

Article XIV Conference on Facilitating CTBT Entry Into Force: Time to Translate Words Into Action

Statement of Nongovernmental Organization Representatives
(AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY)
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Distinguished delegates, on behalf of nongovernmental organizations the world over, it is an honor to address you at this important meeting with our views on the path forward on the CTBT.

Nongovernmental organizations have been and will continue to be a driving force in the long journey to end nuclear testing.

Recall that some twenty years ago, a popular movement in Soviet-controlled Kazakhstan forced the government in Moscow to halt nuclear weapons testing at proving grounds in their homeland where more than 456 explosions had contaminated the land and damaged the health of its people.

As a result of their efforts and those of other nongovernmental and elected leaders, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev declared a test moratorium on October 5, 1991, prompting U.S. legislators to introduce legislation mandating a 9-month U.S. test moratorium. With strong nongovernmental support, the legislation was approved and a year later was extended. The last U.S. nuclear test explosion was conducted on September 23, 1992.

Just four years later, the world's nations concluded the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to prevent nuclear proliferation and help end the nuclear arms race.

Since the opening for signature of the CTBT fifteen years ago, the vast majority of the world's nations have signed and ratified the Treaty. They recognize that nuclear testing is a dangerous and unnecessary vestige of the past and understand that the CTBT is a cornerstone of the international security architecture of the 21st century.

By banning all nuclear weapon test explosions, the CTBT can help accomplish the indisputable obligation under the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons to cease the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament. The established nuclear-weapon states would be barred from proof-testing new, more sophisticated nuclear warhead designs. Without the option of nuclear explosive testing, newer testing nations cannot perfect smaller, more easily deliverable warheads.

The CTBT also serves to reinforce the nonproliferation system by serving as a confidence-building measure about a state's nuclear intentions and, in this regard, it can help head off and de-escalate regional tensions.

And with the CTBT in force, global and national capabilities to detect and deter possible clandestine nuclear testing by other states will be significantly greater.

Accelerating Entry Into Force

Although 182 states have signed the CTBT, the long journey to end testing is not over. The CTBT must still be ratified by the remaining nine "holdout" states before it can formally enter into force.

We are grateful for the strong statements delivered at this conference on the value of the treaty and the need for prompt entry into force. But actions speak louder than words. We call upon every state at this conference, collectively and individually, to act. This conference must help produce a serious diplomatic action plan for getting the remaining holdout states on board.

The United States and China

Ratification by the United States and China is particularly important. Washington and Beijing have already taken on most CTBT-related responsibilities, yet their failure to ratify has denied them—and others—the full security benefits of the Treaty.

In April 2009, U.S. President Barack Obama pledged to “immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification. To date, however, the Obama administration has not done enough to mobilize the scientific and technical expertise necessary to debunk spurious assertions against the Treaty and to mobilize support for its reconsideration by the U.S. Senate.

We call upon President Obama to translate his lofty CTBT words into concrete action by pursuing the steps necessary to win the support of two-thirds of the U.S. Senate for ratification of the treaty without conditions. Such efforts take time and may not show results in the next several months. But to continue to move forward, the Obama administration can and must begin to make the case for the Treaty now.

To indicate the seriousness of his intention to do so, we call on President Obama to promptly name a senior, high-level White House coordinator for the CTBT effort.

While U.S. action on the treaty is essential, other Annex II states must provide leadership rather than simply remain on the sidelines on the CTBT.

In particular, it is time for China’s leaders to finally act on the CTBT. We note the January 19, 2011 Joint Statement by President Hu Jintao and President Barack Obama in which they declared that “... both sides support early entry into force of the CTBT.” Such statements are welcome but insufficient.

Concrete action toward CTBT ratification by China would increase its credibility as a nonproliferation leader and improve the chances that other states will follow suit. We invite China’s representatives to explain in detail what President Hu is doing to take China off the list of CTBT holdout states and to provide a timeline for Chinese action on CTBT ratification.

We also encourage China to constructively engage with other key Annex II states on the importance for international security and stability of universal accession to the Treaty.

India and Pakistan

India and Pakistan could advance the cause of nuclear disarmament and substantially ease regional tensions by converting their unilateral test moratoria into legally binding commitments to end nuclear testing through the CTBT.

It is past time for India’s current leaders to pursue the recommendations of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s eloquent and visionary 1988 action plan for disarmament, which calls for “a moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons ... to set the stage for negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.”

The states to which Prime Minister Gandhi appealed have done what he called for by implementing

nuclear testing moratoria and negotiating and signing the CTBT.

India has pledged in various domestic and international contexts to maintain its nuclear test moratorium, which makes it all the more logical for New Delhi's leaders to reinforce global efforts to detect and deter nuclear testing by others through the CTBT. Indian movement on the CTBT would direct more pressure toward China and the United States to ratify the Treaty.

Pakistan should welcome a legally binding test ban with India and entry into force of the CTBT.

UN member states that are serious about their commitment to the CTBT and nuclear risk reduction should insist that India and Pakistan sign and ratify the CTBT before they are considered for membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and that India should sign and ratify before its possible membership on the Security Council is considered.

