

India and CTBT

Synopsis: India has always favored total and universal disarmament and not partial and discriminatory disarmament pacts and treaties. India did not sign NPT only because it was hegemonic and unjust. IN 1974 India conducted its first nuclear test and since then India has kept its nuclear options open. Surrounded by hostile and powerful neighbors, India cannot compromise its security. India objected to the CTBT on the same grounds in spite of its endorsement by 158 nations in the UN. The treaty did not have any provision for time bound elimination of nuclear weapons possessed by the 5 super powers. It favors nuclear powers and discriminates against others. CTBT allows nuclear powers to have computer-simulation tests in the labs. So much political capital of an option which India may never exercise.

India has always been in favor of total and universal disarmament and elimination of nuclear weapons. Since 1954 India has been making fervent appeals to the community of nations to achieve total disarmament within a timeframe and has never been a party to partial, discriminatory and hegemonic disarmament pacts and treaties. In 1963 the US, UK, and the USSR signed the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty banning nuclear test in outer space, in the deep sea and sea-beds. However, China and France did not sign it.

Initially in the years 1993-94, when the negotiation began for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, India supported it wholeheartedly, but since then India has come a long way and realized how not to compromise its own security needs being surrounded by hostile and powerful neighbors. Consequently, In August 1996, India blocked the CTBT by vetoing it in the Disarmament Conference held at Geneva. The 61-nation conference wanted to send the Treaty to the UN for signing by the member nations but ... India's vetoing made it impossible.

India did not sign CTBT on many important grounds. Firstly, the nuclear powers failed to make any commitment to a time bound programme for elimination of their nuclear weapons and universal disarmament. Secondly, India needed safeguards and nuclear option. Thirdly, it was hypocritical and discriminatory. The 5 nuclear powers conducted 2,045 nuclear tests between 1945 and 1996 and then came with the proposal of CTBT asking others to desist from nuclear tests. India as a threshold nuclear power finds the Treaty discriminatory and against its own security needs.

CTBT allows the nuclear powers to have computer-simulation tests in nuclear labs. These powers have already acquired the technology that enables

them to have simulated nuclear tests in lab condition. The nuclear haves can also exchange the nuclear technology among them and build far more dangerous and devastating arsenals when they wish and their economies allow.

Thus, the CTBT unjustly maintain the status quo which is not acceptable to India. But there are many who favour the signing of the Treaty on the ground that there are many serious logistical and financial problems to be overcome before India can test a nuclear weapons superior to its first bomb tested in 1974 at Pokhran. If India carried such a test it would be immediately detected by a cast network of 170 seismological monitoring stations, 80 radionuclide detection centers, 60 infrasound and 11 hydro acoustic stations spread throughout the globe. Why to spend so much political capital for a nuclear option which India may possibly not use.