



**THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
MISSIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO**

Address: Av. Franklin Roosevelt, 99, 1050
Brussels, Belgium

t. 322-6728844, f.322-6723946,
e-mail: press@uzbekistan.be

**THE INITIATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT OF UZBEKISTAN ISLAM
KARIMOV ON ESTABLISHING A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN
CENTRAL ASIA IMPLEMENTED**

On May 6, 2014 a truly historical event took place at the United Nations headquarters in New York – for the first time since the United Nations was established the representatives of the «five» nuclear states – the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China and Russia have unanimously and simultaneously signed the most important international document – the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. This step served as a completion of full realization of the initiative put forward by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov from the rostrum of the UN General Assembly in 1993 and makes enormous contribution to consolidating regional security and reinforcing the global regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Since the early years of independence Uzbekistan chose the path of peaceful and creative development based on the values of humanism and peace. Proceeding from the deep comprehension of community of interests and destinies of all countries and peoples of Central Asia, as well as indivisibility of regional and global security, the Republic of Uzbekistan renders all of its international efforts to ensuring peaceful and sustainable development of the region.

Today in the conditions when the confrontations and armed conflicts are on the rise, the problems of terrorism, extremism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other threats disrespecting national borders worsen in various parts of the world, including in Central Asia, the life itself does confirm the reasonableness and foresight of Uzbekistan's consistent policy. Preserving and consolidating peace and stability in Central Asia, turning the region into security and sustainable development zone have been enshrined as priority tasks in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

It should be admitted that many initiatives put forward by President of Uzbekistan enjoy a deserving support of the international community. From among such initiatives – the idea of creating the International Center for combating terrorism

proposed by President Islam Karimov at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, which was implemented as establishment of the UN Security Council's Counter-terrorism committee in September 2001. On the proposal of President Islam Karimov enunciated during the visit of the UN Secretary-General to Uzbekistan in October 2002, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center for Combating the Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors (CARICC) was established.

The initiatives of the President of Uzbekistan aimed at putting an end to the many-year-long bloody war in Afghanistan, which brought enormous calamities to the Afghan people and became a source of grave threats for the entire region, drew a special attention of the international community. Yet in 1993 speaking at the 48th Session of the UN General Assembly President Islam Karimov has literally «tolled the tocsin» calling upon the international community to actively assist the resolution of Afghanistan's problem. In 1995 at the 50th Session of the UN General Assembly Uzbekistan articulated the idea to introduce arms embargo to Afghanistan and proposed the model of creating the coalition government to achieve the national reconciliation in this country. In 1997 on the initiative of the Uzbekistan's Leadership the «6+2» Contact Group began operating under auspices of the United Nations. Thanks to it, on July 21, 1999 the «Tashkent Declaration on Fundamental Principles of Peaceful Resolution of the Conflict in Afghanistan» was inked. In 2001 President of Uzbekistan addressed the UN Secretary-General with a proposal to include to the Security Council agenda the issue on Afghanistan's demilitarization. At the NATO/EAPC Summit in 2008 in Bucharest President Islam Karimov proposed to renew the activity of the Contact Group in a new format «6+3» aiming to jointly seek the political settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan, lowering the level of conflict potential in this country and rendering it a coordinated economic assistance.

In the process of further development of events around Afghanistan it were those states brought together in this format that have found themselves to be more involved in international efforts in terms of addressing the ways to resolve the Afghan crisis.

Uzbekistan's proposals on maintaining environmental and socio-economic sustainability as a core of secure development of the region are gaining a broad support in the world. On the initiative of President Islam Karimov the heads of five Central Asian states founded in 1993 the International Fund to Save Aral Sea to bring together the efforts to overcome the consequences of one of the most devastating and large-scale ecological catastrophes of modern time – the Aral crisis.

Undoubtedly, the idea of establishing a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia (CANWFZ) put forward by President Islam Karimov on September 28, 1993 at the 48th Session of the UN General Assembly occupies a special place among large international initiatives of Uzbekistan, which gained a broad recognition and support in the world. Speaking from the UN rostrum, President of Uzbekistan said: *«In today's modern world the security of one country cannot be ensured at the expense of another and the regional security cannot be viewed apart from the problems of global security. Proceeding from this, Uzbekistan is for full liquidation of a nuclear weapon, for effective actions and term-less prolongation of Nuclear Weapon Non-*

Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Uzbekistan is a staunch supporter of announcing the Central Asian region a nuclear-free zone».

The appeal of Uzbekistan's President on establishing a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia completely corresponded to vital interests of the states in the region along the path of nuclear-free development and actively counteracting the threats of uncontrolled proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The initiative took into account the real situation in Central Asia, complex geopolitical conditions in the region and around it, as well as the need for international legal assurances to security of the Central Asian states which don't possess such a weapon. It were those factors, according to international experts, that paved way for successful implementation of Uzbekistan's idea supported by all countries of Central Asia.

