



# Kazakhstan News Bulletin

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## *In this issue:*

**Kazakhstan Supports Diplomatic Solution to Iranian Nuclear Issue  
Calls for Nuclear Restraint from Nevada Find Echo in Blix Report  
Kazakh History of Equality May Benefit OSCE, Says Nazarbayev Vowing to Continue Bid for Group's Chairmanship  
Ten Asian Leaders Confirm Plans for CICA Summit in Almaty, South Korea to Join Group  
Justice Ministry's Innovations Reflect New Parliamentary Influence**

## *Say it in Kazakh:*

*Did you watch television news last night? --- Siz kesche keschte teledidardan zhanalyktar karadyngyz ba?*

*Have you been following the World Cup? --- Alem kubogy ushin dzharysty qarap zhursiz be?*

*Who do you think will win? --- Siz kalai oilaisiz, kim zhenedi?*

## **Kazakhstan Supports Diplomatic Solution to Iranian Nuclear Issue**

Kazakhstan supports a diplomatic resolution of tensions over Iran's nuclear program, according to a letter from President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delivered personally by Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kassymzhomart Tokaev during a visit to Tehran on June 6.

President Nazarbayev, in his letter, wrote that the tensions directly affect national security and strategic interests of both regional countries and the world community. The Kazakh President reconfirmed his nation's commitment, as a country which voluntarily renounced nuclear weapons, to principles of nonproliferation and impermissibility of using nuclear energy for military purposes. The letter also confirmed "the right of signatories to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to conduct scientific and research activities in the nuclear area and to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes."

President Nazarbayev also expressed Kazakhstan's commitment to developing bilateral relations in the spirit of friendship and good neighborliness with Iran. Kazakhstan and Iran are regional neighbors and littoral states of the Caspian Sea.

At the meeting in Tehran, Minister Tokaev told President Ahmadinejad Kazakhstan supports diplomatic efforts of interested parties to resolve the standoff over Iran's nuclear program. He confirmed Iran has a sovereign right to develop its own atomic energy for peaceful purposes provided it fully observes the regimes of transparency and nonproliferation, and closely cooperates with the United Nations and other international bodies.

According to Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry, President Ahmadinejad told Minister Tokaev Iran has no intentions of producing nuclear weapons and its only goal is conducting nuclear research in atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

**At right: The St. Ascension Cathedral in Almaty, built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, is a major tourist attraction and a symbol of the religious tolerance and freedom enjoyed by all in Muslim majority Kazakhstan.**

See story on page 2



## **Calls for Nuclear Restraint from Nevada Find Echo in Blix Report**

The calls for nuclear restraint and disarmament from a recent international symposium on the legacy of nuclear weapons testing in Nevada and Kazakhstan (see *Kazakhstan's Echo*, June 12) found validation and support in a report by an independent Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, *Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World from Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Weapons*, just released in New York.

Hans Blix, former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency and chief UN weapons inspector in Iraq, led the commission and presented the report to the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan on June 1.

Despite the end of the Cold War, stocks of nuclear weapons in the world remain “extraordinarily and alarmingly high,” according to the report, including 27,000 nuclear weapons, of which around 12,000 are still actively deployed. Acknowledging that weapons of mass destruction “cannot be uninvented,” the 231-page report stresses they can be outlawed, as biological and chemical weapons already have been, and their use should be made unthinkable.

The commission offered 60 recommendations on achieving the goal of a world free from the nuclear threat. The recommendations include reinvigorating disarmament efforts and convening a global summit on nuclear weapons; providing guarantees of security to countries who commit themselves to nonproliferation; and spreading nuclear weapons free zones as well as negotiating a global treaty to stop the production of fissile material for weapons use. The commission said the most important thing countries can do is to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which has been open for signature in 1996.

Presenting the report, Blix stressed, “The first line of defense against the spread of nuclear weapons is indeed to make states feel that they don’t need them.”

This is the argument Kazakh officials have been increasingly voicing internationally in recent years. Kazakhstan, as a country which has gained, not lost, from its renunciation nuclear weapons have made use of that decision by developing peaceful relations with other countries, and this represents the best example that security, development, and prosperity are best guaranteed by diplomacy not military force.

What’s more, Kazakhstan has also favored many of the same proposals the Blix commission offered such as ratifying the CTBT and negotiating a treaty to stop production of fissile material for weapons. Kazakhstan has also been involved in negotiations over for a nuclear weapons free zone in Central Asia.

