

# **Session 7: Treaty of Tlatelolco: Evaluating the Establishment and the Efficacy of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones**

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## **Summary**

Ricardo Lagorio explained the adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the first regional nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) treaty in history, as a result of the Inter-American System, which was developed by its members over a period of 200 years on the principles of peaceful resolution of conflicts, democracy, regional integration and a common juridical framework. This joint evolution, a certain degree of mutual trust and a critical mass of political will made the Tlatelolco NWFZ treaty possible. As a result, the risk of nuclear proliferation in Latin America and the Caribbean was successfully avoided before the establishment of the NPT.

Leonardo Sobehart explained that Tlatelolco represents a common will to solve disputes by peaceful means or, if unable to do so, to limit the degree of mutual aggression. This acknowledges that conflict between neighboring nations poses no risk to their survival, which in turn renders the use of WMDs unjustifiable. It also represents a means to avoid wasting resources in arms and a guarantee that countries will not engage in a nuclear conflict as long as there is an institutionally-solid international system. Ultimately, FWNZs are based on the conviction that union, cooperation and self-limitation conduct to growth and development, as the strategic development alliance between Argentina and Brazil shows. Once mutual mistrust was replaced with a strategic alliance, common guarantees were in order for the world community through the IAEA by means of agreements towards the

peaceful use of nuclear energy, the Four-Party Agreement of 1991 between and the ratification of the Tlatelolco and No-Proliferation Treaties.

Sonia Fernández Moreno spoke of the relationship between Argentina and Brazil that reinforces Tlatelolco. The creation of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), which verifies the peaceful use of nuclear energy in both countries, and the ‘Common System of Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials’ (SCCC), a safeguards verification system, is the outcome of a confidence building process and transparency. Believing in the importance of integration and the significance of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, both countries provided mutual transparency to their nuclear programs and established bilateral safeguards to control and verify their nuclear activities. The successful application of the SCCC for almost twenty years in an atmosphere of cooperation between the countries, ABACC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in implementing international full scope safeguards, confirm the effective contribution to peace and security of this initiative.

John Carlson pointed out that Tlatelolco, concluded in 1967, was soon followed by similar efforts in the South Pacific (Raratonga), South East Asia (Bangkok), Africa (Pelindaba) and Central Asia (Semipalatinsk). These NWFZ treaties, all subscribed by non-nuclear-weapon states party to the NPT, serve an important purpose by prohibiting the stationing of nuclear weapons and excluding nuclear testing, which in turn helps to reinforce the moratorium on nuclear testing pending entry-into-force of the CTBT. They have an important transparency and confidence-building function and can provide a substantial body of experience to draw on for potential new NWFZ treaties in other regions.

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