

Session 7: Treaty of Tlatelolco: Evaluating the Establishment and the Efficacy of Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

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Summary

This Tuesday 14th of June, a group of experts related to the nuclear field had the opportunity of listening about experiences and lessons connected to the first and until now most successful example of a regional nuclear-weapon-free zone: the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin American and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967); that worked in part as an example for the others that followed the same objective (Raratonga (South Pacific); Bangkok (SE Asia); Pelindaba (Africa); and Semipalatinsk (Central Asia)).

As John Carlson from the Lowy Institute put it, one of the many importances of these agreements is that they are helping to increasingly exclude the presence and/or testing of nuclear weapons from many places, and that at the same time they works as confidence building measures to increase the transparency and trust between the parties, especially when we considers that more that 110 states are members of these initiatives.

But before having the Tlatelolco Treaty covering all Latin America, first they needed to create other tools to achieve the conditions to reach that objective. Amid those initiatives, the most important is the associated with the relation between Argentina and Brazil; the most developed nuclear countries in the region. That is why the argentine Ambassador Ricardo Lagorio focused the introduction of the panel in the evolution of the Inter-American System and the different milestones that helped in the building and strengthened of this successful

accord. For example, in 1902 Argentina and Chile signed an instrument that some experts consider the first disarmament agreement (Mayo Pact); and closer in the time he mentioned the bilateral nuclear safeguards agreement between Argentina and Brazil; the quadrilateral nuclear safeguards agreement among Argentina, Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) and the International Atomic Agency; and others.

Dr. Leonardo Sobehart (from INVAP, a company that develops and has been exporting nuclear, aerospace, industrial, medical, government, and defense technology to many countries), deepened the experience of the competition and suspicious that later could be transformed in trust and cooperation, between Argentina and Brazil, particularly after the return of the democracy in both countries.

He mentioned also that the official position of Argentina government, that it to defend all the rights to the peaceful developing of nuclear energy.

Finally, Sonia Fernandez Moreno, from the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of Argentina (ARN) centered her presentation in the history of the ABACC and the very intrusive safeguards verification system. The trust created by this agency, the first and only bilateral initiative of this kind, also contributed to the process for the full enforcement of Tlatelolco, as also to the progress in other fields, as in the integration process that derived in the MERCOSUR. The successful of this example, between two countries that competed for many decades in the nuclear area and have the complete control of the fuel cycle, could works also as a model for other states and/or regions.

The people that assist to the panel focused the questions in the possibility of extending the ABACC to other countries of Latin America, the nuclear programs of Argentina and Brazil and possible future new regions free of nuclear weapons.

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