

Detailed SUMMARY of “Closer to midnight,” Dawn Editorial, Published on October 22, 2023

The growing divide between Russia and the US, primarily exacerbated by the Ukraine crisis, has severely hindered cooperation on nuclear arms reduction, posing a significant global risk. Recent developments saw Russia’s State Duma voting to withdraw Moscow’s ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which aims to prevent the testing of atomic weapons worldwide. Historically, all nuclear powers have adhered to this pact, with no nuclear tests for decades, except for North Korea, which conducted tests in 2017. Russia itself has not conducted nuclear tests since the Soviet Union’s dissolution. However, rising tensions between Moscow and Washington increase the likelihood that either nation might alter its nuclear stance. Russia is believed to possess the largest nuclear stockpile globally, followed by the US. Yet, the US lacks the moral high ground to criticize Russia’s CTBT withdrawal, as it never ratified the treaty. Earlier this year, Russia also withdrew from the New START treaty it had previously signed with the US. Despite the need for caution, both nations must prioritize maintaining the current nuclear status quo and eventually reducing their vast nuclear arsenals. Given the current global instability, akin to the Cold War era, international efforts for arms control and preventing nuclear testing must be intensified. Pakistan, situated in a ‘nuclear neighborhood,’ stands to be affected by renewed arms testing, further escalating tensions in South Asia. Hence, strengthening nuclear protocols is crucial for all states.

Easy/Short SUMMARY:

Growing tensions between Russia and the US, stemming primarily from the Ukraine crisis, have jeopardized international cooperation on nuclear arms reduction. Russia’s recent decision to revoke its ratification of the Comprehensive

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), intended to prevent global nuclear weapons testing, raises concerns. Despite having maintained the status quo of not conducting nuclear tests for decades, this move adds uncertainty to the situation, especially considering the large nuclear stockpiles of Russia and the US. The US, which never ratified the CTBT, lacks the moral authority to criticize Russia. Russia's withdrawal from the New START treaty, which it had previously signed with the US, further complicates the issue. It is essential for both countries to prioritize preserving the current nuclear status quo and eventually reducing their extensive nuclear arsenals. Given the world's current instability, similar to the Cold War era, international efforts for arms control and the prevention of nuclear testing need reinforcement. Pakistan, situated in a 'nuclear neighborhood,' could be affected by renewed arms testing, potentially worsening the situation in South Asia. Therefore, all states should focus on strengthening nuclear protocols.

SOLUTIONS of The Problem:

1. Diplomatic Engagement

- Encourage diplomacy and dialogue between Russia and the US to address the growing divide and maintain nuclear stability.
- Promote bilateral and multilateral talks focused on arms control and nuclear disarmament.

2. Global Partnerships

- Seek international cooperation to mediate and facilitate discussions between Russia and the US, fostering a conducive environment for arms control negotiations.
- Collaborate with established nuclear powers and emerging nuclear states to promote collective efforts toward disarmament.

3. Confidence-Building Measures

- Implement confidence-building measures to alleviate suspicions and tensions between Russia and the US, such as transparency in nuclear programs and verification mechanisms.



- Reiterate the commitment to non-proliferation and the prevention of nuclear testing.

4. Public Awareness

- Raise public awareness regarding the risks of a nuclear arms race and the importance of arms control.
- Engage in public discourse on the consequences of nuclear testing and the need for global stability.

5. Multilateral Treaties

- Encourage both Russia and the US to recommit to international treaties like the CTBT and New START, emphasizing the significance of these agreements in promoting global security.
- Advocate for comprehensive arms control treaties that cover a wide range of nuclear issues.

IMPORTANT Facts and Figures Given in the article:

- Russia's State Duma voted to revoke Moscow's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).
- The CTBT aims to prevent the testing of atomic weapons worldwide, with all nuclear powers historically adhering to the pact.
- Both Russia and the US have large nuclear arsenals, and the US never ratified the CTBT.
- Russia withdrew from the New START treaty, a bilateral agreement with the US, earlier this year.

