

Leveraging the CTBT's verification provisions for promoting entry-into-force

The CTBT's verification provisions—especially the IMS—are unparalleled in arms control agreements. Yet, verification concerns were key in the 1999 US Senate rejection of the CTBT and, more generally, the role of effective verification has not been sufficiently acknowledged recently. The TPNW for example reduces verification to CSAs—thus taking a step back from the more rigorous Additional Protocol. Similarly, the collapse of the INF, if that is where we end up, underlines the importance of verification of treaties, with 'disarmament verification' having become a buzzword in the NPT framework. We argue that the CTBT's contribution to arms control verification should be leveraged not only for strengthening the NPT in trying to work out what verification would look like in a nuclear disarmament context, but also for achieving entry-into-force of the CTBT itself. The DPRK's nuclear tests demonstrate that the IMS works and that the CTBT is verifiable. Now is the time to highlight the CTBT's unparalleled verification contribution to arms control—e.g. the IMS, expertise to verify the closure of the DPRK's test site, etc.—and to persuade the United States and China that they could strengthen a weakened NPT by showcasing their fidelity to NPT Article 6 through CTBT ratification.

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Track Classification: Theme 5. CTBT in a Global Context