

February 13, 2017

Dear Ambassador Macedo Soares:

Fifty years ago, on February 14, 1967, the Treaty of Tlatelolco opened for signature. This landmark Treaty led to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, the first agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons in a populated area. It paved the way for other similar zones that now cover 114 countries in four other regions of the globe, as well as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. All of these nuclear-weapon-free zones were negotiated on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States within the region concerned, a principle affirmed by the 1999 United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines on nuclear-weapon-free zones. This practical and realistic approach has enhanced global and regional peace and security and strengthened the global nuclear nonproliferation regime.

The United States has been a strong supporter of the Treaty of Tlatelolco from its inception. The United States is a Party to both of the Treaty's Protocols. As such, the United States has committed not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the Treaty Parties or contribute to the violation of the Treaty's obligations, and not to test, manufacture, store, or deploy nuclear weapons in U.S. territories within the zone's territorial limits.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco also recognizes the importance of the International Atomic Energy Agency in applying safeguards to verify that states are abiding by their commitments to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and we urge all states in the region and elsewhere to adopt the highest level of standards for International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

By keeping Latin America and the Caribbean free of nuclear weapons and establishing a model for other regions to follow, the Treaty of Tlatelolco serves as the international model for limiting the risks of nuclear war and strengthening regional nuclear nonproliferation. We celebrate the wisdom of its drafters fifty years ago, and rededicate ourselves to work together to build on its promise.

Sincerely,

Rex W. Tillerson