

*NGO PRESENTATION TO THE NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE PREPARATORY  
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COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY (CTBT)

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Mr. Chairperson, Delegates, and Colleagues,

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an integral part of our global efforts to reduce the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. All states should recognise that action on the CTBT is all the more important in light of heightened awareness regarding the dangers of terrorism generally and nuclear terrorism in particular. The states presently resisting the CTBT are undermining their own security as well as the security of the entire world.

The CTBT was brought about through the hard work and determination of NGOs and millions of ordinary people around the world. In all these years, the NGO community has not faltered in its advocacy for a test ban treaty. People throughout the world understood that ending nuclear testing was essential for two powerful reasons: to halt the spiralling arms race once and forever; and to prevent further devastation of human health and the global environment, already contaminated from decades of atmospheric and underground explosions.

We are profoundly disappointed with the countries that failed to attend the Second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in November 2001, especially those states whose signature or ratification is essential for entry into force. We are pleased, however, at the support for the CTBT demonstrated by three nuclear-weapon states (France, Russia, and the UK) and we call on them to maintain and strengthen their support.

Entry into force of the CTBT is crucial to the stability and future of the non-proliferation regime, as all NPT states parties confirmed at the 2000 Review Conference. Among the 13 practical steps for systematic and progressive nuclear disarmament identified in the final document of that conference, two are devoted to the CTBT and nuclear testing. The first of these steps stressed “the importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without conditions and in accordance with constitutional processes, to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.” The second step called for “a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions pending entry into force of that Treaty.” Both of these goals are in serious danger today. This conference should take stock on progress towards these goals and make practical recommendations on how to achieve early entry into force of the test ban treaty.

A ban on testing is an essential step towards nuclear disarmament because it helps block dangerous nuclear competition and new nuclear threats from emerging. However, technological advances in nuclear weapons research and development mean that a ban on nuclear test explosions by itself cannot prevent some qualitative improvements of nuclear arsenals.

Continued efforts to improve nuclear arsenals and to make nuclear weapons more useable in warfare will jeopardise the stability of the test ban and non-proliferation regimes. We call upon all states

possessing nuclear weapons to halt immediately all efforts aimed at qualitative improvements in their nuclear armaments, especially those which provide new or enhanced military capabilities, whether or not these improvements require nuclear explosive tests. Such programmes contravene the spirit of the test ban, which calls for an end to the development of new types of nuclear weapons.

In this context we are especially alarmed by recent disclosures regarding US plans for the development of a new generation of low-yield earth-penetrating nuclear weapons as well as enhancing US readiness to resume underground nuclear testing. According to the US Nuclear Posture Review, the current 2-3 year posture for resumption of testing “may be too long.” In addition, the National Nuclear Security Administration “proposes over the next three years to enhance test readiness by: augmenting key personnel and increasing their operational proficiency; beginning the mentoring of the next generation of testing personnel; conducting additional field experiments, including additional subcritical experiments and test related exercises of appropriate fidelity; replacing key underground-test-unique components (e.g. Field Test Neutron Generators); modernizing certain test diagnostic capabilities; and decreasing the time required to show regulatory and safety compliance.” (p. 36)

Although the Nuclear Posture Review notes that the US supports continued observation of the testing moratorium, “this may not be possible for the indefinite future” and “objective judgments about capability in a non-testing environment will become more difficult.” (p. 55)

**These disclosures underscore the link between nuclear testing and continued reliance on nuclear weapons for security. They also reveal an appalling disregard of the NPT commitment to stop nuclear testing permanently. NPT member states that support nuclear disarmament and a CTBT should use every opportunity and every means at their disposal to express their concern and demand adherence to a permanent, verifiable test ban.**

The CTBT has been carefully designed so that its benefits greatly outweigh any possible risks associated with the treaty, for example that a country might conduct a clandestine test. The CTBT establishes a far-reaching global monitoring, verification, system capable of detecting all relevant nuclear explosions. This system, in combination with national and scientific assets will deter any potential treaty violators. The Preparatory Committee for the future Comprehensive Test Ban Organisation in Vienna has been making good progress. We urge signatories to provide the necessary financial, political and technical support to complete the verification system as soon as possible. In this crucial time for multilateral arms control, any reduction of support for the test ban organisation would signal also reduced support for the treaty itself. States therefore should continue to support the continuous operation of all parts of the monitoring system, and consider making its data available for humanitarian and scientific purposes.

We believe that security would be enhanced if all states possessing nuclear weapons engaged in confidence-building processes, including transparency measures at nuclear test sites. In this regard, we note with interest the Russian proposal for mutual confidence-building measures with the United States. An engagement of the two governments in such a process before the CTBT's entry into force could help remove doubts about verifiability and strengthen cooperation between the two biggest nuclear weapon states.

Despite overwhelming international support for the CTBT, 13 key states have not yet signed and/or ratified, unnecessarily delaying entry into force. We are particularly displeased with the policies of President Bush, who has indicated that he will not even seek Senate approval for ratification. The U.S. remains a signatory, and yet in November 2001, the United States alone voted against keeping the CTBT on the UN agenda within the General Assembly. Washington has also announced that it will not fully pay its share of the funding of the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT Organization in Vienna, thereby violating its political commitments as a CTBT signatory. The US withdrawal from certain verification activities, such as preparations for on-site inspections, greatly complicates international efforts to set up the verification system.

Other governments, including those of China, India and Pakistan, have also failed to demonstrate the leadership and courage necessary to secure a political consensus within their countries for accession to this important Treaty. Failure to support the CTBT or fund the CTBTO PrepCom by another state – whether or not it is party to the NPT – should not serve as an excuse for any governments to withhold signature and ratification.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, and Pakistan *must* sign and ratify the CTBT for the treaty to enter into force. Algeria, China, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, the United States, and Viet Nam must now ratify, without further procrastination. The longer these states wait to join the Treaty, the greater the chance that some nation may begin testing and set off a dangerous international action-reaction cycle of military and nuclear confrontation. It is vital to international security that the moratorium on nuclear testing be maintained.

It is the job of the governments meeting here to make sure that the CTBT remains on the top of the arms control agenda. NPT states parties need to send out a strong message to the remaining 13 CTBT "hold-out" states and urge their prompt signature and ratification without conditions or reservations. NPT states parties should also endorse the continuation of the current global nuclear test explosion moratorium until such time as the CTBT enters into force. On these points, states that truly support the NPT and the CTBT should not be willing to compromise. To ensure that the testing moratorium is maintained, it is vital that potential violators realise that the penalties and costs would be significant. We also urge governments to send high-level emissaries to the 13 hold-out states and to press for their signature and ratification at every opportunity, including discussions on combating terrorism.

Entry into force of the CTBT is truly within reach. But as a result of the actions of a handful of states, the viability of a verifiable, comprehensive ban on nuclear tests – and possibly the future of the NPT itself – is in jeopardy. No single government or individual leader should be allowed to stand in the way of the historic opportunity to permanently end the scourge of nuclear testing, which is an indispensable step towards eliminating nuclear weapon threats and preventing nuclear war.

This presentation was prepared and supported by NGOs who have worked for a comprehensive test ban treaty for many years, in many countries, in many ways. On behalf of the world's citizens, we urge you to do all that is within your power to ensure the entry into force of the CTBT and the implementation of all elements of treaty's verification and monitoring system.

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