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INTERNATIONAL LEGAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR ENERGY: THE ROLE AND POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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The modern Kazakh state is closely connected with the global nuclear policy, its main problems, challenges and threats. The starting point was 1947, when the USSR government chose the Kazakh steppe for the construction of a nuclear test site [1]. The Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, which ranks second in the world and fourth in the number of nuclear weapons, was created in 1948 for testing Soviet nuclear weapons.

From 1949 to 1989, at least 468 nuclear tests were carried out at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, in which at least 616 nuclear and thermonuclear devices were detonated, including: 125 atmospheric (26 ground, 91 air, 8 high-altitude); 343 nuclear test explosions underground. Dozens of hydro-nuclear and hydrodynamic tests were also carried out. The total power of the nuclear charges tested in the period from 1949 to 1963 at the Semipalatinsk test site was 2500 times higher than the power of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Radioactive clouds of 55 air and ground explosions and a gas fraction of 169 underground tests have left the landfill. It was these 224 explosions that caused radiation contamination of the entire eastern part of the territory of Kazakhstan. That is why Kazakhstan is fighting for a ban on nuclear weapons testing in the world and the creation of a nuclear-free world [2].

Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan played a key role in the Soviet nuclear program. The republic was the main source of uranium, there were enterprises of the military-industrial complex on its territory that ensure the production of nuclear material, there were military divisions serving intercontinental missiles, heavy bombers and nuclear warheads located on the territory of Kazakhstan.

In the late 1980s, events in the international arena and in the Soviet Union allowed Kazakhstan to raise the issue of the need for the existence of a test site. At the international level, public opinions on the prohibition of nuclear tests began to form. Mikhail Gorbachev's rise to power and the subsequent period of perestroika and glasnost began to change the political culture in the Soviet Union [1]. So in 1989, the famous Kazakh public figure Olzhas Suleimenov created the Nevada — Semipalatinsk movement, which united victims of nuclear tests around the world. And

K. Boztaev, ignoring the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Kazakh SSR, wrote a letter to Gorbachev personally, demanding the closure of the test site [3]. The last explosion at the landfill was carried out on October 19, 1989.

One of the first decisions of Nursultan Nazarbayev as the head of the Union Republic was the closure of the Semipalatinsk test site, and then the complete abandonment of the world's 4th arsenal of nuclear weapons - on August 29, 1991, the Semipalatinsk test site was closed by the government of the Kazakh SSR [4]. On the same day, the whole world celebrates the International Day of Action against Nuclear Tests, which was approved at the 64th session of the UN General Assembly in December 2009 [5].

However, the Soviet nuclear legacy was not limited to the landfill. The USSR left Kazakhstan thousands of nuclear warheads, more than a hundred intercontinental missiles and forty heavy bombers.

Thanks to the verified policy of the leadership of Kazakhstan and the support provided by the international community, primarily the United States, the issue of the Soviet nuclear legacy was resolved in the best way both for the republic itself and for international security and stability. Kazakhstan was able to get additional guarantees of its security. In 1994, the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom assumed corresponding obligations by signing the Budapest Memorandum. They promised to respect the sovereignty and borders of Kazakhstan, not to use or threaten by force the territorial integrity and political independence of Kazakhstan. A little later, China and France provided similar guarantees [1].

Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has become an active participant in all basic international treaties and institutions in the field of nuclear nonproliferation. In 1992, Kazakhstan, as an independent State, signed the Lisbon Protocol to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty-1, in which it fixed its obligations on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons.

On December 18, 1992, was adopted the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Social protection of citizens who suffered from nuclear tests at the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site» [6].

In 1993, Kazakhstan was one of the first in the CIS to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Since February 1994, Kazakhstan has become a member of the IAEA and transferred all its nuclear facilities under its control. Under the auspices of the IAEA, Kazakhstan has established on its territory the world's first low—enriched Uranium Bank - providing countries with the opportunity to develop peaceful nuclear energy without the need to deploy their own uranium enrichment programs [7].

Kazakhstan is currently an active supporter of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan, together with neighboring countries, has created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. On September 8, 2006, Kazakhstan, along with other Central Asian countries, signed the Treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Semipalatinsk. It came into force in 2009. The Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone treaty is a legally binding commitment by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan not to manufacture, acquire, test, or possess nuclear weapons.

