

Brazil to Consider Joining the NPT

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Brazilian President Fernando Cardoso submitted the nuclear NonProliferation Treaty (NPT) to the Brazilian congress for ratification on June 20, nearly 20 years after the treaty was opened for signature. Should Brazil accede to the NPT, only four nations (Cuba, India, Israel and Pakistan) would remain outside of the regime. In 1990, Brazil renounced the nuclear weapons program it had been pursuing since the 1970s, and, in 1991, it signed an agreement with Argentina to establish a bilateral nuclear accountancy and control system to verify that each state's nuclear activities would be for peaceful uses only.

Brazil followed Argentina in joining the Treaty of Tlatelolco (a nuclear-weapon-free-zone accord covering Latin America and the Caribbean) in May 1994, but continued to resist joining the NPT on the basis of the treaty's discrimination between nuclear "haves" and "have-nots." Argentina acceded to the NPT in 1995.

Neither house of Brazil's bicameral legislature is likely to act on the treaty before fall 1997. Currently in extraordinary session to conclude its normal business, neither the Chamber of Deputies nor the Senate has been able to include the treaty in its agenda. Little domestic opposition to the NPT is expected, since Brazil has already accepted the principle of nuclear nonproliferation through its bilateral agreement with Argentina and the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

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