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Abstract. This article presents a critique of recent arguments opposing ratification by the United States of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., former deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear forces and arms control policy and former acting assistant secretary of defense for international security policy, has written an article opposing ratification by the United States (US) of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) that was recently published in The New Republic. This article is both highly representative of arguments opposing CTBT ratification and illustrative of the weaknesses of such arguments.

Gaffney correctly argues that it is impossible to verify a ban on all nuclear testing. Yet this is the case for any treaty for any topic for any set of political entities throughout history. Does Gaffney mean to discount any treaty per se as inevitably unhelpful to a political entity's security interests? If so, diplomatic history is replete with examples of treaties as success, failures, or even as bearing no significant effect. CTBT ratification may be contrary to US security interests, but not based on this argument.

Gaffney correctly argues that there may well be countries folded into any multilateral monitoring and response regime that will increase impediments to an actual finding of noncompliance with a ratified CTBT or other weapons treaty--regardless of the quality and quantity of technical data yielded by the CTBT's worldwide seismic monitoring system and of that data's interpretation. These impediments could include the stymieing of on-site inspections that would be authorized by United Nations Security Council members according to the CTBT. Yet all multilateral treaties have, do, and probably will reflect different degrees of support, different interpretations, and different behavioral triggers among the various ratifiers. This is merely another version of the above argument discounting the past, present, or future value of all treaties--and deserves the same response.

Gaffney argues that "[E]ven if the CTBT were fully verifiable, it would be irrelevant to the proliferation of nuclear weapons (p. 18)." This is because one can develop and acquire nuclear weapons without the need for nuclear explosive testing--instead through covert and clandestine acquisition programs including outright theft. Gaffney is right about the alternative route for weapons acquisition. However, his logical jump to CTBT irrelevance for weapons proliferation is, well, illogical. CTBT supporters do not claim that the ratified treaty would prevent covert and clandestine acquisition including theft, only that it would significantly decrease the probability of proliferation through nuclear explosive testing. Here, Gaffney is attacking a claim that is not made by CTBT supporters about the CTBT in the attempt to attack the CTBT and its supporters.

Gaffney maintains that the safety and reliability of a political entity's nuclear weapons--both germane to these weapons' role as a deterrent--cannot be maintained without nuclear explosive testing. In fact, he states that it will be "impossible to maintain the U.S. nuclear deterrent over time (p. 18)" without such testing. Yet all approaches to assessing safety and reliability--viz., nuclear explosive testing, non-nuclear

explosive testing, and computer simulations--have their own strengths and weaknesses some of which are not yet well understood by physicists. Foregoing nuclear explosive testing will equate to foregoing some of its strengths and weaknesses. Some of the same strengths and weaknesses are shared by other approaches. Others are not. There is no 100% accurate route to safety and reliability even with all known approaches including nuclear explosive testing. Whether foregoing nuclear explosive testing's strengths overrides the advantages of foregoing its weaknesses is--at present standards of knowledge--a metaphysical Issue as much as physical one. By setting the safety and reliability bar at 100% accuracy, Gaffney is ensuring that the CTBT does not measure up. What he does not say is that there is nothing that measures up--including that which he bemoans losing. (This is the case both for newer weapons as well as older ones that might need to be refurbished.)

Gaffney argues that the older nuclear weapons are, the more refurbishment of such weapons becomes necessary, the more nuclear explosive testing becomes vital, and the more problematic computer simulation becomes in the quest for safety and reliability. This argument is but a repeat of his argument made in the previous paragraph to which is added the many difficulties of refurbishment--e.g., dismantled production lines, the challenge of replicating designs, technologically obsolete components, federal safety and health guidelines prohibiting some original components, adequate time, and sufficient funds. His previous argument has been critiqued in the previous paragraph, while the additional refurbishment difficulties would still be difficulties even without the constraints on nuclear explosive testing. (Interestingly, Gaffney adds that there are newer, smaller, lighter, cheaper, and more reliable materials and equipment that are available for refurbishment. Sure, this presents a possible problem of replicating less advanced materials and equipment and of the possibility of untoward effects on safety and reliability. He does not consider that more advanced materials and equipment also represents the possibility of greater safety and reliability.)

Gaffney argues that most of the original experts who designed and tested nuclear weapons have left the "industrial and laboratory complex, taking with them irreplaceable corporate memory (p. 18)." His conclusion from this correct premise is that (without nuclear explosive testing) the US "will be able neither to modernize its nuclear arsenal to meet future deterrent requirements nor to retain the high confidence it requires in the older weapons upon which it would then have to rely for the foreseeable future (p. 18)." Yet President Clinton's terms of CTBT ratification would allow the US to leave the treaty's confines if future deterrent requirements dictated such an action. Moreover, Gaffney still does not give us any information about why nuclear explosive testing would be required above and beyond other approaches to safety and reliability. Lastly, his implied paean to the original experts seems to function as a backhanded insult to their contemporary counterparts. It's as if extensive and valuable knowledge has died off with its possessors, as opposed to the vast preponderance of such knowledge being stored and protected in the teaching "hand-off" from generation to generation, manuals, journals, books, and the newer variants of information technology. He also ignores that the more recent generations of experts can build on and from the expertise of their antecedents--regardless of radical interpretations of philosophers of science and technology who take a hyper-paradigmatic and discontinuous perspective on basic and applied knowledge. And Gaffney does not acknowledge that newer knowledge might more than compensate for whatever has been lost.

