

NUCLEAR DETERRENT AND CTBT: THE MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR PAKISTAN

Reference to be provided by Prof. Khurshid

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Nuclear Deterrent and CTBT: The moment of truth Pakistan

By: Senator Professor Khurshid Ahmad

After a series of blunders the Government of Pakistan has made a welcome decision to discuss the issue of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the Parliament.

All the indications showed that under heavy external pressure and the nerve-racking impact of ever-aggravating economic crisis, the government, at the behest of a group of advisers, bureaucrats, finance-magnates and those with vested interests, has been inching towards surrender on the nuclear front. In fact, the Western media and diplomats are even giving a couple of probable dates for the unilateral signing of CTBT. A powerful lobby, both in Pakistan and abroad, has been systematically orchestrating the political and economic blessings of such surrender, christening it as a 'high moral position'.

Both the carrot and the stick have been actively used. The IMF and World Bank have added a new item in their accursed list of 'conditionalities' i.e. unconditional signing of CTBT. Government functionaries began to pave the way, first by de-linking the signing of CTBT from India's prior signing, as has been the declared and principled policy in the past, and second by giving 'glad-tidings' about the easing of sanctions and flow of new loans from the World Bank, the IMF and strangely enough the Islamic Development Bank, as if Jeddah was also playing to the tunes of Washington.

It was in the context of this awe-inspiring scenario that the cabinet's decision to go to the Parliament on this issue came as a breath of fresh air. I welcome this despite the apprehension expressed in some knowledgeable quarters that the decision has already been made and going to the parliament is no more than window-dressing. While welcoming this step, let me place on record my concern that the government must not misread the mood of the people. CTBT and nuclear deterrence are very crucial issues on which the very independence, sovereignty and security of the country hinge. Parliament must discuss all aspects of the problem and discuss it threadbare. There should be a national debate. Knowledgeable people within parliament and outside must take an active part in this debate. Political and religious leadership as well as the press and the intellectuals should discuss the issue at hand with care and candour.

What is at stake is the very future of the country - the destiny of 140 million people. This decision would materially affect our future relationship with India, with the United States and the West. It would also determine the political and economic independence of the country. The whole issue of self-reliance is central to this debate. Even the future of the Islamic character of the state and society is at stake.

This decision must be made on the basis of informed discussion, squarely facing the facts, with loyalty and commitment to the ideals and ambitions of the Pakistani people and their vision of the future. Any discussion under overt or covert pressure would be disastrous. The economic challenge is real; but transient economic pressures cannot be allowed to dictate such strategic decisions. That is why I submit that the entire nation must participate in this debate and decide its future. There cannot be short-shrift proxy decisions on such fundamental issues. Let me recall what the Prime Minister said on 28th May after achieving the nuclear breakthrough despite all the international pressure: "I am not the representative of a coward and submissive nation. From now on we will seek help only from Allah." The parliament and the nation must face this challenge in this spirit - upholding firmly what is in the best interest of Pakistan, its people and the Islamic Ummah.

The Real Issue:

CTBT is to be seen in the total context of the nuclear problem and not as an isolated, self-contained item. The treaty is an integral part of a special Global Nuclear Regime, and must be seen and decided in that context. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the foundation. CTBT, Missile Technology Control Regime and Fissile Material Cut-off Convention (FMCC) are others. All are formed to make a compact regime.

The fact is that the emergence of the atom bomb, thermonuclear technology and the hydrogen bomb has totally changed the global geo-political and military scenes. The power balance that worked for centuries based on conventional weapons and military capability has now taken a secondary place. Nuclear deterrence has brought about essential change in the maintenance of that balance. On the one hand it posed the enormous danger of mass destruction, but at the same time the nations possessing this deterrent have been enabled to establish their hegemony and dictate basic structural changes in the area of world politics. That is why when the NPT is talked about, that it actually means to confine the nuclear capability to the club of five and to ever maintain their monopoly. The whole game is how to keep their exclusive hold and deprive the rest of the world of independent command over this technology. They will do anything to perpetuate that status quo.

