

## KAZAKHSTAN

# Thirteen years of cooperation with the CTBTO

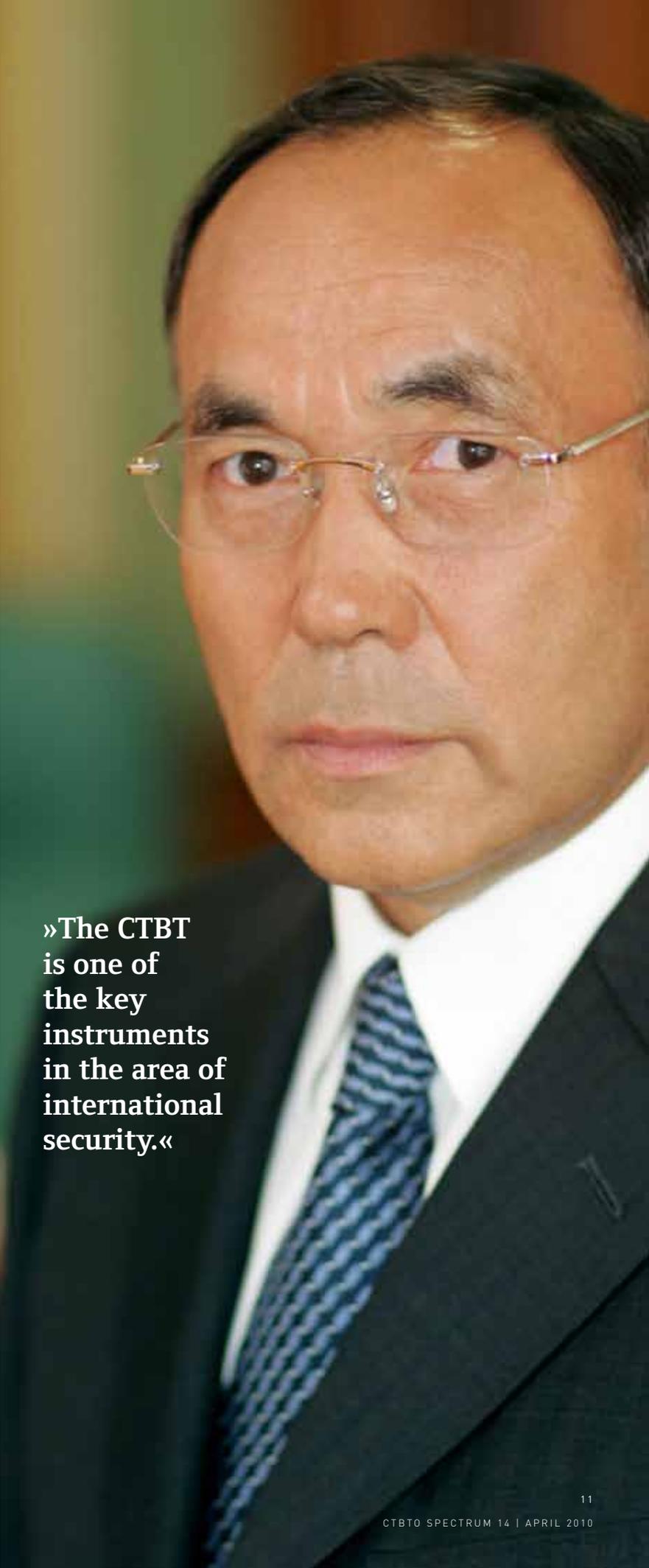
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It can definitely be said that during the 13 years of its existence, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has brought palpable benefits. This means, in particular, the closure of nuclear test sites. Kazakhstan signed the Treaty in 1996, only a few days after it had been opened for signature, and has remained one of its most steadfast supporters ever since. There is a background to Kazakhstan's firm devotion to CTBT, which explains why our country could not and cannot act in any other way.

### KAZAKHSTAN'S COMMITMENT TO A NUCLEAR-WEAPON- FREE WORLD

On 29 August 1991, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan issued a decree closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site, the second largest in the world. The Soviet Union carried out over 450 nuclear weapons tests at the site between 1949 and 1989, affecting over 1.5 million people.

This decision was followed by the voluntary renunciation of the fourth largest nuclear missile arsenal in the world, which Kazakhstan inherited from the Soviet Union. Since independence, Kazakhstan has also eliminated the infrastructure of the old test site and is actively and systematically



»The CTBT is one of the key instruments in the area of international security.«



Photo: Kirsten Haupt

**SEMIPALATINSK,  
KAZAKHSTAN**

*The former Soviet Union nuclear test site is pockmarked with craters, remnants of over 450 nuclear weapons tests that were carried out between 1949 and 1989.*

promoting the principles and ideals of nuclear disarmament and seeking to rid the world of the nuclear threat. Over the last year, Kazakhstan has further demonstrated its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. In March 2009, Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia made a crucial contribution to the implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the CTBT when the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia entered into force. The special feature of this zone is that it lies between two major nuclear powers. The zone could play a significant practical role in preventing the uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear materials and combating nuclear terrorism.

