

Mexico's position on the Non-Proliferation Treaty

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1995 marks the end of the twenty-five-year period established in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in which the international community was to state its views on the treaty's accomplishments and insufficiencies, as well as the terms for its extension.

The close link between non-proliferation and disarmament has been the basis of Mexico's positions throughout the period of preparatory work, as it was at the time that the NPT was drawn up.

Since 1959, when the negotiation of an accord for the non-proliferation of nuclear arms was proposed by Ireland, Mexico supported that effort, as it does today. Mexico established three objectives for those negotiations:

1. That the treaty which would be agreed on, for the prevention of nuclear arms proliferation, is not an end in itself, but rather the means to facilitate the adoption of effective measures for genuine nuclear disarmament.
2. That the prohibition of nuclear arms proliferation be linked with measures for the promotion of the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, in order to benefit developing countries, and lastly,
3. That the interim NPT not affect in any way the right of any group of states to coordinate regional treaties designed to assure the absolute prohibition of nuclear arms in their respective territories.

The position put forward by Mexico was set forth in Resolution 2028(XX), dated November 16, 1965, in which the Geneva disarmament committee was asked to resume its deliberations as quickly as possible, with the aim of creating a Non-Proliferation Treaty based on the following five general principles:

- The treaty should not permit the proliferation, whether direct or indirect, of nuclear arms;
- It should establish an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations for nuclear and non-nuclear states;
- It should be a step towards general and complete disarmament, and specifically nuclear disarmament;
- Measures to guarantee the Treaty's effectiveness should be included;
- It should not contain any stipulations which would restrict the right of any group of states to create regional treaties with the aim of guaranteeing the absence of nuclear arms in their respective territories.

These principles continue to guide our action in this conference. The main problem in evaluating the application of the NPT arises from the fact that the original treaty tended to perpetuate a situation which favored the nuclear powers as a group against the non-nuclear powers. It was therefore necessary to incorporate certain conditions which, in the opinion of the non-nuclear countries, should be fulfilled in order to justify their decision not to acquire nuclear arms.

In addition, we should point out that negotiations towards a treaty for the complete and definitive prohibition of nuclear testing—which, unfortunately, have not been carried out as speedily as we hoped—currently have excellent prospects as a result of the new international situation, in particular the qualitative change in the relations between the United States and the Russian Federation. This has led to bilateral agreements to reduce their respective nuclear arsenals. This reduction is due to the recognition, after years of overproduction, that there is a kind of nuclear saturation. But it also represents a healthy change in the way the nuclear powers view the role of these weapons, due to the end of the Cold War. We consider the steps taken by those two countries in the

Speech at the Conference on Extending the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, United Nations, New York, April 18, 1995.

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The Non-Proliferation Treaty

1. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was presented for signing on July 1, 1968—in Washington, Moscow and London simultaneously—and went into effect on March 5, 1970. Mexico signed it on July 26, 1968 and turned in its document of ratification on January 21, 1969.

2. While the NPT is generally viewed as an important document for international security, it wound up establishing a discriminatory system among the participating nations by allowing the five self-proclaimed nuclear powers to possess nuclear weapons while prohibiting other nations from doing so.

3. Starting during the period of preparation for the conference, the United States, together with other countries from the Western bloc, strongly promoted an unconditional and indefinite extension of the NPT. For its part, Mexico always called for the adoption of measures which would make it possible to move towards nuclear disarmament and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation system, as prerequisites for determining the best form of treaty extension.

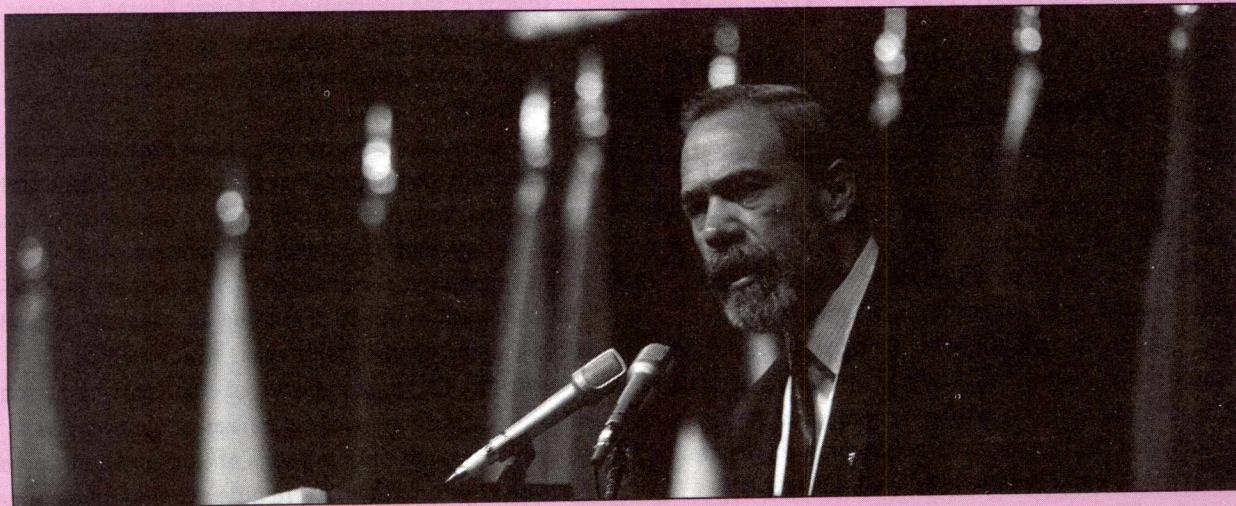
4. At the beginning, three projects were presented which approached NPT extension in different ways. The first was put forward by Canada, proposing the pure and simple indefinite extension of the treaty; despite support from the nuclear powers and co-sponsorship by a total of 108 countries, it did not achieve consensus. The second, sponsored by fourteen non-aligned countries, called for the treaty to be extended by automatically renewable 25-year periods (unless a majority of participating countries should eventually decide otherwise). Mexico did not join forces with either of these plans, instead presenting its own draft resolution.

