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Statement by Ambassador Hector P. Garcia, United States
Representative in Committee I, on the Treaty for the Prohibition
of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, October 26, 1967.

Mr. Chairman, my Government warmly welcomes the conclusion on February 12, 1967, of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America. At that time, my Government declared that "it considered the conclusion of this first international instrument establishing a nuclear-free zone to be an event of unique significance . . . We hope that the Treaty will constitute a milestone on the road to general and complete disarmament, and in particular, that it will lead in the near future to the conclusion of a world-wide treaty prohibiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons." It is with pleasure that my delegation extends congratulations to the twenty Latin American nations who are already signatories to the Treaty, and particularly to the Government of Mexico which has already ratified. In this connection, I wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the outstanding work of Senor Garcia Robles, Chairman of the Preparatory Commission and the members of that Commission who negotiated the drafting of the Treaty.

It is indeed fitting that Latin America is the first area of the world which has produced a detailed treaty embodying the nuclear-free zone concept, with provision for verifying compliance by the Parties. Latin America has traditionally been an area where solutions to problems have been sought through the development of law and regional cooperation. Latin America has provided world leadership in the development of international political organization. The OAS is the oldest regional organization devoted to problems of peace and security. Latin American statesmanship and optimism made a significant contribution to the development of the United Nations Charter. Latin American faith in the reasonableness of man has triumphed in the Treaty before us today. My Government supports the determination of the countries of the region to maintain the high level of international comity which has served as an example to other areas of the world. The outstanding

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leadership displayed by Latin America has established a historical landmark pointing the way to further arms control measures.

The Treaty in basic terms prohibits the contracting parties from producing, testing or possessing nuclear weapons in their respective territories. It also forbids the receipt or installation of any nuclear weapons. An agency is provided to ensure compliance with the purposes and procedures set forth in the Treaty. The principal means for verifying compliance will be through the application of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on the nuclear activities of each signatory and through special inspections. These provisions are aimed at ensuring compliance with the prohibition on nuclear weapons while at the same time fostering the peaceful application of nuclear technology.

My Government has been engaged with other nations over the past several years in discussions designed to preclude the spread of nuclear weapons to countries and areas which do not possess them. We have maintained that a prohibition on deployment, possession or manufacture of nuclear weapons in areas where they have not been introduced, under appropriate circumstances, could constitute a fundamental step toward universal agreement on this non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

On a number of occasions, my Government has set forth four basic requirements which it believes should characterize nuclear-free zones. These requirements were succinctly set forth by Mr. Foster in a letter dated December 10, 1965, to the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission, Senor Garcia Robles, which states, "The United States supports the creation of nuclear-free zones such as a Latin American nuclear-free zone, where the initiative for such zones originates within the area concerned; where the zone includes all states in the area whose participation is deemed important; where the creation of a zone would not disturb necessary security arrangements; and where provisions are included for following up on alleged violations in order to give reasonable assurance of compliance with the zone."

The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America meets these basic requirements. First, the effort has been totally Latin American in character. The initiative for creation of the zone stems from a joint declaration by the Presidents of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Mexico proposing the Denuclearization of Latin America on April 29, 1963. In response to this proposal on the initiatives of Brazil, the General Assembly unanimously passed resolution 1911 (XVIII) which expressed the hope that the Latin American states would initiate studies leading to such a zone. Second, virtually all the countries located within the zone have either signed, or indicated their intention to sign, the Treaty or approval of the principles of the Treaty. This offers promise that the agreement will be effective. It is to be noted that Cuba is the sole exception.

Third, the security balance within the area will not be affected. Fourth, the Treaty contains provisions for verifying compliance with its obligations and for investigation to determine violations of the Treaty and for measures to be taken in the event that a violation should occur. We welcome the intention to apply the IAEA safeguards to the nuclear activities of each country.

Protocol II of the Treaty provides that nuclear weapon states would undertake to respect the obligations set forth in the Treaty; would not contribute in any way to the performance of acts involving a violation of obligations undertaken by the contracting parties; and would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the contracting parties. My Government is giving very careful and sympathetic consideration to the signing of Protocol II, in the light of our overall security arrangements and the important obligations of Protocol II. We urge the other nuclear-weapon powers to give their urgent attention to this Protocol and to the possibility of subscribing to it.

Although the Treaty is a Latin American effort, the UN played an important role as a stimulus and catalyst for regional action. The IAEA is an organization with competence and experience in which the Latin American countries can place confidence for verification of the peaceful nature of their nuclear production and scientific activities.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I wish to emphasize once again the importance which my Government attaches to this Treaty. As this Committee knows full well, each disarmament step represents long and hard negotiations. We consider the Latin American Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty as another valuable step, along with the Antarctic Treaty, the Limited Test Ban Treaty and the Outer Space Treaty, toward the goal of General and Complete Disarmament. We believe that this Treaty should be unanimously commended by this Committee.
