

## [SE7-LT-1] Treaty of Tlatelolco: Evaluating the Establishment and the Efficacy of Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

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### Full Summary

From 16:45 to 18 of Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> 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 treaties that followed the same objective: Rarotonga (South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, 1985); Bangkok (Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, 1995); Pelindaba (African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, 1996); and Semipalatinsk (Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, 2006).

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 at least in the case of Latin America, before having the Tlatelolco Treaty covering the entire region, 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 (the oldest and most stable in the world) and the different milestones that helped in the building and strengthened of this successful accord.

According to him, respect for International Law and obligations deriving from treaties, respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non interference in their international affairs, good neighborliness, good will and co-operation, are pillars of the Inter-

American System. Furthermore Democracy, Integration and an Inter-American System based on the peaceful solution of conflicts (in the XX Century there has been just one major inter state war: the Chaco War, between Bolivia and Paraguay, 1932-1935; which ended with the negotiations undertaken by the Argentine Foreign Minister, Carlos Saavedra Lamas) are underpinnings which explain the situation in the Latin America region.

Other examples that he mentioned are the Pacts of Mayo of 1902, between Argentina and Chile, which according to some experts were the first disarmament agreements in the XX Century; the South American Anti-War Pact (1933, under the initiative of the Argentine Saavedra Lamas, later the first Latin American Nobel Peace Prize recipient); the American Treaty on Peaceful Solutions (The Bogota Agreement, 1948) and the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty, 1947).

Closer in the time, and related to the nuclear field, he mentioned the signature of the Tlatelolco Treaty (1967). Tlatelolco is more than a nuclear non-proliferation initiative or a regional NPT, he alleged, it reflects the political and diplomatic tradition of the countries in the region regarding peace and security. It is the assertion of regional commonality, shared values and shared interests. With that instrument, Latin American countries were the first to commit themselves against nuclear proliferation and to codify this commitment in a nuclear-weapon-free zone arrangement. And as a result of the entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1968, two years before the NPT, the risk of nuclear proliferation is null in this region, and the lowest of any worldwide.

Focused in the Argentine-Brazilian relation, the Ambassador stated that both countries have got a long nuclear tradition, of about 60 years and that, although almost never clashed, there were times in the past when there was rivalry between the two. Given the circumstances, the key challenge concerning nuclear matters was to find innovative ways to increase mutual confidence and to prevent potential risks of proliferation. In this sense both countries transformed rivalry and competition into cooperation by developing an innovative model of "Neighbour-to-Neighbour Control".

So, 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 accords, helped in the creation of a new chapter in the history between both countries; one of trust, cooperation and integration.

Related with his opinion, we can also mention that Argentina is the only Latin American country that is a member of all five export control regimes (the Australia Group (AG), the

Zangger Committee, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), showing a great compromise with non proliferation. It is also important to say that Argentina was one of the 13 members of the **Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)**.

Also, that there are specialists and researchers that have studied the possibility for applying the ABACC experience to the Korean Peninsula. In fact, the central idea of developing a regional agency, making a concept of the “neighbors-watching neighbors” policy, is a possibility that is worth considering.

After Ambassador Lagorio, **Dr. Leonardo Sobehart** (from INVAP, a company that develops and has been exporting nuclear, aerospace, industrial, medical, and defense technology to many countries), expand the experience of Tlatelolco, and also he referred about the competition and suspicious that later were transformed in trust and cooperation, between Argentina and Brazil, particularly after the return of the democracy in both countries.

Over the first issue, and in his words, the military denuclearization of Latin America and the Caribbean represents a way to prevent their peoples from wasting resources in weapons, guaranteeing that their territories will not engage in conflict involving nuclear armaments as long as there is an institutionally-solid international system through the action of the United Nations Organization and the observance of its Charter.

The opening of a nuclear weapons free zone symbolizes a bridge towards the strengthening of mutual trust between nations. Its implementation, however, calls for a conviction that union and cooperation - and not division - is the way towards growth and development, together with a self-limitation to show the other party the nation’s true will.

