



Editorial



In March 1963, President John F. Kennedy said: "I am haunted by the feeling that by 1970, unless we are successful, there may be 10 nuclear powers instead of 4, and by 1975, 15 or 20." Fortunately,

Kennedy's timetable was averted. However, there has been a sense over recent years that his prediction could come true, several decades later.

In today's world, the ban on nuclear testing is more important than ever.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) prevents the spread of nuclear weapons to additional States and restricts the development of advanced, new types of nuclear warheads. It acts as a catalyst for progress on nuclear disarmament, aiding measures such as de-alerting and strategic and non-strategic arms reductions.

Climate change and the energy crisis are two priorities on the global agenda. Closely related is the resurgence of nuclear energy as nations strive to meet their growing energy demands while minimizing their potential impact on the environment. This results in an increase in the production of fissile material as the number of countries and facilities managing the nuclear fuel cycle also grows. In such a world, it is essential that the line between prohibited and permitted nuclear activities is drawn clearly and irrevocably. The CTBT provides the last and most visible barrier against nuclear weapons development. A CTBT in force would also be an incentive for ending the production of fissile material for weapons use, pending the negotiation and entry into force of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, as well as reducing stocks of such materials.

When Kennedy made his speech, great leadership combined with multilateral arms control initiatives, such as the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963 and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968, succeeded in limiting the spread of nuclear weapons. Today we need the same strong leadership, with the United States at the forefront in international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

The political momentum for the Treaty continues to grow. Colombia, Malaysia and Iraq are key countries that recently signed or ratified the Treaty. Strong support for the Treaty has also been expressed at the highest political levels by President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom and numerous foreign ministers. Former U.S. foreign affairs and defense policy leaders – George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn, supported by more than 40 others – have called for the CTBT's entry into force from a bipartisan platform. The U.S. Democratic Party nominee, Barack Obama, has made his support for CTBT ratification clear on several occasions and U.S. Republican Party nominee, John McCain, has pledged to have another look at the Treaty.

The CTBT's global alarm system is also constantly expanding. 256 monitoring facilities have been installed to date. The number of these facilities transmitting data to Vienna from around the world has tripled since 2004 and the volume of data made available to users has doubled. Over 100 countries and over 1000 individual users now access data bulletins and analyzed products. A brand new Global Communications Infrastructure has been put in place, completing a ten year programme worth tens of millions of dollars. The first ever on-site inspection field exercise (IFE08) is being conducted on an unprecedented scale at the former nuclear test site at Semipaltinsk in Kazakhstan: the exercise involves over 200 participants and over 50 tonnes of equipment deployed over 1000 square kilometres of terrain.

In view of the current political climate, this edition of CTBTO Spectrum focuses on the role of the CTBT in the wider non-proliferation and disarmament context. We are privileged to have received articles from several internationally acclaimed leaders. President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica gives his views on the steps necessary to ensure the Treaty's entry into force. The Director General of the IAEA, Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, stresses the CTBT's key role in global security. Former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn expounds on the "race between cooperation and catastrophe." U.S. senior diplomats, Ambassador Max Kampelman and Ambassador Tom Graham, explore the threat that nuclear weapons pose to humanity, and the Executive Director of the Arms Control Association, Daryl Kimball, examines the reasons for the enduring value of the CTBT. This edition also includes highlights about the IFE08, the cooperation between the CTBTO and the World Meteorological Organization, the challenges of establishing monitoring stations in Antarctica, and the ongoing International Scientific Studies project to assess the readiness and capabilities of the CTBT's verification regime.

As was the case 45 years ago, the governments of today will need to visualize the larger picture and ask themselves what world they would like their children to live in. Would they want to go back to a "free-for-all" with the risk of a new nuclear arms race? Or would they prefer to continue building the global security architecture with multilateral treaty arrangements such as the CTBT at its core?

I deeply hope they will choose the latter.

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