

Special Feature

The Kazakhstan-Japan Nuclear Nexus: Ideas, Norms, and Identities

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Abstract

This article examines Japan's cooperation with Central Asian countries in the security field based on the example of Kazakh-Japanese interactions in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of atomic energy.

Using constructivism as the main theoretical framework, the author reveals new ideas, norms, and identities that complement the existing architecture of bilateral perceptions and cooperation. At the same time, the author focuses on restraining norms in the two countries' behavior, which constrain mutual calls for cooperation.

The author also uses desk research and discourse analysis to explore the numerous written and oral sources of information he obtained in Kazakhstan and Japan, including official documents, as well as interviews with officials, former diplomats, researchers, and civil society groups in the two countries. The article presents a deeper understanding of the political and economic motives of cooperation between the two countries.

The article covers a 30-year period from the moment of the emergence of modern Kazakhstan in 1991 until the end of 2021.

1. Introduction

In February 2022, Kazakhstan and Japan celebrated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties. The Government of Japan (GOJ) became one of the first foreign countries to recognize Kazakhstan's independence in December 1991. Over three decades, Kazakhstan and Japan have been able to accumulate vast experience in political and economic cooperation, as well as to generate various cooperative approaches in international fora. As a result, the Government of Kazakhstan (GOK) openly supports Japan's aspirations to join the UN Security Council (UNSC) as a permanent member¹.

To date, Kazakh-Japanese relations have been studied in detail in terms of political dialogue, multilateral contacts, and economic cooperation. In contrast, issues of bilateral interactions in the field of security have never been dealt with in such detail. Indeed, the

GOJ's security engagement in Central Asia (CA) is always limited to its participation in various regional projects aimed at the effective management of border control, the prevention of drug trafficking, and the retention of energy resource supplies. In addition, these studies often ignore the Japanese experience of interaction with "nuclear Kazakhstan" as a possible source of initial security concerns. Partially, these aspects were touched upon in the writings of famous Japanese diplomats and scholars, such as Ambassador (Amb.) Kyoko Nakayama (Nakayama 2005), Amb. Akira Matsui (Matsui 2007), Amb. Toshio Tsunozaki (Tsunozaki 2007), Amb. Akio Kawato (Kawato 2008), and Professor Tomohiko Uyama (Uyama 2004, 2010, 2015). Academic publications of Kazakh authors, such as those by Mrs. Akerke Sultanova (Sultanova 2018), are limited in quantity and content.

It is important to assess nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation partnership between the two countries as a good example of security interaction in order to reveal their missing identities, norms, and ideas, which form mutual similarities and gaps (Collins, 2016:74). Multilateral cooperation is seen as an inseparable part of this process and not as a separate environment (Suh et al., 2008:108-9). Constructivism shows how Kazakhstan and Japan form ideas of bilateral relations in the context of global security, including humanitarian consequences. This approach helps us to understand how the two countries perceive each other through Alexander Wendt's "Self and Others" lens, and how their beliefs affect bilateral relations. Indeed, actors continually shape international ties through their interactions. Their identities depend on whether these relationships will be directed toward cooperation or confrontation. At the same time, specific goals are formed on the basis of how countries see themselves in relation to other nations and the international community in general. This is why state identities, state beliefs, and norms are an important part constructed by social structures (i.e., shared knowledge, material resources and practices), rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics (Wendt, 1994:385).

The initial analysis of the foreign policy of Kazakhstan and Japan points to the similarity of the two nations in their desire to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. However, a deeper analysis indicates that over the course of 30 years, these countries have demonstrated different models and strategies of behavior. Kazakhstan's modern history is unique. The country was a victim of nuclear tests on Kazakh soil from 1949 to 1989. In addition, the country hosted several scientific and industrial reactors, and its people were involved in the management of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union (FSU), Kazakhstan was *de facto* a nuclear-weapon state during the first years of its independence. Despite its tragic nuclear legacy, the GOK, however, does not exclude the possibility of further development of its atomic industry, such as the

construction of modern nuclear power plants NPPs. Recently, this issue has gained a lot of political attention. Indeed, Kazakhstani officials make conflicting statements that do not give an exact answer as to Kazakhstan's intentions regarding NPP construction.

Residents of two Japanese cities—Hiroshima and Nagasaki—were the victims of the first and last atomic bombings that occurred in warfare. It has long been known that the targets of the 1945 atomic bombing included other Japanese cities such as Kyoto and Niigata². During the Cold War (1945-1989), 23 Japanese anglers from Lucky Dragon No. 5 became victims of the high-yield thermonuclear test at the Bikini Atoll in 1954. Poisoned by Castle Bravo, test fish was later found on 856 Japanese fishing vessels³. In March 2011, one of the largest nuclear accidents occurred at the Japanese Fukushima Daiichi NPP. Thus, Japan has experienced three mega nuclear tragedies that have affected its political norms, public consciousness, and technological standards, as well as foreign policy goals. Nevertheless, Japan does not wish to completely abandon its nuclear energy projects⁴.

Despite the ongoing debate on Japanese pacifism and the possible shift toward militarism, Japan is still considered “a country with latent nuclear capacity” or “five minutes from a nuclear weapon” (Baylis et al., 2017:425). In this context, relations between the two countries can be viewed as an attempt by Japanese authorities to obtain more information about the impact and use of nuclear weapons. However, the GOJ is forced to reaffirm, on a regular basis, the importance of the 1967 Three Non-Nuclear Principles (i.e., not possessing, not producing, and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan)⁵.

The international community is deeply aware of how the country reacts to North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, considering them a direct threat to regional and international security. At the same time, Japan continues to cooperate with the US, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Russia; these nations possess powerful nuclear arsenals and means of delivery. Japan reacts to nuclear weapons if these arsenals directly threaten its security. In other cases, this matter does not irritate the Japanese government. In fact, Japan once considered options for creating its own nuclear weapons and today is under the US “nuclear umbrella,” which cannot but help influence Japan's official position on the reduction and elimination of nuclear arsenals (Kase, 2001:56).

