

Statement of the
Chief of Special Troops Department of the Chief of Staff Committee of the
Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the International Seminar
« Confidence Building Measures and Regional Cooperation through Mine Action »
(25-27 March 2007, Almaty)

*Dear co-chairmen!
Ladies and gentlemen!*

First of all, let me express gratitude to organizers for convocation of a present meeting on so vital topic as a problem of land mines.

Using a opportunity I would like to express also the gratitude to all present delegations, and also experts from other countries and the international organizations for support of this meeting which by our opinion, will bring in the powerful contribution to strengthening of regional cooperation to sphere of development of adequate decisions in struggle against an existing problem.

Dear participants of the Seminar!

Last decade we became witnesses of rising of new threats to an international peace and safety.

Specificity of rising of modern challenges and threats in region of the Central Asia is determined by its geographical position and dynamics of modern development of our states. Our region is located on a junction of the most ancient cultures on which for ages passed trading caravans of " the Great Silk way ». Today through our borders also pass increasing amount of tourists and labour migration, the goods and technologies. At the same time, through the same borders every year illegal traffic of drugs and the weapon are increasing, trade of people is carried out. There is a real threat of illegal penetration of dangerous technologies, religious extremism and terrorism.

In this connection Kazakhstan pays great attention to expansion and a deepening of regional cooperation in the Central Asia. Understanding, that the specified problems, threats and challenges have trans-border character, it is important to apply maximum efforts to transform available potential of cooperation to stable interaction in view of legitimate interests of all Central Asia regions' countries.

In opinion of Kazakhstan, it is necessary to strengthen coordination of United Nations Organization's activity and the regional organizations in this direction. We believe, that the solving of global and regional security problems is inseparable from strengthening all system of the United Nations and strengthening of its central role in global affairs.

All-round expansion of cooperation between the United Nations and such regional structures as the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Organization of Cooperation, the Organization Collective Security Treaty and the Organization of the Central - Asian Cooperation would promote appreciably to the international efforts in maintenance of peace and stability.

Dear co-chairmen!

Antipersonnel Mines are one of the most antihuman kinds of arms and as it was more than once marked is a weapon does not make distinctions between the peace population and fighting parties, after the ending of military actions antipersonnel mines remain in the ground, and already after several years kill or will cripple innocent people.

It is known, that in the world every week from 10 up to 30 children perish or become invalids because of antipersonnel mines which have stayed since times of conflicts. According to the United Nations, more than 100 million such mines are set up in 60 countries of the world, approximately as much are in military warehouses and wait for the hour. Extensive use of mines in military conflicts around the world has led to humanitarian accident of planetary scale.

The usual mine in the international market of arms costs from 3 up to 40 US dollars. After the ending of wars, there comes time of scrupulous and dangerous operations on mine clearing. According to experts, neutralization of one mine cost from 300 up to 1000 US dollars.

Concerning a question about joining of Kazakhstan to «Ottawa Convention on prohibition of application, accumulation, manufacture and transfer of antipersonnel mines and about their destruction », for today our country is not ready to make this step yet. At the same time, Kazakhstan completely supports a humane orientation of this document.

There are a lot of the objective reasons on which our country is not ready to liquidate antipersonnel mines, and now I shall indicate 2 of them:

1) Kazakhstan has the big extent of border with the neighboring countries which should be covered and protected by Armed Forces, including by use of antipersonnel mines in frontier areas of the country at the certain cases of conditions;

2) Full destruction or non-use of antipersonnel mines are unacceptable in view of absence in Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan of alternative systems and protection means and defending of overland borders of the country.

At the same time, according to the decree of the Government of Kazakhstan from 6 of August 1997 № 1222 « About prohibition of export of antipersonnel ground mines » in Kazakhstan entered into force the moratorium on export of antipersonnel ground mines, including their re-export and transit.

I would like to emphasize especially, that Kazakhstan has no the mine fields subject to mine clearing and as I already indicated earlier, does not manufacturing a antipersonnel mines and keeps the established requirements on their storage and security. It is necessary to note, that at operational planning application of troops in interests of state security, Kazakhstan considers use of mines and other devices only in a scope of their limited application.

Moreover, we are going to continue to participate in peace-keeping operations on detection and destruction of explosive materials and rendering assistance to the civil population in water providing. Since 19 of August 2003 in territory of Iraq in structure of Coalition Forces operates the engineering combat unit "Kazbat" by which since the starting of mission (August, 2003) until present time it is destroyed more than 3,5 million ammunition and explosive materials.

In conclusion of the report I would like to assure all representatives, that Kazakhstan in further will support completely a humanitarian orientation of the Convention, and to be guided by this approach in the practical activities.

Also I would like to express assurance that our two-day work will contribute to struggle of the international community with antipersonnel mines problem.

Thank you for attention.