

## WORKING PAPER BY JAPAN

### STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO A COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN

1. It goes without saying that an early cessation of all nuclear testing is an important step toward the final goal of general and complete disarmament. A comprehensive test ban will be a very effective instrument to curb both horizontal and vertical nuclear proliferation.

A long history of negotiation on this subject, however, seems to indicate that complicated interactions between political, strategic, technical and other factors are at work around this subject. Quick and easy solution and agreement has unfortunately not been possible so far. It must also be admitted that prospects for it to become reality in the immediate future are not particularly bright. If that is the case, steps should be taken as soon as possible to overcome difficulties and enter into the process leading to the desired goal.

2. On 12 June, Mr. S. ABE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, submitted the following proposal in his statement at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament:

"If a CTB cannot be achieved at one stroke, we should make an in-depth study on a second best measure, namely, a step-by-step formula, under which underground nuclear test explosions of a yield now considered technically verifiable on a multinational basis will be taken as the threshold, and an agreement will be reached on banning test explosions overstepping this threshold, and then the threshold will be lowered, by improving the verification capability itself".

This proposal does not claim to realize a comprehensive test ban in a single step, but to go through realistic steps to get there. At least in the present circumstances, it would be the most realistic approach to make a breakthrough in the stalemate that seems to prevail in our deliberations on this subject and to bring us ever closer to our goal.

3. Japan sincerely expects that an Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban will be established as soon as possible. We wish also that this step-by-step approach will be taken up there for favourable consideration.

4. One key issue of difficulty with the prohibition of nuclear testing has been the establishment of a verification system which can convincingly persuade all concerned and give assurance that all and any violation will be promptly detected.

Pending an agreement on a comprehensive test ban, a full measure of co-operation must be undertaken on the establishment of a multilateral verification system and on its continued improvement.

5. For the purpose of implementing the step-by-step approach and establishing a multilateral verification system at an early date, it will be advisable to take up two important aspects of the problem:

The first step is the determination of a "threshold", the magnitude of nuclear explosion which is at present multilaterally verifiable on the basis of existing multilateral capabilities.

The second step is the search for methods of co-operation between States for improvements of such capabilities in order to bring down gradually the level of threshold.

Simultaneously with these exercises it will also be advisable to start discussions on an institutional mechanism to put the whole process into operation.

6. The technical portion of the above-mentioned exercises may most appropriately be assigned to the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events which has already been making significant contributions in this context. In particular, we are convinced that the experience gained from technical tests of the Group relating to the international seismic data exchange can play a very important role in examining the extent of multilateral verification capabilities.

Also the importance of the national technical means must be fully recognized in supplementing and making contribution to the multilateral system.