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Forward: Positioning the CTBT Among Other Arms Control Treaties

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Due to stringent entry into force provisions, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) has yet to enter into force, despite a provenly effective comprehensive verification regime and widespread support. Meanwhile, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)—a more aspirational treaty with a broader scope and lower entry into force requirements—received enough ratifications to enter into force on October 24, 2020. Among other provisions, the TPNW prohibits the development or testing of nuclear weapons: language reminiscent of, though not identical to, prohibitions contained in the CTBT.

This e-poster presentation explores how the current landscape of arms control treaties, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the TPNW, affect the CTBT. It assesses: what are the legal obligations related to nuclear weapons testing under various arms control treaties? In what ways do the treaties reinforce one another? If one treaty poses a risk of undermining the CTBT, how can that risk be addressed, resolved, and transformed into an opportunity?

In seeking to answer these questions, the presentation will incorporate the author's legal interpretation of treaty text, the results of expert interviews, and comparisons drawn from other areas of international law with complicated treaty landscapes.

Promotional text

As the global conversation on arms control continues to evolve, reflecting new developments in treaty regimes, the CTBT must remain relevant. This presentation contributes to the SnT2021 objectives of education, communication, and public awareness of that relevance.

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