

CLINTON URGES ACTION ON NUCLEAR TREATY (By Stephanie Nebelhay)

GENEVA (Reuters)—President Clinton pressed Tuesday for a quick resolution to talks on an underground nuclear test ban treaty so the text could go to the U.N. General Assembly by June but India demanded nuclear powers first give assurances to eliminate nuclear weapons, Clinton said.

But the Group of 21 countries, which includes nuclear "threshold" states India and Pakistan, criticized the major powers for refusing to open new negotiations on a nuclear disarmament treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The 38-state negotiations, sponsored by the United Nations, were overshadowed last year by France staging five underground nuclear tests in the South Pacific, and two blasts by China.

"A Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is vital to constrain both the spread and further development of nuclear weapons," Clinton said in a message read by John Holum, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

"Now, urgent national political decisions must complement your painstaking work in Geneva, so that the Conference can forward a completed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to the U.N. General Assembly by June."

In New Delhi, Foreign Ministry spokesman Arif Khan told reporters India's conditions to support the CTBT were unchanged despite Western pressure.

He said India's stand was clearly stated in Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's address to the recent summit of non-aligned countries.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974 but says its nuclear program is peaceful. It declined to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty last year, saying the pact discriminated against non-nuclear powers.

"A handful of nations perpetuated their monopoly over the means of mutually assured destruction by the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty," Rao told the non-aligned summit.

"They did so without even obtaining an expression of intent to eventually abolish all nuclear weapons as envisaged in that treaty itself."

India says it wants both the CTBT and a proposed convention on the cut-off of fissile material for weapons.

"While the aim of both these treaties are laudable, and we support them wholeheartedly, we must ensure that we do not lose yet another opportunity to obtain a commitment to universal and comprehensive nuclear disarmament," Rao said.

But Holum told a news briefing in Geneva that Clinton's message "made clear that this is a very high priority commitment of the United States. We are dedicated to completion of the test ban on time. We believe that will happen."

Holum, noting some states wanted to link the CTBT to a timetable for totally eliminating nuclear weapons, warned in his speech: "...I must acknowledge that the CTBT is at risk here in Geneva."

He said it was imperative to report the complete text of the CTBT to the General Assembly by June "at the very latest."

This would allow governments to examine the text, endorse it at the General Assembly and open it for signature in September.

All five declared nuclear powers: Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States are taking part in the talks.

Holum said the United States continued to believe a moratorium on testing, as observed by Washington, was the most positive way to support the negotiations.

But he also said the latest blasts might help forge consensus around a CTBT, which

would extend the 1963 Moscow treaty banning tests in the atmosphere and under water.

Asked whether a further French underground blast, due before May, might be harmful to the negotiations, Holum replied: "I would think it would be just the opposite."

"This is our chance to accomplish a nuclear CTBT. This window of opportunity may not stay open forever."

"If countries are concerned by those tests, it seems to me that a CTBT is the answer, not the problem."

Meanwhile, the Group of 21, in a statement read by Peru, called for immediately establishing a special ad-hoc committee, under the conference, to negotiate a nuclear disarmament treaty.

Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram, in a separate speech, said the Geneva conference faced a "moment of truth" at a time when there were no confrontations between the nuclear powers.

"It is, therefore, most disturbing that most of the nuclear weapon states seem to be unprepared to consider the measures required to lead to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

"Some of them, while reducing their nuclear arsenals quantitatively, are upgrading them qualitatively," Akram added.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 24, 1996]

FRANCE ACKNOWLEDGES RADIOACTIVE LEAKAGE IN SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR TESTS (By William Drozdiak)

PARIS.—France acknowledged today that radioactive materials have leaked into the sea from its nuclear tests in the South Pacific but insisted that the quantities were so minimal that they posed no threat to the environment.

The confirmation that radioactive elements such as iodine-131 have seeped into the lagoon near the Mururoa test site seemed likely to revive the storm of protests that followed President Jacques Chirac's decision to conduct a final series of underground nuclear explosions before signing a global test-ban treaty.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda said he will demand a full explanation from France about the nature of the leaks. Other countries in the Pacific region, notably Australia and New Zealand, are expected to follow suit, French officials said.

Defying international criticism, France has carried out five nuclear tests since September to verify a new warhead and to perfect simulation technology that will be used to monitor reliability of its nuclear weapons. A final test will take place next month before the test site is shut down permanently, French officials said.