The CANWFZ initiative corresponds to the United Nations Charter with its provisions that have made disarmament a universally recognized norm of international law, as well as the OSCE Helsinki Final Act in which the principles of peaceful coexistence of states and disarmament have been enshrined. The creation of nuclear-free zones as an inalienable part of the global non-proliferation regime stands as one of the fundamental provisions of the NPT. Uzbekistan was the first among the Central Asian countries to have joined this international treaty in May 1992 by showing example to other states in the region.

The essence of the nuclear-free zones is that the initiative in terms of the establishment must come out from the states of respective region. The international treaty with a binding force must act as an instrument of creation of such zones. The parties to the treaty undertake obligations in terms of total absence of a nuclear weapon in the area of application of treaty. The obligatory element is creation of verification and control system of nuclear activity in the zone being established. It is also necessary so that the nuclear-free zone must be recognized by the United Nations General Assembly. Another important element are the obligations of the five nuclear states (the U.S., the UK, France, China and Russia) – «respect and observe the nuclear-free zone status, not to use or threaten to use a nuclear weapon» against any party to the treaty.

The process of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones, as a rule, requires continuous, intensive and targeted work of all parties to the treaty and supporting organizations and countries – which may take many years. However, the results of such efforts, as respected international organizations and experts believe, justify themselves manifold since they bring humanity closer to achieving the goal of preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and in the final outcome, ensuring the nuclear security round the world.

Up to date, the nuclear-free zones have been established in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967), in South Pacific (Treaty of Rarotonga of 1985), in Southeast Asia (Treaty of Bangkok of 1995) and in Africa (Treaty of Pelindaba of 1996). Other attempts to declare nuclear-weapon-free zones have failed. In particular, the Joint Declaration on announcing the Korean Peninsula a nuclear-free zone of 1992 seized to function. It has already been 40 years that the decisions are being adopted with no end result at the United Nations on the need to turn Middle East into a weapon-of-mass-destruction-free zone.

The implementation of the CANWFZ idea required long and labor-intensive work both on the part of the Central Asian states and the «nuclear five» countries, as well as the respective UN structures. On February 28, 1997 the heads of the five Central Asian states signed the Almaty Declaration in Kazakhstan by unanimously supporting the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This document created the atmosphere of political trust in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. Since then the CANWFZ turned into a comprehensive regional initiative expressing a collective will of all five countries of the region and the local peoples.

During the International conference «Central Asia is a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone» which took place on September 15-17, 1997 in Tashkent the CANWFZ initiative gained further conceptual development, as well as took a political and legal shape. Speaking at the Conference, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov set forth his vision of the essence and ways of creating the CANWFZ.

- The nuclear security must be considered as an integral part of a comprehensive security and problem of survival. The balance of obligations of non-nuclear and nuclear states stands as a basis for normal functioning of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The reliability of the CANWFZ can be ensured only in case if all nuclear power recognize it.

- Such a mechanism must be created which might put into action all functional capabilities of a zone to prevent the proliferation threat. With such a goal the parties to the treaty must rely on the international experience which has elaborated several fundamental principles (full freedom of a nuclear-weapon free zone; the opportunity to take on obligations on its functioning not only by parties to the treaty, but also all interested parties; effective control system over obligations; the control based on IAEA and UN Security Council assurances).

- The creation and functioning of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia is an alienable part of the global system of nuclear security defined by the NPT provisions. At the same time, there must be the efforts aimed at preventing proliferation of other types of weapons of mass destruction.

- The issues of creating a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia must be closely linked with addressing the consequences of nuclear tests, tackling the social and ecological problems, as well as ensuring a decent life for people.

- The idea of establishing the CANWFZ stands as a logical continuation of the efforts taken in terms of ensuring the regional security.

The work of the states of the region on creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia has been endorsed by the international community and supported by the United Nations and the IAEA, as well as other respected international organizations, including the OSCE and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation. On December 9, 1997 the UN General Assembly adopted the Resolution 52/38S «Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia», having demonstrated a firm international endorsement of determination of the Central Asian states to achieve the set goal. It should be noted that later in its resolutions the General Assembly has invariably and consistently reiterated its support towards the activity of the countries of the region on establishing the CANWFZ.

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the IAEA experts actively assisted in elaborating the draft of the Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. A number of working meetings of the Regional expert group of the Central Asian countries on drafting the CANWFZ Treaty were held in Geneva, Bishkek, Tashkent, Sapporo and Samarkand. On September 27, 2002 the first draft of the Treaty was endorsed in Samarkand which was passed to the «nuclear five» states for consideration.

It should be noted that many countries, including the nuclear powers, have had certain doubts in terms of the possibility of implementing the initiative on establishing the CANWFZ. Moreover, during drafting the Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone the «nuclear five» states put forward their remarks and demands on certain provisions of this document based on their own geopolitical interests.

Along with this, over the course of intensive consultative meetings and talks with nuclear powers on the wording of the draft of the Treaty the Central Asian states have displayed determination in achieving the set goals, capability to overcome differences and seek compromises in line with their national interests, as much as taking into account the stances of larger states.