In 1991, with the collapse of the (now former) USSR, new nuclear powers appeared on the world map: Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus. In fact, Kazakhstan and Japan were indirect agents of the Cold War. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan and Japan were able to build relations, despite the initial refuse of Kazakhstan to abandon its nuclear status without reservation. As a result, Japan began to transform its policy under two conditions: the absence of the USSR and the appearance of new international challenges; that is, the spread of international terrorism and the emergence of new nuclear states

(Singh, 2013:61).

Later, the two states were able to achieve a visible partnership in this area. Below, the author describes all possible elements of such cooperation and examines Kazakhstan's experiences of interaction with Japan (Kavalski, 2010:4) to answer the following research questions: What is the essence of bilateral relations in this area, and what rules are they grounded in? What are the constraining foundations of joint cooperation?

2. Background information

On August 29th, 1949, the USSR tested its first nuclear bomb, RDS-1, at the Semipalatinsk test site (STS). Over the next four decades, 456 nuclear and thermonuclear explosions were carried out at the site. According to the First President of Kazakhstan (FPK), Nursultan Nazarbayev, a person who has been at the center of crucial political decisions and has determined the country's policy over the past 30 years, the entire territory of the country resembled one large polygon (2001:26). The nuclear tests were not limited by one specific site and exclusively by military goals. From 1965 to 1979, a series of 26 nuclear explosions was carried out for scientific purposes in Western Kazakhstan. The total power of all nuclear devices tested on and in Kazakhstan's soil was 2,500 times greater than the capacity of Hiroshima's Little Boy (Nazarbayev, 2001:54).

As often happened in USSR history, almost all Soviet political experiments—including forced migration, executions, and exiles—were carried out without warning and in strict secrecy. Officially, residents near the STS territories began to receive warnings beforehand, but only in 1953; that is, four years after the first test. Perhaps this can be attributed to the death of the then-Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. However, the Khrushchev Thaw (1953-1964) had no positive effect on STS activities. After ten years, the USSR switched to underground tests, which also carried new risks and hazards for local people and the surrounding environment. According to official data, more than half a million people suffered as a result of the tests (Nazarbayev, 1996:89). For example, the direct effects of nuclear testing can always be observed at Semey Medical University (SMU), where a significant number of mutilated fetuses are stored⁶.

The last nuclear test in Kazakhstan's history occurred on October 19th, 1989; therefore, the STS functioned for 40 years and two months in full operating mode. The FPK signed presidential decree No. 409 on the STS shutdown on August 19th, 1991, four months before Kazakhstan gained full independence. This document also incorporated elements of the 1990 Declaration on the State Sovereignty. In 2009, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) declared August 29th the International Day against Nuclear Tests⁷.

According to the FPK, popular activities at the time included the Nevada-Semipalatinsk anti-nuclear movement, under the leadership of the famous Kazakh writer Olzhas Suleimenov, which influenced the official position of Kazakh SSR leadership (Nazarbayev, 1996:161). Thanks to their joint efforts, 11 out of 18 planned nuclear tests at the STS were stopped in 1989. It is noteworthy that the successful experience of Kazakhstani NGOs has drawn increased attention from civil society in the US and Japan. Mr. Suleimenov became the second Kazakh to take part in the activities of the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (Gensuikyo). However, it took Kazakhstan approximately ten years to destroy the infrastructure of the test site. On May 27th, 1995, the last nuclear device was destroyed at the test site. The last testing tunnel was demolished on July 29th, 2000 (Tokayev, 2001:529). Such success was not possible without the assistance of foreign partners, such as Japan (Kawabata, 2018).

The history of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was well known in FSU countries. The story of Sadako Sasaki inspired the famous Avar poet Rasul Gamzatov to write one of the best Soviet songs about WWII: *The Cranes*⁸. Soviet experts were also able to visit the destroyed remains of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a month after the tragedy. In 2016, Russian authorities decided to share that archival video with the GOJ (Mizukawa, 2016). No one should have any doubts that this film directly or indirectly influenced the fate of Kazakhstan and its inhabitants. It is clear that the film—which remained hidden for more than seven decades—fueled the interest and desire of Soviet leadership in owning a new deadly weapon.

However, the bomb dropped on Nagasaki was different from the one used in Hiroshima. Based on its characteristics, RDS-1 was closer to Nagasaki's Fat Man⁹. On August 9th, 2016, during the 71st Nagasaki Peace Ceremony, Toyokazu Ihara (Dec.), atomic bomb survivor and author of *No More Nagasakis*, declared that the 1945 atomic bombings might be considered nuclear tests of two different types of atomic bombs¹⁰. This means that Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Semipalatinsk became elements of a single chain.

By the end of 1991, when newly independent states (NIS) appeared on the world map, Kazakhstan and Japan had a similar understanding and knowledge of the possible pros and cons of nuclear weapons, the effects of their direct/indirect use, and the importance of further proliferation efforts.

In theory, the two sides were able to combine their potential for the launch of major anti-nuclear initiatives, especially in terms of humanitarian law, environmental impacts, and changing global public opinion, but this did not happen. As for its part, Kazakhstan was able to achieve a balance in relations between the government, civil society, and the international community, including with its closest neighbor, Russia, with which Kazakhstan

also had nuclear agreements. In Japan, the situation looked a little different. The presence of difficult relations with neighbors required Japan to make well-considered choices.

3. Actions, not words

After the USSR collapsed, a large nuclear arsenal was concentrated in Kazakhstan, which included the uranium industry, as well as experimental and industrial nuclear reactors with powerful scientific and technological potential (Tokayev, 2001:349). According to the FPK, Kazakhstan became a nuclear-weapon state against its will (2003:69). Before the destruction of the last device in May 1995, for three years and five months, Kazakhstan was *de facto* a nuclear-weapon state.

