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News Release

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Kazakhstan Supports Russia-US Initiative Against Nuclear Terrorism

Kazakhstan has supported “The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism” put forward by Russia and the United States on July 15 and pledged a firm commitment to collective efforts in fighting terrorism.

In a July 15 statement, Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the country welcomes the initiative to fight nuclear terrorism unveiled by presidents Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush in St. Petersburg, Russia, ahead of the G8 summit last weekend.

“Kazakhstan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and believes that terrorist acts with nuclear weapons are among the most acute and dangerous challenges to international security faced by the world community. The threat of such acts today is as real as ever,” the statement read.

“Kazakhstan, a country which voluntarily renounced its nuclear arsenal views this initiative as a new effective step in the fight against international terrorism. Our support of the Russia-US initiative confirms Kazakhstan’s firm commitment to strengthening the international security and to collective efforts of the world community in fighting terrorism,” the Foreign Ministry stated.

The statement also said: “The initiative of the Russian Federation and the United States of America will become an important element in strengthening the existing regimes of nonproliferation and is aimed at greater interaction of the world community in preventing components of nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists,” the Foreign Ministry said. “Of particular importance are efforts to ensure safe control over the use, storage and transfer of nuclear materials, physical protection of nuclear facilities, the development of effective means to reduce the danger of consequences of possible terrorist nuclear attacks, the

improvement of legal basis for international cooperation and domestic system of prevention of any types of crimes related to movement of nuclear materials.”

Kazakhstan’s Nuclear Disarmament, a Story of Commitment

Since its independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has consistently demonstrated its commitment to and leadership in nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. In the 1990s, Kazakhstan rid itself of the world’s fourth largest nuclear arsenal and erased the infrastructure of the former Soviet Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, all done with the assistance of the United States under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program.

In the current age under the threat of catastrophic terrorism, Kazakhstan’s contribution continues with new importance and urgency as the country implements new important projects in partnership with the international community.

One such major project was completed early in 2006 by Kazakhstan’s national atomic company, KazAtomProm, and Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), a Washington based NGO concerned with nuclear nonproliferation and led by Ted Turner and former Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA). Together, the two organizations blended down in Kazakhstan 2,900 kilograms (approx. 6,400 pounds) of weapons usable highly enriched uranium, enough to produce two dozen atomic bombs if it had fallen in the wrong hands, to become fuel for peaceful use only. Marking the project’s success, Senator Sam Nunn, Co-chairman of Nuclear Threat Initiative, said, “Today, the most potentially devastating threat is a terrorist attack with nuclear weapons. The most effective and least expensive way to prevent nuclear terrorism is to keep nuclear materials out of the hands of terrorists. The project we are celebrating today advances those aims and sets an example for the direction of the world.” Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, shared that view noting, “NTI–Kazakhstan effort could well serve as a model for future projects in other countries.”

Earlier, Kazakhstan also pledged its support for the Proliferation Security Initiative, a U.S. initiative to interdict illicit shipments of weapons of mass destruction and their components which has served as a precursor to the current initiative. As reported by The New York Times, within months US officials expect China, Japan, the major European powers, Kazakhstan and Australia to form the initial group of nations under the new initiative.

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