But the latest accounts of radioactive leakage at the Mururoa test site have raised questions about the credibility of the French government's arguments that the nuclear explosions present no environmental menace.

"There is no way to assess whether their is a coverup because the French do now allow independent verification," said Tom Cochran, a nuclear-test specialist at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington. "What makes people suspicious about whether they are hearing the truth is the fact that these tests were really unnecessary in the first place."

France has already contended that its underground nuclear blasts inflict no damage on the fragile ecology of the Mururoa coral atoll, 750 miles southeast of Tahiti, which serves as its principal test site. Explosive devices are bored deep within the basalt foundation of the atoll, and French scientists say the intense heat from the blast vitrifies the rock and traps all radioactivity before it can escape.

But Alain Barthoux, director of nuclear tests at France's Atomic Energy Commission, acknowledged that traces of radioactive material are usually "vented" into the lagoon when scientists drill down into the rock to obtain samples after every blast.

Barthoux claimed, however, that such leaks involve "insignificant amounts" of radioactive substances, such as cesium, tritium or iodine, that vanish quickly in the environment. Quantities of iodine-131, for example, which can cause cancer when ingested by humans, shrink by half within eight days and disappear entirely within 80 days, he said.

Barthoux denied a report in the Japan's Yomiuri Shimun newspaper that small amounts of radioactive iodine were continuing to leak into the water as a result of the latest round of nuclear tests. The paper quoted sources at the Geneva disarmament conference, where the global test-ban treaty is being negotiated, as saying a French nuclear expert disclosed the radiation leakage at a meeting in Washington last November.

The French specialist was quoted as saying the information was "extremely confidential."

France first acknowledged the release of radioactivity from its nuclear tests when oceanographer Jacques Cousteau visited the Mururoa site in 1987 and was allowed to conduct independent tests of the water in the lagoon. He found the presence of radioactive iodine, cesium, cobalt and europium, but in quantities that were not considered dangerous.

But he warned the Mururoa's coral crown was deeply cracked and could pose a problem if testing continued. He said risks grew that higher levels of radioactive residue could seep into the lagoon.

French Defense Minister Charles Million denounced reports from last year of widening fissures in the atoll as "unreliable." Foreign Minister Herve de Charette told the National Assembly that "never have any cracks of any kind been spotted."

But a confidential Defense Ministry report acknowledged the government has been aware, at least since 1979, that Mururoa's underwater basalt foundation is fractured several places.

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UPDATE ON AMERICA'S PEACE-KEEPING MISSION IN BOSNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. SKELTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am giving this second in a series of speeches updating the Congress on the state of our peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Last night in his State of the Union Address the President thanked the American troops taking part in the Bosnian peacekeeping mission and the families that support them in their efforts. Also, it was good to see the President make a visit to the forces in Hungary and in Bosnia just a few days ago. The Americans in uniform seemed to appreciate this. I am pleased the President made the trip. Mr. Speaker, the men and women in our country's military deserve the full support of every Member in this body and the American people.

There continue to be causes for concern regarding our peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. First, there is the enduring presence of Muslim extremists in that country. According to news reports, most recently in an article in last Sunday's Washington Post, some Muslim extremists who previously aided the Bosnians in their military efforts have not left the country. Many of these groups oppose the presence of our troops. Their stated opposition to our mission poses a serious threat to the success of our peacekeeping effort and the safety of American troops.

On January 18 I sent a letter to President Clinton asking that the American-led effort to arm and train the Muslim Croat Federation be delayed until groups such as the Iranians and Mujaheddin leave Bosnia. I asked the President to require Bosnia to certify on a regular basis that no such outside extremist Muslim forces remain. If any of these groups reappear, the arming and training effort would cease.

For several months I have voiced concern that assisting the Federation would jeopardize the neutrality of the U.S. troops. Although the U.S. military will not have a direct role in arming and training, independent contractors, including retired U.S. military officers, will conduct the operation. But if the administration insists on arming and training the Federation through soldiers for hire, we should use the effort as a club to make sure Muslim extremists leave the country.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a copy of the January 18 letter. The letter referred to is as follows:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 18, 1996.

The PRESIDENT,
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: It appears the Administration is proceeding with arming and training the Muslim-Croat Federation, not with our military as originally proposed, but by independent contractors. It further appears the contractors are former U.S. military leaders.

I remain opposed to any arming and training of the Federation, as I believe there exists a military balance between the Federation and the Serbs. Also, this effort still has American fingerprints, with only a short distance between the contractors and our military. It reinforces the perception that we are not neutral in the peacekeeping mission. This effort is proceeding, despite the resolution that passed the House 287-141 on Dec. 13 which states "the United States Government in all respects should be impartial and evenhanded with all parties to the conflict."