## **Kazakh History of Equality May Benefit OSCE, Says Nazarbayev Vowing to Continue Bid for Group’s Chairmanship**

President Nursultan Nazarbayev, explaining that Kazakhstan’s experience of preserving interethnic and inter-religious harmony may well serve the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said this success is a major reason for his country’s bid to chair the organization in 2009.

“Kazakhstan has developed an optimal system for ensuring interethnic harmony. I believe our experience can be of interest to the entire OSCE community,” President Nazarbayev said, addressing a high level OSCE conference, *Intercultural, Inter-religious and Interethnic Understanding*, in Almaty on June 12. “This is precisely why we put forward our bid to chair the OSCE in 2009. This is a goal towards which we are consistently and purposefully moving, and we are hoping for your support.”

The President was speaking to more than 300 delegates from 55 OSCE member states, international organizations, and foreign and domestic NGOs taking part in the conference.

The President listed major goals Kazakhstan will seek to achieve as chairman of the OSCE. These include strengthening regional long term security in Central Asia; using Kazakhstan’s potential as a “bridge” between East and West; developing an optimal political system, ensuring the effective

functioning of the state and protection of rights and freedoms; and strengthening the OSCE which suffers through difficult times and making it relevant to interests of all member countries.

“We all need to work together to strengthen the potential of the OSCE and make it fully responsible to the interests of all member states,” the President said.

“Given all this, I believe realizing our initiative to chair the OSCE meets the highest priorities of domestic and foreign policies of our country as well as the principles promoted by the organization itself,” President Nazarbayev concluded.

## **Ten Asian Leaders Confirm Plans for CICA Summit in Almaty, South Korea to Join Group**

Leaders of ten countries confirmed they will participate in the second summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) which will take place in Almaty on June 17.

Today, 17 Asian countries participate in the fledgling security dialog organization which is seeking to become the “OSCE” of Asia.

Presidents of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the prime minister of Thailand will lead their countries’ delegations. Israel, Mongolia and Turkey will be represented by deputy prime ministers, while India will send a special representative of its prime minister.

The summit is expected to welcome the Republic of Korea as a full member. Kazakhstan’s Foreign Ministry spokesman noted Ukraine, today an observer at the group, will be represented by its president. Also in attendance will be a UN deputy secretary general and the secretary general of the League of Arab States.

The inaugural summit of CICA, held in June 2002, was a historic occasion bringing together leaders of major Asian countries with long histories of conflict. The leaders pledged to talk to each other and resolve their problems through diplomatic means. The upcoming summit is expected to result in a declaration of CICA’s vision of key challenges in the security area, cooperation in Asia and the world, reform of the UN, nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ways to peacefully resolve regional conflicts.

## **Justice Ministry’s Innovations Reflect New Parliamentary Influence**

Reflecting the growing power of Parliament and growing sophistication of Kazakhstan’s political processes, the country’s Justice Ministry has recommended all ministries and agencies with legislative initiative rights run early drafts of their bills by the Majilis before the Government reviews, approves and introduces them to the Parliament as formal proposals.

Deputy Justice Minister Dulat Kustavletov announced the innovation at a round table discussion on promoting public expertise which took place in Astana on June 12.

“By discussing such bills with deputies and representatives of the public in the presence of the news media, we could resolve many issues while deliberating such bills within the Government, and this would help deputies and working groups when the formal bills are reviewed,” Kustavletov said.

Until recently, the Government had deliberated a bill internally before introducing it into the Parliament for consideration there, and only recently a few bills were sent to the Majilis in their earlier drafts which helped moved them forward faster.

In the future, Kustavletov said, representatives of the public may even be brought into deliberation of new bills by interagency working groups even at the concept stage. If introduced, such a system will significantly increase transparency of legislative process.

## **Things to Watch:**

- President Nursultan Nazarbayev will participate in the upcoming summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Shanghai on June 14 and 15. Members of the organization include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- The Central Asian Geographical Society has launched a project to sail the first Kazakh ship around the world. The yacht is expected to set sail from Aktau on the Caspian seashore in August 2007 and will have to cross borders of 32 countries. This will be the first round the world trip starting in a landlocked country.
- The launch of the first Kazakh satellite, *KazSat*, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in southern Kazakhstan on a Russian built launch vehicle is scheduled for June 18.

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