6-5-1998

Trends. Nonratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty: The Logic of Illogic

Editor

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp

Part of the International Relations Commons, Other Political Science Commons, and the Other Psychology Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol4/iss22/3

This Trends is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Bulletin of Political Psychology by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact commons@erau.edu.
Since the recent nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, there is growing consensus among leaders in the United States Senate that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) should not be ratified. Part of this may deal with lifting a finger to the domestic political winds, but a larger part may be based on strategic illogic.

The advocates of nonratification maintain that the CTBT is unverifiable. Yes, the treaty is not 100% verifiable. Very low-level tests can be missed, although the value of these tests for weaponization is generally thought to be very low as well. And what security-related treaty that eventually comes down to assessing political intent could be 100% verifiable? However, the treaty mandates an international monitoring system and upgrades of the system, a global network of seismic sensors, that apparently did detect the presence of nuclear testing--India's and Pakistan's. The treaty also provides the vehicle for short-notice, on-site inspection to assess allegations that a nuclear test has occurred. The bottom line: a competent security analyst does not recommend rejecting an imperfect security system leaving nothing in its place, but rather putting the system in place while continuing to upgrade it or until it is replaced with another.

Advocates of nonratification also maintain that the CTBT is ineffectual. To some of these advocates, ineffectual is merely synonymous with unverifiable and is part of a rhetorical device to doubly damn the CTBT. To other nonratification advocates, ineffectual is synonymous with lacking deterrent features--not preventing nuclear testing. This is an interesting argument, given that it stems from nuclear testing by two political actors--viz., India and Pakistan--that have not signed, let alone ratify, the CTBT. Moreover, the CTBT is not yet in force. Illogic indeed.