The US succeeded in developing nuclear capability before Nazi Germany could do, mostly with the help of German scientists and engineers. Then unwarranted and without any good reason, the US dropped two bombs on the already defeated (and ready to submit) Japan, only to show to the world its supremacy and of its being a global power. Winston Churchill is on record to have said then that if the West intends to maintain its global hegemony, it must attempt to settle its score with the Soviet Union through the use of atomic power. Otherwise, if Russia got that same capability, the West will lose the chance forever. But because of the huge size and

depth of the Russian Empire and its vast conventional arms capacity, the US could not dare to do that. Within years, the Soviet Union was also a nuclear power. Soon after that both the US and the Soviet Union started talking about non-proliferation. To corner the US, the Soviet Union also loudly announced the need for nuclear disarmament. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), under Russian influence, made this a prime objective. During time, both the US and the USSR went on piling up their nuclear arsenal. However, this was the period when dialogue was initiated regarding ban on nuclear tests. During the presidency of General Eisenhower (1958), a treaty of such nature began to be discussed. Initially, Britain supported the US proposal, as both were commonly pursuing their nuclear programmes, so much so that all the British nuclear tests were carried out on American soil.

France could not stay behind either and soon joined the club. Thus, the four white Western nations were armed with nuclear power. Now the fear was from China. China being non-Western, both the US and the USSR despite its shared ideology of communism were bent upon keeping it away from acquiring nuclear capability. However, China was not to accept any such pressure and finally proved its matching strength by detonating its device in 1964. It was the nuclear capability of China that pressed the Western powers to change their attitude towards it. The US, which was not accepting mainland Communist China as a legitimate power and was insistent upon keeping Taiwan in the UN Security Council as a permanent member, had to bend down, to recognizing Communist China and give it its due place in the Security Council.

The five permanent members of the Security Council, having equipped themselves with huge nuclear arsenal, now concentrated on the agenda of not allowing atomic power to proliferate further. Israel, India, South Africa and Brazil were busy in their own clandestine programmes. At least Israel and India were receiving all necessary support from the US, Canada and France. Israel and South Africa were mutually supporting each other. The West now became concerned to work out a system of nuclear non-proliferation at the world level. That is what gave birth to NPT and the treaty was adopted in 1970 for twenty-five years.

In this whole affair, NPT is the most important and fundamental treaty, as it has divided the world into two permanent camps - the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) and those who possess none. For this the cutoff point was 1967. Those nations which detonated and established their nuclear capacity by that year are NWS, the rest are non-NWS. The right to carry out further research and development in the nuclear field is thus reserved for the NWSs. For all the rest of the states, the door is permanently closed.

Pakistan, India and Israel did not sign this treaty. In 1969-70, Pakistan was pursuing only a small and peaceful programme of nuclear reactor development, yet sensing

the dangerous Indian designs; it had expressed its reservations and kept its options open. That is how the so-called linking with India began. After NPT, talks soon started for the CTBT, though the test ban treaty could only be finalised in 1996. A few agreements regarding partial ban on tests were certainly made, but one for comprehensive ban (tests in space, in air, under- water and underground) could not be reached. Interestingly, the US had for a long time been playing tricks and sought for itself special concessions and exceptions. During this period, America conducted 1,000 tests and succeeded in producing such powerful computers, that without going for air, space, underground and under-water tests, it can successfully continue its R&D programme based on computer simulation. Once the US developed other means to realize its targets of continuous nuclear upgradation, it started taking deep interest in the test ban treaty. The US is busy cutting every other hand, yet itself has not so far ratified the CTBT. As China and Russia have also not yet ratified the treaty, there seems little possibility that the US will do so before them. A study of the minutes of the meetings of the US Senate Official Matters Committee and its sub-committee for International Security Proliferation, reveal that Senate ratification of the treaty is yet a far-off matter.