MCQs from the Article:

1. *What is the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)?*
 - A. A treaty to reduce carbon emissions
 - B. An agreement to prevent the testing of atomic weapons worldwide
 - C. A pact for regulating global trade

D. A bilateral nuclear disarmament treaty

2. *Why is there growing tension between Russia and the US in the article?*
 - A. Trade disputes
 - B. *The Ukraine crisis*
 - C. Climate change negotiations
 - D. Space exploration competition

3. *Which country possesses the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons, according to the article?*
 - A. China
 - B. *Russia*
 - C. The US
 - D. North Korea

4. *What is the significance of the New START treaty mentioned in the article?*
 - A. A treaty to limit space exploration
 - B. An agreement to reduce military spending
 - C. *A bilateral treaty for nuclear arms reduction between Russia and the US*
 - D. A pact for regulating global energy trade

5. *What is one of the solutions recommended in the article to address the nuclear arms race?*
 - A. Competitive military build-up
 - B. *Diplomatic engagement and confidence-building measures*
 - C. Public support for nuclear testing
 - D. Enhanced secrecy in nuclear programs

VOCABULARY:

1. *Nuclear Posture* (noun) (핵심사상): A country's declared policy and intentions regarding its nuclear weapons, including strategies for their use and deployment.

2. *Status Quo* (noun) (स्थिति): The existing state of affairs or the way things are currently.
3. *Disarmament* (noun) (हथियार हटाना): The reduction or elimination of a country's military capabilities, including weapons and armed forces.
4. *Transparency* (noun) (पारदर्शिता): The quality of being open and easily understood, often referring to information and decision-making processes.
5. *Non-Proliferation* (noun) (नैऋतिकरण): The prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons and their technologies to other countries.
6. *Bilateral Treaty* (noun) (द्विपक्षीय संधि): A formal agreement between two countries, often focusing on specific issues or relationships.
7. *Arms Control* (noun) (हथियार नियंत्रण): Measures and policies aimed at regulating and limiting the production, deployment, and use of military arms and weapons.
8. *Nuclear Disarmament* (noun) (नैऋतिकरण): The process of reducing and ultimately eliminating a country's nuclear weapons.
9. *International Community* (noun) (अंतर्राष्ट्रीय समुदाय): The collective body of nations worldwide, often referring to their shared interests and responsibilities in global affairs.
10. *Verification Mechanism* (noun) (जांच प्रणाली): A system or process for confirming and ensuring compliance with international agreements and treaties.

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Closer to midnight
Editorial

FOR a world already in flames, a fresh nuclear arms race would be an unmitigated catastrophe. Yet the growing gulf between Russia and the US — fuelled primarily by the Ukraine crisis — means that cooperation on nuclear arms reduction has practically stalled, with both states eyeing each other with suspicion. A significant recent development in this regard came in the shape of Russia's State Duma voting to revoke Moscow's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. As the name of the 1996 document suggests, it seeks to prevent the testing of atomic weapons worldwide. All nuclear powers have largely respected the status quo, with no tests in decades, with the exception of North Korea, which tested devices in 2017. Russia has not tested nuclear weapons since the end of the Soviet Union. But with growing tension between Moscow and Washington, there is a danger that either state could alter its nuclear posture. Russia is believed to possess the world's largest stockpile of nukes, followed by the US. However, Washington has little moral ground to criticise the Russians on the CTBT move as unlike Moscow, it never ratified the treaty. Earlier this year, Russia also withdrew from the bilateral New START treaty it had signed with America.



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While there is no need for panic, both Russia and the US need to give top priority to maintaining the nuclear status quo, and preferably one day reducing their massive stockpiles. During the Cold War there were too many instances where a nuclear exchange was closely averted. The current global situation is just as — if not more — unstable, which means that efforts at arms control and preventing the resumption of nuclear testing should be redoubled by the international community. Pakistan also lives in a ‘nuclear neighbourhood’, and renewed arms tests may further vitiate the situation in South Asia. Therefore, instead of rolling back nuclear protocols, these must be strengthened by all states.

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