

CTBT Entry into Force: Breaking the Stalemate

Despite differences on nuclear weapons as being the cause of unending arms race or linchpin of deterrence, there has been general consensus on the need for nuclear disarmament. Putting a ban on nuclear tests remains one of the oldest yet hardest fought items on disarmament agenda. Given their perceived security interests and diverging nuclear ambitions, the abstaining states continue to point fingers at each other for not being politically sincere towards Treaty's entry into force. This stalemate has not only halted any progress on the Treaty but also undermines the prospects of global disarmament that are already marred by differences on mutually agreeable mechanism to pursue it. This scenario calls for exploring innovative ideas on how to convince abstaining states to get into legally-binding mechanism. Drawing inference from the idea of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, a region oriented approach may prove useful in finding solution to the global problem. Through verifiable legally binding bilateral, or even multilateral, agreements on non-testing of nuclear weapons, the goal of CTBT may be pursued gradually. Given that some states, like Pakistan, have expressed willingness to enter into legally binding bilateral agreement with India, the prospects of this graduated regional approach appear bright.

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