The set of nuclear weapons included 104 ICBMs with 1,216 nuclear warheads. The effective casualty radius of SS-18 missiles was approximately 12,000 km. In Eastern Kazakhstan, 40 long-range strategic bombers of the Bear-H6/16 class, equipped with 240 long-range cruise missiles, were also deployed. For example, the distance between Semey (formerly called Semipalatinsk) and Tokyo is equal to 4,956 km. In May 1983, Japan, along with the US, opposed the deployment of the Soviet SS-20 missiles in Europe and Asia (Singh, 2013:59). In other parts of Kazakhstan, there were 148 ICBM silos. In addition, there was considerable potential to produce chemical and biological weapons (Tokayev, 2001:349). For instance, the Ulba Metallurgical Plant (UMP) had 600 kilos of weapons-grade enriched uranium, enough to fuel more than 20 atomic bombs. In 1994, these nuclear materials were secretly transported to the US as part of Project Sapphire. This arsenal was large enough to destroy all potential adversaries of the former USSR (Tokayev, 2001:23-29).

On December 21st, 1991, speaking in Almaty at the Summit of FSU Countries (the forerunner of the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS), Nazarbayev noted the importance of norms such as unified control over nuclear weapons, non-proliferation, compliance with IAEA standards, and the promotion of international cooperation on WMD-related issues. Even then, the former Kazakh leader made it clear that it would be preferable for Kazakhstan and other CIS countries to acquire the status of a non-nuclear-weapon state, rather than to seek recognition as a nuclear power (2009:30-31). The collapse of the USSR also meant the deterioration of traditional economic ties. To ensure stability, the countries needed huge financial injections and reforms. Kazakhstan understood that nuclear weapons had to be maintained, and that new investors would not be interested in supporting new rogue states.

Following the Almaty Summit, an agreement was adopted between the four FSU

republics on joint measures regarding nuclear weapons¹¹. This legal document included the following norms: elimination and non-proliferation commitments, as well as the “no first use” (NFU) principle (Tokayev, 2001:351). At the time, Ukraine and Belarus had already announced their intention to join the NPT as nonnuclear-weapon states. However, the First President announced that strategic weapons would remain inviolable in Kazakhstan.

On the one hand, in the 1990s, in Kazakh society, a dispute arose about the future of the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world. For instance, a small number of figures, including military officers, were in favor of maintaining a nuclear arsenal in moderation (20-50 warheads). According to Nazarbayev, it was a dispute, but not a split (2001:34). In addition, various external agents, including former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, offered funds to maintain and manage Kazakhstan’s nuclear program (Ota, 2015). However, Kazakh officials precisely understood that the appearance of the first Muslim nuclear bomb would attract the excessive attention of extremist groups and could become an instrument of nuclear blackmail (Tokayev, 2001:4). In 1992, Kazakh leadership clearly stated that Kazakhstan would contribute to international peacekeeping efforts. As mentioned, Kazakhstan would seek to (1) curtail the arms race and prevent it in space; (2) decrease the production and testing of all types of WMD; (3) prohibit the use of existing—and create new— technologies for WMD production; and (4) destroy chemical weapons (Nazarbayev, 1992:53).

In the early 1990s, the FPK met with UK Prime Minister (PM) Margaret Thatcher, US Vice President Albert Gore, US Secretaries of State James Baker and Warren Christopher, the French Foreign Minister (FM) Rolland Dumas, the German FM Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and US Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar. One of Nazarbayev’s closest associates, Nurtai Abykayev, noted that the purpose of all these visits was to voice Kazakhstan’s position on nuclear weapons (MID, 1998:41). As for his part, the then-Kazakh leader designated the main conditions for the further surrender of these arsenals (2009:39-40). Nazarbayev said it is premature to recognize Kazakhstan as a non-nuclear-weapon state until the country receives comprehensive security guarantees. He added that the country does not intend to distribute or transfer nuclear technologies, components, or fuel (2003:64-67).

As a result, in May 1992, in Lisbon, representatives from Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Belarus, and the US signed the protocol for the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. The Lisbon Protocol also contained their obligations to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states¹². Two years later, in February 1994, Kazakhstan finally joined the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon state (MID, 2014:8). In fact, the voluntary denouncement of nuclear weapons was made in exchange for obtaining a special international status with

a focus on sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders. The withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan's territory was completed on April 21st, 1996 (Tokayev, 2001:467).

In addition, Kazakhstan tried to influence its closest neighbors and partners in Asia, whose behavior also affects Japan's security policy. In June 1993, Kazakhstan welcomed the official delegation of the DPRK, headed by then-Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly Yang Hyong-sop. During the visit, Nazarbayev expressed concern about Pyongyang's decision to withdraw from the NPT (Tokayev, 2001:439). In June 1994, during a discussion on Eurasian Union-related issues with Russia, Kazakhstan proposed forming an Interstate Center for Nuclear Disarmament with the participation of international organizations (IOs) (Nazarbayev, 2009:454). In July 1996, speaking in the Parliament of Kazakhstan, PRC President Jiang Zemin announced a moratorium on nuclear tests at the Lop Nur test site (MID, 1998:275) and reassured the guarantees of the NFU principle (Baizakova and McDermott, 2015:14).

(I) The start of cooperation

Kazakh SSR did not have traditions of foreign policy during Soviet times. Principles of Soviet diplomacy were unsuitable for independent Kazakhstan due to its incompatibility with new goals and objectives (MID, 1998:14). In reality, Kazakhstan's modern diplomacy was started from scratch. According to Tokayev, in the very beginning, the FPK decided that Kazakhstan would not undermine the non-proliferation regime, increase international tension, or cause nuclear tensions (Tokayev, 2001:4). Indeed, anarchy is what states make of it (Wendt, 1992:395).

According to Japanese logic, the nuclear experience is essential for a better understanding of nuclear issues and anti-nuclear responsibility (Cabinet Office, 2017:7). The Japanese Foreign Ministry (MOFA) often talks about its role as a "bridge" between nuclear and non-nuclear states. However, Japanese NGOs believe that Japan's historical legacy should push Tokyo to form various partnerships and networks that would allow it to more effectively play the role of an intermediary, especially in its relations with Russia and China, which have close ties with Kazakhstan.

