

Making Permanent the Benefits of CTBT

The Indian Perspective

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The Benefits of CTBT

Even without being in Force the CTBT has made significant contributions to national and international security. The reality of CTBT is of 254 monitoring stations and 10 Labs being run by the CTBTO. This is 80 % of its designed capability. The present arrangement picked up the Oct 2006 test by the DPRK, which was rated as a fraction of a KT yield by experts. This demonstrated capability has made clandestine testing of nuclear weapons nearly impossible. The CTBTO's capacity to identify the source and location of even small tests is a major benefits of the CTBT.

Three specific gains will accrue from this. First, it will hinder nuclear weapons states from advancing/improving their capabilities. Second, it will impede the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Third, it will constrain regional arms race. The CTBTO has demonstrated credible capacities to locate nuclear accidents, to detect radiation and issue early warnings. Its capability to issue Tsunami warnings is another gain from the Treaty. There is no doubt that CTBT in force will serve every state's national security interests.

Making CTBT Universal

All states - nuclear weapons states and non NWS - acknowledge that the coming into force of the CTBT will enhance their national security. Strategic analysts, former Generals, Admirals and Air Marshals, accept this. The National Academy of Sciences of US in March this year has reiterated that 'case for Test Ban is stronger than ever'. The General Secretary of China's Institute for International Strategic Studies in Shanghai has stated that "China's ratification of the CTBT will solidify China's image as an open, transparent and responsible nation, and will enhance China's security interests." Every US President has tried to obtain legislative endorsement for US ratifying the CTBT. None has succeeded.

What then is coming in the way of its coming into force? It is the wait and watch policy of China which is I waiting for the United States to take the lead in ratifying the CTBT. The need for the moment is of leadership. That needs to come from the US and President Obama's initiatives on nuclear disarmament and Nuclear Security gives us reason to be hopeful. Initiatives by the Cold War era stalwarts viz; Schultz, Perry, Kissinger and Nunn have also energised the discourse on nuclear

issues. On the CTBT, it would not be incorrect to say that all roads lead to Washington.

India & CTBT

India did not sign the CTBT, since it was not explicitly linked to disarmament. India was not willing to join a Treaty which legitimises a permanent division between NWS and Non NWS. It also objected to the CTBT being pushed through bypassing the Conf on Disarmament to avoid the consensus based procedure in favour of a majority vote in the UNGA. India was included in the category of states whose ratification was made essential for the CTBT to come into force.

Since its nuclear tests in 1998, India has declared and observed a unilateral and voluntary moratorium on tests. It has conveyed its readiness to join the CTBT if all states in the Annexure 2 of the Treaty sign it.

The Future

Given the wide spread support to the Treaty, there is good reason to believe that, if the US ratifies the CTBT, China the principal NWS yet to ratify the Treaty, will also do so. If that happens, India will find little logic in not ratifying the Treaty. This will hopefully bring others on board the CTBT.

In the Interim

It is necessary to ensure that nuclear tests are not conducted by any state. A test in future will be a game changing event. Its consequences can lead to a cascading effect on the nuclear restraint demonstrated by many states.

The linkages between Non Proliferation and Disarmament are another dimension of the future of the Global Nuclear Regime. Notwithstanding the progress made on START, there is much needs to be attained on important is These are Tactical Nuclear Weapons, clandestine transfer of nuclear technologies and the range of doctrinal beliefs in concepts of deterrence, First Use, escalation dominance, and extended deterrence. Progress is also required on all these.