5. At the conference, Mexico—true to its traditional policies on the disarmament issue—achieved the objectives it set for itself in Secretary Gurría's April 18 speech. These can be summarized in the following points:

a) Mexico supported the treaty's extension but—emphatically—not without previously ensuring that an agenda would also be approved for negotiating clearly defined steps towards nuclear disarmament. The degree to which said objectives were concretized reflected the difficult negotiations required for ensuring firm commitments.

b) Additionally, from the beginning of the conference, Mexico insisted on the need for approval of a mechanism for periodic review with the aim of evaluating the fulfillment of treaty obligations; this objective was also completely achieved. Obviously, if one of the periodic evaluations reveals that the nuclear powers are not fulfilling their commitments, it will always be possible for us to denounce this non-fulfillment—an option established in Article X of the NPT.

c) Another achievement was the inclusion, in the declaration of principles and aims, of the idea for a program of action regarding nuclear disarmament; for years, Mexico has been pushing for this in Geneva.



START I and II Accords to be promising, and we hope not only that START II will remain fully in effect, but also that a future START III will bring additional reductions.

Mexico has provided solid proof of its commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We have therefore also insisted on the need for countries which presently possess nuclear arms to make a concrete and precise commitment to the shared objective of eliminating them from the face of the earth.

Mexico practices what it preaches. More than sixty years ago we endorsed the Geneva Protocol on the use of chemical and biological weapons; we are part of the 1972 convention on bacteriological (biological) and toxic weapons; and we were the seventh country to ratify the 1992 convention on the elimination of chemical weapons.

We were also one of the first nations to adhere to the NPT, and before that had already worked out and signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We continue to stress that the Treaty of Tlatelolco is an example for the entire world, especially given that in its Second Additional Protocol the states which possess nuclear arms made the commitment, in an obligatory juridical instrument, not to use or threaten to use nuclear arms against states in this region. The same commitment was made by two of those countries in the Treaty of Rarotonga, which establishes a denuclearized zone in the South Pacific, an example which we believe should be followed through examining the assurances which the nuclear countries should

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offer the non-nuclear nations in the context of the treaty we are examining at this time.

Mexico has also insisted on the need to slow and reverse the nuclear arms race through agreements to undertake concrete measures, beginning with the complete cessation of nuclear testing. The role of Mexico in this area was recognized last year, when we were given the honor of presiding over the beginning of negotiations on this issue.

The international community should take full advantage of the current opportunity to reach disarmament

agreements. Let us prevent polarization and take advantage of the unique opportunity which this conference offers to reach a consensus on the best way to consolidate the Non-Proliferation Treaty and assure its universal application in the coming century.

With this aim, the Mexican delegation has carried out a series of consultations and would like to state its views, from the beginning of this debate, regarding the basic criteria which will govern its actions during this conference.

We understand, on the one hand, the concerns of those who consider that limiting the Treaty's applicability may endanger the instrument which, although imperfect, continues to be the basis of the non-proliferation system. On the other hand, it is our obligation to struggle for nuclear disarmament, as we have done since this international instrument was formalized. The question is not simply one of extending the treaty. An extension is not an end in itself.

Consequently, Mexico believes that whatever decision arises from this conference must take into account the following interrelated elements:

- The NPT should be extended. The modalities of this extension will arise naturally from the agreements which are reached regarding the responsibilities of all the treaty's signatories;
- The adoption, within space of a year at most, of a treaty prohibiting all nuclear testing;
- The initiation, as soon as possible, of negotiations for an agreement which will prohibit production of fissionable materials for military purposes;
- The establishment, through linkage, of so-called "negative securities";
- The necessity to reinforce the current safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency;
- The adoption of a strengthened review mechanism which would guarantee periodic evaluations of the treaty.

Few questions in recent years have attracted as much attention from the international community as this. Rarely have we had the kind of chance that we have today to reach significant agreements on such an important issue.

In conclusion, we are ready to participate in good-faith negotiations aimed at finding an adequate formula, before the end of this conference, which will be supported by the great majority of participating nations and which takes into account universal concerns on nuclear issues, not only in terms of non-proliferation but also with regard to the need to advance toward genuine and effective disarmament. ✕