

February 16, 1967
**Telegram from the Indian Embassy in Mexico on
Latin American Denuclearization Treaty**

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Summary:

This telegram comprehensively evaluates the Latin American Denuclearization Treaty

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Secret

Telegram No: MEX/162-1/66

FROM: Naranjan Sing Gill, Embassy of India, Mexico

TO: V.M.M Nair, Joint Secretary (UN), MEA

DATE: February 16, 1967

Subject: Latin American Denuclearization Treaty

□ My dear joint secretary,

□ Please refer to the Minister's telegram No. 25006 dated the 14th February 1967, which arrived after the treaty had been signed and the meeting of the Prep Comm for the Denuc of LA had ended. However, I immediately conveyed the Government of India's appreciation and happiness to the Chairman of the Comm, Garcia Robles, who is the Second Deputy Minister of Mexico, And I add that this gesture was much appreciated.

2. Regarding the meetings of the Prep Comm and the Treaty itself, it has not been possible so far to get the English version of the latter and some other relevant papers. Hence a detailed report will be sent later. In this communication, I give our preliminary comments.

3. It is a compromise treaty, one which leaves loopholes and is open to different interpretations of some important articles. This was perhaps unavoidable due to the importance and complications of the subject. A newspaper comment that "it was a gesture hopefully to start a new trend than anything else" perhaps sums up the results in one sentence. The Mexican President witnessed the signing ceremony on the last day, 15th February. The delegations of all the 21 nations present had given approval to the final draft. But only 14 signed that day. The others, namely Argentina, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Nicaragua did not sign as they had not received the necessary authority up to that time. And, in any case, the treaty has to be ratified by the Government concerned.

4. All the Latin American representatives present realized that this perhaps was their last chance to have a treaty and give a creditable lead to the world, in view of the forthcoming disarmament meeting at Geneva. Hence quick compromises were forthcoming. All of them were keen to achieve something this time to enhance the prestige of the Latin American group and to lay some claim for the thanks of posterity. Most of them realized that it was only a moderate step, the success of which will depend more on faith and trust than the wording and legality of the document. And they were justifiably happy that a first step forward had been taken.

5. The articles which aroused the major controversy related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The USA and UK, later joined by USSR, wished that all explosion should be banned, since explosions for peaceful purposes also meant additional capability to develop nuclear weapons. Some, like Guatemala, who in any case are in no position to develop any type of nuclear energy, tended to agree. Others, like Mexico, were prepared to compromise their points of view to a considerable degree, in order to get a treaty going, no matter how controversial. Others, like Brazil and Argentina, did not want to give up their rights to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including explosions. Thus the final articles on this subject are open to different interpretations. The USA in fact sent a note to say that their interpretations of the treaty is that all explosions are forbidden. This they did before the final meeting ended for record purposes. However, the general interpretation is that explosions for peaceful purposes are permitted, though these have to be pre-reported, open to inspection, etc. I gathered during my conversations that at present no Latin American nation is capable of an explosion even for peaceful

purposes. For this reason, it was considered better not to state the positions more categorically and thereby risk serious differences. Meanwhile, in his final speech, Garcia Robles stated that work will be taken in hand to see if it is not possible to define peaceful explosions that do not have the characteristics of a warfare explosion. I may add that the headquarters of the organization arising from the treaty will be in Mexico City.

6. The USA did not agree that the treaty can cover Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands as there are a part of the USA. UK was very unhappy that Argentina has been given the authority to cover the Falkland Islands for the purposes of this treaty. The final attitudes of the USA, USSR, UK and France towards the treaty remained to be seen, though they will try to be as sympathetic as possible. But Red China has flatly refused to accept the treaty under the present international circumstances. Cuba also remains outside the scope of the treaty and so a thorn in it. The Secretary General of the UN and some others have already expressed happiness at the treaty.

7. In spite of the factors mentioned in the foregoing paras and some others that may be mentioned in the final report, the acceptance of the treaty was a laudable achievement for which all the participants can take credit. The Mexicans are particularly happy and already turning this treaty of Tlatelolco, named after ancient ruins adjoining the new Mexican Foreign Ministry, a historic landmark. And Mexico and Mexican Chairman of the Commission did play a most notable part in getting the treaty unanimously approved in the hope that this step will open the way for further progress.