

ACCELERATING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CTBT: NOW IS THE TIME

**Statement by Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations to the
Article XIV Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT**

September 25, 2009

Distinguished delegates,

The history of the nuclear age makes clear that opportunities to reduce the grave dangers posed by nuclear weapons are often fleeting. When the right political conditions are in place, government leaders must seize the chance to make progress.

NOW IS SUCH A TIME:

Entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is within sight. Since the idea of a ban on nuclear testing was first proposed in the 1950s, it has stood among the highest priorities on the international nonproliferation and disarmament agenda. As U.S. President Barack Obama noted in April of this year, the CTBT is a concrete step toward “a world without nuclear weapons.”

THE CTBT IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER.

The CTBT has near-universal support: 181 nations have signed and 150 have ratified the Treaty. Last fall, the UN General Assembly voted 175-1 in favor of a resolution on the CTBT—and we expect the one “no” vote by the United States will become a “yes” vote this year.

We applaud those states that have lined up to express their support of the Treaty at this Conference. We recognize those states that made their full financial contribution to the build-up and operation of the Treaty’s international monitoring and verification system. But rhetoric alone is not enough to make the entry into force of the CTBT a reality. Article XIV of the Treaty provides that in order to enter into force, ratification is needed from a number of key players. Nine necessary states have failed to ratify the CTBT and are therefore delaying its entry into force.

To help put the CTBT over the finish line, we also strongly urge that like-minded pro-CTBT states work together to develop and execute a common diplomatic strategy to persuade the remaining states to sign and/or ratify the treaty before the next Article XIV Conference two years from now. Failure to pursue such an effort will cast doubt on the sincerity of the many strong statements of support for CTBT entry into force expressed at this conference.

We also strongly encourage those few states that have not delivered their assessed contribution or that do not yet allow the transmittal of data from

monitoring stations on their territory to do so without further delay. Such actions are contrary to the goals of the Treaty.

THE VALUE OF THE CTBT

By banning all nuclear weapon test explosions, including so-called hydro nuclear explosions, the CTBT limits the ability of established nuclear-weapon states to field more sophisticated warheads. Without the option of nuclear explosive testing, it is far more difficult for newer members of the club to perfect smaller, more easily deliverable warheads.

For these and other reasons, CTBT ratification has long been considered essential to the fulfillment of Article VI of the NPT and the goal of “effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.” 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.

With the CTBT in force, global and national capabilities to detect and deter possible clandestine nuclear testing by other states will be significantly greater. Entry-into-force is essential to making short-notice, on-site inspections possible and maintaining long-term political and financial support from other nations for the operation of the International Monitoring System and International Data Center.

ACCELERATING ENTRY INTO FORCE

Ratification by the United States and China is particularly important. Given their existing nuclear test moratoria and 1996 signature of the CTBT, Washington and Beijing already bear most CTBT-related responsibilities, yet their failure to ratify has denied them—and others—the full security benefits of CTBT entry into force. The United States is poised to be a leader on the CTBT once again.

We applaud President Barack Obama’s April 5 statement in Prague in which he said: “To achieve a global ban on nuclear testing, my administration will immediately and aggressively pursue U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. After more than five decades of talks, it is time for the testing of nuclear weapons to finally be banned.”

Now, President Obama must translate those words into action by mounting a substantial effort to win the support of two-thirds of the U.S. Senate for the treaty.

With the support of a wide array of NGOs in the United States and around the globe the President must convince the Senate that the Treaty enhances U.S.

security, is effectively verifiable, and would not compromise future efforts to maintain the reliability, safety, or security of the United States' existing stockpile of nuclear warheads.

Technical advances in each of these areas over the past decade should make the case for the CTBT even stronger than it was in 1999 when the Senate failed to provide its advice and consent for ratification. For years, Chinese government representatives have reported that the CTBT is before the National People's Congress for consideration but has apparently taken no action to win legislative approval needed for ratification.

Washington's renewed pursuit of CTBT ratification opens up opportunities for China and other Annex II states—such as Indonesia—to lead the way toward entry into force by ratifying before the United States does. Action by Beijing would increase its credibility as a nonproliferation leader and improve the chances that other states in Asia, as well as the United States, would follow suit.

We note the June 8 statement by Indonesia's Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda: "We share [President Obama's] vision of a world in which nuclear weapons have been eradicated. We trust that he will succeed in getting the CTBT ratified—and we promise that when that happens, Indonesia will immediately follow suit." Indeed, ratification by Indonesia would enhance its reputation as a world leader and agent for international security.

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

Eleven years ago this week, then-Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee told the 53rd UN General Assembly that India would not be among the last states standing in the way of the treaty's entry into force. Unfortunately, over the past decade, neither India nor Pakistan have transformed their de facto nuclear test moratorium into a legally-binding commitment not to conduct nuclear test explosions. It is past time for India's current leaders to take up Prime Minister Vajpayee's promise to the General Assembly and move toward joining the near-consensus on the CTBT.

Last month, India's National Security Advisor M. K. Narayanan said in an interview: "As of now, we are steadfast in our commitment to the moratorium. At least there is no debate in the internal circles about this."

Asked if India would have no problem signing the treaty if the others whose ratification is required for the CTBT to enter into force — especially the U.S. and China — did so, Mr. Narayanan responded: "I think we need to now have a full-fledged discussion on the CTBT."

Mr. Narayanan's statement is encouraging. But we cannot afford to simply hope and wait. Leading states have a responsibility to work much harder to encourage India and Pakistan to meet the same nonproliferation and disarmament standards expected of other states, including ratification of the CTBT.

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 zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as called for in the Middle East Resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review Conference.

Likewise, if Israel were to ratify the CTBT, it would bring that nation closer to the nuclear nonproliferation mainstream and help encourage other states in the region to do so. 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 fuel cycle activities.

The decision of the government of the Democratic Peoples Republic of North Korea (DPRK) to suspend its participation in the Six-Party Denuclearization process is deeply disappointing. We sincerely urge the DPRK to refrain from further nuclear testing and we urge the effective and rapid implementation of the commitments made pursuant to the Six-Party agreements by all involved as a step toward mutual security, as well as CTBT entry into force.

REINFORCING THE CTBT

To reinforce their commitment to the purpose and objectives of the CTBT, we also call upon all nuclear-armed nations to adopt clear policies neither to develop or produce new design warheads nor to modify existing warhead types for the purpose of creating new military capabilities.

President Obama has already stated on the White House Web site in January that he “will stop the development of new nuclear weapons.” Indeed, the U.S. nuclear arsenal has been—and can continue to be—maintained with high confidence through non-nuclear tests and evaluations, and as necessary, the remanufacture of key components to previous design specifications. Independent technical experts have determined that the United States can maintain its existing arsenal through a conservative program of warhead refurbishment rather than through new design “replacement” warheads. We strongly urge the Obama administration to embed such a “no new nuclear warheads” policy in its forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review.

To increase confidence in their commitment to the CTBT, we also urge nuclear-armed states to seriously consider joining France in closing their test sites to all nuclear weapons-related research activities and experiments, particularly those involving fissile material. In the meantime, we encourage states with active nuclear test sites to adopt transparency and confidence building measures that help clarify that there are no prohibited nuclear test explosion activities of any kind on their territory.

CTBT entry into force is within reach. The next two years may represent the best opportunity to secure the future of this long-awaited and much-needed treaty. We urge you to act now and to act with boldness.

Thank you.

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