

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF INDEPENDENT KAZAKHSTAN

Mukhtar Tileuberdi

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Kazakhstan

This year marks the symbolic 30th anniversary of the development and implementation of Kazakhstan's independent foreign policy.

On July 2, 1992, the President of Kazakhstan signed Decrees approving the Regulations on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and on the Basic Duties and Rights of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kazakhstan.

Since then, Kazakhstan's foreign policy has demonstrated its success, ensuring stability and security along our borders and favourable conditions for domestic development.

Kazakhstan has established itself as a predictable, reasonable, and responsible actor in the global system of international relations. Thanks to its effective foreign policy, our country avoided being drawn into conflicts with other states. As a result, today we have good relations with all the members of the international community. Overall, Kazakhstan's diplomacy has made a significant contribution to strengthening our statehood.

Since independence, the main principle

of Kazakhstan's foreign policy has been multidimensionality and balance. Guided by this agenda, Kazakhstan has become a member of many reputable international organisations, regularly interacting with the UN and its various specialised agencies (UNDP, WHO, IMF, UNICEF, UNESCO, etc.) and strengthening cooperation with other influential multilateral structures such as the WTO, the World Bank, ADB, EBRD, IAEA, and others.

The legal formalisation of Kazakhstan's state border should be highlighted as one of the landmark achievements of our foreign policy. Globally, delimitation and demarcation of state borders is a very sensitive issue, which has been causing tension and military conflicts in many regions of the world for centuries. We managed to resolve the border issue with China, Russia, and our neighbours in Central Asia in a short period of time. This was done while taking into account our national interests. Similarly, we signed the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea, which secured its status as a zone of peace and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Furthermore, our active contribution to nuclear non-proliferation has become the trademark of Kazakhstan. During discussions with our officials, the leaders of various countries frequently express their respect and gratitude to Kazakhstan for voluntarily renouncing the fourth largest nuclear arsenal. Paying tribute to our efforts in this area, the United Nations declared August 29 – the day of the official closure of the Semipalatinsk test site – the International Day against Nuclear Tests. Last year we celebrated the 30th anniversary of this historic event. Kazakhstan continues to actively promote nuclear disarmament and remains committed to efforts towards the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Building a World Free of Nuclear Weapons by all UN Member States.

The signing of the Semipalatinsk Treaty on the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone by Kazakhstan and its neighbours in the region on September 8, 2006, which created the first such zone in the Northern hemisphere, was the manifestation of concrete steps to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. An important addition to it was the Protocol on Negative Security Assurances, which stipulates that countries possessing nuclear weapons undertake not to use them on the parties to the Treaty. Last year, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the States Parties to the Treaty made a joint statement on its 15th anniversary, in which they reaffirmed their unshakable commitment to its provisions and called on the United States to ratify the Protocol as soon as possible.

In addition to the efforts to promote the idea of a nuclear-free world, Kazakhstan enjoys the respect of the international

community for its meaningful contribution to strengthening global and regional security.

Kazakhstan initiated the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which today unites 27 member states and 8 observer states. The objectives of the CICA are reflected in the very name of the organisation. Motivated by the necessity to adapt to the new realities and needs of the international agenda, its activities expanded to also cover new areas, including epidemiological security, public health, information technology, digitalisation, among other issues.

Kazakhstan's election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2017-2018 can also be considered one of the most historic achievements of our diplomacy. The international community greatly appreciated the responsible and principled position of Kazakhstan in the framework of this mission.

Furthermore, in 2017 Kazakhstan successfully held the International Specialised Exhibition EXPO 2017 on Future Energy, which facilitated the development of "green" technologies.

Another area worth mentioning is Kazakhstan's own unique model of interethnic and interfaith harmony in our society, which we created over the years of independence. The important visit of Pope John Paul II to Kazakhstan in autumn of 2001 was a reflection of Kazakhstan's global role in this field. Held less than two weeks after the tragic terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, which sharply exacerbated discussions of an inevitable "clash of civilizations," Kazakhstan attracted widespread international attention as an example of how a country can actively

promote and ensure a culture of peace and effective interfaith dialogue both on a national and global scale.

Subsequently, our country introduced several popular initiatives in the field of inter-civilizational and intercultural dialogue. The most significant among them is the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has been held triennially in the capital of our country since 2003. The seventh Congress will take place on September 14-15 this year, with participation from Pope Francis, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Rus', the Chief Rabbis of Israel, Ashkenazi David Lau and Sephardic Yitzhak Yosef, and other established leaders of various religious communities around the world.

Strengthening multilateral diplomacy and expanding cooperation with international and regional organisations remains the priority of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. Here I would like to particularly emphasize Kazakhstan's successful hosting of the summits of the OSCE, OIC, SCO and other organisations in the capacity of the presiding country.

In the realm of regional economic integration processes, Kazakhstan is known to be a responsible member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). This union facilitates increased trade, economic and investment ties and the implementation of large-scale joint projects.

Due to Kazakhstan's reputation as an impartial and objective mediator, our country has over the years contributed to the resolution of several diplomatic and international crises, including hosting the Astana Process talks on the conflict in Syria, hosting negotiations in 2013 on the Iranian nuclear program, resolving the diplomatic rift between Russia

and Turkey in 2015-2016, and supporting the launch of the Minsk Process on Ukraine in 2014.

Our country has also become a full member of the World Trade Organisation and a party to the Paris Agreement on combating climate change. Furthermore, climate diplomacy is becoming a new and important area of our foreign policy. We have set ourselves an ambitious task to decarbonize our economy by 2060. To this end, we are developing a Low-Carbon Development Concept. We are consistently promoting renewable energy sources, which should make up 15% of the country's energy mix by 2030. We are also actively involved in the global processes of developing a green economy.

Over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a new and unexpected global challenge exposing humanity's vulnerability to biological threats. In this regard, at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proposed to establish an International Agency for Biological Safety aimed at preventing biological threats and exchanging data on dangerous diseases. The implementation of this important initiative is currently one of the priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Priority tasks of the Foreign Ministry also include systematic attraction of foreign direct investment for our country's economy, transfer of advanced technologies and, most importantly, creation of new jobs for our citizens. Our diplomats have contributed to the attraction of about 380 billion US dollars of direct investment to Kazakhstan's economy over the past years. Undoubtedly, the Foreign Ministry, in close cooperation

with other government institutions and national business communities, will continue to improve the strategy and practice of operating in this pivotal area for the country.

Guided by the idea and values of the New Kazakhstan, the Foreign Ministry prioritises human dimension and considers the protection of the rights and interests of our citizens and national businesses abroad one of its key objectives. Kazakhstan's diplomacy is becoming increasingly applied and focused on the specific needs of society and every citizen.

Unfortunately, there is currently an increased degree of volatility and unpredictability in the international arena. New challenges and threats have emerged, including the crisis of confidence and increase in confrontation between various international actors, the erosion of fundamental principles of international law, aggravation of the threat of terrorism, an arms race, and exacerbating

hybrid, cyber, trade and currency wars. These new challenges require timely adaptation and adjustment of Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

In this regard, on March 6, 2020, the Decree of the Head of State approved the 2020-2030 Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The key provisions of the updated document are predicated on the principles of a multi-vector policy, sustainability, pragmatism, and protection of national interests. From the first days in the office, President Tokayev clearly underlined continuity in the course of our foreign policy. Our country continues to maintain its multi-vector diplomacy, which has proven its effectiveness, ensuring a positive trend in the engagement of the country with all its international partners. Therefore, our foreign policy priorities remain unchanged.

Kazakhstan has been, is, and will be a reliable partner of the international community.