In April 2009, President Nazarbayev announced Kazakhstan's readiness to consider the possibility of the deployment on our territory of an international nuclear fuel bank, controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the establishment of which could be a decisive step towards strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

Most recently in December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 29 August the International Day against Nuclear Tests, which was an initiative of Kazakhstan. The date has a deep symbolic significance. It was on that day in 1949 that the first nuclear weapons test was carried out at the Semipalatinsk site and also on that day in 1991 that the site was closed down forever. Our hope is that on this day, activities will take place all over the world to remind the international community of the terrible consequences of nuclear testing and calling on it not to allow any resumption of nuclear tests in the future.

#### **POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR THE CTBT**

Since it opened for signature, the CTBT has enjoyed strong support, both politically and practically, from Kazakhstan, which considers it one of the key instruments in the area of

**»Together, we must persuade the nine countries that have either not signed at all or have not ratified the Treaty, and without whose participation it is not fully effective, to do so.«**

international security. We confirm the value of participation in the Treaty and are ready to provide assistance to other countries with those basic aspects of the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), from which we ourselves have gained invaluable experience.

Five monitoring stations, certified in accordance with all the CTBTO's technical requirements, have been established in the territory of Kazakhstan, and are operational under the International Monitoring System (IMS). Data are transmitted directly to the International Data Centre and to the newly established Kazakhstan National Data Centre. Moreover, in support of the Treaty and under an agreement with the United States, two seismic arrays have been set up in western and southern Kazakhstan. An additional eight stations have been restored and modernized and are now operational, including the unique large-aperture seismic array in Borovoe, central Kazakhstan.

The monitoring system set up in Kazakhstan in support of the CTBT made a significant contribution in identifying and assessing the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2006 and 2009, as well as for both regional and long-range natural and man-made events.

In cooperation with the CTBTO, four field experiments for on-site inspections have also been carried out in Kazakhstan: in 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2008. Kazakhstan made the territory of the Semipalatinsk nuclear

test site available for this purpose since it has retained numerous special features from its history of nuclear tests, which have contributed to the success of the exercises.

#### **LARGEST ON-SITE INSPECTION EXERCISE EVER CONDUCTED BY THE CTBTO**

Of particular importance was the large-scale Integrated Field Exercise 2008 - IFE08 - conducted at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in 2008. IFE08 was a huge logistical undertaking involving the transportation of 200 participants, including 47 inspectors and almost 50 tonnes of equipment, from Vienna to Kazakhstan. It produced unprecedented results. For the international community, it was a unique opportunity to try out, on a multilateral basis, most of the main elements of the inspection system within a short space of time, under real conditions. Kazakhstan also gained considerable experience, which will be used in conducting further field exercises and resolving problems relating to the assessment of the safety of the Semipalatinsk site.

The implementation of CTBTO projects provides an opportunity to use the infrastructure of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site to promote international peace and security. The Semipalatinsk site is becoming increasingly popular with observers from various countries since it offers them the opportunity to participate in or attend experiments and programmes carried out at the site. It is our hope that this cooperation with the CTBTO will continue through the

development of a methodology for on-site inspections and research into inspection equipment. The CTBTO can and must improve the effectiveness of its operations still further.

We have helped promote the Treaty through five international conferences entitled "Monitoring of nuclear tests and their consequences". These conferences, which have taken place in central Kazakhstan, have been instrumental in providing scientists and specialists from various countries and international organizations with the opportunity to further the interests of the CTBT by discussing, on an operational and systematic basis, current technical and scientific problems relating to the monitoring of nuclear tests.

### PROMOTING CTBT UNIVERSALITY

We, for our part, are also prepared to work intensively to promote the Treaty's entry into force as quickly as possible. A key issue for the viability of the IMS is to make the Treaty truly universal. Together, we must persuade the nine countries that have either not signed at all or have not ratified the Treaty, and without whose participation it is not fully effective, to do so. Against that background, the endeavours of

the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, to give new impetus to the process and submit the Treaty to the Senate for ratification provide a good example for others. We hope that this step will meet with success in the near future.

Kazakhstan is a strong proponent of initiatives designed to rid the world of nuclear weapons and in June 2009, President Nazarbayev spoke out in favour of drawing up a new universal treaty on general horizontal and vertical non-proliferation of nuclear weapons involving both nuclear and non-nuclear States.

We welcome the global summit on nuclear security to be held in Washington in April 2010. We hope that participating countries like Kazakhstan will have the opportunity to discuss many questions on the international agenda on non-proliferation and take practical steps towards our common goal – the creation of a world free from nuclear weapons.

This year, Kazakhstan is chairing the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In that capacity, too, we are determined to do everything in our power to ensure the practical implementation of the

commitments made by the OSCE on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, set out in the Ministerial Declaration on Non-Proliferation adopted in Athens in 2009.

As a country that has itself suffered the horrors of nuclear tests, closed the world's second biggest nuclear test site and voluntarily renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal, Kazakhstan has the full moral right to seek more decisive action on disarmament and a fundamental strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. And it is our belief that the most effective action would be the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

#### KANAT SAUDABAYEV

began his career as a diplomat in 1991, prior to which he had a long career in the fields of government and the arts. Between 1992 and 2007, he served as Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Turkey, the UK, and the USA, respectively. In May 2007, Mr. Saudabayev was appointed Secretary of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and in September 2009 also became the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.



SEISMIC STATION PS23:  
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