

Rede Außenminister Guido Westerwelles auf dem 'Forum für eine atomwaffenfreie Welt' in Astana

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Ladies and gentlemen,
I wish to thank the Mazhlis of the Republic of Kazakhstan for organizing this important conference on nuclear disarmament. It is with great pleasure that I have accepted the invitation to speak to you today, on the United Nations International Day against Nuclear Tests. Kazakhstan and Germany are celebrating 20 years of diplomatic relations this year. Germany was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan. We have strongly supported Kazakhstan on its path to consolidating its sovereign statehood. From early on, we were convinced of the enormous potential of Kazakhstan to establish itself as a force for peace in the region. More than 200,000 Kazakh citizens of German descent live here. They play an important role in our bilateral relations and form a precious bridge between our peoples. For us, Kazakhstan is not only an important bilateral partner, but a partner on the world stage and an economic power house. In a globalized world, we face global challenges that no single country and no single region can tackle on its own. Mr. President, Kazakhstan is one of the world leaders in the push for a world free of nuclear weapons. I have come here to congratulate you and the people of Kazakhstan for your visionary decision to dismantle the former fourth largest nuclear arsenal. Ladies and gentlemen, as Germany and Kazakhstan, as Europe and Central Asia, as the whole world grows closer together, disarmament and non-proliferation are more important than ever. They are two sides of the same coin. Without nuclear disarmament, the global non-proliferation regime will not be sustainable. Without an efficient non-proliferation regime, there will be no readiness to cut down nuclear arsenals. The former Soviet testing site of Semipalatinsk is one of the gruesome mementos of the Cold War. Almost 500 nuclear tests were carried out here. It reminds us of the human suffering of innocent civilians exposed to radiation, environmental degradation and economic loss. We have to join forces to put an end to nuclear explosions. Mr. President, I welcome your proposal to launch the internet platform ATOM in this context. A comprehensive legal ban on all nuclear testing is long overdue. Existing nuclear test moratoria are important, but not sufficient. I am confident that the eight countries whose ratification is mandatory for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will eventually assume their responsibility. This is an essential step on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons. I am proud that Germany is the third largest contributor to its budget. Thanks to its monitoring system, the institution can detect nuclear tests anywhere on the planet. States are deterred from clandestine testing. The development of new nuclear weapons becomes more difficult. The world is a safer place. In 2010, the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty reaffirmed their commitment to "Global Zero, a world free of nuclear weapons. NATO endorsed this vision in its New Strategic Concept adopted at the Lisbon Summit in 2010. Germany welcomes this clear political signal. We remain firmly committed to this goal. We therefore welcome the New Start Treaty between the US and Russia to reduce their strategic nuclear weapons. Its implementation is of crucial importance. At Germany's initiative, substrategic nuclear weapons are on the international disarmament agenda. NATO's decision at the Chicago Summit to offer Russia a dialogue on confidence-building and transparency measures is a first and necessary step forward. Such a dialogue could prepare the ground for future reductions in the substrategic nuclear weapons stationed in Europe. Their reduction and ultimate elimination would represent a major step towards more security in Europe. NATO is on record as calling for maintaining the Alliances security at the lowest possible level of forces. We are prepared to consider further reducing the requirement for nuclear weapons assigned to NATO in the context of reciprocal steps by Russia. The Alliance also made clear that nuclear weapons will not be used against Non-Nuclear Weapons States that are party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Germany will make sure that arms control and disarmament stay high on the Alliances agenda. In order to make progress we need to further develop our strategic partnership with Russia. Disarmament and arms control are part and parcel of this relationship. We are ready for a broad dialogue, including nuclear and conventional weapons and missile defence. We will not achieve security in Europe against, but only together with Russia. We also need to join forces to address the new and emerging security threats together. Iran, North Korea and Syria challenge the global non-proliferation regimes and regional stability. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, the subjects I have touched upon show again how ambitious our policies on disarmament and arms control have been from the very beginning. It has been challenging work and there are more hard nuts to crack. Some consider Kazakhstan and Germany among the champions of disarmament in our respective regions. Not each and every single step might be the great turning point, but as a whole we have made a considerable step in the right direction. This should encourage us to continue our work to make our world a safer place.

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