If the Administration proceeds, I urge you to require the Bosnian government to ensure all Muslim fundamentalists, such as Iranians and mujaheddin, have been expelled before any arming and training begins. According to news reports, some Muslim extremists who previously aided the Bosnians in their military efforts have not left the country. Their stated opposition to our mission poses a threat to the success of the peacekeeping effort and the safety of American troops in the region.

Bosnia should certify on a regular basis that no such outside Muslim fundamentalists remain. If any of these groups reappear, the arming and training effort paid for by American tax dollars should cease.

This is a basic issue. Such certification will not only strengthen the outcome of the peace effort, but will enhance the safety of our American forces in that region. If the Administration insists on arming and training the Federation through "soldiers for hire", we must use this effort as a club to ensure Muslim extremists leave the country.

Very truly yours,

IKE SKELTON,
Member of Congress.

Second, Mr. Speaker, there is the concern of mission creep for our forces in Bosnia. I addressed this concern in my January 3 speech. Recently the Americans have been urged to provide security for investigators looking into Serb atrocities. The commander of the forces in the region, Adm. Leighton Smith, is to be commended for his resistance to deeper American involvement in these investigations.

Third, there seems to be a serious breach of the Dayton peace agreement by the refusal of all three sides to release prisoners of war, despite a stipulation in the accord that required doing so by last Friday. This refusal bodes ill for the future prospects of peace.

These are three ongoing concerns that this body and the American people should keep in mind. Our hopes and our prayers are with the success of the mission and the safety of the uniformed Americans in Bosnia. This is a difficult task, but I remain so very proud of the men and women who wear the American uniforms.

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH AND BORDER PROTECTION FOR CALIFORNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I have taken this time to make some brief comments on the State of the Union Message last night to say first that, as I said earlier today, it was interesting to juxtapose the State of the Union Messages of the past to the State of the Union Message that we got last night.

If we go back to the campaign of 1992, we heard a very strong message that came from candidate Bill Clinton. He promised to end welfare as we know it, balance the Federal budget, and in fact, bring about a reduction of the tax burden on working Americans, that middle class tax cut. Then, in the State of the Union Message in 1993, we obviously saw the message that ended up being the largest tax increase in American history. Then, 2 years ago, we saw right here in the well of the House a State of the Union Message in which the President held up a card, a card in

which we were going to move ahead and see the Federal Government usurp control of one-seventh of our economy with a national health care plan.

Then last night he said that the era of Big Government has come to an end, so I was gratified to see that shift, but if one looks at those speeches that have been delivered from the campaign of 1992 through the governance of the Clinton administration over the past 3 years to the speech that was delivered right behind me here last night, it is very interesting.

One of the things in the speech that troubled me greatly was a statement that was made toward the end of his speech. I would like to share that, because it is something that concerns not only all of us from California, but from other parts of the country as well.

The President said, "but there are some areas that the Federal Government" must address directly and strongly. One of these is the problem of illegal immigration. "After years and years of neglect, this administration has taken a strong stand to stiffen the protection of our borders."

The thing that troubles me about that is that while it is great that the President said it, it is great that the President is proceeding with a focus on this issue, but over the past year, since we have seen a new majority come into this Congress, since we have seen the fine work of my colleague, the gentleman from California, ELTON GALLEGLY, who chairs our task force on illegal immigration, since we have seen the Speaker's Task Force on California focus on the issue of illegal immigration as its number one priority, and thanks to the great work of people like the gentleman from Kentucky, HAL ROGERS, and the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, we have been able to move ahead with very important legislation that, tragically, the President has vetoed.

I would like to share with my colleagues a letter which I have just sent today to the President, in which I say, "I was greatly encouraged by your decision to include addressing illegal immigration as a national priority in Tuesday's State of the Union Address. However, in this light, I was dismayed by your veto record that has killed historic congressional proposals to combat illegal immigration and lift the burden of illegal immigration from States like California."

Those include, Mr. Speaker, providing \$500 million to reimburse States for the cost of incarcerating illegal immigrant felons in State prisons, tripling prior year funding, and relieving California taxpayers of a \$300 million burden that clearly is a Federal responsibility;

Second, increasing funding for INS border control efforts by \$300 million, to add 1,000 Border Patrol agents and 400 support staff;