



VOICES

The CTBT: One of the most important international instruments

BY HOSHYAR ZEBARI
IRAQ'S FOREIGN MINISTER

We are striving to create a safer world for ourselves and for future generations, a world free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The international commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) represents one of the most prominent mechanisms for achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. I was keen to take part in the last two CTBT Ministerial Meetings in 2010 and 2012 to promote the Treaty's entry into force, which were held on the fringes of the UN General Assembly sessions. I participated not only to express Iraq's desire to reiterate the importance of supporting the Treaty but also to reaffirm the support of Iraq for the entire disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

IRAQ'S DESIRE TO ENHANCE THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM FOR DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION

When we tackle the subject of WMD, in Iraq we are talking about our personal experience and the intense suffering

to which we were subjected because of the possession of these weapons. We have also been greatly affected by the international sanctions imposed by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions that prevented Iraq from making any technological and scientific progress for a number of years, most specifically between 1990 and December 2010. As a result of this suffering but equally because of our sincere desire to rid the Middle East of the menace of nuclear weapons, Iraq is keen to contribute to global efforts to enhance an international system for disarmament and the non-proliferation of WMD.

We consider both the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) with its three interrelated pillars (disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy) and the CTBT as the main cornerstones of this system. In Iraq we have made a number of achievements in this regard. We have ratified the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), we signed the CTBT in 2008 and the Iraqi

Council of Representatives approved a law on ratification by the Republic of Iraq of the CTBT on 9 October 2012.

Iraq is taking these steps towards disarmament and non-proliferation and the destruction of all kinds of WMD not only as a fulfilment of UNSC resolutions, but also because the Iraqi Constitution, which was approved in 2005 after the collapse of the former regime in 2003, bans the use and the possession of such weapons. Here, I would like to draw attention to Article 9 of the Iraqi Constitution on the banning of WMD for its importance in our internal and foreign policy:

'The Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq's international obligations regarding the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production and non-use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and shall prohibit associated equipment, material, technologies and delivery systems for use in the development, manufacture, production and use of such weapons.'

In this regard, it might be useful to indicate that Iraq has documented all the steps it has taken in that matter within the respective international forums. Iraq has also expressed its respect and commitment to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation- related international treaties, agreements and arrangements.

The Government of Iraq has adopted a number of legislative and executive measures in this regard in order to reflect its commitments in a practical way. The Government of Iraq also believes that the total elimination of WMD would provide the international community with a true guarantee against the use or the threat to use these weapons.

CTBT'S ENTRY INTO FORCE WILL ENHANCE THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION

There is no doubt that the entry into force of the CTBT, after its ratification by the eight remaining States in Annex

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2 of the Treaty¹, would enhance the international system of disarmament and non-proliferation. Moreover, ratification of the CTBT by the main nuclear weapon States would encourage other remaining Annex 2 States to ratify or sign the Treaty. In Iraq, we welcome the voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing as an important pathway to reaching the goals

[1] Annex 2 lists 44 countries that possessed nuclear power or research reactors when the CTBT was being negotiated. The eight Annex 2 States that must still ratify before the Treaty can enter into force are: China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States.

of the Treaty, although it cannot be a substitute for a comprehensive universal and legally binding agreement.

