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Statement
by H.E. Mr. Nursultan A. Nazarbayev
President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
during the general debate
at the Sixty-second Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

New York
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**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I want to invite us all to make not a very long trip down the memory lane and recall that in 1946, the United Nations General Assembly, convened for the very first time, by its very first decision established a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy.

As you can see, already at that point in history, an extraordinary power unleashed by that scientific discovery and its use for military purposes became a matter of concern for the world community.

And almost nothing has happened since that time to allay fears of the humanity. On the contrary, the race for the possession of nuclear weapons, now joined by even terrorist organizations, has continued unabated all through these years.

Even though the community of nations has recognized the need to reform the system of international security for a long time, there is no real progress.

Lack of the international consensus on the issue has led to a dramatic weakening of the collective security system. Speaking in general terms, we are dealing with a systemic crisis of international governability, the international community is running out of legitimate levers capable of stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

In addition to ethic, economic or other motives, we need to erect legal barriers to stop proliferation. For this reason, Kazakhstan proposes to adapt the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to the new realities.

It should be acknowledged that the NPT has turned into an asymmetric agreement. It provides for sanctions applicable only to non-nuclear states. However, if nuclear powers call for banning the development of nuclear weapons, they themselves should set an example of reduction and renunciation of nuclear arsenals. That is not the case.

This unfairness is an inducement for those states that still aspire to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

It should be made clear that, in our view, this aspiration is irrational.

The people of Kazakhstan have lived through all the horrors of the effects of nuclear explosions. 456 such explosions were conducted at the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground.

It is for this reason that, after gaining its independence, the first milestone decision by Kazakhstan was to shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site. It was followed by the renunciation of nuclear missile arsenal, the fourth largest in the world, and the dismantling of its infrastructure.

I want to note here that at that time we had not only the trained personnel but also practically all means of delivery of nuclear warheads.

Those steps have shaped the strategy of our state in the area of global security. For the first time in human history, a nation possessing destructive force has given it up voluntarily.

I am sure that by taking that action Kazakhstan established trust in the world. Thanks to that step, the country has witnessed an inflow of considerable investments that have become a foundation of impressive accomplishments in the area of development known today throughout the world.

By taking that step, we have consolidated our independence, having received security assurances of all nuclear-weapon states. I have a question for others: why not follow our example instead of wasting astounding amounts on the arms race?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the recent years international terrorism has significantly undermined world security.

International drug trafficking serves as a financial pillar of terrorism. Today, international drug industry accounts for a third of the annual volume of the “economy of terrorism.”

It is a well-established fact that terrorism finds fertile ground in unstable and poor countries. We have such a country in our region: Afghanistan. That country is driving an ever-growing trade in drugs.

Poor countries need the assistance of developed nations. They need the assistance that would give tangible results.

Thanks to a thriving economy, our country, until recently a foreign aid recipient, has joined the group of “new donors.” Over the recent years, Kazakhstan has grown its economy at an annual rate of some 10 percent. And now we are in a position to help our neighbors.

Difficulties involved in the process of the reconstruction of Iraq and the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan are a matter of concern for Kazakhstan.

The peoples of our region like the entire international community count on peaceful solution of the so-called crisis around Iran. The best way to achieve that is for Iran, whose people have great history and culture, to prove the peaceful character of its nuclear programme.

Mr. President,

Today, the efforts taken by the United Nations to conduct peacekeeping operations remain the most effective instrument of peaceful settlement of regional crises.

15 years ago, from this podium, Kazakhstan put forward an initiative related to the enhancement of the Organization’s peacekeeping capacity. We proposed to establish a United Nations peacekeeping fund by states voluntarily contributing to it 1 percent of their military budgets.

That idea has been supported by the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon who has proposed to redirect to development 1 percent of global military spending. I believe that such a decision would constitute an important step towards the implementation of the United Nations strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now let me draw your attention to a number of issues that are important in the context of Kazakhstan’s cooperation with the United Nations and its Member States.

First, Kazakhstan welcomes the decision by the General Assembly to identify problems involving climate change as the priority theme of the current session.

In this context, I would like to draw your attention to our initiative, put forward at the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development, by reiterating our proposal to establish, within the framework of the United Nations, a Register of Global Environmental Problems. Such an instrument would help us develop mechanisms of addressing environmental disasters.

