

CTBT: HOW TO AVOID THE TRAP

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The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is a proxy and a symbol. The real issue is Pakistan's sovereignty, its Islamic identity and capacity to stand firm for its vital interests. The choice is between nuclear deterrence and economic self-reliance on the one hand and submission to US hegemony, compromises on nuclear capability and ever increasing debt dependence on the other. The CTBT is the road to nuclear decimation and suffocating debt enslavement.

The Pakistani nation and its leadership are faced with a critical choice. Whatever direction is taken today will have far reaching impact on the future of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah. It is no exaggeration to claim that their role in the 21st century would very much depend on this choice. The Prime Minister's visit to the US and his meeting with President Bill Clinton on December 2, 1998, constitute important steps in this process.

The real issue is not one of getting a few billion dollars in loans, and a little more breathing space. Even lifting or partially relaxing of the economic and military sanctions is not the real issue. Similarly, the problem is not to acquire 28 already obsolescent F-16s, or to get back our money, held illegally by the US after defaulting on delivery of contracted F-16s on time. At best, these could be termed as secondary aspects of the problem. The real question is Pakistan's freedom and security and its capacity and will to stand up for its rights and vital interests. It has implications for Pakistan's ability and capability to play its role in building and shaping its own future and that of the Muslim Ummah according to its own priorities in the light of its own ideology, religion, and political aspirations. Present and future security challenges in South Asia have to be seen in this context.

Facts have to be faced squarely. The threat from India is a fact, not fantasy. Although over fifty years have rolled by since independence, Indian political leadership has, by and large, refused to accept Pakistan as a sovereign Muslim country. Whatever the domestic failures of Pakistani leader-

ship, the fact is that the final break-up of Pakistan in 1971 was a result of open Indian aggression. Moreover the Indian leadership sought "legitimacy" for this aggression invoking abhorrence for the two-nation theory and the ideology of Pakistan. Indira Gandhi openly said, India's defeat of Pakistan on the eastern front was "to sink the two-nation theory in the Bay of Bengal". The world's response to this naked aggression was passive and even tactically collusive.

The same "justification" is advanced by the Indian leadership for its continued occupation of Kashmir. Every Indian leadership has been openly declaring: "We are in a state of war against Pakistan and China. For security against these two enemies, nuclear weaponisation and all-time war preparations are essential". This was not only declared by the Indian Prime Minister and his interior minister, but also very forcefully and in quite clear words by the India's diplomat and spokesman - Mr Jaswant Singh. His article "Against nuclear apartheid" appearing in *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct, 1998) contains a clear statement of the Indian nuclear doctrine.

There is need to understand the US position too. Pakistan never spared anything to avail American friendship and favour. However, starting from the Indo-China war in 1962 to the nuclear explosions in May 1998, the US attitude and the economic and military sanctions to which Pakistan has been subjected in varying degrees, make three things quite clear:

- One, for Pakistan, the US is not at all a trustworthy friend. It never helped us in real need. Its promises of help and protection cannot be relied upon;

- Two, the real US inclination has always been towards India. At every hour of trial, it upheld Indian interests against Pakistan. In its global political design, the US looks towards India as a regional power. This hampers Pakistan's playing the role of a sovereign equal, notwithstanding the difference in size.

- Three, the US and the West, are ner-

vous about the Islamic threat. That is why the US wants Pakistan to be weak so that it is unable to play an effective role in unifying the Muslim world. Israel has been strengthened so that it should dominate the combined strength of the Arab states, militarily and economically. It has been ensured that no challenging power should emerge in the region. Any nation that aspires for an independent role — be it Iran, Libya, Iraq, Pakistan or anyone else — is so 'fixed' that it may pose no threat to Israeli hegemony. The fate of the Central Asian Muslim states is no different where it has been ensured that a Muslim block is not created, and this whole area remains linked with Russia and Europe. In this context, Pakistan's becoming a nuclear power is most awesome for the West and a factor that can upset their whole future plans.

In the context of this political chessboard, it can be well-understood that in the eyes of the US, Israel and the West, the real danger is Pakistan's nuclear capability and economic progress. The Indian nuclear status somewhat fits into this design. That is why when China acquired atomic capability in 1964, western countries including Russia, Canada, France, Israel and America helped openly as well as clandestinely to make India a nuclear power. No adverse reaction was shown against Indian detonation in 1974. Even the Indian explosions of 1998 materialised because of sustained help from some these countries, particularly Russia and Israel. No severe action was taken against her until Pakistan conducted tests on May 28 and 30. The sanctions are really targeted at Pakistan's nuclear capability and economic independence.

Even the relaxation now being promised does not represent a change of heart, it only reflects a change of strategy. The purpose is not to pull Pakistan out of the economic crisis. The pressure is coming from US agricultural and industrial lobbies. Yet the real objective is to keep Pakistan in a condition of perpetual dependence upon the West.