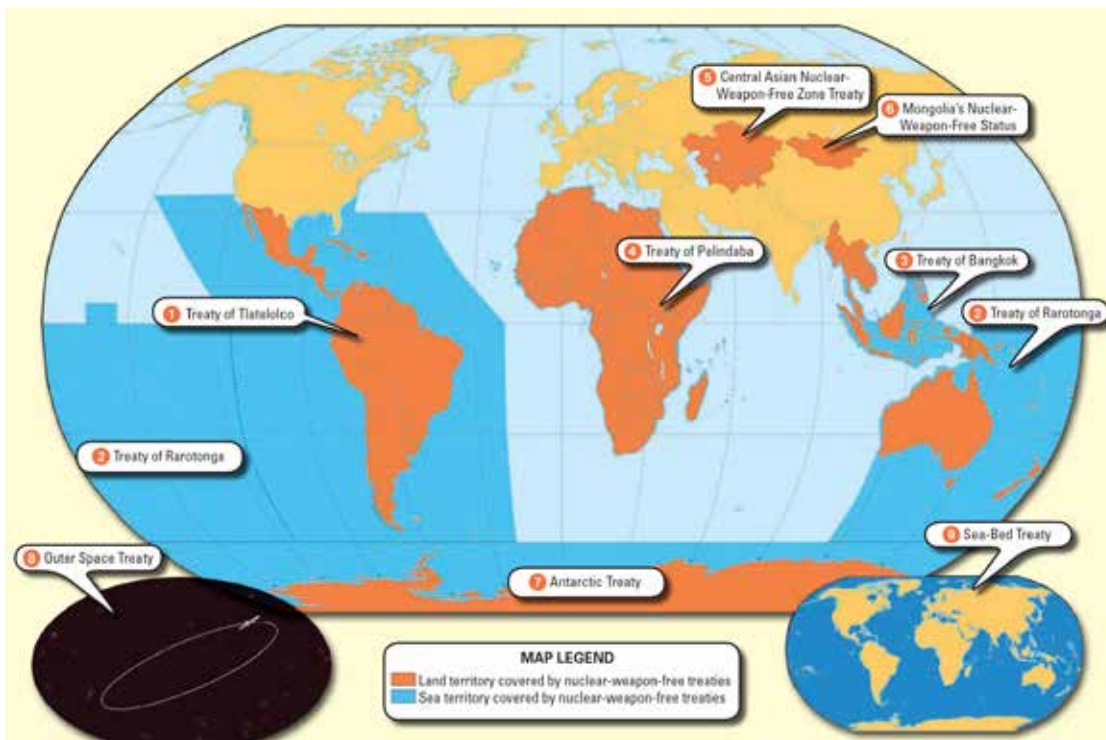
In 2009 the international community received positive signs when President Barack Obama declared that his Administration would follow up the matter of ratification of the CTBT by Congress. Since Congress did not ratify the Treaty during the first term of President Obama, we truly hope that this will be achieved during his second term, especially since there is a moral responsibility borne by the United States as it was the first and only State that has ever actually used a nuclear weapon in wartime.

CTBT AS AN EFFICIENT MONITORING SYSTEM FOR DISASTER MITIGATION

The world has witnessed the tragedies caused by the use of nuclear weapons and other WMD during the past century. We have also witnessed so far in the 21st century the devastating aftermath

Foreign ministers attending the sixth CTBT Ministerial Meeting on 27 September 2012 in New York, USA. Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari is standing in the back row third from right.





Demarcation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, nuclear-weapon-free status and nuclear-weapon-free geographical regions.

Iraq supports the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Map courtesy of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

of natural disasters caused by tsunamis, in addition to the dangers resulting from damage to energy generating nuclear power plants (such as the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident in March 2011). The CTBT and its verification system which, when complete, will consist of 337 monitoring facilities spread around the globe, can help tsunami warning centres issue earlier alerts as well as monitoring the distribution of radiation in the event of a nuclear accident. These civil and scientific applications can definitely help in mitigating the dangers resulting from such disasters, despite the fact that the verification system has been designed to enable the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in Vienna to monitor all nuclear tests that might be conducted around the world.

GLOBAL CONCERN REGARDING THE POSSESSION OF WMD BY TERRORIST GROUPS

The world would be much safer for all of us and for future generations without nuclear weapons and all other WMD. Reality, however, indicates that terrorist groups might be able

to obtain the necessary technology and materials needed to produce such weapons. Meanwhile, we are facing various challenges in that field but most importantly, the fact that many countries possess the materials and knowledge necessary to produce nuclear weapons. Moreover, the technology to produce these weapons is widespread and available on the black market. What really concerns the international community is the danger of terrorist groups acquiring nuclear weapons and the threat they would pose to our security. It is imperative that we coordinate regional and international efforts as a *sine qua non* requirement in order to deter these threats against international peace and security.

OUR GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH A ZONE FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND OTHER WMD IN THE MIDDLE EAST

With regard to the Middle-East, it is one of the most notable regions of tension in the world. Just as it is vital for the sake of security in the region that all of the States in the Middle East ratify the CTBT and the NPT and that their nuclear facilities are subject to the IAEA

safeguards system, we also consider it necessary that the international community mobilizes support to convene a conference in Helsinki, Finland, in 2013 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMD. Such a conference was planned for 2012 but did not take place. This would help prevent fears of a nuclear arms race in the region from becoming a reality, a race that represents a threat to the region's stability and consequently to international peace and security.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

HOSHYAR ZEBARI

was first appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq in September 2003, continuing to serve in this position with successive governments. Prior to this, he became a member of the Iraqi Opposition Coordination and Follow-Up Committee in 2002 after serving as a member of the Iraqi National Congress Leadership Council from 1999. In 1992 he became Head of International Relations of the Iraqi Opposition and was also elected to the Kurdistan National Assembly, serving as the principal negotiator in the Kurdish peace process in 1994.