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OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
IN LATIN AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN



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STATEMENT OF  
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DELEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

U.S. ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary General, Distinguished Delegates and Friends of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Thank you for the opportunity to address this Thirteenth Regular Conference of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America. I am honored to represent the United States at this conference. Before proceeding with my statement, I would like to read a personal message from President Clinton to those participating in this meeting of the General Conference.

"I am pleased to send greetings to participants in the Thirteenth General Conference of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America.

One of our most important international security issues today is preventing the spread of nuclear weapons around the globe. The Treaty of Tlatelolco has stood now for over a quarter-century as an important barrier to the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the western hemisphere. By strengthening international legal restrictions against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, it protects the security interests of every nation and makes a substantial contribution to regional and hemispheric stability.

Your important regional system has received significant new momentum since your last general conference. St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Belize have now signed the Treaty. The amendments unanimously passed at the special general conference in August have paved the way for Argentina, the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Republic of Chile to bring the Treaty into force for these states. I sincerely hope that these developments will lead all eligible states to bring the Treaty into effect at the earliest possible date.

I want to reaffirm that the United States strongly supports all efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in Latin America. The United States, as a party to the two additional Protocols, remains a strong supporter of the Treaty.

I wish you a productive and successful meeting."

That concludes the President's message.

Nonproliferation is assuming a central role in arms control for the 1990's. With the end of the superpower rivalry and as both the U.S. and Russia reduced their level of armaments, weapons proliferation and regional tension and conflicts are emerging as central international security concerns. Events of the past two-and-a-half years have produced a heightened awareness within the international community about the dangers of proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction, and have led to stronger efforts to arrest the spread of these weapons and the means to deliver them. In this regard, the efforts of the Latin American states provide a model for other nations to emulate in eliminating weapons of mass destruction from their regions.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco clearly recognizes that nuclear nonproliferation is an objective that demands shared responsibility. The Treaty also benefits the security of its parties both individually and collectively. Each Contracting Party, in exercising its sovereign rights, has assumed self-imposed restrictions that help to avoid misunderstanding and suspicion and to prevent a regional nuclear arms race that would only endanger the security of all nations. Further, the Treaty commits its parties to enter into full-scope safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to provide assurance of the non-diversion of safeguarded nuclear material from a parties' peaceful nuclear program, consistent with considerations of sovereignty and protection of proprietary information.

Since the last Regular General Conference in 1991, Argentina and Brazil have taken a series of important steps toward comprehensive nuclear nonproliferation controls: they have implemented a bilateral Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy; instituted comprehensive bilateral safeguards on their nuclear activities; and signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency that would fulfill their Article 13 obligations under the Treaty of Tlatelolco. Further, the amendments adopted at the special general conference in August of last year have cleared the way for Argentina, Brazil, and Chile to bring the Treaty fully into force for their national territories. We look forward to this event with much anticipation. As President Clinton noted in his statement, it is our firm hope that their actions will result in the Treaty's entry into force for all eligible states at the earliest possible date. We believe that regional and hemispheric security will be greatly enhanced by these actions.

The United States remains firmly committed to the goals and objectives of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and we continue to fulfill faithfully the protocol obligations which we have undertaken. As a party to Protocol I, the United States is obligated to apply the provisions of Articles 1, 3, 5, and 13 of the Treaty to its territories in the zone. Our safeguards agreement with the IAEA for these territories contributes to the fulfillment of our obligations.

In addition, as a party to Protocol II, the United States is obligated to respect the denuclearized status of the region and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the states party to the Treaty. We continue to treat this obligation with utmost seriousness.

The Treaty and the consequent application of full-scope IAEA safeguards for Contracting Parties also provides the foundation necessary for peaceful nuclear cooperation between states. The United States has been able to engage in the broadest possible peaceful nuclear cooperation with states that have brought the Treaty into force and have accepted IAEA safeguards on all their peaceful nuclear activities. The United States has also granted preferential treatment in technical cooperation to states which are party to the Treaty. We hope that soon all states in the region will be eligible for such cooperation and preferential treatment. We call upon all states in the region to take whatever steps are required to bring into force and fully implement the Treaty of Tlatelolco as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman, the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been and remains a key element of the international nuclear nonproliferation regime. Its goals are just as vital and important today as they were more than twenty-five years ago. Today we hope that the Treaty is on the verge of having its full promise and potential realized. No effort should be spared to see that this occurs, and thus to ensure that one large and important region of the world is truly free of the threat of nuclear proliferation. All of the states represented here -- Contracting Parties, states party to the protocols, and others -- have both an important responsibility and the opportunity to work together to see that this happens.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to address this Thirteenth Session of the Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America.