

In the spotlight

Sergei A. Ordzhonikidze

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Organizations or between International Organizations. The Commission has a large number of bilateral agreements and arrangements with States hosting international monitoring facilities for the CTBT.

International Monitoring System (IMS) facility agreements and arrangements are foreseen in the Treaty and are based on models adopted by the Commission to regulate the establishment and provisional operation and maintenance of the facilities. To date, the Executive Secretary has signed 22 such agreements and arrangements on behalf of the organization, of which 15 have entered into effect and two are applied provisionally.

Negotiating IMS facility agreements can take time. Early on it was realized that the Commission's programme of work could not wait for them to be finalized. The practice thus evolved for host States to authorize the necessary work by means of interim exchanges of letters, pending conclusion of the formal facility agreement. This has been a successful approach and legal arrangements in the form of IMS facility agreements, or exchanges of letters, now govern the Commission's activities at 309 of the 337 monitoring facilities in 76 of the 90 host States. ■



Mr. Ordzhonikidze, a Russian national and career diplomat, was appointed Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva in March 2002. He also serves as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze joined the Soviet diplomatic service in 1969 and has held several positions at the Permanent Mission of his country to the United Nations in New York, including Deputy Permanent Representative. In Moscow he served as Deputy Chief of the International Legal Department of the Foreign Ministry and Director of International Organizations of the Foreign Ministry. In 1999, Mr. Ordzhonikidze was appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Q: *The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) was negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva between 1993 and 1996.*

Where do you as the Secretary-General of this Conference place the CTBT in the overall historic context of the Conference on Disarmament?

A: In the nuclear context, I place the CTBT in the logical, and I hope historical, chain that leads from uncontrolled nuclear proliferation to multilaterally agreed and verified elimination of all nuclear weapons. The conclusion of the CTBT in the Conference on Disarmament marked the completion of an important step in this process that essentially started with the negotiation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in one of the Conference on Disarmament's predecessor bodies.

More broadly, I see the CTBT, together with the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, as a link in the fence that will ultimately keep out all weapons of mass destruction. The job of the Conference on Disarmament is to continue building this fence.

Q: *In the Final Declaration of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT adopted in New York on 13 November 2001, 109 ratifying and signatory States affirmed "...that the conduct of nuclear-weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion constitutes a serious threat to global efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation."*

In your view, what effect will the entry into force of the CTBT have on global non-proliferation efforts and the disarmament process?

"The entry into force of the CTBT would provide an immediate boost to both non-proliferation efforts and the whole disarmament process."



A: The entry into force of the CTBT would provide an immediate boost to both non-proliferation efforts and the whole disarmament process. Most immediately, there would be a solid guarantee against the resumption of testing, backed up by confidence that any illegal testing would be detected. This would deliver many governments the assurance they need that the NPT regime is protected, and that their decision not to pursue nuclear weapons is justified.

“The verification regime is the teeth of the Treaty, and the political significance is that the teeth are sharp and strong enough to bite anyone who conducts a nuclear test explosion.”

Secondly, entry into force would restore confidence in multilateral security arrangements in general, and would boost efforts to negotiate further instruments for nuclear disarmament, such as a treaty banning fissile material production. I think there would also be very positive effects in other areas, such as biological weapons, where general scepticism and lack of political interest is detracting from the development of potentially important multilateral barriers to proliferation.

Q: *The world witnessed over 2000 nuclear test explosions before the CTBT opened for signature on 24 September 1996. CTBT's global verification regime is the result of many years of negotiations led by an international Group of Scientific Experts at the Conference on Disarmament to ensure that non-compliance with the provisions*

of the Treaty can be detected in a timely and effective manner.

What political significance does the verification regime have in constraining the proliferation of nuclear weapons?

A: The verification regime is the teeth of the Treaty, and the political significance is that the teeth are sharp and strong enough to bite anyone who conducts a nuclear test explosion. For countries which do not have nuclear

weapons, there is a strong disincentive to developing them – essentially, there is no chance that tested and reliable weapons could be developed undetected. For the countries which do have nuclear weapons, there are serious constraints to developing and expanding their arsenals. This in turn both reduces the pressure on them to keep up with their nuclear rivals, and represents an effective tool to prevent any non-nuclear State from developing a nuclear capability.

Q: *44 States listed in its Annex 2 must ratify the CTBT before it can enter into force. These 44 States formally participated in the work of the 1996 Conference on Disarmament and possessed nuclear reactors at that time. So far 31 Annex 2 States have ratified the Treaty.*

What could be done in your opinion to further signature and ratification of the Treaty, in particular of these 13 outstanding Annex 2 States whose signature is still needed for the CTBT to enter into force?

A: To be frank, I think the main obstacle to entry into force of the CTBT is the lack so far of political commitment to the concept of the nuclear-test-ban by one of the nuclear weapon States. Without leadership from all five of the permanent members of the Security Council, we are unlikely to see the 13 outstanding Annex 2 States join anytime soon. So it is essentially a question of building political support for the test ban within the nuclear weapon States. I think it is important that other, smaller countries, who rely for their security on the guarantees contained in the NPT, make it clear how important it is to them – in pure national security terms – that the CTBT enters into force. This message needs to be delivered through all available channels: bilateral, regional and multilateral.

In the meantime, it is vital that those countries which have ratified this international legal instrument, work energetically with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to ensure that when the Treaty does enter into force, everything will be ready and will operate effectively. It will be all the more difficult to get the necessary political support where it counts, if interest and support is dissipating elsewhere. ■