By the 1990's, the Aral Sea, once a large internal sea, lost three fourth of its water. That spelled disaster for millions of people living around it. The salt from the bared seabed is being sprinkled on the entire Eurasian continent, damaging its environment.

The countries of the Central Asian region have done a lot to rehabilitate the sea. However without consolidation of the efforts of the world community this problem can't be solved. As at the 2002 Earth Summit, I again propose to give to the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea the status of a United Nations institution.

Second, a deepening global energy crisis and the growing threat of negative climate changes taking place on our planet present acute problems for the world community. We share the concern of the leaders of the G-8 and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation over these problems.

It is advisable to develop, within the framework of the United Nations, a global energy and environment strategy and to discuss it at the 2012 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Third, Kazakhstan forms part of the Caspian region, which is playing a growing role in international energy markets.

As of today, Kazakhstan has the world's seventh largest deposits of oil, the sixth largest deposits of gas and the second largest deposits of uranium.

By 2017, Kazakhstan will join the group of the world's 10 largest oil producers. Kazakhstan is also increasing its gas production. Possessing large deposits of uranium, we will be playing an important role in the development of nuclear energy sector.

Having said that, Kazakhstan is fully aware of its share of responsibility for ensuring a global energy balance and security.

To promote further diversification of energy delivery to consumers and also to provide assurances to energy producers, Kazakhstan proposes to adopt a Eurasian Pact on Stability of Energy Delivery.

Fourth, the first ever global United Nations conference on problems faced by landlocked developing countries, hosted by Kazakhstan in 2003, adopted an international document – the Almaty Programme of Action. We believe that it will facilitate effective assistance to that group of countries.

Decisions on the development of regional cooperation and transport and transit infrastructure, adopted at the latest session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), held in Kazakhstan last May, have become an important and logical step in the same direction.

Fifth, speaking of Asia, we have to mention here the issue of the establishment of a continental arrangement of collective security. That has become possible due to the implementation of Kazakhstan's initiative to convene the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building in Asia (CICA), declared by me standing on this very podium, during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in 1992.

Today, the CICA process brings together 18 states, which occupy 90 percent of Asia's territory. Their population makes half of the people living on our planet. Time has proven the relevance of the CICA process, within which a political dialogue among Asian states is gaining momentum.

Sixth, we support joint efforts to reform the United Nations activities.

In our view, the Security Council should be enlarged in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent members and on the basis of equitable geographic representation and respect for sovereign equality of states.

The working methods of the Security Council should also be reformed in order to increase its transparency and accountability.

The General Assembly should play a central role as the main deliberative, decision-making and representative body of the United Nations.

Distinguished delegates,

Most of sensational predictions of an inevitable “clash of civilizations,” luckily, have not yet been accurate. However, we should be clear that inter-faith tension feeds the social basis of international terrorism and religious extremism.

I believe that seeking an accord between religions and peaceful coexistence of ethnic groups is a crucially important element of the process of maintaining international security.

Kazakhstan, a home for 130 ethnic groups representing 45 confessions, has set an example of tolerance, which has become a decisive factor in the efforts to ensure peace, stability and economic progress of Kazakhstan.

Conscious of the critical importance of a dialogue between world confessions on key issues of the modern world order, Kazakhstan hosted, in 2003 and 2006, forums of leaders of world and traditional religions where religious opinion makers were trying to find not only a language of mutual understanding but also mechanisms of easing inter-faith tensions in the planet’s “hot spots.”

I want to suggest that the Third Congress of Religious Leaders, scheduled for 2009, is conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. I also propose to proclaim one of the coming years an International Year of Convergence of Cultures and Religions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just days after the terrorist attacks on 11 September Pope John Paul II visited our country. He said that this tragic event should not become a cause of a standoff between religions.

I strongly believe that there are no problems in the world that cannot be solved if we set harmony, tolerance and spirituality against animosity, relying on mutual trust and cooperation. That understanding instills hope and enhances confidence in the future.

The United Nations plays a special role in the strengthening of those hopes. We are not skeptical about the legitimacy of the international law and have faith in the effectiveness of such multilateral mechanisms as the United Nations in the promotion of security and fairness.

We are against attempts to weaken our Organization.

Kazakhstan associates itself with those states that are willing to strengthen the role and authority of the United Nations because they view it as the only international body capable of influencing, in an effective way, the issues of war and peace.

Thank you for your attention.