In 2012, Kazakhstan launched the ATOM project (Cancellation of Tests is Our mission), an international educational and propaganda campaign aimed at mobilizing world public opinion against nuclear weapons tests. More than 300 thousand people from more than 100 countries have already signed an online petition of the ATOM Project, addressed to the leaders of the leading states demanding progress on the ratification of the CTBT [8].

Kazakhstan has made a significant contribution to the success of negotiations on the settlement of the Iranian nuclear program. From Iran's point of view, Kazakhstan is a good mediator in negotiations and a promising partner. Firstly, the Islamic religion prevails in Kazakhstan and is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), to which Iran aspires to become a member. Secondly, Kazakhstan is a major exporter of uranium. Iran, in turn, has limited reserves of natural uranium and needs imports. Kazakhstan not only has good relations with Russia and China,

develops cooperation with the West, but also maintains trusting relations with many countries of the Middle East [9].

On August 27, 2015, in Astana, Kazakhstan and the IAEA signed an agreement on the establishment of the IAEA Low-Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan. On August 29, 2017, the grand opening of the IAEA LEU Bank building on the basis of the Ulba Metallurgical Plant took place.

By providing its territory for hosting the Bank, Kazakhstan has made its next historical contribution to strengthening the regime of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and creating a completely new mechanism for guaranteed supplies of LEU to IAEA member States [8].

Kazakhstan will supply LEU to Iran, and the IAEA, in turn, will control these supplies. Thus, the IAEA division strengthens the role of Kazakhstan in the field of peaceful use of atomic energy and increases the prestige of the state in the international arena [9].

Kazakhstan is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Kazakhstan is the only state in the post-Soviet space that has signed the TPNW, and the only state in Central Asia from the former Soviet Union that has ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

Kazakhstan took an active part in the Conference on the elaboration of a legally binding document on the prohibition of nuclear weapons as another step towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

In 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted at a Conference in New York by a majority of votes (122 countries in favor, 1 country abstained, 1 against). The Treaty will enter into force after it is ratified by 50 States. Kazakhstan voted in support of the Treaty and is conducting appropriate domestic procedures for its early signing [8].

The election of Kazakhstan as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018 provided an additional opportunity for our country to actively participate in global nuclear policy. Nuclear safety has become one of the four priorities of Kazakhstan's policy during its membership in the UN Security Council [1].

Kazakhstan has ratified and implemented the following international agreements into the legislative system:

- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction;
- Convention on the Prohibition of Development, Production and Stockpiling bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and their destruction;
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty;
- Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials;
- Convention on Nuclear Safety;
- Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism;
- Nuclear Suppliers Group;
- Safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

But this does not mean that Kazakhstan is refusing nuclear energy, and only exporting uranium. On the contrary, there are public discussions about the construction of nuclear power plants and the choice of nuclear technology suppliers [10].

The closure of the Semipalatinsk test site, the abandonment of the nuclear arsenal and the subsequent initiatives of Nursultan Nazarbayev to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons gave a powerful impetus to the process of the global anti-nuclear movement.

Kazakhstan's position is that general and complete nuclear disarmament and the abolition of nuclear tests are important prerequisites for global security throughout the world.

In his speech at the UN General Assembly in 2015, the First President of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev stressed that a world without nuclear weapons should be the main goal of humanity in the XXI century. At the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, N.A. Nazarbayev proposed to develop a Plan for the Global Strategic Initiative – 2045 by the UN centenary. He called

on all UN member states to set a goal - to rid the world of nuclear weapons by the 100th anniversary of the UN in 2045.

President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev continues to promote Kazakhstan's anti-nuclear initiatives. K.K.Tokayev called on the world community to support the provisions of the Universal Declaration on Building a World Free of Nuclear Weapons, stressing that this document is a roadmap to a safer future [11].

The most important condition for ensuring the socio-economic development of the already independent Republic of the Republic of Kazakhstan, its geopolitical interests and energy security is the adequate development of the country's energy industry potential, in the structure of which, in modern conditions, accelerated large-scale development of the nuclear energy industry is of particular importance. In accordance with the message of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, work is actively underway to create the foundations of nuclear energy in the republic, develop the nuclear energy industry, and it is planned to build a nuclear power plant [12].

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