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## Strategic Stability Without Arms Control

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Arms control has increasingly been pronounced “dead.” Indeed, recent empirics are grim. In 2023, Russia unilaterally suspended participation in New START, the last remaining bilateral arms control agreement since the Cold War. While the future of arms control is uncertain, Russia, China, and the United States have expressed nominal interest in maintaining strategic stability. However, strategic stability has largely only been considered in contexts with arms control, or as an outcome of technical military strategies and incentives. Is arms control necessary for strategic stability? I conduct a most-similar systems design analysis of the end of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) to distinguish confounding factors in strategic stability. By holding the end of arms control agreements constant, I measure variation in strategic stability and assess an understudied variable at play: political relationships. Examining the end of arms control agreements allows me to isolate the effects of political relationships on strategic stability in a post-Cold War context. Leveraging evidentiary tests, I identify important interaction effects and find arms control is sufficient but not necessary for strategic stability. Political relationships better explain strategic stability outcomes, suggesting strategic stability is possible without arms control. By critically evaluating the role of arms control in strategic stability, this article applies the concept of strategic stability to a case universe more representative of today’s international geopolitical environment: a world without formal arms control policies.

**What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?**

Political Science

**If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?**

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

**Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?**

Yes

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