

## **Congress Must Remedy Past U.S. Funding Shortfalls for Global Nuclear Test Monitoring System**

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Press Release

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(Washington, D.C.): Today, a leading nuclear nonproliferation research and advocacy organization warned that the United States is undermining efforts to complete a global monitoring network intended to help detect and deter nuclear testing worldwide. Congress must significantly increase funding this year for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) or risk seriously impairing the system, the nonpartisan Arms Control Association (ACA) stated.

“The Bush administration and Congress have under funded this important nuclear nonproliferation tool for the past two years,” said ACA Executive Director Daryl G. Kimball. “As a result,” he continued, “the United States is now significantly behind in its financial obligations and, as a result, has lost its voting rights in the CTBTO Preparatory Commission.”

The commission is the decision-making body of the CTBTO, and one of its rules is that “a state-signatory which has not discharged in full its financial obligations within 365 days of receipt...shall have no vote in the Commission.” According to documents on the CTBTO Web site, U.S. arrears as of May 2007 total \$38.3 million. In addition, the Bush administration in its current fiscal year 2008 budget request is only asking Congress for \$18 million to fund the CTBTO even though the Vienna-based organization assessed the latest annual U.S. dues at \$23.4 million.

Kimball urged Congress to “rectify U.S. shortfalls before they significantly damage the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) system. For a small investment, the United States stands to gain much.”

The 1996 CTBT bans all nuclear test explosions. Although the United States has not ratified the treaty, it is a signatory to the agreement.

Under the UN dues assessment system, the United States is obligated to provide just under a quarter of the CTBTO annual budget, which currently is approximately \$100 million. Established in 1997, the CTBTO has completed an International Data Center and constructed more than 240 of the planned 320 global monitoring stations designed to provide real-time data on nuclear tests worldwide.

Since 2002, the Bush administration unilaterally has decided not to support the U.S. portion (approximately \$800,000 per year) of the On-Site Inspection (OSI) component of CTBTO verification activities. The administration, which does not support ratification and entry into force of the treaty, contends the United States should not have to contribute to OSI because it will only be available upon the treaty’s entry into force.

For each of the past two fiscal years (2006 and 2007) the administration and Congress allocated only

\$14.4 million for the CTBTO, which is approximately \$7 million short of the United States' assessed contribution for each year. Making matters worse, the Bush administration has not yet obligated the \$14.4 million appropriated by Congress for fiscal year 2007.

"The U.S. funding shortfalls are shortsighted and self-defeating," charged Kimball. "In particular, the U.S. failure to pay its share will hinder the CTBTO's ability to complete construction and certify for use the remaining stations of the International Monitoring System. Many of these remaining stations are to be built in remote and/or strategic areas, such as Turkmenistan, which borders Iran," Kimball noted.

"CTBTO seismic monitoring stations proved very capable in detecting the sub-kiloton North Korean test explosion on October 9, 2006. The CTBTO air-monitoring network also detected rare radioactive gases that are a tell-tale sign that the North Korean event was a nuclear weapon blast," Kimball stated.

Additional information on the CTBT and nuclear testing can be found on ACA's web site at <<http://www.armscontrol.org/subject/ctbt/>>.

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