



CTBT Rejection: Who Will Lead Now? by Ralph A. Cossa

The U.S. Senate's rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) last month is not likely to result in the immediate resumption of nuclear weapons tests, either by the U.S. or by anyone else. While the Senate vote has effectively killed any hope for immediate ratification of the CTBT by other significant treaty hold-outs, none has indicated an intention to resume testing. Most, like China, have elected to seize the moral high road, contrasting their continued commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament with America's "do as I say, not as I do" approach to foreign policy

The treaty's defeat does not signal an American abandonment of the CTBT either. President Clinton has stated that America will continue to honor the test ban and over 80% of the American people continue to support an end to nuclear testing. But, as Brent Scowcroft and Arnold Kanter point out [PacNet 43], America's credibility in leading the global arms control and non-proliferation movement has been dealt a serious blow.

Scowcroft and Kanter have offered a straight-forward way out of this quagmire which acknowledges both the importance of continued American leadership in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and the potential validity of the more serious concerns about the CTBT's viability. Their suggestion deserves serious attention, although the prospects of either the Administration or Senate being willing to set aside partisan politics as the 2000 presidential campaign heats up remain slim.

In the meantime, the question remains as to who will step forward and take the lead in promoting nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament now that America has abrogated this responsibility. Will the Russians seize the moral high road and push forth their own ratification of the CTBT and START II to demonstrate their commitment to the cause?... not likely. Will Chinese actions match Beijing's lofty words?... don't hold your breath. While China has made it clear that it will not be the first to break the moratorium, Beijing also laments the fact that China is the least advanced – and thus the most disadvantaged by the CTBT – of the five major nuclear weapons states (the U.S., Russia, UK, and France rounding out this group) and would be more likely to respond to renewed testing by the latest members of the nuclear club (India and Pakistan) or by any new entrant by resuming Chinese testing.

Enter Japan! The Japanese have long championed the cause of non-proliferation and are genuinely committed to the broader goal of nuclear disarmament. It's time for Tokyo to step forward and put some teeth behind this effort. Today, all states presumed capable of testing nuclear weapons, at least in the near term, proclaim a commitment to sustain the

moratorium. Japan can help them continue to see the wisdom of this decision through a few simple, concrete actions.

First, Japan can announce unilaterally that it will permanently cut off all overseas developmental assistance to, and will aggressively discourage direct financial investment in, any country that defies the global consensus against nuclear weapons testing. This is an action Tokyo can take today, as a matter of principle. Tokyo should stress that this action is not aimed at any specific party, but is merely a genuine reflection of heartfelt Japanese public opinion and international priorities.

Second, Tokyo can challenge its fellow G-8 members to emulate this move at their next meeting. This will effectively separate the talkers from those who are willing to match their lofty words with concrete actions aimed at permanently halting future nuclear weapons tests. Japan has, rightfully, been seeking a more prominent role in international security affairs. The American failure to ratify the CTBT has presented Tokyo with an opportunity to seize the initiative and provide global leadership in an area where few can question its sincerity or commitment.

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