

# The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: A key to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons

by Jonas Gahr Støre, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

A world free of nuclear weapons has been a longstanding objective of Norway's foreign policy. Considerable progress was made up to the 1990s, but the last ten years have been more discouraging. We have been confronted with serious proliferation challenges. There is a widespread perception that nuclear weapon States are not delivering on their disarmament obligations. And it has been difficult to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. In short, the first ten years of this century can be described as the lost decade.

### Eliminating nuclear arms will enhance global security

Achieving a world free of nuclear weapons will require a reversal of recent years' setbacks and a renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament. Fortunately, there are signs in many countries of growing awareness, among politicians and the general public alike, that global security will be enhanced by the elimination of nuclear arms, and that the security of even the most powerful States will be better served in a world without these weapons.

### Strong leadership crucial for promoting nuclear disarmament

In February last year, Norway hosted an international conference on nuclear disarmament that brought together some of the world's leading experts on nuclear issues. There was remarkable consensus on the advisability of moving towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. The crucial importance of the personal engagement of national leaders was underlined; strong leadership is vital in order to involve key stakeholders and build public support. The conference also agreed that taking disarmament seriously means taking concrete steps in that direction, such as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

### NPT must be strengthened

Nuclear weapons cannot be eliminated overnight. This will have to be a gradual process based on verified reductions over time. Our efforts should be anchored in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which has been a cornerstone of our collective security for more than 40 years. It has prevented the most alarming proliferation scenarios from becoming a reality. It has enabled non-nuclear weapon States to benefit from civilian nuclear applications. It has committed nuclear weapon States to disarm. However, despite its good record, the NPT is now under growing strain. We must develop a common vision of how to strengthen this vital treaty, and this should be the main objective for the NPT Review Conference in 2010. We cannot afford to repeat the failure of the 2005 Conference.

### Legally binding CTBT is imperative

It is therefore of utmost importance that we develop a common approach to the nuclear threat. A legally binding and comprehensive ban on nuclear testing is crucial. This would effectively prevent the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. It would enhance our common efforts to prevent horizontal nuclear proliferation and a new nuclear arms race. A legally binding CTBT is one of the preconditions for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Norway has therefore on a number of occasions urged all remaining countries, whose ratification is necessary for entry into force, to ratify the CTBT, and has provided funding for activities to this end.

### Importance of ratification by the United States

With the new U.S. administration there is now a new window of opportunity. Prior to his

## NOTES & QUOTES

“The Nonproliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the nonproliferation regime, and the United States must exercise leadership needed to shore it up. So we will seek agreements with Russia to secure further reductions in weapons under START. We will work with this (Senate Foreign Relations) committee and the Senate toward ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and we will dedicate efforts to revive negotiations on a verifiable, fissile material cut-off treaty.”



STATEMENT BY U.S. SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON  
AT THE NOMINATION HEARINGS TO BE SECRETARY OF STATE, 13 JANUARY 2009



election, President Barack Obama expressed strong support for the CTBT. Ratification by the United States would have a tremendous impact not only on the CTBT, but also on the NPT.

Meanwhile, pending entry into force, we must uphold the existing norm of non-testing. Norway expects all States that possess nuclear weapons to maintain their unilateral moratoria.

### **CTBT is verifiable**

We must provide political and financial support to help the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) complete the International Monitoring System (IMS) and the other elements of the global verification regime. Indeed, much progress has been achieved in recent years. The assertion that the CTBT cannot be verified is not valid.

Reaching agreement on a legally binding ban on the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes is also essential in this respect. Such an agreement must be transparent and verifiable so that the international community can be confident that no nuclear warheads are being produced in secrecy. Likewise it is essential to make progress in the destruction of military stockpiles of fissile material, or the conversion of these materials for peaceful uses. Disarmament and peaceful use should go hand in hand.

### **United States and Russia must take the lead in nuclear disarmament**

The number of nuclear warheads must be significantly reduced. Given the fact that the United States and Russia possess more than 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, they must take the lead. The bilateral United States–Russian START and SORT treaties, which limit the number of strategic and deployed arms, need to be replaced by new

binding agreements on further cuts in strategic nuclear arsenals. And other nuclear weapon States will then have to follow suit.

We must reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in security policies. This could be done in a number of ways. Steps should be taken to reduce the operational status of deployed weapons in order to prevent accidental use. We should diminish the geographical scope of nuclear weapons by supporting the establishment of regional nuclear–weapon-free zones. We should encourage nuclear weapon States to provide assurances that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States, particularly States belonging to nuclear-free zones. We also need to reassess the role of deterrence.

### **Robust non-proliferation regime is essential**

Total elimination of nuclear weapons will require a much more robust and credible non-proliferation regime than we have today. This will entail expansion of the regime and closure of the current loopholes. All nations must work towards this end, and assistance must be provided to countries that are not able to implement their non-proliferation obligations due to limited resources.

We will not make real progress on non-proliferation unless we ensure that all NPT States have the opportunity to benefit from nuclear energy and technology. However, the right to peaceful use must not undermine our non-proliferation efforts or human safety and environmental considerations.

### **IAEA nuclear fuel bank necessary**

One way of providing opportunities for peaceful use while ensuring

non-proliferation is through multilateral cooperation on handling the whole nuclear fuel cycle. As a first step, we should set up a fuel bank under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to supply nuclear fuel to all *bona fide* NPT States. Such a fuel bank would discourage a number of countries from developing their own fuel production capacity, which is both expensive and, more importantly, could increase proliferation. Norway has pledged US\$ 5 million to such a bank.

We must overcome our differences. We must work across the traditional regional groupings, as Norway does in the Seven Nation Initiative (*please see explanation on page 11*). We must involve civil society, academia and non-governmental organisations. We must forge new partnerships. We must work in innovative ways to achieve a positive and forward-looking outcome of the NPT 2010 Review Conference. These are challenging tasks, but I am confident that we can succeed. ■

### **Biographical note**



*Jonas Gahr Store has served as Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2005. Prior to this he was the State Secretary and Chief of Staff at the Office of the Prime*

*Minister. In addition to having held other positions within the Office of the Prime Minister earlier in his political career, Mr. Store was also the Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross from 2003 to 2005 and the Chief of Staff at the World Health Organization from 1998 to 2000. ■*