The Middle East

With no shortage of conflict and hostility in the Middle East, ratification by Israel, Egypt and Iran would reduce nuclear weapons-related security concerns in the region. It would also help create the conditions necessary for the realization of a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear and other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Likewise, Israel's ratification of the CTBT would bring that nation closer to the nuclear nonproliferation mainstream and lend encouragement to other states in the region to follow suit.

Iran was at one time an active participant in the CTBT negotiations and on September 24, 1996 it signed the treaty. Today, Iranian ratification would help reduce concerns that its nuclear program could be used to develop and deploy deliverable nuclear warheads. Continued failure by Iran to ratify the CTBT raises further questions about the nature of its sensitive nuclear activities, which remain under investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We strongly urge the states involved in the Non-Aligned Movement to play leadership role in pressing Iran, the incoming chair of the NAM, to ratify the CTBT.

North Korea

The Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear tests undermine Asian security. We call on the DPRK to declare a halt to further nuclear testing and urge the participants in the Six-Party talks to make North Korea's approval of the CTBT one of the key steps in the action-for-action process for denuclearization and normalization. We note that the Russian Federation, the Republic of South Korea, and Japan—which have signed and ratified the Treaty—can play an especially important role in this regard.

Addressing the Damage Caused by Nuclear Testing

We must all also rededicate ourselves to addressing the harm caused by the 2,051 nuclear test explosions conducted worldwide. The deadly effects linger at dozens of sites from Lop Nor, to the atolls of the Pacific, to Nevada, to Algeria, to Australia, to Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan, across Russia, and beyond.

Exposure to ionizing radiation is harmful to humans. The leaders of the nuclear testing nations have exposed their people – within and outside their territories – to radiation without their informed consent.

While underground nuclear blasts pose a smaller radioactive hazard than atmospheric tests, there has been widespread venting from underground explosions. In addition, underground nuclear blasts leave a

legacy of radioactive contamination, which can be transported by groundwater into the surrounding environment.

Our knowledge of the extent of the harm caused by five decades of nuclear test explosions underground, in the atmosphere, and underwater is still incomplete. The governments responsible for the damage have not adequately provided assistance to survivors nor the resources necessary to mitigate the environmental contamination. In fact, the major testing states have been reluctant to recognize the harm inflicted by testing and the rights of those people who have been most affected.

We encourage the states gathered here to support the proposal, advanced by Kazakhstan last year, to establish an international fund—to be managed by the United Nations—to support those seriously affected by nuclear testing.

To move this from concept to reality, we call on the UN Secretary-General to organize a conference under the auspices of the United Nations to help mobilize resources for the remediation of contamination at nuclear test sites, and health monitoring and rehabilitation of populations most seriously affected by nuclear testing.

States responsible for the testing at major test sites should report to the conference—and on an annual basis thereafter—on their current and future efforts and resource allocations to address the health and environmental impacts of nuclear testing and to rehabilitate populations that have been particularly impacted.

Independent nongovernmental experts, and especially members of affected communities should be invited to help develop a multi-year program of action.

Reinforcing the Test Ban

There are other actions that should be pursued that would reinforce the *de facto* test moratorium and accelerate CTBT entry into force. Specifically:

1. Responsible states should provide in full and without delay their assessed financial contributions to the CTBTO, fully assist with the completion of the IMS networks, and continuously and without interruption transmit data from the monitoring stations to provide the most robust capability to detect and deter clandestine nuclear test explosions. Every state should recognize that the Provisional Technical Secretariat to the CTBTO Preparatory Commission is—for all practical purposes—no longer “provisional.” The CTBTO and the International Monitoring System and International Data Center are now an essential part of today’s 21st century international security architecture that enables all states to detect and deter nuclear test explosions;
2. In order to further reinforce the *de facto* global taboo against nuclear testing and deter any state from considering nuclear test explosions in the future, we call upon the UN Security Council to discuss and outline the penalties that could be imposed in the event that any state breaks this taboo;
3. We urge states armed with nuclear weapons to refrain from pursuing new types of nuclear weapons or modifying weapons in ways that create new military capabilities. Such activities may not violate the letter of the CTBT, but they are contrary to one key purpose, which is to halt the qualitative improvement of nuclear arsenals. We urge all of the states armed with nuclear weapons to adopt clear, “no-new-nuclear-weapons” policies;
4. We urge nuclear armed states to halt activities at the former sites of nuclear test explosions that

might raise concerns about compliance with the CTBT or could undermine the purpose of the treaty by facilitating qualitative improvements in nuclear weapons;

5. Finally, with only nine holdout states on the Annex II list remaining, it is time for CTBT member states to begin consideration of options for provisional entry into force once all five permanent members of the UNSC have ratified. After the decades-long journey to achieve a permanent, verifiable global ban on all nuclear weapon test explosions, the international community cannot allow one or two states to thwart the will of the vast majority of the world's nations to bring the CTBT into force.

For decades, nongovernmental organizations and ordinary people the world over have prompted action to achieve a permanent, verifiable prohibition on all nuclear test explosions.

We respectfully urge each of the states present here to consider these recommendations and we look forward to working with you on our common goal of prompt CTBT entry into force.

Thank you.

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