

**Statement by
State Secretary Frank Belfrage, Sweden,
at the
CTBT Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force
of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**

September 17-18 2007

Mr. President,

Let me first congratulate you on your election as President of this conference.

Sweden fully associates itself with the statement made by Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

It is with somewhat mixed feelings that I address this forum today. The need to convene a fifth conference to facilitate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a sad reminder of the lack of progress in the field of arms control and disarmament during the decade that has passed since the Treaty opened for signature. At the same time, it is a manifestation of the continued commitment to ban nuclear weapon tests once and for all by an overwhelming majority of states. We knew from the outset that this was no easy task – but we remain committed.

We remain committed to fulfil the promise to future generations, that the age of nuclear testing is a closed chapter in history. Honouring the efforts of those who tirelessly negotiated the Treaty we must now push this five-decade long process the last mile to completion.

We remain committed because we know the importance of the CTBT for the overall non-proliferation regime:

- Raising the threshold for acquisition of nuclear weapons;
- Preventing a qualitative arms race; and
- Building confidence through an effective verification system.

We remain committed in pursuit of our long-term vision of a world free from weapons of mass destruction, convinced of the urgent need to revive international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

Mr. President,

When new threats to global and human security emerge, we must resist the temptation of reaching for traditional tools and means of defence. Today, it is indeed difficult to imagine a situation in which the use of a nuclear weapon would pass the tests of military necessity, proportionality, and humanity. Yet, there are still some 27 000 nuclear warheads in the world and new weapons systems are contemplated. If nuclear weapon states continue to rely on their nuclear arsenals as a guarantor for security, there is a real risk that other states will seek nuclear weapons for the same reason.

And here I quote from the January 4th article in the Wall Street Journal, signed by former US Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger, and George Schultz, former Secretary of Defence William Perry, and former Senator Sam Nunn:

“[R]eliance on nuclear weapons for [deterrence] is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective.”

Preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is one of the major challenges of this generation of international leaders. The confidence gap regarding the nuclear ambitions of Iran, and the negotiations over the nuclear weapons program in North Korea, are the two most prominent examples. The risk that non-state groups and terrorist networks acquire nuclear weapons or sensitive materials is another. In dealing with these urgent cases, we should not lose sight of the ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. Global challenges call for multilateral responses – and the most effective way to ensure a certain conduct by some states, is that all states adhere to the same principles.

In June 2006, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, chaired by Dr. Hans Blix, delivered its report “Weapons of Terror: Freeing the world of Nuclear Biological and Chemical Arms”, representing a welcome contribution to the international discourse on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. Sweden joins the Commission in urging that “[a]ll states that have not already done so should sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty unconditionally and without delay.”

A particular responsibility rests with the remaining ten states whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to enter into force. To them, the CTBT represents an extraordinary opportunity for international leadership. Ratifications by key states – such as China and the United States – could potentially spark a positive chain reaction. The US was the first country to sign the

CTBT in 1996 and renewed US leadership for the entry into force of the Treaty would be immensely important.

Regional approaches to secure ratifications by Egypt, Iran, and Israel – and signatures and ratifications by India and Pakistan – should also be further explored. China could play an important role as a catalyst in South Asia. Finally, the framework of the six-party talks offers an opportunity to influence North Korea to adhere to the Treaty. In the face of a positive chain reaction, Colombia and Indonesia would no doubt follow suite.

Mr. President,

Even though three states – India, Pakistan and North Korea – have conducted nuclear tests since the CTBT opened for signature in 1996, there is reason to be optimistic. The international community, including the Security Council, has unanimously condemned all these tests. In combination with the voluntary abstention from nuclear testing by all recognized nuclear weapon states, we denote a virtually universal consensus that nuclear testing is unacceptable.

Let us be clear – aside from keeping the door open for future nuclear tests, there is no valid reason to remain outside the treaty or to bar it from entering into force. We are here to call for a confirmation that no such plans exist. We are determined to close the door to future nuclear tests – and we remain committed.