About the evolution of the relation between Argentina and Brazil, the different nuclear programs that each country tried to develop in the past only reflected another means to maintain the competition, although differences in this field were mainly owed to isolated work rather than a decision to stress differences. Thus, Argentina went for heavy-water Nuclear Power Plants during the 1960s, while two decades later Brazil chose light water technology, and Argentina developed its uranium-enrichment facility applying the gaseous diffusion method while Brazil began enriching uranium through centrifugation.

The establishment of a strategic development alliance was possible on the basis of a strong and explicit international self-limitation declaration, sustained by the acceptance of mutual verification through a bilateral organization known as ABACC. Self-limitation and the search

for union could only see the day within democratic processes that took place in both Argentina and Brazil.

Naturally, as he admitted, this evolution was gradual: cooperation principles were first established, and then came commercial and industrial desegregation, followed by the integration of transport, energy, and communications infrastructures, and, more recently, the most sensitive areas, those of nuclear and aerospace science and technology. The challenge is to standardize towards the use of multi-discipline equipment in common projects, and how to deal with the worries about proliferation.

Regarding the last point, he considers that is wrong for some States that possess nuclear weapons to apply a strategy within the framework of the process to revise the NPT as an attempt to restrict access to technology more and more, when the actual need is to ban its illegitimate use. Such attempt goes against one of the key obligations of the agreement, as specified in its Article IV.

He ended his presentation saying that the significance of full disarmament towards the establishment of mutual trust among nations should prevail over the idea that the possession of nuclear weapons could represent a magic solution to the economic and social troubles of the people or its utilization in nationalist or fundamentalist harangues.

Then, **Sonia Fernandez Moreno**, from the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of Argentina (ARN) centered her presentation in the history of the ABACC, its safeguards verification system, the relation with Tlatelolco and her views about “our nuclear future”.

According with her, that initiative was mainly possible thanks to a unique political vision of the Presidents of Argentina and Brazil at a very special moment for both states such as the re-establishment of democracy; plus the existence of a solid senior scientific and other specialist staff in the nuclear sectors of both countries that not only were cooperating in some technical areas even before the 80s, but they were a key factor in developing and implementing the system of reciprocal transparency that the political leaders envisioned.

The trust created by this bilateral 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.

With respect to “**our nuclear future**”, Fernandez Moreno believes that nuclear energy continues to be a suitable option to address the increasing demand of electricity for people’s development and socio-economic growth.

That is because energy sustainability relies on a diversified energy matrix where nuclear energy and renewable are important components. In fact, with the exemption of hydroelectricity, nuclear is currently the only base-load generation technology that provides relatively clean and low cost electricity. That is why she doesn’t think that Fukushima accident would drastically change this trend.

Finally, she pointed out that different views and proposals on how to deal with the current challenges have been expressed in various forums. As Sobehart mentioned, Argentina is against supporting drastic decisions such as the limitation of nuclear fuel cycle technologies and knowledge, and with that hamper the right to fully develop nuclear energy technologies for peaceful purposes.

Closing the panel, **John Carlson** mentioned that there are 9 NWFZ: the 5 treaties that we already enumerated; 3 agreements over specific areas basically unpopulated (Antarctic, 1959; Outer Space, 1967; and Seabed Treaty, 1971); and the one-state Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone of Mongolia.

All are integrated by members of the NPT, and includes dispositions to don’t allow the station of nuclear weapons in their regions, also bans the nuclear test (something don’t expressed in the NPT) and have transparency and clarification mechanism that helps in the building of trust. They are good examples that could favor the creation of new NWFZ, perhaps in the Korean Peninsula (with a mechanism similar to the ABACC), Middle East (in 2012 a conference will be developed to explore that possibility) and Southeast Asia between India and Pakistan (where also the example of the ABACC could be used, as well as the Pelindaba, which includes procedures to verify the dismantling of nuclear weapons).

The questions from the public focused in the possibility of extending the ABACC to other countries of Latin America (México, Chile, Venezuela, etc.), something possible according with some of the panelist; how the agency works in the case that one of the member don’t fulfill its obligations; the reasons behind the negative of Argentina and Brazil in ratifying the Additional Protocol; the nuclear programs of Argentina and Brazil and possible future new regions free of nuclear weapons (for parts of Europe or Asia).

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