



Responding to India's Nuclear Testing by Ralph A. Cossa

Has the nuclear genie been let out of the bottle? Will this week's series of nuclear tests by India result in a new nuclear arms race? Will Pakistan soon follow suit? Will North Korea? Will Taiwan? Will others?

The answer to these questions will depend in large part on the nature of the global reaction to India's blatant, unrepentant act of defiance against the near-universal world-wide consensus against nuclear testing. Statements of regret or condemnation and even the selective application of sanctions will not be enough to pressure India to reverse course or to convince Pakistan and others not to follow India's lead. New Delhi, and those tempted to follow India's lead, must understand that the consequences are both severe and long-term.

This is not mere conjecture. Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, when asked if his nation would respond with tests of its own, stated clearly, "It depends on how effectively the United States, Japan and other actors deal with the whole scenario.....Just a rebuke and a couple of weeks of posturing is not going to be enough." Pakistan, among others, is no doubt closely watching what comes out of this weekend's G-8 meeting in London.

In December of 1996, I suggested at an ASEAN Regional Forum-sponsored non-proliferation meeting in Jakarta that all nations that had demonstrated their commitment to the goal of global denuclearization by signing the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty (CTBT) further announce independent lists of political and economic sanctions that would be applied automatically against any nation that decided to conduct nuclear weapons tests. I further called on Japan to start the ball rolling through a unilateral declaration of steps that others, most specifically including India's fellow ARF colleagues, could then follow. The objectives were two-fold: first, to put pressure on CTBT non-signers (India, Pakistan, North Korea) not to test and second, to dissuade others from using a single state's resumption of tests as an excuse to initiate (or resume) testing.

The second objective remains a valid one, even as we try to find ways to pressure India to not go any further along the nuclear weapons path. As a result, I would once again call on Japan to take the lead. Unlike the U.S. or the other nuclear weapons states, Tokyo cannot be accused of merely trying to maintain its advantage. As a committed non-nuclear weapons state with first-hand knowledge of the horrors of nuclear weapons, Japan's leadership credentials are impeccable.

To date, Japan has announced that it will freeze economic aid in the form of grants, except for those for emergencies and humanitarian purposes and put a freeze on new aid bans. Tokyo has also declined to host a World Bank-sponsored India

Development Forum scheduled to be held in Tokyo and announced its intention to slow or block new loans from the World Bank and other institutions.

However, I would urge Prime Minister Hashimoto to announce at the G-8 meeting that Japan was immediately suspending all aid, developmental assistance, and concessionary bank loans to India *and that Tokyo would automatically take the same action against any other state that chooses to begin or resume nuclear testing*. He should further state that such sanctions would not be lifted until the offending state ceased tests, signed the CTBT without conditions, and then *demonstrated its commitment to honor its obligation under the CTBT for at least one year*. Only then would Japan consider a resumption of assistance. Hashimoto should call on all other members to follow suit and should more firmly echo the U.S. pledge to oppose future World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans to India.

India has stated that it would at some point "be prepared to consider being an adherent to some of the undertakings in the CTBT." It must be made clear that nothing less than unconditional acceptance of the CTBT is sufficient and that even this will not result in an immediate lifting of sanctions. To do otherwise invites Pakistan and others to begin testing under the belief that penalties, even if harsh, will be temporary.

Should Tokyo choose to take the lead, one would expect the United States to immediately follow Japan's example and make it clear that its current announced sanctions (many triggered automatically by virtue of Congressional legislation) would not be lifted until India signs and then demonstrates its commitment to the CTBT.

President Clinton should also announce that New Delhi's signing of the CTBT is now a pre-condition to his visit to India this year. He should further state that his planned visit to Pakistan will proceed, provided Islamabad refuses to yield to the temptation of duplicating India's mistake. In return, the U.S. and China should consider jointly providing Pakistan with security assurances against this increased Indian threat. Clinton should also announce that a Pakistani commitment not to test will be sufficient to lift the current Pressler Amendment restrictions against U.S. economic and military assistance -- an announcement that Congress should quickly endorse.

Conversely, it must be made clear to Islamabad that initiation of nuclear testing by Pakistan will result in the same harsh, long-term consequences now confronting India.

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