Urtabulak Gas Well Fire

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What Happened:

In 1963 a drilling incident created a massive natural gas blowout, in Urtabulak (today Uzbekistan). It had 70 m high flames and burned for three years, ca 12.000.000 m^3 gas was burned daily. Traditional methods to stop the 300-bar release, failed.

A 1.5 km deep underground, 30 kilo ton nuclear bomb was used to stop the gas release. The rock layers collapsed and sealed the high-pressure gas well. The fire stopped 20 seconds after the explosion.



Aspects:

- The method was “successfully” used again in 1968 at Pamuk and in 1972 at the Mayskoye gas field blow-out.
- No significant above ground radiation release was reported.
- Today the technology is not allowed. Blow-out preventors must be installed.
- Consider releases in advance and install equipment to stop releases.

Assure leakages from high pressure gas sources, can be stopped

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