USA and CTBT:

The US Governments case before the Senate is the most reliable and eye opening statement of America's real objectives. John Holum, Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, sums this up on behalf of the White House in his testimony before the Senate Sub-Committee on International Security. Excerpts from his evidence on March 18, 1998 in Panel 1 are given below:

"First, the United States is currently in a position to reap maximum benefits from such a freeze..... Second, the CTBT is also a non-proliferation treaty. Even if a non-nuclear weapon state were able to assemble a simple fission weapon, the CTBT would force it to place confidence in an untested design. Design of a two- stage thermonuclear weapon is even more complicated and (its) development even more dependent on test data. Third, the treaty will strengthen international non-proliferation standards and the NPT regime.... with the means to isolate and sanction those who do not respect the law Fourth, CTBT is effectively verifiable. The US successfully fought for tough verification provisions.....Indeed CTBT will strengthen our means to monitor nuclear testing.....US nuclear deterrence would not be undermined by any nuclear testing that the United States might fail to detect It is a net plus."

John Holum is very explicit about the US hegemonistic ambitions, "....the CTBT will allow us to maintain a safe and reliable nuclear deterrent. In the summer of 1995, President Clinton announced safeguards which collectively recognize and protect to continue important contribution of nuclear weapons to US national security. The

first safeguard mandated the conduct of a stockpile stewardship programme to ensure a high level of confidence in the safety and reliability of our nuclear stockpile, (which) will enable us to maintain America's nuclear deterrent without testing. Moreover in the unlikely event of doubt about our ability to maintain the arsenal under CTBT arises at some point in the future, the treaty provides for withdrawal.....the US will enter the CTBT regime with a proven, well tested arsenal.....the issue before us is really American leadership in the world "

According to Dr Holum the US is "aiming for 100,000 million theoretical operations per second computer capability in our super computer initiative as part of our stockpile stewardship programme. The kinds of computers that are being considered in the context of China and Russia are between 2000 and 7000, as compared to 100,000 mamtax (ph)".

Despite all this preparation, the heads of Nuclear Laboratories and Research establishments are opposing ratification of CTBT by the Senate in the interest of safeguarding future capabilities and guarding against unforeseen developments in the rest of the world. The testimony of Dr Kathleen Baily, Head, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, (Panel II, 18th March 1998) is worth reading and reflecting upon. Her conclusion is "CTBT fails the cost-benefit test. Specifically it will not accomplish the non-proliferation goals as set out for it by the administration, and at the same time, the treaty will seriously degrade the US nuclear deterrent, and thus have a high national security cost."

This is the serious apprehension of the leadership of a country that has undertaken over 1000 tests, has the most powerful supercomputers and an arsenal of some 7000 strategies and 12000 tactical nuclear bombs in readiness on land, air and sea. I wish our policy makers could read not only the full text of the treaties but also the testimonies and discussions before the senate committee available on web pages: (<http://www.dhw.org/pub/clw/coalition/0318bail.htm>).

The US military and scientific leadership claims with certainty that they need no further nuclear tests - open or underground, and that American supremacy can be easily maintained in the next century. In spite of that, the US keeps the option open for itself, while blocking others. The basic American argument is that if nuclear weapons development is frozen at the current level, then it will be in the best US interests to keep others deprived of this power. The US has for itself devised a continuous stockpile stewardship programme, through which it plans to maintain its supremacy into the 21st century.

NPT and the World Powers:

NPT envisaged finally a world totally free of nuclear weapons, but that vision was pursued for a single day. One thing is settled, that nuclear deterrence is a reality for

today and for the future. If the world system is to stay on nuclear deterrence, then there is no argument to keep any nation deprived of it. It is a matter of regret that Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah have not fully grasped the problem and taken a proper stand on the nuclear issue. Now that Pakistan has acquired the capability, all efforts are directed at depriving Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah of it, and our leadership is submitting to pressures in this regard.