In May 1992, Nazarbayev received his first Japanese visitor, FM Michio Watanabe. According to Japanese sources, the meeting did not contribute to the growth of Kazakhstan's popularity among Japanese politicians for several subjective reasons (Uyama, 2004:201-202). However, during the meeting, FM Watanabe expressed his concern on nuclear issues and presented Japan's Three Non-Nuclear Principles to the FPK. Nazarbayev reassured FM Watanabe that Kazakhstan, together with other states, would seek to

completely eliminate nuclear weapons (Tokayev, 2001:422). This may indicate that the Kazakh leader understood the importance of building profitable economic ties with Japan. Nazarbayev, as a politician, realized he had to enlist the support of the Japanese government. It was clear that investment and aid would not come if Kazakhstan did not confirm its peaceful orientation and did not guarantee that it would strive to achieve disarmament.

The GOJ understood that the control and protection of nuclear materials and radioactive waste in the NIS were far from international standards¹³, and that these countries could not implement costly nuclear disarmament programs alone¹⁴. In the 1993 Diplomatic Bluebook, the MOFA noted that the situation in Kazakhstan, along with Russia and Ukraine, had a great impact on the security of neighboring states. Reliable control, the removal of nuclear weapons, and accession to the NPT were considered important conditions for international security¹⁵. The GOJ clearly perceived all possible challenges and risks, and recognized the importance of comprehensive measures aimed at the complete dismantling of nuclear infrastructure in FSU countries.

In July 1992, the second paragraph of the G7 Munich Summit's outcome declaration was entirely devoted to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The document stipulates that G7-NIS cooperation is only possible if all countries adhere to the principles of non-proliferation¹⁶. In July 1993, the Tokyo G7 Summit's declaration once again called on Kazakhstan and Ukraine to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states¹⁷. The GOJ expressed willingness to assist with eliminating nuclear weapons and to clean up the nuclear test site.

The first basic norm was formed against the backdrop of the relationship between Kazakhstan and Japan, rooted in the fact that Kazakhstan had to fulfill a specific condition to convince the Japanese authorities to help the country. Subsequently, this principle is intended to be used in economic relations between the two states. Japan will repeatedly stimulate the signing of important bilateral agreements to legally consolidate Kazakhstan's obligations in the investment and nuclear fields.

In October 1992, the GOJ hosted the Tokyo Conference on Assistance to the NIS, chaired by the same FM Watanabe. Representatives from 70 countries and 20 IOs attended the event. The parties agreed that aid coordination, based on the principle of "help for self-help," would be made for each country individually¹⁸. Prior to the 1993 Tokyo Summit, at the G7 Joint Ministerial Meeting to support Russia, Japanese PM Kiichi Miyazawa officially announced that Japan would give \$100 million to help eliminate nuclear weapons in FSU countries (MOFA, 2003:74). Later, at the 1999 Cologne G8 Summit, PM Keizo Obuchi announced the allocation of \$200 million for new projects (MOFA, 2003:74).

From 1993 to 1994, the GOJ concluded bilateral cooperation agreements with Russia,

Ukraine, and Belarus regarding technical assistance in the elimination of nuclear weapons. Based on these documents, appropriate bilateral technical committees (TCs), under the auspices of the unified technical secretariat (TS), were established. On March 11th, 1994, a similar intergovernmental agreement was signed with Kazakhstan, which entered into force on the same day¹⁹. For Kazakhstan, this became the first bilateral institution in relation to Japan. In this way, Japan could coordinate and monitor its efforts on the ground. At the same time, this structure underscored the importance of Japanese authorities institutionalizing future relations with Kazakhstan. In addition, this mechanism made it possible to lay the foundation for further cooperation in the field of security.

In 1997, the G8 nations invited CA countries to join the “Program for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear Materials”²⁰. One year later, the G8 states assured that they would continue to work with the NIS to improve their nuclear safety²¹. In July 1997, PM Ryutaro Hashimoto presented his famous Eurasian diplomacy that covered Russia, China, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. He confirmed that the “peaceful orientation” of CA nations (e.g., nuclear non-proliferation, democratization, and the fostering of stability) would form one of the three pillars of further cooperation²².

(2) Toward the Hiroshima-Nagasaki-Semey Alliance²³

Kazakhstan fulfilled its international obligations by implementing joint agreements with the US, Russia, and Japan as a source of additional financial and technical assistance for the dismantling of nuclear weapons, and to erase the consequences of operating nuclear weapons in Kazakhstan (MID, 2005:11). In general, Kazakhstan received ¥1.77 billion (\$16 million) from Japan, or 7% of the total amount allocated for disarmament and non-proliferation programs in 1993 and 1999. This amount is almost twice the amount given to Ukraine (3% or ¥750 million), but significantly inferior to the assistance programs for Russia (81% or ¥20.38 billion) or Belarus (9% or ¥2.23 billion)²⁴.

In October 1992, speaking at the UN General Assembly, the GOK tried to create new aid opportunities for social-related projects in eastern parts of the country. As a result, Kazakh experts took part in the preparation of the UN Secretary-General’s report on international aid to the Semey region (September 23rd, 1998)²⁵ and project proposals in four areas: healthcare, the economy, ecology, and public information. The report was reviewed at the 53rd session of the UN General Assembly (1998-1999) (Tokayev, 2001:283). In November 1998, the UN General Assembly adopted a separate resolution on the matter²⁶. This document created the prerequisites for holding the Tokyo International Conference on Semipalatinsk. In fact, it also reflects a second significant norm in Kazakh-Japanese relations. The objective of such cooperation should have an important international status and

should be enshrined in international documents.

