

# Nuclear Peace Emerging in the Middle East

BY WILLIAM LAMBERS



It's in every nation's interest to be free of the expensive and dangerous burden of nuclear weapons. When we hear estimates from Global Zero of about \$1 trillion being spent in the next decade on nuclear weapons, we should all be in shock. For that is certainly not the road to peace and progress.

We have an alternative. We can reduce the burden of nuclear weapons with a step-by-step approach, one country, one region and one treaty at a time. This peace process includes agreement with Iran over its nuclear programme and all nations ending nuclear testing forever.

Iran clearly cannot afford to be diverting precious resources to the pursuit of nuclear weapons. All eyes right now are on negotiations to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Iran has suffered from sanctions for failing to live up to obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. A report from the International Federation of Human Rights published in June 2013 stated the consequences for the Iranian people:

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"Unemployment is on the rise, inflation is at unprecedented levels and most people have to combine several jobs because the minimum wage is insufficient to counterbalance inflation. Iran's population is experiencing an increasing income gap between rich and poor."

As President Obama said in his statement on 23 November 2013 on the first step agreement on Iran's nuclear programme: "Iran must know that security and prosperity will never come through the pursuit of nuclear weapons – it must be reached through fully verifiable agreements that make Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons impossible."

This year brings great hope for a comprehensive agreement with Iran. But why stop there? There are more steps that need to be taken to stop nuclear proliferation.

## SHUTTING THE DOOR ON NUCLEAR TESTS FOREVER

Jordan, for example, is hosting a large-scale simulated inspection exercise for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in late 2014. This Treaty bans all nuclear weapons test explosions.

The 1963 Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty already bans tests in the atmosphere, underwater and in outer space. The CTBT would shut the door on nuclear tests by prohibiting underground testing too.

Not all nations though are on board. Eight countries still need to ratify the CTBT for the pact to take effect globally: China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United States. The only nation to conduct nuclear tests recently has been North Korea, which has done so at the expense

of its starving citizens. North Korea is an example that no one wants to follow.

By ratifying the CTBT the United States would demonstrate leadership in the non-proliferation field.

The Treaty is vital for creating the conditions for deeper nuclear arms reductions. In fact, the 1996 Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons stated: "...the CTBT obligation permanently to cease or forgo nuclear testing sets the psychological stage for moving toward elimination of nuclear weapons."

If the United States or Russia were to resume nuclear weapons tests they would be followed by others, leading to a costly arms race and increased tensions.

Russia has said it will continue a voluntary nuclear-testing moratorium "as long as other nuclear weapons States do the same."<sup>1</sup> If this moratorium were tragically to end it would be like a return to the Cold War days. No one wants to see that again. The only place left for nuclear tests is the history books.

### RESOURCES SHOULD NOT BE WASTED ON NUCLEAR TESTING AND DEVELOPMENT

What we want to see is the opposite. We want nations to join treaties like the CTBT and save their resources for more important objectives than nuclear testing and development. The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation says that "China is very likely to ratify the CTBT after the U.S. does." Certainly, India and Pakistan are much more likely to join if the United States has signed on. Neither country can afford nuclear weapons with their high rates of hunger and poverty.

The CTBT is enforced through an international monitoring and inspection system, the one that will be tested

[1] Remarks by H.E. Alexander V. Zmeyerovskiy, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the CTBTO, at the fifth conference to promote the CTBT's entry into force, September 2007.



Jordan's Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications, Mohammad Al Momani (left) with CTBTO Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo, in Amman, Jordan, on 2 December 2013, announcing that Jordan will host the CTBTO's Integrated Field Exercise 2014.

in Jordan later this year (for more information, see page 26).

Mohammad Hussien Al Momani, Jordan's Minister of State for Media Affairs and Communications, recently stated: "Jordan is proud to host this exercise. It is in line with Jordan's desire to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework, in particular in the Middle East."

Nearly 20 years ago, the government of Canada published a paper on aerial inspection confidence building measures to help build peace in the Middle East. The upcoming CTBT inspection exercise in Jordan could also be a good building block for future security in the Middle East and the world.

President Obama is committed to ratifying the CTBT, finishing a goal shared by almost every president since Dwight Eisenhower. In fact, President Eisenhower and President Kennedy both supported the goal of ending nuclear testing, and their efforts did achieve the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), which entered into force in 1963. Both Republicans and Democrats supported this plan. The Senate would need to show the same kind of bipartisan cooperation to get the CTBT passed today.

When Kennedy sent the PTBT to the Senate, former members of the Eisenhower administration spoke in favour. Harold Stassen, disarmament advisor under Eisenhower, told the Senate: "I emphasize that this treaty is in the best interests of mankind."

Stassen went on to warn of the dangers of failing to impose restraints on nuclear weaponry, stating that nuclear proliferation "would multiply the dangers of a miscalculated firing of a nuclear bomb, or a madman's first nuclear attack, or an accidental nuclear explosion, or a foolhardy overplayed nuclear bluffing, or other action which would, in a terror-tense world set off a chain reaction of horrible nuclear devastation." Any questions?

Ending nuclear testing was part of what President Kennedy referred to as a "peace race – to advance together step by step, stage by stage, until general and complete disarmament has been achieved."

When Kennedy pushed the PTBT through the Senate he had the support of the public through the Citizens Committee for a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This committee was headed by one of Eisenhower's test ban negotiators, James Wadsworth.



Soviet and American scientists at the 1958 Geneva Conference of Experts discussing nuclear test detection.



U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's making a statement on suspending nuclear testing on 22 August 1958.

## »The only place left for nuclear tests is the history books.«

Harvard and many others. Dr James Killian, Eisenhower's science advisor, was a member of Kennedy's Citizens Committee.

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U.S. President John F. Kennedy ratifying the Partial Test Ban Treaty, 7 October 1963.

### NO TOTAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT WITHOUT A TEST BAN TREATY

It was Wadsworth who wrote in 1962: "Failure in the nuclear-test-treaty talks would be a very bad omen indeed for success in the broader area of negotiations." He was among many, both Democrats and Republicans, who were committed to ending nuclear testing. There could be no total nuclear disarmament, after all, without a test ban treaty.

The Citizens Committee even included statements of support from college and university presidents from Oregon, Purdue, Florida, Pittsburgh,

Today, there are groups like Global Zero, the Ploughshares Fund and the Friends Committee on National Legislation who can help build that public support for the CTBT. These organizations have dedicated followers worldwide who can build significant support for the CTBT, which is so essential for progress on nuclear disarmament.

We can't let up when it comes to non-proliferation. We cannot as a world society forget that nuclear weapons and their dangers still very much exist. The job of nuclear arms control and disarmament is still far from complete.

Support for the CTBT, as well as for successful negotiations with Iran, will be so crucial for today's race for peace.

A lasting agreement with Iran and ratification of the CTBT are two goals within reach. It's diplomacy in action, the only road to peace and nuclear disarmament.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES



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