Provided in the NPT was an important responsibility of the nuclear capable states to transfer to other countries the technology for peaceful purposes and help them in research and ever-increasing use in various fields. The NWSs have not only failed to discharge that responsibility, but have rather eliminated any such chance in the CTBT. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty stops all types of tests, even those conducted for peaceful research purposes. It also imposes a detailed programme of inspecting the air and underground testing, so much so that it provides a regulation with schedules ranging from two hours to a few days. Every member country has the right to send its representative for investigation, or at least as an observer. Thus every corner of the country related to this can be probed. Ironically, the US seeks the right of the West to peep into the houses of others, while demanding special reservations for themselves. Recently, the American Senate passed a law concerning CWC (Chemical Weapon Convention). The Convention will be applicable to America only if the US President thinks it will serve American interests. With respect to places of inspection and selection of the personnel (inspectors), the US has arrogated to itself under its own law the right of veto inspection under the global treaty. In fact, in one case, the United States refused the inclusion of an Iranian scientist in an international team.

What has been discussed so far brings out the following:

1. The real issue is not one of banning tests; it is rather to maintain the monopoly of the few atomic powers forever. Thus CTBT is only part of a whole system, which, overlooking the rest, cannot be accepted.
2. The question is not confined to banning future testing. Rather, excepting the five nuclear states, all others, particularly Pakistan, are totally deprived of their nuclear capability.
3. The American policy is based on hypocrisy and duplicity. Its yardsticks are different for itself and for others, which is sheer injustice and an act of deceit.
4. Banning all types of tests, CTBT hinders scientific progress and forces one part of the world to rely permanently on the other part, which is not acceptable.

5. CTBT is an attempt to allow a few powers to intervene in other countries in the name of inspection and jeopardize their security.

Thus in brief, the treaty, in its present form is discriminatory and a means of exploitation which has been formulated to safeguard the interests and supremacy of the big powers. It is not in Pakistan's interest to join it.

CTBT, Pakistan and India:

Having clarified the principle stand, we feel it is necessary to put before the nation some other ground realities. Without fully comprehending those facts, the pressure for signing CTBT will not be properly understood:

1. Notwithstanding all tall promises of friendship with Pakistan, the US has always failed to help us in times of real need. In fact, it did not hesitate even to hurt. America is not trustworthy and to rely on its support is to invite one's annihilation. Our national integrity and protection depends on our own strength and not through taking shelter under an umbrella provided by someone else.
2. The US has always been inclined towards India. From the Indo-China border clash in 1962 through Indian nuclear tests in 1974 and May 1998, America has given full weight to Indian interests in total disregard to Pakistan's legitimate concerns.
3. For enhancement of the Indian nuclear capability, the US and other (Euro-centric) Western nations, including Russia, extended all cooperation. Even for its May 11 (1998) test, India was given access to sophisticated technology and know-how. Pakistan on the other hand was pressed hard through the Pressler Amendment and other such sanctions. In spite of having received the price in advance, the F-16s were not delivered to Pakistan. By using all means at its command, the US created hindrances at every stage of our nuclear development programme.
4. Both the US and India thought that Pakistan was unable to undertake the test, or at least it would not go for one. Our detonations of May 28 and 30 and our successful launching of 'Ghauri' were beyond their expectations. The real conspiracy behind the Indian tests was pre-empted through our timely actions. The true purpose was that Pakistan would lag behind, while India, after some eyewash snubbing, will be accepted as a de-facto nuclear power, and ultimately recognized. The successful tests by Pakistan changed the whole scenario. The current game is that first Pakistan should de-link its case from India and thereafter matters are settled with both of them separately. Pakistan is to face various sanctions and pressures to accept all

arrangements proposed. Thus, its defence and economic jugular vein is to be taken into control. India on the other hand is to be given various concessions and brought into the system, thus giving it an upper hand over Pakistan.

