

[SE7-LT-2] Treaty of Tlatelolco: Evaluating the Establishment and the Efficacy of Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

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Full Summary

Ambassador Ricardo Lagorio focused on the political and diplomatic underpinnings that led Latin American countries were to commit themselves against nuclear proliferation and to codify this commitment in a nuclear-weapon-free zone arrangement, the Treaty for the prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin American and the Caribbean, commonly known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, signed in February 1967.

In this sense, Lagorio believes that the evolution of the Inter-American System explains the adoption of Treaty of Tlatelolco, as well as other key regional institutions such as Zone of Peace, the bilateral nuclear safeguards agreement between Argentina and Brazil, the quadrilateral nuclear safeguards agreement between Argentina, Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the International Atomic Agency, the Declaration of Cartagena of the Presidents of the Andean Group, the Declaration of Guadalajara, the 1991 Declaration of Mendoza and the widespread regional adherence to BWC, CWC and NPT.

The Inter-American system 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, as well as 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, goodwill and cooperation.

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.

Lagorio mentioned some of Tlatelolco's antecedents, such as the South American Anti-War Pact of 1934, as well as common juridical instruments like the Drago Doctrine (1902), the

Tobar Doctrine (1907), the Estrada Doctrine (1930), the American Treaty on Peaceful Solutions (The Bogota Agreement of 1948) and the Inter-American Treaty of reciprocal Assistance (The Rio Treaty of 1947). This Latin American juridical framework has played an important role in the safe and stable evolution of the region, with reduced levels of force and military expenditure.

Lagorio also spoke of Argentina's commitment to Democracy, Peace, Human Rights, regional integration, Multilateralism and Peaceful Solution of its conflicts. Concerning nuclear energy, Argentina chose to limit the use of its technology solely for peaceful purposes, as can be seen by its signing (1967) and ratifying (1994) of Tlatelolco, its ratification of the NPT in 1995, its membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Nuclear Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1997 and the Missile Technology Control regime in 1991.

Another key issue was the development of an innovative model of "Neighbour-to-Neighbour Control" between Argentina and Brazil. This model has been in effect since 1991, when a key bilateral agreement was signed, and both countries jointly developed the Common System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (SCCC) (which is a set of safeguards procedures applicable to all the nuclear materials used in all the nuclear activities performed within the jurisdictions or in the territories of Argentina and Brazil) and the bilateral agency responsible for its implementation, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) (an entity responsible for verifying that the nuclear materials existing in both countries are being used for exclusively peaceful purposes).

Lagorio concluded by stating that Tlatelolco is more than a nuclear non-proliferation initiative or a regional NPT. In reality, 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 shares interests.

Dr. Leonardo Juan Sobehart explained some of the challenges in the establishment of a Regional Agenda without Nuclear Weapons. For him, the Tlatelolco Treaty proves the common will of the Latin American countries to solve disputes by peaceful means or, if unable to do so, to limit the degree of mutual aggression. This voluntary limitation 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 through the action of the United Nations Organization and the observance of its Charter.

Ultimately, underlying the implementation of a nuclear weapons free zone calls is the belief that union and cooperation is the way towards growth and development, together with a self-limitation to show the other party the nation's true will.

Sobehart illustrated this by explaining the relationship between Argentina and Brazil, which evolved from a decades-long competition that brought mistrust, division and isolation, to the establishment of a strategic development alliance. This 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 the Brazilian Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). A prerequisite to this self-limitation and the search for union was the democratic processes that took place in both countries.

Once mutual mistrust was replaced with a strategic alliance, common guarantees were in order for the world community through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), by means of agreements towards the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the Four-Party Agreement (the 1991 Agreement between Argentina, Brazil, ABACC and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards), and the ratification of the Tlatelolco and No-Proliferation Treaties.

The evolution from dialogue and cooperation to economic and cultural integration 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.

All was made possible within a democratic atmosphere, as from the conviction that cooperation, and not confrontation, improves everyone's standard of living.

Sonia Fernández Moreno spoke further of the relationship between Argentina and Brazil and how it 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 conducted by the leaders of Argentina and Brazil. This endeavor constitutes a unique contribution to peaceful nuclear energy and to non-proliferation and disarmament.

Convinced of the importance of deepening the integration process between Argentina and Brazil and the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the scientific, technological, economic and

social development of their people, both countries reaffirmed their decision to provide mutual transparency to their nuclear programs in the 80s. This led to the establishment of bilateral safeguards to control and verify their nuclear activities. During the 90s, Latin America approached the solution of pending issues in the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Argentina and Brazil contributed in a determining way to the process for its full enforcement.

The successful application of the SCCC for almost twenty years in an atmosphere of cooperation between the countries, ABACC and the IAEA in implementing international full scope safeguards confirm the effective contribution to peace and security of this initiative.

John Carlson highlighted the importance of the Treaty of Tlatelolco as the first of many the regional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties: there are four other regional NWFZ treaties: Raratonga (South Pacific), Bangkok (SE Asia), Pelindaba (Africa) and Semipalatinsk (Central Asia). Carlson also mentioned three treaties that prohibit nuclear weapons in particular geographic areas (Antarctica, Outer Space and the Seabed) and the case of Mongolia, which has declared itself a single-state NWFZ.

All of the states included in nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties are party to the NPT and are thus prohibited from acquiring nuclear weapons. But the NWFZ treaties additionally prohibit the stationing of nuclear weapons and exclude nuclear testing, consequently helping to reinforce the moratorium on nuclear testing pending entry-into-force of the CTBT. Finally, NWFZ treaties also have an important transparency and confidence-building function

NWFZ treaties provide a substantial body of experience to draw on for similar treaties in other regions like the Middle East, South Asia and the Korean Peninsula.

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