

September 7, 1977

**Letter from US Congressman Paul Findley to
Brazilian Vice-President Adalberto Pereira dos
Santos**

Citation:

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Summary:

Findley proposes a system of mutual inspection of nuclear facilities between Argentina and Brazil. According to the agreement he proposed, Brazil and Argentina would renounce the intention to develop a nuclear device and would accept mutual inspections of their respective nuclear facilities.

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

September 6, 1977

His Excellency
General Pereira dos Santos
Vice-President
Government of Brazil
Embassy of Brazil
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Vice-President:

Learning with great pleasure today of your presence in the United States of America, I welcome the opportunity to report concerning a proposal on nuclear policy which I formulated during my recent visit as a member of a Congressional Study Mission to Latin America.

The proposal I set forth in this letter is strictly my own. It was formulated entirely by myself, without consultation or knowledge of the White House or Department of State. Its formulation occurred entirely during my travels in Latin America, which occurred from August 9 to August 23, 1977.

I hope very earnestly that it can be given consideration by the Government of Brazil and the Government of Argentina and that it can contribute in some measure to the creation of a spirit conducive to improved international relations.

Here is my proposal:

A bilateral, on-site nuclear verification agreement between Argentina and Brazil could help to arrest mounting concern over the character of each country's ultimate nuclear aspirations.

I reached this conclusion during a recent Congressional study mission that included discussions with top officials in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia.

The agreement I envisage would be one in which Brazil and Argentina renounce any intention of developing a nuclear explosive device and agree to accept continuing, mutual, on-site monitoring of their respective nuclear facilities. Each nation would let nuclear officials of the other move freely throughout its nuclear facilities.

Argentina and Brazil have been natural competitors on many planes over the years and probably will remain so in the future. They have a long common border. Each has a great diversity of

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resources, technical competence and a burgeoning economy.

Argentina is presently the most advanced nuclear power in Latin America, with several natural-uranium-fueled power plants in operation and under construction. Its technology includes a laboratory-size plant for reprocessing spent fuel.

Brazil, whose pursuit of nuclear development is more recent than Argentina's, has contracted with West Germany to buy a complete nuclear fuel technology based on the use of enriched uranium and including equipment for reprocessing spent fuel. The latter, of course, will yield substantial quantities of plutonium usable for weapons.

Neither country is currently a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, though both have taken some steps toward entering into the Treaty of Tlateloco. However, this treaty, important as it is, accepts the distinction between peaceful and military nuclear explosive devices, a distinction that the U.S. and other supplier states now prudently recognize to be artificial and meaningless.

Both Brazil and Argentina have frequently renounced any intention of building or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons, but apprehension persists that, in the absence of solid safeguards, future circumstances might impel one of them to go the weapons route. If so, the other would surely follow. With the giants of South America armed with nuclear weapons, a chain reaction might bring them swiftly to other Latin nations. Such a situation would promote neither security nor stability in the Western Hemisphere.

The bilateral pledges and inspection arrangements I have described would not be a substitute for International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards nor for specific individual supplier state provisos, but rather would provide an important additional element of assurance and protection between two states whose relations have at times been quite troubled. The agreement in question would strengthen the web of checks and decrease any incentive for abuse and diversion. The agreement by Brazil and Argentina to check themselves should be doubly reassuring to neighboring states and to the world at large. There are other situations in other parts of the world where tensions among regional powers are so great as to require checks beyond those inherent in customary safeguard arrangements. This kind of bilateral verification could serve as a model for such situations, helping, by means of the added protection it would provide, to assure that traditional safeguards are not subjected to intense or unbearable strain.

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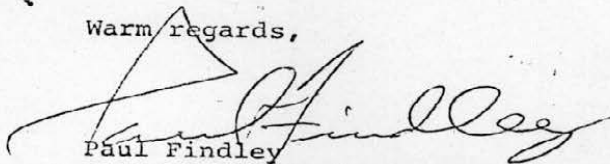
*The agreement would have these advantages:

- 1) It would elicit worldwide applause for the two neighboring countries--which would consummate the agreement entirely on their own without participation or pressure by the nuclear weapons state.
- 2) It would be the first major agreement between the countries in many years and might create an atmosphere that would be supportive of agreements in other fields as well.
- 3) It would not involve concessions or cost by either state. Brazil and Argentina already have a cordial, informal, cooperative relationship among their nuclear officials and, inasmuch as both have renounced nuclear weapons, neither would be disadvantaged by accepting continuing on-site inspection.

During my initial exploration of the possibility of a nuclear verification agreement between Argentina and Brazil with officials around Latin America, I sensed a great receptivity to this positive, cooperative step. I hope, therefore, that Argentina and Brazil will pursue this concept, thus promoting a reduction of tensions and greater understanding between these two nations. This would be in the best interests of the entire Western Hemisphere.

I had the honor to present this idea briefly to Deputy Foreign Minister Geraldo Holanda Cavalcanti.

Warm regards,



Paul Findley
Representative in Congress