5. It is for this reason that so much pressure was exerted on Pakistan before and after the tests, The demands made as follows, are unjustified and unlawful:

- (a) Sign NPT and CTBT unconditionally. Accept all their provisions of bans and let America and Western powers put their hands on our neck;
- (b) Pledge not only to avoid any more testing, but roll back and finish all capability acquired so far:
 - (i) Through non-weaponization,
 - (ii) Stop working on missiles and delivery systems,
 - (iii) Accept Fissile Material Cut off Convention (FMCC), which provides to declare the material stored, open it for inspection and stop further enrichment,
 - (iv) Practically roll back the whole nuclear programme.

What is to be achieved against all this? Only easing those economic and trade sanctions which were unjustified and immoral in the first place, and to initiate bilateral talks with India on Kashmir, when even the continuation of these talks is not guaranteed, let alone the result.

6. As against this, the deal being struck with India is along the following lines:
- a. If India signs NPT and CTBT, it will be recognized as a nuclear weapon state (NWS).
 - b. It will receive the most sophisticated technology so that India can continue its research and upgrade programme without external tests.
 - c. All possible support and cooperation will be given to make India an Asian power against China.
 - d. Help for India in securing permanent Security Council membership status.

Some Policy Blunders:

Over the past 30 years, our stand was that until India signs the treaty, and we are ensured provision of a workable security system, Pakistan will not sign' any treaty. How then, did the self-styled wise men of the present government de-link Pakistan's signing from that of India's without any quid pro quo. Their argument for their decision has severely damaged our principle position. We should have demanded not only the Indian signatures first, but we should have rather insisted that unless given the privileges and positions to be given to India, and unless the Kashmir issue is solved in accordance with the UN resolutions within a given time-frame, there will be no question of our signing the treaty. It is a grave mistake and must be immediately rectified.

Another blunder of the government is that whatever bargaining leverage was acquired, it has been surrendered right at the beginning of the talks. In this respect 'technology transfer' and new experiments according to 'needs' are the areas in which we have already submitted, although these were very important bargaining tools for securing protection of our strategic interests

Appropriate Nuclear Policy:

The question is what should be our nuclear policy? We consider its basic features are as follows:

1. Our principle stand should be that the world at large, and South Asia in particular, must be made nuclear free. Otherwise, we have the right to nuclear deterrence as any other nation. This cannot be done just from one side. The talk about high moral grounds is sheer deceit. The US has 19,000 nuclear warheads. India possesses 90 to 100 - why then are moral sermons addressed to us? Such speeches can convince only those who either are unaware of the global politics and history, or at worst, are bent upon committing suicide.
2. Pakistan is a de facto nuclear power, exactly as India is. Now it is not going to revert to being a non-nuclear state or a nuclear threshold country. If the world is not willing to accept our position, then we cannot accept the position the world wishes to accord us.
3. To get rid of economic sanctions at any cost, is not the issue. The nation should bravely face the difficulties, and it can certainly do so. The real problem is not sanctions, but the government and the leadership, which does not have a true vision of self-reliance. Moreover, it does not have the confidence of the nation and has lost its credibility. The fact of the matter is that like the past

governments, it is equally responsible for the current economic crisis. The real problem is to get rid of this government and to have a credible and capable leadership that can arrest the economic deterioration. Even if they sign CTBT, they would not be able to do anything about the present crisis. Allah forbid, if they follow the path (of signing), it will only add to the load of indebtedness, which is already breaking our necks. Our reliance on foreign assistance will increase and we will sink deeper in this marsh. We still have time to face the situation properly. The sanctions imposed are no hindrances for us. On the contrary, these offer a historic opportunity to get rid of the loan-based economy and the imperialism of the World Bank and international money-lenders.

4. The priority of our nuclear policy should be that in the light of data obtained through our tests, we should further strengthen and consolidate our capability. Furthermore, the need of the hour is:
 - a. Enrich more material and create a credible deterrence in a 20-year perspective.
 - b. The process of miniaturization should be further developed and we must possess tactical and strategic weapons in sufficient quantity - both usable and in the form of readily made-usable.
 - c. The missile technology should be further developed and anti-ballistic missile capability acquired. The recent US cruise-missile attack has brought to light our defence vulnerability. It should be corrected.
 - d. Naval strength should be developed, and the government should not lag behind in the area of nuclear submarines (the instrument of second strike).
 - e. The Command and Control System should be further improved and chances of accidental dangers minimized.
 - f. The Intelligence system should be developed according to our needs.