In September 1999, FM Tokayev—who became the new president of Kazakhstan in mid-2019—took part in the Tokyo Conference, which was attended by more than 200 delegates from 80 different IO/ROs and NGOs²⁷. Thirty-eight Japanese organizations, as well as professional leaders from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Semipalatinsk, attended the forum. In his welcoming statement, PM Obuchi stressed that international assistance should be based on the concept of “human security” (i.e., a comprehensive view of all threats to human life and dignity). PM Obuchi also singled out Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Semipalatinsk as three important “symbols of peace.” In fact, the Kazakhstani participants perceived this as a call for joint action. At that time, Kazakhstan began to project the history of Semipalatinsk along with the legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In sum, the conference became a starting point for comprehensive partnerships among various agents of the two countries²⁸. Japan declared its readiness to help improve medical infrastructure for affected people with the *proviso* that Kazakh authorities would observe the ownership and coordination principles. As a result, more than \$20 million was pledged from Japan, the World Bank, and various UN agencies. In addition, Japan announced a special contribution of \$1 million through the Japanese/UNDP Funds²⁹. In December 2006, the GOJ and the UN decided to extend an additional \$2 million to finance a joint project in Kazakhstan³⁰. Moreover, GOJ continued to support endeavors aimed at strengthening the technical capacity and security of leading Kazakhstan’s research institutions, such as the National Nuclear Center (NNC), the Kazakhstan Atomic Energy Committee (KAEC), and the Institute of Nuclear Physics (INP)³¹.

In April 2007, based on the findings of the GOJ’s team study tour of Kazakhstan (December 2006), the GOJ decided to extend approximately ¥500 million to boost security at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant (UMP) and the INP³². Such a decision was made based on the Kazakhstan-Japan agreement to launch a negotiation process on the conclusion of a bilateral nuclear pact³³. In May 2015, then-First Vice-Minister of Energy Uzakbay Karabalin of Kazakhstan declared that Japanese aid helped to increase the reputation and reliability of the local atomic industry³⁴. This is a vivid example of Kazakhstan’s traditionally high appraisal of Japanese aid and investments.

During the 2016 Washington Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), the GOJ joined 18 world leaders in a statement expressing support for the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank in Kazakhstan at UMP facilities³⁵. However, Japan is not listed among the main donors of the project, which may indicate the presence of restraining norms in the Japanese assessments of the project, such as its proximity to Russia. In addition, alongside France, Hungary, and the UK, the two countries joined the NSS Gift Basket on Trans-

port³⁶. Kazakhstan's participation in this group was dictated by its geographic location and extensive experience in rail communications. However, the initial proposal came from the Japanese MOFA.

This approach suggests that for many years, Japan viewed itself as a major donor to Kazakhstan, and as a guide that facilitated Kazakhstan's participation in new security initiatives. This also led to the formation of new norms in relations between the two countries; it lies in the fact that Kazakhstan is waiting for a specific invitation or action that will open the door for new cooperation with Japan.

(3) Promoting regional security in Asia

Nazarbayev expressed his support for nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ)-related ideas in December 1991 at the CIS Summit (1996:25-26). As a first step, in October 1993, during his talks with Jiang Zemin, the FPK proposed creating a joint group of experts to study the problems of Lop Nur and STS (Tokayev, 2001:124). In 1998, Kazakhstan condemned nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, which are located in close proximity to Central Asia. Even earlier, in February 1992, during his visit to Islamabad, the former Kazakh leader expressed interest in establishing an NWFZ in South Asia (Tokayev, 2001:418).

These ideas signaled to other CA leaders the need for further discussion on the NWFZ project in Central Asia (CANWFZ). In 1994, security assurance from P5 countries increased the confidence of the Kazakh leader in the feasibility of a new regional initiative. The CA initiative to create a CANWFZ was set forth in the 1997 Almaty Declaration (Tokayev, 2001:357). This was not a coincidence. During the Soviet era, nuclear explosions also occurred in Ukraine (two tests), Uzbekistan (two tests), and Turkmenistan (one test) (Nazarbayev, 2001:196).

In September 1997, this idea received additional impetus during the meeting of CA foreign ministers, which was organized under the initiative of former Uzbek leader Islam Karimov (Ishiguri, 1999:4-5). The CANWFZ idea was supported by UNGA resolution 52/38 S, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia," which called for the UN Secretary-General to provide full support to CA countries³⁷. As for its part, the GOJ provided \$420,000 to the UN Secretariat to facilitate the negotiation process³⁸. Participation in this process was important for Japan in terms of studying the CA positions toward two Japanese neighbors, Russia and China, whose voices are vital in discussing the possibility of creating a similar zone in Northeast Asia.

The expert group, organized by the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD), began drafting the treaty in 1998. The next year, an

additional round of expert meetings was held in Hokkaido. Despite the progress made, the CA countries did not reach a consensus due to the absence of Tajik and Turkmen delegations. The next conference, which was organized in 2000 in Hokkaido, also failed to reach an agreement. All necessary preparations were finalized two years later during the 2002 Samarkand meeting. Despite resistance inside and outside the UN, partly due to the membership of the CA countries in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the GOJ supported the signing of the Semey treaty in 2006 as an effort to strengthen peace and stability in the region³⁹.

Individual efforts of Japanese diplomacy regarding the CANWFZ only increased the GOJ's interest in continuing multilateral dialogue with CA nations as a potentially collective force capable of supporting various international initiatives in Japan (Ishiguri, 2010). In this regard, Japan's participation in the creation of the CA, plus Japanese dialogue (CAJ) in 2004, can be viewed from a new angle. The dynamics of exchanges with the countries of Central Asia show that the solution of security issues led to the development of Japanese diplomacy in the regional context. Today, Japan is actively leveraging its successful experience as a "bridge-builder" or "catalyst," which it gained from the launch of the Central Asia+*a* dialogue platform.

(4) The role of Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors)

In 1957, famous Kazakh poet Mukhtar Auezov was one of the first Kazakhs to speak about the danger of Soviet nuclear testing (Auezov, 2017). As the delegate of the III World Conference against A & H Bombs, he visited several Japanese cities, including Hiroshima (Nazarbayev, 2001:62). Later, poet Olzhas Suleimenov, artist Karipbek Kuyukov, and members of numerous Kazakh NGOs also took part in subsequent meetings of the World Conference against A & H Bombs.