Even if his arguments are correct about the significance of problems in decreasing weapons proliferation and maintaining safety and reliability, Gaffney does not consider that these same arguments might work to the advantage of CTBT supporters in their quest for a huge goal irrespective of minimizing proliferation and maximizing safety and reliability--reinforcing nuclear deterrence. If one is less sure about what's out there, how well what's out there works, and how well what one has works, could not

one be even less likely to develop, acquire, deploy, and employ nuclear weapons assets? Whether the answer is more, less, or it depends on the situation, Gaffney has not significantly treated what is ipso facto a psychological question. The same applies to another psychological question--the consequences for the political calculations within, between, and among political entities of his arguments and those of supporters of the CTBT . (For example, would a CTBT or non-CTBT world be more likely to be not only more peaceful, but also more prosperous, healthy, well-educated, and so on?)

Gaffney seems to be the prisoner of a constricting ideology that assumes that a tough-minded approach to national security and defense Issues equates to a deontological instead of a consequentialist perspective. Tough as in the greater quality and/or quantity of weapons is the Way to security and defense righteousness. Tough as in the bottom line effects on security and defense will inevitably follow, even if data and events seem to support a contrary position. In other words, the Way cannot be not supported--as is the case in psychologically dogmatic belief systems of True Believers. This unsaid ideological stance in Gaffney's arguments merits as much if not more analysis than the technical aspects of his CTBT opposition. Unfortunately, the same can be said for CTBT supporters. Research on the psychological basis, styles, and consequences of ideologies has never been so important. (See Davies, M.F. (1998). Dogmatism and belief formation: Output interference in the processing of supporting and contradictory cognitions. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75, 456-466; Florian, V., & Mikulincer, M. (1998). Terror management in childhood: Does death conceptualization moderate the effects of mortality salience on acceptance of similar and different others? Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 24, 1104-1112; Gaffney, F.J., Jr. (October 25, 1999). The flawed test ban treaty. Poor pact. The New Republic, pp. 16; 18; Herr, C.F., & Lapidus, L.B. (1998). Nuclear weapons attitudes in relation to dogmatism, mental representation of parents, and image of a foreign enemy. Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 4, 59-68; Kane, R. (1998). Dimensions of value and the aims of social inquiry. American Behavioral Scientist, 41, 578-597.)

(Note: A more recent article by Richard Perle, a former assistant secretary of defense for international security policy, has provided several additional arguments opposing the CTBT that merit analysis.

Perle argues that the CTBT is not only not 100% verifiable, but also not 100% enforceable. However, as above, no treaty has ever contained enforcement procedures that cover all situations and are guaranteed of being fool-proof and totally effective. Here Perle, like Gaffney, is committed to an argument that rule out all treaties irrespective of the successes that many treaties have had throughout history. Moreover, even if a treaty is not 100% enforceable, a political entity or entities can effect the will and motivation to enforce the treaty outside the treaty if Issues of survival are at stake. There is certainly no precedent of international law that a political entity should willingly choose to cease to exist--to commit the supreme sacrifice--for the good of a treaty. Then what good is a treaty? A treaty can provide an appropriate combination of positive over negative consequences that merits ratification. Both Perle and Gaffney choose to not address the parameters of this more sophisticated and complex analysis.

Perle maintains that "the argument that [CTBT] ratification would discourage North Korea, Iraq, Iran, India and Pakistan from acquiring nuclear weapons produced laughter in the Senate cloakroom (p. A31)." The argument that CTBT may not have a motivational effect on so-called rogue states certainly can be well-supported. However, most CTBT supporters do not maintain that ratification will lead to such motivational change. Instead, they argue that CTBT will make it ever more difficult to test nuclear weapons and/or their components--an argument that neither Gaffney nor Perle directly address.

Perle argues that the CTBT is not subject to unilateral amendment or reservation. Thus, he maintains, the US and its allies would be locked into whatever deficiencies the CTBT presents with no out. However, as with Gaffney's argument about the CTBT preventing the meeting of future deterrent requirements addressed above, President Clinton's terms of ratification would allow the US to leave the treaty under certain conditions. Treaties also can be renegotiated. That is, there are ways out.) (See Perle, R. (October 19, 1999). Neither isolationists nor fools. The New York Times, p. A31.)(Keywords: Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, Gaffney, Nuclear Deterrence, Perle, Reliability, Safety, Weapons Proliferation.)