The system as a whole will provide us effective nuclear deterrence. In the light of this, the rest of the defence strategy be reformed. Both the government and parliament should understand clearly that if (Allah forbid) our nuclear deterrence capability is weakened, then we are no match to India, nor have the time or resources to cover the gap in the field of conventional weapons and war needs.

We should maintain the conventional capacity at a certain level, but our real counter to India will be through nuclear capability only, which is also cost effective.

5. Apart from what has been said above, we should continue dialogue at the international level, and must formulate our demands and conditions after thorough consideration. In our view, Pakistan's conditions for signing NPT and CTBT should be:
 - a. Necessary amendment in the NPT, so that the 1967 cut-off point for testing is waived. Pakistan can thus be accepted as a nuclear power and should enjoy the rights and privileges, which other nuclear states have regarding maintenance of weapons, capability and opportunities of upgrade. Signing CTBT, without availing the facilities given under NPT, will be like having a cart before the horse and would mean abandoning our hard earned nuclear capability. The CTBT road will take you only to the end pointed above. The NPT must be negotiated first. Then only will negotiations on CTBT become relevant.
 - b. The Fissile Material Cut-off Convention is still being formulated. It can be the most damaging treaty. To enter it without enough sustainable deterrent capabilities and their full protection can be extremely dangerous. Do discuss the matter, yet beware of the catches and drawbacks. Rather determine first what your true position is. Take your capability to a desired level, then enter the dialogue from a safe point, if not equal status.
 - c. There is no question of signing CTBT, unless India does so. Whatsoever concessions and privileges are determined for India, Pakistan must also avail all that. The matter is not one of equal size of the countries; it rather concerns the perception of dangers and of the strategy to face them. The US and Britain are not equal in size, but both insist on their interests and independent deterrence. Why should we be so submissive?
 - d. As General Karamat mentioned recently while on a visit to the UK, our stand should be: if India signs, we shall see even then, whether it suits us to sign or abstain. Clearly, for us the just solution of Kashmir is as important as the question of regional security. It is integral to national security, not auxiliary to it. As long as there is no progress in that, and within a pre-determined time-frame, leading to the solution of the Kashmir issue according

to the wishes of the people of Kashmir, we will not enter an arrangement that ties our hands.

- e. Let us abandon the path of cowardice and announce openly that if matters are not settled according to our national interest, and if unjust sanctions are kept imposed upon us, then we are also free to go for further testing as we feel and disregard the self-imposed conditions of international nuclear or missile proliferation. Without counter-leverage, you cannot get your right in today's politics. Why should we tie our hands? When others deprive us of our legitimate right, why should we not take necessary steps to restore that right?

Within this six-point framework, an effective nuclear policy can be designed. It is the duty of the parliament to prepare guidelines within the said framework and bind the government to protect national interests. We should remember that freedom, honour and rights can never be secured through begging and sycophancy. These demand hard struggle and sacrifices. That is why Islam proposes jihad as the path to life and honour. Unfortunately, the present leadership of the country has taken a road, which does not lead to freedom and honour; it would rather entangle us more and more in the American trap. If the nation cannot demonstrate today the courage and resolve, and if it does not opt for the path of jihad and sacrifice to protect its freedom and self respect, then it will lose what it has gained so far. The respect and the capability that our country enjoys today because of having become a nuclear power will all go to waste. CTBT is only a cause and means to slip. Take one step and you will go on sliding down to reach a lowly humility. The ladder of progress is altogether different. The nation must decide whether it accepts the chains of a new slavery and subjugation, or be content with hunger and save its faith, its freedom and its honour.