In August 1998, a group of Hiroshima residents who supported the Kazakh national team at the 1994 Asian Games founded the "Hiroshima-Semipalatinsk Project" (Xiaoyu, 2018). This NGO is engaged in various programs, including the organization of medical aid, educational exchanges, mutual visits, and cultural events. Chieko Kobatake (deputy director) and Akerke Sultanova (project alumna)⁴⁰, who were part of this group, helped to distribute and translate the song *Zaman-ai (Oh Such Times)*—a symbol of the antinuclear movement in Kazakhstan, sung by the famous Soviet/Kazakh singer Roza Rymbaeva—into Japanese. In 2011, the song underwent a third rebirth in Japan as a protest song against the GOJ's further nuclear plans.

In November 2013, the "Earth Identity Project," together with Kazakhstan's initiative, The ATOM Project (Abolish Testing: Our Mission), launched a series of antinuclear events

in Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. To date, this is the only large-scale action of public groups of the two countries in Japan. Akie Abe, a spouse of ex-PM Abe, also attended the event. Later, Mrs. Abe expressed her thoughts on Twitter about the joint initiative: “Paintings inspire people to fight for a world without nuclear weapons. It would be great if art reaches its goal and the world rids itself of nuclear weapons” (Li, 2013).

To date, significant scientific, medical, and educational assistance to Semey has been provided through the Hiroshima International Council for Healthcare of the Radiation-Exposed, the Nagasaki Association for Hibakushas’ Medical Care, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the CANVaS Youth Network, and GOJ grant assistance for grassroots projects (*kusa-no-ne*). However, they are local in nature and only benefit a small group of professionals.

The humanitarian track allows the two countries to talk about the similarities of their moral duties (DiFilippo, 2006:195). However, the GOK cannot bring its extensive contacts with Japanese NGOs to a higher political level due to the presence of serious gaps among anti-nuclear agents inside Japan, especially after the March 11th events; neither can Kazakhstan interfere with issues related to Japan’s participation in the US “nuclear umbrella.” Ordinary citizens of Kazakhstan cannot understand the closeness of the US-Japan alliance, as well as how the Japanese were able to forgive the US for nuclear bombing.

The UN University and Kyoto University of Foreign Studies tried to connect efforts by Kazakhstan and Japan several times to develop common approaches in the field of nuclear disarmament education⁴¹. However, these initiatives have remained unrealized. For example, during an interview with Hiroshima NGOs in 2018, some of them noted that cooperation with Kazakhstan—which has good relations with the PRC, South Korea, and Russia—could help to jointly promote the hibakusha legacy in the Asia-Pacific region.

(5) Political differences

To date, the two nations have not launched any major joint initiatives. An analysis of existing initiatives shows that the countries are kept apart and prefer to work in their own environment. For example, Kazakhstan favors support for August 29th-related events. For the Japanese, dates such as August 6th and 9th (the anniversaries of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings), as well as September 26th (the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons), are more important. Moreover, the GOJ has not made any serious attempts to connect Kazakhstan with its multilateral platforms, such as the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) or Asia Senior-Level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP). This fact could be attributed to Japan’s selective disarmament,

namely, Japan's opposition to Kazakhstan's membership in various regional organizations, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (DiFilippo, 2006:196).

However, in the case of mutual interest, they are forced to work together and seek compromises. In February 2015, Kazakhstan and Japan were elected as co-coordinators of the CTBT ratification. In October 2015, in Nur-Sultan, President Nazarbayev and PM Abe signed a joint statement that confirmed their commitment to achieve the early entry into force of the CTBT as part of their "special mission"⁴². This document became the first statement adopted at such a high political level, where countries appeal to the Annex 2 states, including the US, Japan's ally.

During the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, a follow-up statement was adopted in support of the CTBT. The text of the document calls once again on the Annex 2 states to take necessary steps for the early ratification of the treaty⁴³. In May 2017, in Vienna, an additional statement was adopted by the Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan and Japan, as well as the executive secretary of the CTBTO PrepCom.

In Kazakhstan, this fact was perceived as an opportunity for closer cooperation with Japan on related issues. These documents demonstrate common tasks for the two countries: the entry into force of the treaty and its further universalization, as well as achievement of progress on the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs. However, unlike Japan, Kazakhstan has opportunities to conduct direct diplomatic consultations with the DPRK, which Japan could not (or did not want to) use. Moreover, according to eyewitnesses, not all forms of mutual actions previously proposed by the Kazakh side found support among Japanese officials⁴⁴. Kazakh diplomats attribute this to Japan's unwillingness to interfere with third countries in relation to its strategic partners in other parts of the world, such as Iran.

In the past few years, Hiroshima Prefecture and the Japanese Institute of International Relations have published an annual report, the Hiroshima Report, which includes individual country assessments in three categories: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and nuclear security.

According to reports, Kazakhstan and Japan are constantly in the advanced "blue" zone, while nuclear powers are in the dangerous "red" or "orange" sectors. At the same time, the report shows that Japan has also taken into account the participation of official representatives from Kazakhstan in memorial ceremonies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, this is a very subjective criterion; for example, Japanese acting officials have not yet visited the STS⁴⁵.

As a result, the GOJ might view Kazakhstan as a country that shares common values, while the lack of joint initiatives only indicates a difference in perspective on how to achieve and promote these values. Kazakhstan does not wish to be considered by Japan

as an “other.” In contrast, it wants the GOJ to consider it Japan’s closest ally, as Japanese NGOs and experts do. Despite attempts by individuals and organizations to bring the two countries closer together, these efforts have failed to close the perception gap, which is shrinking every year due to new challenges and threats that countries need to tackle together.

(6) Achieving world merits

Today, independent politicians, NGOs, and research centers from both sides use different tools to consolidate Kazakhstan-Japan accomplishments. Based on Figure 1, we can assume that these achievements allow the two nations to demonstrate to the international community their solidarity in the fight against nuclear threats. However, Japan is using its nuclear legacy as a tool for understanding the issue and gaining recognition for its practical contributions. Japan recognizes the real difficulty of fully eliminating nuclear weapons. At the same time, Kazakhstan is using its nuclear legacy to advance its own policy initiatives.

