

## Preface

Over the last few years, with the extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Negotiation of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, much international attention has been devoted to multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament processes. Universality has been, and remains, one of the essential aims of these efforts.

At the same time, it has become increasingly apparent that regional factors of insecurity can be significant obstacles to non-proliferation and disarmament, and that they are in fact among the major causes of proliferation and arms races. Therefore, the regional dimensions of arms control need to be closely addressed by the policy-making, diplomatic and research communities alike.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) on the regional States' own initiative, approved by the United Nations General Assembly, and endorsed by the relevant external States, is an important contribution to non-proliferation, to disarmament, and above all, to international security.

Jointly with OPANAL (Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean) and the Government of Mexico, UNIDIR convened an international seminar on "Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in the Next Century" in Mexico City on 13-14 February 1997, the 30th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The discussions were broad-ranging, and some of the main themes addressed were the following:

The role of the *Treaty of Tlatelolco* as the first effective expression of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) in a densely inhabited part of the globe was stressed. The Treaty has set a pattern for other NWFZs to follow. Its drafters' work in the 1960s was remarkably innovative and has proved durably influential. The Treaty has brought tangible security benefits to its States parties. It has also played a part in enhancing the international standing of the Latin American and Caribbean region, beyond the issue of arms control itself. Moreover, it has provided an essential framework for nuclear transparency and cooperation within the region, notably between Argentina and Brazil.

*Other Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones.* Three NWFZs have been negotiated since the Treaty of Tlatelolco: in the South Pacific (Treaty of Rarotonga, 1985), in South-East Asia (Treaty of Bangkok, 1995), and in Africa (Treaty of Pelindaba, 1996). All of these share very similar obligations, both for regional member States and for relevant external States (especially the nuclear weapon

States—NWS). But each NWFZ also has its very own features, notably in terms of definitions of prohibited activities, of the delineation of the zone of application, and of inspection and verification arrangements. Most of all, each NWFZ is the product of specific regional (political, strategic, cultural and economic) circumstances. While the text of the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been a major inspiration for other NWFZs, its *exemplarity* does not go without the regional *specificity* and regional *appropriateness* of other NWFZs.

*Future Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones.* The progress made in the negotiation of NWFZs and towards their entry into force since the end of the Cold War has prompted debate on the prospects for such zones in other regions including the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, Central Europe and the Korean peninsula. Most participants in the seminar agreed that near-term prospects were slim for the emergence of new NWFZs in any of these regions.

This raised the issue of *the relationship between Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and peace processes*. NWFZs are potentially of greatest importance in areas characterized by both regional tensions and by the actual or suspected existence of nuclear capabilities. It is also in such regions that they are most difficult to negotiate. Two alternative ways of conceiving this relationship were discussed: one is to consider a NWFZ as the end-product of a successfully implemented peace process; another is to view discussions and negotiations on a NWFZ as part and parcel of peace processes involving confidence-building and arms control. The Treaty of Tlatelolco's gradual entry into force was referred to in this connection as a possible example.

The strengthening of *cooperation among existing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones* was widely regarded as a useful path to pursue. Many participants felt that the member States of NWFZs (and their regional organizations) could productively share their respective experiences and draw lessons from both past successes and difficulties. The experience gained over the years by OPANAL was seen as particularly relevant in this respect, as was the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In addition to such cooperation, various options were discussed for the future, including *broadening the geographical scope of existing NWFZs* such as proposals for a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere, and *broadening the weapons-scope of existing NWFZs*.

The idea of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere met with varied reactions. Some saw it as a step towards global nuclear disarmament; others saw it as a de facto reality; others yet objected that its area of application would include large ocean areas and international waters. In sum, more questions were raised than answers proposed. What legal form would such an arrangement

take? What would be its relationship to multilateral and universal non-proliferation and disarmament efforts?

Broadening the weapons-scope of existing NWFZs was considered an interesting option. It was suggested, for example, that on the basis of their commitment to the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the States parties to the Tlatelolco Treaty might envisage ways of addressing together the regional control (or banning) of other weapons of mass destruction, of various types of conventional weapons, and/or of delivery vehicles such as surface-to-surface ballistic missiles.

More generally, there exists a clear complementarity, on the one hand between global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts striving for universality, and on the other, the establishment of NWFZs on a regional scale. The challenge before us is to reflect constructively on the ways of making both processes as mutually-reinforcing as possible.

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