

**International Seminar**  
**“The experience of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean and the prospects for**  
**2015 and beyond”**  
**(Mexico City, 14-15 February 2012)**

Remarks by Miguel Marín Bosch in PANEL 1: “Lessons learnt and good practices in the creation and consolidation process of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Latin America and the Caribbean”

February 14, 2012

For decades the Treaty of Tlatelolco, whose 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary we are now commemorating, meant different things to the different countries in the region and the rest of the world. Today there seems to be general agreement among the 33 Latin American and Caribbean States: the Treaty of Tlatelolco erects a legal barrier against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their possible use by states outside the region, and also constitutes a guarantee for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

At some point in time, the Treaty of Tlatelolco was considered as a response to the 1962 Cuban missile crisis in Cuba. However, facts do not support this view. Rather, it should be seen as part of the efforts of the international community to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to do so through regional agreements. The Polish Foreign Minister, Adam Rapacki, had called for the establishment of a Central European NWFZ; Ireland proposed what would become the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the UN General Assembly had been considering the initiative to denuclearize the continent of Africa.

There were also those who said that the Treaty was an initiative to stop the nuclear ambitions of some countries in the region, Brazil and Argentina in particular. That may have come into play later, but not in 1962 since it was the Brazilian government itself that submitted the proposal that year to the United Nations. By the way, they presented it a few months before October of the same year.

Nevertheless, the creation and consolidation of the NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean offered many lessons. We can highlight, inter alia:

1. The pioneering effort undertaken by the States in the region requires a lot of patience. It is necessary to overcome all types of resistance. On several occasions, Alfonso García Robles himself had to “persuade” his Minister of Foreign Affairs and his President to continue negotiating the treaty.
2. Some issues cannot be solved. Consider the transit of vessels carrying nuclear weapons and material through the waters of the zone. Consider the Caribbean Sea. The Malvinas Islands offer an example.
3. The solution to other issues can be found by an ingenious proposal. Such is the case of the Treaty’s entry into force.
4. An outstanding issue: which countries should sign Additional Protocol II?