For example, in 2012, Hiroyuki Moriyama, then-member of the Japanese Parliamentary Friendship League with Kazakhstan, announced in Semey that a group of Japanese MPs had nominated the FPK for a Nobel Peace Prize⁴⁶⁻⁴⁷. At the time, the head of the League was another MP from DPJ: Yukio Hatoyama, the former PM of Japan⁴⁸. It is clear that the young politician could not speak alone without the consent of his senior colleagues.

In fact, both countries use the “awards factor” to demonstrate their unique roles as countries capable of evaluating the efforts of foreign politicians and scientists in the fields of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For instance, in 1998, Dr. Saim

Figure 1. Logos of Japan-Kazakhstan Committee on Cooperation for the Elimination of Nuclear Weaponsⁱ (left) and the 20th Anniversary of Kazakhstan-Japan diplomatic relationsⁱⁱ (right)



ⁱ Technical Secretariat, “Kazakhstan-Japan Committee on Cooperation for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”, http://www.tecsec.org/?page_id=1578 (accessed 11 June 2019).

ⁱⁱ MOFA, “Press release”, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/release/24/1/0126_05.html (accessed 11 June 2019).

Balmukhanov was awarded the Takashi Nagai Memorial Nagasaki Peace Award for “contribution to the provision of assistance to victims of nuclear weapons testing, to the struggle for a nuclear-free world”⁴⁹. In 2008, President Nursultan Nazarbayev received the Grand Cordon of the Supreme Order of Chrysanthemum for his “outstanding contribution to the disarmament process, global initiatives on strengthening international security and peace, tolerance and international harmony”⁵⁰⁻⁵³. In 2016, he earned the Culture of Peace Special Award for “leadership in promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation,” as well as Hiroshima City Special Honorary Citizenship for “commitment to the peace movement as President of Kazakhstan” and “work on the total abolition of nuclear weapons”⁵⁴⁻⁵⁶.

In 2017, Mr. Suleimenov received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette for his “contribution to the strengthening of Japan-Kazakhstan relations in the field of nuclear non-proliferation”⁵⁷. Two years later, Dr. Tolebay Rakhypbekov was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon for his “contribution to the promotion of academic exchanges between Japan and Kazakhstan through medical assistance and research for the survivors of the atomic bombing”⁵⁸. In 2020, the same order awarded Dr. Zhaksybay Zhumadilov, Chairman of the Board of the University Medical Center at Nazarbayev University, for his “contribution in the field of radiation exposure research and strengthening the health of victims.”

Kazakhstan does not stand aside either. In 2011, Yoriko Kawaguchi was awarded the Anniversary Medal of the National Nuclear Centre of Kazakhstan for her “contribution to global security promotion and non-proliferation”⁵⁹. Eight years later, Ambassador Yukiya Amano’s family received the Nazarbayev Prize for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World and Global Security for his “key role in the creation of the low-enriched uranium bank in Kazakhstan and [contribution] to the settlement of Iran’s nuclear issue”⁶⁰.

(7) Forming anti-nuclear values

Currently, 15 territorial units of Kazakhstan are members of Japan’s Mayor for Peace initiative, including two key cities: Nur-Sultan and Semey. Several years ago, Semey was selected as the Executive City and Lead City by the Mayor for Peace⁶¹. In addition, Semey municipal administration proposed holding one of the general meetings in Kazakhstan and awarding the Kazakhstani provincial city with a new status: regional leader in Central Asia.

In November 2016, speaking at the National Diet of Japan, Nazarbayev declared that his visit to Hiroshima included an appeal to world leaders to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki⁶². It is noteworthy that Nazarbayev visited Hiroshima for the first time in 2016, even though it was his fourth visit to Japan. This visit represented a response to Japan’s signal to world leaders, especially from then-FM Fumio Kishida (2012-2017), to visit

Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Originally, the initiative came from the MOFA, and the Japanese side offered several tour options for Kazakhstan's consideration, including major industrial centers in Japan (e.g., Nagoya) and a number of disaster-hit places in the Tohoku region (e.g., Miyagi or Iwate). In the beginning, the Kazakh side leaned toward Nagasaki due to the previous visit of Mayor Tomihisa Taue to the STS in 2011⁶³. Given the role of FM Kishida, who is native to Hiroshima, the Kazakh group chose Hiroshima, although Japanese PMs or FMs had never visited the STS⁶⁴.

In 2004, Secretary-General of Mayors for Peace, Yasuyoshi Komizo, planted a sapling of a second-generation, the atomic bombed ginkgo tree from Hiroshima in Semey⁶⁵. In 2015, a Stone for Peace was installed in Semey by one of Hiroshima's numerous NGOs⁶⁶. In mid-2016, the Kazakh side proposed installing a memorial stone devoted to the victims of nuclear tests in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park; however, the proposal was declined by the city due to the great number of similar applications from local organizations. In August 2016, the Daigo Fukuryu Maru Peace Foundation agreed to unveil a new memorial panel dedicated to August 29th in the municipal Daigo Fukuryu Maru Exhibition Hall, located in Tokyo's Yumenoshima Park. The public activities of various organizations of the two countries make it possible to hide existing gaps in bilateral cooperation.

(8) Toward a nuclear alliance

In 1992, the GOJ, together with the US, the EU, and Russia, signed an agreement on the establishment of the International Science and Technology Center (ISTC), whose headquarters are currently located in Kazakhstan at Nazarbayev University (since December 2015). The ISTC coordinates the efforts of a number of public and private entities, as well as private companies, providing FSU scientists—formerly engaged in WMD-related research—with opportunities to conduct research activities in civilian areas. Over the years, more than 70,000 scientists from 760 research institutes have received \$880 million (the GOJ's share is \$65 million) in support from the ISTC⁶⁷. For example, in the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi NPP accident, ISTC environmental and public health research findings were applied in the Tohoku region (Orazgaliyeva, 2015).

