Aerospace Force of Russia reached 72.8%.

Economy, Finance and Energy

- According to the OPEC report, Azerbaijan’s oil production will be stable

at 0.7-0.8 million barrels per day until 2040. It is expected that the oil output in Azerbaijan would reach 0.8 million barrels per day in 2017, decreasing to 0.7 million barrels per day in 2018 and 2019. It was also noted that in the absence of major new start-ups and as output at the large Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli fields matures Azerbaijan’s production of natural gas liquids is expected to decline, falling from 0.8 million barrels per day in 2016 to 0.7 million barrels per day in 2022.

- According to Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank Wencai Zhang, the bank and the Government of Uzbekistan signed an \$80 million loan agreement for the Pap-Namangan-Andijan railway electrification project. Under the project, 145.1 kilometers of the non-electrified track linking the major cities in the Fergana Valley with the Uzbek capital would be electrified.
- According to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Uzbekistan’s largest financial institution, the National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity, will be provided with a loan of up to \$100 million. The financing package will consist of a \$70 million credit line to support micro, small and medium-sized businesses across Uzbekistan and a \$30 million loan under the EBRD’s Trade Facilitation Program.
- On the sidelines of the 14th Forum of Interregional Cooperation of Russia and Kazakhstan held in Chelyabinsk, President of Russia Vladimir Putin reported that the volume of trade between Russia and Kazakhstan grew by one third to \$11 billion in eight months of 2017. It was also noted that the accumulated Russian investments in Kazakhstan exceeded \$10.8 billion and Kazakhstan’s investments in Russia reached \$3 billion.
- According to the EBRD report, the economy of Azerbaijan will grow by 2% in 2018, while for 2017 the growth is expected at 0.5%. It is noted that the growth of Azerbaijan’s economy next year will be supported by the launch of the natural gas production within the second stage of development of the Shah Deniz gas field.
- According to the State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan, 168,570 tons of cotton were harvested in the country, which is 3.3 times more than in 2016. The largest volume of cotton was harvested in Azerbaijan’s Saatli District. In total, cotton has been sown on an area of 136,410 hectares

this year, which is 2.7 times more than in 2016.

Society and Culture

- According to the Heydar Aliyev International Airport, in January-October 2017 the airport served 3.46 million passengers, which is 20% more as compared to the same period of 2016 and exceeds the total number for the entire last year. 85% of passengers were carried by international flights. Azerbaijan Airlines accounted for 50.6% of the total international traffic of the airport, while 49.4% of traffic was carried by foreign air companies. Currently, the Heydar Aliyev International Airport serves 30 airlines flying to 53 destinations.
- According to the state-owned Russian Rocket and Space Corporation Energia, the work to develop the conceptual design of the Soyuz-5 medium-class carrier rocket will be completed by the end of the year. It is noted that the new medium-class rocket will be used instead of the Angara-A5P carrier to launch the Federatsiya (Federation) spacecraft. The first launch of the Soyuz-5 rocket is scheduled for 2021. The first manned launch is scheduled for 2022.
- The Parliament of Kyrgyzstan passed the law on the denunciation of the agreement on receiving \$100 million of technical aid from Kazakhstan. 105 parliamentarians voted in favor of the law, with one voting against.
- According to the National Disaster Management Organization of Iran, a powerful 7.2-magnitude earthquake hit the area near the Iran-Iraq border. It is noted that the strongest tremors were felt in the Kermanshah and Ilam provinces in western Iran, where the heaviest damage and the majority of victims were recorded. At least 328 people were killed by the earthquake and 2,530 people were injured. The earthquake’s epicenter was 32 kilometers north from the Iranian city of Sarpol-e Zahab and 100 kilometers south-east from the Iraqi city of Sulaymaniyah, at a depth of 10 kilometers.
- According to the director of the Department of Drug Provision and Medical Equipment of Kyrgyzstan’s Ministry of Health, Gulmira Shakirova, the country is completely dependent on the imports of drugs. Only 3% of drugs are produced by local manufacturers, while 97% of drugs are imported.