

The Limited Test Ban Treaty

Signed in 1963, the Limited Test Ban Treaty:

Prohibits nuclear weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions in three environments: in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater, but does not prohibit underground nuclear explosions.

During the negotiation of the LTBT, the phrase "or any other nuclear explosion" was included for the specific purpose of prohibiting explosions of nuclear devices for peaceful applications, so-called "peaceful nuclear explosions" or "PNEs." LTBT negotiators recognized that any nuclear explosion could provide military benefits, and therefore that without the inclusion of this phrase, a State Party could conduct nuclear explosions providing valuable military benefits on the pretense that they were solely peaceful purposes explosions and not "nuclear weapon test explosions."

During much of the negotiation of the Treaty, one delegation in particular, China, sought to retain the possibility of carrying out underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, citing Article V of the NPT, which recognizes that, for reasons of non-discrimination, non-military benefits that might be derived from peaceful applications of nuclear explosions would need to be available to non-nuclear weapon States Parties.



After the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy and Khrushchev established a telephone hot line, and in 1963 they signed the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty that banned nuclear tests in the air and in the water.

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

The CTBT marks an historic milestone in America's efforts to reduce the nuclear threat and build a safer world.

- The CTBT will prohibit any nuclear explosion, whether for weapons or other purposes.
- Halting all nuclear explosions will constrain the development of more sophisticated and destructive nuclear weapons.
- The CTBT will thus help to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote nuclear disarmament, and enhance U.S. national security and that of our friends and allies.

The CTBT was negotiated in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament (CD) between January 1994 and August 1996. The United Nations General Assembly voted on September 10, 1996, to adopt the Treaty by a vote of 158 in favor, 3 opposed, and 5 abstentions. President Clinton was the first world leader to sign the CTBT on September 24, 1996. 151 other nations have now signed, and 41 have ratified. The Treaty will enter into force following ratification by the United States and 43 other CD member states with nuclear power and/or research reactors. Twenty-one of these 44 states - almost half - have now ratified. Failure by the Senate to provide its advice and consent would prevent the entry into force of this important arms control agreement. CTBT's Central Features

- Basic obligations. The CTBT will ban any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, consistent with President Clinton's August 11, 1995, decision to negotiate a true zero yield CTBT.
- Organization. The Treaty establishes an organization to ensure the implementation of its provisions, including those for international verification measures. The organization includes a Conference of States Parties, an Executive Council and a Technical Secretariat, which shall include the International Data Center.
- Structure. The Treaty includes a Protocol in three parts: Part I details the International Monitoring System (IMS); Part II on On-Site Inspections (OSI); and Part III on Confidence Building Measures. There are two Annexes: Annex 1 details the location of treaty monitoring assets associated with the IMS; and

- Treaty compliance and sanctions. The Treaty provides for measures to redress a situation and to ensure compliance, including sanctions, and for settlement of disputes. If the Conference or Executive Council determines that a case is of particular gravity, it can bring the issue to the attention of the United Nations.

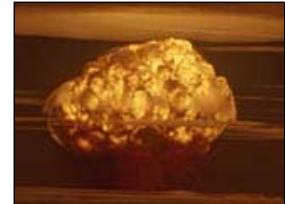
- Amendments. Any state party to the Treaty may propose an amendment to the Treaty, the Protocol, or the Annexes to the Protocol. Amendments will be considered by an Amendment Conference and will be adopted by a positive vote of a majority of the States parties with no State party casting a negative vote.

- Entry into force. The Treaty will enter into force 180 days after the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification by all States listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty, but in no case earlier than two years after its opening for signature (i.e., September 24, 1998). Annex 2 includes 44 States members of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) with nuclear power and/or research reactors. If the Treaty has not entered into force three years after the date of the anniversary of its opening for signature (i.e., September 24, 1999), a conference of the States that have already deposited their instruments of ratification may convene annually to consider and decide by consensus what measures consistent with international law may be undertaken to accelerate the ratification process in order to facilitate the early entry into force of this Treaty.

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Annex 2 details the parameters for screening events.

- Verification and Inspections. The Treaty's verification regime includes an international monitoring system composed of seismological, radionuclide, hydroacoustic and infrasound monitoring; consultation and clarification; on-site inspections; and confidence building measures. The use of national technical means, vital for the Treaty's verification regime, is explicitly provided for. Requests for on-site inspections must be approved by at least 30 affirmative votes of members of the Treaty's 51-member Executive Council. The Executive Council must act within 96 hours of receiving a request for an inspection.

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