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Self-imposed Nuclear Apartheid or Effective Unarmed Deterrence? An Overview of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

Objective/context: The article proposes an updated evaluation of the effectiveness of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean as an instrument for the prevention of nuclear threats to the continent. All 33 state parties have largely complied with the Treaty. However, the Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS), which undertook to respect it through the Additional Protocols, maintain interpretative declarations that cast doubt on the application of the Treaty in a war scenario. *Methodology:* This study determines its findings through the introduction of qualitative criteria of treaties' effectiveness and by contrasting specialized bibliography, archival documents such as resolutions of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), and other national and international primary sources. *Conclusions:* The Treaty's limited mandate, aimed above all at preventing intracontinental nuclear proliferation, altogether with the persistence of NWSs' nuclear deterrence doctrine, explain the Treaty's restrictive effectiveness for preventing the introduction of nuclear weapons by extra-continental means, for example, via bilateral military agreements with an NWS. *Originality:* Considering the current generalized deterioration of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, this study offers a prospective diagnosis of the main limits to the optimal effectiveness of the first regional non-proliferation treaty applied to a populated area.

Keywords: *Latin America, Caribbean, Non-proliferation treaties, Nuclear weapons, International security*