Let it be clearly understood that the CTBT is not a self-contained and independent treaty. It is a key element of a comprehensive and integrated American nuclear doctrine as clarified in its preamble. The purpose of the treaty is that the five world atomic powers, and more particularly the US, should perpetuate their nuclear hegemony over the world. The result would be that the Muslim world stays permanently deprived of this capability. The US nuclear umbrella provides protection to Europe and Japan. China has its own nuclear capability. The UK and France have their own added deterrents. Now India has managed to secure enough capability that it can establish its hegemony over the region. Israel also possesses nuclear power.

The only area that lacks a nuclear security system, is the Muslim world. Stretching from Morocco to Malaysia, it is dependent on others for its defence. Under the circumstances the future of the Muslim world depends on Pakistan. That is exactly why the whole political, economic and technological pressure is exerted against Pakistan. Carrot and stick, both are in use, in full measure.

After Pakistan conducted the tests in response to Indian explosions, the five permanent members of the Security Council (P-5), the eight industrially developed nations (G-8) and the UN Security Council through its resolution, have all made it clear that Pakistan and India commit to test bans by signing CTBT, followed by other steps:

- Acceptance of the NPT regime;
- Stopping further enrichment, joining the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), including acceptance of proposed inspection arrangements;
- Submission to the Missile Technology Control and Transfer Regime, so as to contain and control delivery systems;
- Restrain from weaponisation, miniaturisation and deployment of nuclear material; and
- To commit not to export or supply technology and develop appropriate Command and Control System.

The above five are components of one indivisible Pakistan nuclear doctrine. Presently, Pakistan is totally out of this whole system, and in spite of all hue and cry at the international level, whatever Pakistan, or for that matter India, has done is legally and morally correct; as under international law Pakistan had every right to do so. But once Pakistan signs and becomes part of the system, then it will be bound to follow all rules and may never be able to get out of it, despite the so-called exist clauses. A country once entrapped, if it opts to come out, will face the fate of Iraq and the type of threats given to North Korea.

The CTBT is the first step towards this trap. Pakistan must avoid it if it wishes to protect its sovereignty and nuclear deterrence. If we do not resist this slippery road at this stage, we would willy nilly be dragged into the abyss. The five nuclear powers, particularly the US is destined to exert all kinds of pressure to force Pakistan into the CTBT unconditionally, followed by commitment to the FMCT and stop further development of nuclear technology or deploying of missiles (para 3, P-5 communique of June 5, 1998). The five have also made it abundantly clear that no amendment will be made in the NPT to recognise the nuclear status of India and Pakistan. (para 4).

When the Prime Minister of Pakistan pledged in the UN General Assembly (Sept 23, 1998) to respect the CTBT and accepted the treaty practically, the US Secretary of State Madeline Albright categorically declared the very next day that CTBT was not the only issue; the whole nuclear regime is to be accepted and adhered to. The US under secretary of state, Strobe Talbott, speaking on "Peace and Security in South Asia" in the World Network Programme (November 13, 1998) again asserted the same. He openly stated that virtual nuclear roll-back was the real target. With respect to the CTBT, he for the first time alluded to the inspection not merely of "testing sites"

but of "nuclear sites". Interestingly the treaty has used the term "test" in the title and not in the substantive text where only "explosion" is mentioned. Both these terms were not properly defined in the treaty. Mr Talbott's allusion to "nuclear sites" is not a lapse, it has brought the cat out of the bag.

The fact that the CTBT is a stepping stone to an integrated indivisible nuclear doctrine is hard to deny. The decision to be taken today is whether Pakistan is ready to be entangled in the system, and resultantly get its hand tied for ever. Alternatively is it willing to pay the price to stay free and insist on maintaining its nuclear deterrence in a manner that is not only in keeping with its independence and honour but which also enables it to effectively protect its national and ideological security? If freedom, security and honour are dear to Pakistan, it will have to decide today. Any subservience to the neo-imperialist system is not acceptable. Pakistan must look only to Allah, place confidence in its own people and follow the path of self-reliance. Any other option, whatever be the promises, would lead us towards slavery.

Pakistan's security concerns are multifaceted. And all these aspects — security, economic strength, ideological identity and cultural integrity are equally important and inter-related. Stepping into the CTBT corridor is bound to take us along the road to denuclearisation. This specific aspect of the national security relates to the threat perception from India, as well as Pakistan's role in shaping the future of the Muslim Ummah. Accepting ban on further nuclear tests would amount to abandoning these security dimensions and betraying the aspirations of the people of Pakistan and the Islamic Ummah.

CTBT's non-relevance to nuclear deterrence is being trumpeted in the official media in a very biased manner. Presenting only one side of the picture is being reflected. We would like the political, intellectual, scientific and military leadership of the country to look into the issue with greater depth and concern to meet our present and future needs. Only a futuristic approach can be realistic. We must not surrender to short-term political or economic pressures.

to be concluded