At the Seventh meeting of the Regional expert group on February 7-9, 2005 in Tashkent parties to the treaty endorsed their common positions on the text of the Treaty taking into account the proposals and comments of nuclear powers, the IAEA and United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. The text of the Tashkent Declaration was disseminated as an official document of the Security Council and the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Thanks to these efforts, in the final outcome the Treaty on the CANWFZ was signed by the states of the region on September 8, 2006 in Semipalatinsk. It is symbolical that signing of this document took place on the territory of Kazakhstan which has severely suffered from continuous nuclear tests at the Semipalatinsk testing area where 459 nuclear tests were made as a part of policy to ensure military parity in the Cold War years which, on its essence, was carried out at the expense of lives and health of millions of residents of Kazakhstan.

The signing of historical Treaty on the CANWFZ was supported by the UN General Assembly which on December 6, 2006 adopted a special resolution 61/68 «Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia» introduced by Uzbekistan on behalf of the states of the region. The General Assembly welcomed the Treaty on the CANWFZ as an important step in consolidating the regional and international peace and security.

Uzbekistan was the first among the countries in the region to ratify the Treaty on the CANWFZ on May 10, 2007. The Treaty entered into force on March 21, 2009 after its ratification by all other countries of the region.

The CANWFZ Treaty took final international legal shape following the signing by the five nuclear powers of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on May 6, 2014 at the United Nations headquarters in New York during the Third Session of the NPT Preparatory Committee and Review Conference. In his special statement on this issue the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China and the Russian

Federation undertook legal obligations to respect and observe the status of a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia, and not to use or threaten to use a nuclear weapon against any party to the treaty. The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Angela Kane put it as follows: «Signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia marks an important milestone for reinforcing both regional security in Central Asia and the global nuclear non-proliferation regime». Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for International Security and Non-Proliferation T. Countryman said that signing by the United States of Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia is «an acknowledgment of sincere and praiseworthy efforts by the states of Central Asia on keeping their region free of a nuclear weapon». The representatives of other nuclear powers have also highly praised the establishment of the CANWFZ as a cornerstone of international non-proliferation regime and ensuring peace and security in the region.

The Treaty is open-ended and consists of 18 articles, Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia and Rules of Procedure on holding consultative meetings to consider the issues related to implementation of its provisions.

In accordance with the Treaty on the CANWFZ, the Central Asian states took on the following main obligations: not to conduct research on, develop, manufacture, stockpile or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device by any means anywhere; not to allow in its territory the production, acquisition, stationing, storage or use, of any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device with no means whom they are belonged to.

The nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia has a number of unique features that distinguish it among all other nuclear-free zones in the world:

First, the CANWFZ is the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone located in the northern hemisphere, on the entirely land-locked territory that has no access to seas. The Central Asian zone directly borders on the two nuclear powers – Russia and China. Besides, the two big de-facto nuclear-weapon countries, India and Pakistan are situated on the neighboring territory.

Second, it is the first nuclear-weapon-free zone established in the region, where nuclear weapons earlier existed and its tests were made – the consequences of which the people in Central Asia still feel up to date. In this regard, the issues related to ensuring the ecological and radiation security, taking measures to rehabilitate environment severely suffered from the activity of the Soviet nuclear complex facilities in the past have been prioritized in the CANWFZ Treaty. The Treaty bans tests of a nuclear weapon and other nuclear explosives, as well as burial of radioactive wastes of other states on the territory of the countries of the region.

Third, the CANWFZ Treaty is the first document on nuclear-free zones that obligates all parties to it to conclude with the IAEA an Additional protocol not later than 18 months after the entry into force of the Treaty and to fully implement obligations under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Meanwhile, the CANWFZ Treaty became the first agreement among similar documents concluded after establishment of the aforementioned Protocol of the IAEA and the signing of the CTBT, which was ratified by all Central Asian states.

Fourth, a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia established a new element of regional security that provides consolidating the war on terror and preventing nuclear materials from falling into hands of non-state actors, first of all, the terrorists. In fact, realization of Uzbekistan's initiative on establishing the CANWFZ has turned into a real effort on implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004), which has obligated governments to prevent acquisition, proliferation and using nuclear, chemical and biologic weapons and their means of delivery to terrorists.

However, the main feature of the CANWFZ is the fact that it is a comprehensive and all-inclusive. It includes such key aspects of international security as non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and components of their production, strengthening the NPT regime, nuclear disarmament and demilitarization, cooperation in environmental rehabilitation of territories, war on terror, enhancing regional and international peace and security.

It is extremely important to note that the Treaty on the CANWFZ became the first multilateral agreement in the area of security which covers all five Central Asian states. In the process of establishing the nuclear-free zone Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan demonstrated a strong political will, constructiveness, the ability to unite their efforts to provide security and stability in the region, create necessary conditions for the development and prosperity of their people.

It is for this particular reason that realization of the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia is highly acclaimed and recognized as a powerful factor directed to maintain peace, regional stability and fruitful cooperation among the countries of the region and major powers, as a collective contribution to progressive development of the world community and, certainly, as the most important element to strengthen international security and nuclear disarmament.

Information Agency «Jahon»