In 2010, Kazakhstan joined the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA), which was founded by Japan in 1990 to promote cooperation in the field of nuclear energy with neighboring Asian countries⁶⁸. Today, FNCA member countries interact in eight areas: (1) radiation oncology; (2) mutation selection; (3) radiation safety and radioactive waste management; (4) nuclear security and safeguards; (5) the use of research reactors; (6) biofertilizers; (7) the use of electron accelerators; and (8) the study of global climate change⁶⁹. The National Nuclear Center—which has various forms of cooperation with key

energy organizations and companies in Japan—plays a crucial role in scientific cooperation. The NNC is also involved in studying the consequences and responses to the Fukushima Daiichi NPP accident (NNC, 2014:48-51).

Initially, Japan's interest in Kazakhstan was limited to traditional energy resources: oil and gas. In April 2002, in China, speaking at the first annual conference of the Boao Forum for Asia, PM Junichiro Koizumi announced the GOJ's readiness to expand energy cooperation with Central Asia⁷⁰. Three months later, the delegation of official and business circles of Japan—known today as the Silk Energy Mission—visited four main countries in the region to discuss new perspective areas of cooperation. In 2004, Kazakhstan and Japan signed their first agreement in the field of scientific and technical cooperation, which forms the basis for the provision of consultative and technical assistance to Kazakhstan⁷¹.

In August 2006, PM Koizumi visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. During his talks with FPK Nazarbayev, the two leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in the energy sector; that is, the development of uranium mines and the introduction of NPPs (Nurgaliyeva, 2015:379). These intentions were reflected in the joint statement and a separate memorandum⁷². In May 2007, the Economy, Trade and Industry Minister of Japan Akira Amari visited Kazakhstan. During the visit, a record number of documents (24) were signed, which laid the foundation for a “strategic partnership” in the nuclear industry⁷³. That same year, the two countries also agreed to launch the negotiation process on bilateral nuclear pacts (signed in March 2010). The document stresses that cooperation is based on the experience of a number of legal frameworks, including the previous agreement between Japan and the USSR, as well as the two countries' membership in the NPT, the IAEA, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group⁷⁴. In October 2007, the Kazakh Ambassador to Japan was invited to take part as an observer in the Maritime Interdiction Exercise “Pacific Shield 07,” hosted by the GOJ under the Proliferation Security Initiative⁷⁵.

In 2007, Kazatomprom, the Kazakh state-run nuclear power company, acquired a small stake in Westinghouse Electric from Toshiba of \$540 million. Toshiba-Westinghouse-Kazatomprom was seen at that time as the first successful industrial alliance between Kazakhstan and Japan. However, amid the crisis surrounding Westinghouse and Toshiba in 2017, Kazatomprom exercised its right and sold Westinghouse's shares back to Toshiba (Hotta, 2017).

This cooperation was seen as an important channel that could help Japanese companies obtain a contract for the construction of Kazakhstan's first NPP. Indeed, the Kazakh side's plans to build the NPP are still considered a sort of magnet that constantly attracts the attention of Japanese politicians and TNCs. Japan's corresponding interest is reflected in the outcome documents of two previous Nazarbayev-Abe summits. According to an

unnamed Japanese official, PM Abe's 2015 tour to CA did not meet his expectations due to unsuccessful negotiations on the NPP issue with the former Kazakh leader⁷⁶. Kazakh politicians were also upset by constant pressure from the Japanese government, despite strong public opposition inside of Kazakhstan.

Japanese efforts show that official circles in Japan ignore the sensitivity of the NPP construction issue for Kazakhstani society in every way, especially their concerns about the possibility of a reiteration of the Fukushima tragedy in Kazakhstan. According to various sources, approximately 34,000 Kazakhstanis participated in disaster management after the Chernobyl accident. Today, the number of so-called "liquidators" in Kazakhstan is close to 5,000 people (Isayev, 2019). Given the high level of civil activity of Kazakhstani citizens, especially those related to anti-Chinese sentiments, any accident at a future NPP could be fatal for local officials, who would advance the decision on its construction.

4. Conclusion

This study provides a fresh look at the history and content of Kazakh-Japanese cooperation. Today, the focus of their bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the security field is focused on the safe use of nuclear energy, the security of nuclear facilities, and the development of nuclear technology and medicine. At the same time, a significant proportion of efforts is devoted to solving humanitarian challenges related to the negative impact of radiation on human health and the environment.

Cooperation in this area has been formed for a long time and is based on diverse ideas and norms that are important for the two countries. In many ways, the specific rules of such cooperation allow both countries to loudly express their contributions to global nuclear security. However, different patterns of behavior or identity are all conditioned by the external environment and their external perception. This affects the formation of new political initiatives and leads to attempts to provide political and economic dividends in exchange for technological cooperation in the nuclear field.

Despite their enormous potential, both countries demonstrate a passive path of cooperation and efforts to shift the current status quo. The two states' early successes indicate that Nur-Sultan and Tokyo can act as leaders of the international anti-nuclear movement. They possess a huge amount of knowledge that could form the core of a systemic educational program for young generations of politicians and leaders. However, the older generations of witnesses to atomic explosions and tests dwindle every day. Against the backdrop of other challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, people are less likely to recall nuclear threats.

Kazakhstan and Japan must accumulate the legacy of hibakusha survivors so that the next generation of world leaders can understand all the horrors and risks of rash statements and decisions regarding nuclear weapons. Unlike infectious diseases, radiation does not know any barriers, and its consequences can poison life on earth for millennia. The case study of Kazakhstan and Japan shows that cooperation between the government sector and NGOs can be a powerful tool.

Indeed, the uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that Kazakhstan is a close partner of Russia and China, while Japan has allied relations with the US. Both states can individually or jointly influence political discourse among the officials of these countries regarding nuclear weapons and their possible use. Kazakhstan is a founding member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which includes nuclear powers such as Russia, China, India and Pakistan. This does not in any way affect the policy of Kazakhstan, which is looking for possible ways to resolve the nuclear issue, in part or in full, and is not afraid of condemnation from its nuclear neighbors and partners.

This is a signal to Japan that defense alliances and military commitments do not mean that the country should not make efforts to achieve any realistic goals in the field of nuclear disarmament. In contrast, Japan itself could act as a “bridge” between the US, China and Russia.

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