

STEPPING AWAY FROM THE DEADLY LEGACY OF THE NUCLEAR ERA

**Statement by
the Hon. Dr. Alberto G. Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines
2005 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of
the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
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Mr. President, at the outset, permit us a moment to congratulate you on your election as President of this Fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are confident that your vision and leadership will help guide those assembled here towards bringing about the Entry into Force of the Treaty. Please count on the full cooperation and support of the Philippine delegation towards bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty closer to fruition.

I would also to thank the delegation of the Commonwealth of Australia for steering the consultations that presented us with the draft of this conference's Final Declaration.

Last May, many of us actively worked for a successful outcome of the 2005 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The results of that Review Conference were less than desirable. But like many others, the Philippines continues to keep faith with the legal regimes that we have established to promote nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Good Reason to Hope

Recent events have given us good reason to hope.

I would like to welcome the recent developments in the Six-Party Talks on the issue of the Korean Peninsula. The decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon nuclear weapons and to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty is most welcome news, particularly for those of us in the region. This development is a direct result of the dedication and hard work of all those involved in the Six-Party Talks.

During this Session, the Philippines joined other countries in signing the Convention Against Nuclear Terrorism. With this agreement, we not only strike a blow against terrorism, but we also tighten the noose on those contemplating the use of nuclear material in carrying out terrorist activities.

The Future of the CTBT

These developments increase our hopes for a brighter future for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Philippines welcomed and joined the bold move to transfer the draft of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty from Geneva to New York, with the hope that this would lead to broader acceptance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Today, the

challenge remains the same: convincing states of the necessity of universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Philippines is willing to consider and support creative measures that would help bring this about.

As a ratifying state of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Philippines acknowledges the critical role of the Treaty, embodied in Article I, in prohibiting all nuclear test explosions, whether for a military or any other purpose, as well as nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes.

During the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference last May, I joined many in reiterating that the destruction that nuclear weapons can cause is so unthinkable, the mere possibility of its possession is cause for very serious concern.

I emphasized then that claims to so-called inalienable and unqualified rights to nuclear technology, without adequate checks and safeguards, are dangerous, do not contribute to the cause of non-proliferation and should be seriously resisted and rejected. The dangers from nuclear weapons require that international commitments on the treatment of nuclear technology including the making of plutonium and uranium should be strictly observed.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, with its comprehensive ban on testing, would provide an indispensable safeguard against the possible abuse of the right to use nuclear technology.

Constitutional Imperative

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains an important part of overall efforts to prevent nuclear non-proliferation and promote nuclear disarmament.

For the Philippines this is a Constitutional imperative. Sections 2 and 8 of Article II of the Philippines' 1987 Constitution enshrine the policy of freedom from nuclear weapons.

Towards this end, we worked closely with other ASEAN members to craft the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty. We are in negotiations with the nuclear states with a view to having them sign the protocols to this treaty.

As part of its commitment to the non-proliferation regime, the Philippines hosts 2 auxiliary seismic stations, 1 radionuclide laboratory and 1 National Data Center of the International Monitoring System: a system which, when complete, will produce data to detect possible nuclear explosions and provide evidence thereof to States Parties for verification of Treaty compliance.

The Need for Universal Acceptance

The Philippines calls upon all States that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Treaty soonest. We reiterate our strong support for the Joint Ministerial Statement on the Treaty made during the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New York in September 2004.

We especially urge the 11 remaining Annex II States, whose ratification is needed for the Treaty's Entry into Force, to complete their respective ratification processes without delay.

The sooner the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty enters into force, the sooner the testing moratorium currently adhered to by the 5 nuclear weapon states will become legally-binding.

We call upon the 5 nuclear weapon states to bear the responsibility and burden of leadership. They must act decisively in realizing a complete nuclear weapons ban.

They must honor their commitments to the full implementation of the 13 practical steps, as contained in the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference Final Document for systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In this regard, my delegation identifies itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As of today, a total of 175 States are counted as having signed the Treaty of whom 122 are ratifying States. Included among these 122 State ratifiers are 33 of the 44 Annex II States. Since the third Article XIV Conference held in Vienna in 2003, only the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among Annex II States, has stepped forward and fully embraced the Treaty.

Certain quarters may claim that adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996 marked the successful conclusion of one of the longest negotiations in the history of arms control.

But the process cannot and must not stop until the Treaty enters into force. Negotiations concerning the Treaty, and the mere specter of what may come to pass should we fail, are what bring us together in this building nearly 9 years after the Treaty was opened for signature.

Much work has been done in those 9 years. My delegation wishes to welcome Executive Secretary Tibor Tóth to the leadership of the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. We are confident that he will ably shepherd the organization through the challenges of the next 4 years.

We would also like to commend the professionalism and dedication of the men and women of the Provisional Technical Secretariat for continuing the work of establishing the International Monitoring System, a network that, when complete, will consist of 321 monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories, throughout the world.

Out From Under the Dark Shadows

The Philippines reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and reiterates the call to the 11 remaining Annex II States to ratify the Treaty without delay.

The longer we postpone the entry into force of this Treaty, the longer we all court the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. We must sustain the collective effort. We must continue making the hard choices that have seen us through the last 60 years.

Last month, governments and peoples throughout the world gathered to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. A war which, although mostly contested with the conventional arms of the age, witnessed the deaths and maiming of tens of millions of civilians and military personnel as well as the first combat application of nuclear weapons.

Six decades have passed since then. Even as we tried to cope with the horrifying memory of the death and destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear arsenals were built and we have lived in the dark shadow of these terrible weapons.

The Cold War has ended, yet the legacy of these weapons live on not only in the arsenals of the nuclear powers, but in the hidden recesses of a few countries who can ill afford to spend on these weapons.

Sixty years after we gave birth to the United Nations and sixty years after unleashing the deadly force of the atom, it is time to step out from under the darkness and fear of the weapons of mass destruction into the broad sunlit uplands of universal peace and brotherhood of all men.

Thank you, Mr. President.