

# **ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL: A REGIONAL MODEL OF CONFIDENCE BUILDING FOR NUCLEAR SECURITY**

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The end of the Cold War constitutes a fundamental and historic step in the development of a new perspective on international relations at the entrance to the twenty-first century. It seems that the end of the old order creates the possibility of overcoming the specter of a nuclear holocaust, and encouraging a renewed diversity of views, with new actors and a more open and plural agenda, in an attempt to keep up with the international dynamics whose growing complexity brings about the actual transformation of knowledge itself. Clearly, it is necessary to reorganize the supply of cognitive maps that legitimize the Cold War's political and ideological context.

The end of the old order is typified by a greater understanding between the two great powers, the USA and the former USSR, generating an atmosphere of greater cooperation and, consequently, the decentralization of the world power. Today, there is a clear comprehension of the change within the parameters of international security policy. We can indeed claim that today's issues on nuclear non-proliferation constitute an integral part of the endeavors to strengthen world peace and security. The new global themes involving security include: environmental security, transportation of atomic garbage, toxic and radioactive substances, nuclear smuggling, etc. Along with technological revolution and innovation, new mechanisms of supervision via satellite became diluted, reducing the state's absolute supremacy and its exclusive military power. States are now more interdependent, requiring greater cooperation amongst each other, opening the way for forums and intergovernmental institutions to obtain greater effectiveness and power in the management of international affairs. We are now observing the conception of a world where states yield their political and military absolutism when confronted with collective instruments of security, such as the Security Council of the OUN, or those of the new global order, as in the case of proliferation control and detection procedures of parallel and clandestine programs of utilization of "dual" technologies.

Due to the globalization of limited resources, and loss of the control and power of the nation-state to manage them, the participation of a growing number of international actors in the discussion and the planning of common solutions has become utterly necessary. It is not a matter of quantity, but rather of seeking quality in the assessment of risks of the global nature, and the search of alternatives, formerly assured by a minority. Furthermore, the increasing participation of multiple new actors portrays a situation in which democratization itself becomes the parameter of the system and international relations. The claim that we are developing an international democratization may be substantiated by the political tripod:

- (1) Greater transparency in the administration of global resources;
- (2) Greater effectiveness and confidence building in the mechanisms of control and verification; and
- (3) Greater responsibility concerning global affairs such as stability, and the

development and social compromise of democracy.

Besides these global challenges, we hold the steady conviction of living in times of historical opportunities. In order to develop solutions for the dilemmas presented by the mechanisms that were brought into functioning, we must facilitate the new configuration of the international powers, by allowing a broader participation of the actors involved. This condition is necessary to avoid the retrocessions or international relations that only represent a mere mechanical and quantitative succession of events as well as general and abstract lucubrations. Cooperation seems to be a common factor in congregation and communion of the new world order. This is a challenge that must be sought and accomplished.

Globalization, presently made concrete by the formation of regional blocks that grow toward globalization itself, demands, on the level of security's regime, the creation of measures of regional control and verification. It is in such a sense that the "contiguous confidence building," developed by Argentina and Brazil in the nuclear security area, constitutes an innovating model that is harmonious with the very universal regime of nuclear non-proliferation.

### **The Nuclear Paradigm**

The development of nuclear energy was the confirmatory symbol of the international power's supremacy, consecrating an atomic bipolarity and transforming the four powers into an exclusive Atomic Club. This *condominium* created an atmosphere of suspiciousness, distrust and freezing of world power and, finally, legitimized the very "international regime of nuclear non-proliferation." In 1967, the Atomic Club proposed the *Non-Proliferation Treaty* (NPT) as a restrictive measure concerning nuclear proliferation. It must be remembered that in 1964, the People's Republic of China exploded its first atomic bomb and that ten years later, India also exploded its first weapon of mass destruction. From this point, the exclusiveness of the stable Atom Club was forever broken. Since then, the urgency for the United States and other countries of the Nuclear Club to reinforce the guarantees of NPT has increased, limiting the access to "sensitive" technologies and controlling the installations and nuclear materials that started to spread out around the world. The *London Club* was created with the intent of universalizing the USA's *Non-Proliferation Act* (1980) in order to control the nuclear trade while restricting the Atomic Club's obligations in terms of assumed cooperation in the NPT itself.

Internationally, in the Cold War's context and under the preponderance of the national security doctrine, it seemed as though the Atomic Club was consolidating itself, reaffirming, consequently, the perception of the freezing of the world power. Despite this nuclear control regime created by the atomic powers, countries such as Argentina and Brazil, since the 40's, already had delineated aims for their independent nuclear energy programs. What reasons made the two countries proceed with their national programs of scientific and technological-nuclear development? One could say that at least three purposes reflected the mystic of controlling the complete process of atomic production. First, it guaranties an effective, energetic support for the process of national

industrial development. Second, within the context of subregional balance of power around the Bacia do Prata, each of these countries perceived the other with suspicion concerning the pacifistic use of the nuclear development programs. Third, as Brazil has always claimed, it was a chance to enter the Atomic Club's élite and sit itself at the negotiation table with greater bargaining power.

Realistically speaking, Argentina and Brazil sought a certain degree of autonomy in their nuclear programs that would allow them to complete the cycle of nuclear fuel. In the atmosphere of confrontation between East and West, such programs provoked an attitude of mistrust and isolation on behalf of the so-called international community. This suspiciousness reflected the belief that these two countries sought the construction of the atomic bomb, destabilizing the nuclear "freezing." The international isolation worsened through the violation of human rights by the military regimes, restricting even further the possibilities of access to modern technologies—an absolute necessity for the continuation of an independent nuclear-fuel cycle program. Consequently, there was an interruption of the programs, a delay in the projects, irrational expenditures and a posture, especially in Brazil, of attacking an attitude called "technological apartheid."

### **Subregional Dimension: From Conflict to Cooperation**

The Bacia do Prata, because of its political, economical and security meanings, always represented a true *border macroregion of shared resources*. A *border macroregion* remained swaying between the Portuguese and Spanish Empires and evolved from open conflicts to the perspective of cooperation and subregional integration.

As was previously shown by Celso Lafer, the proximity context of the Bacia do Prata is a context where the political and economical events of each country of the region, or the relationships between some of its members, cause an impact on the internal and external lives of the others. Such a conception reveals the existence of a *complex interdependency* which may evolve into both conflict and cooperation. Historically, however, the regional integration development process suffered several difficulties. In this context, Argentina and Brazil's fluctuations between convergence and rift, in some ways, could be seen as a reluctance to submit to Latin-American convergence, both because of each societies' internal features and because of the very specificity of the bilateral relations between the two greatest South American economies and the remaining countries of Latin America.

Nevertheless, in the scope of these more ample experiences of regional integration, there were enterprises that provided for political and diplomatic development between Argentina and Brazil—together with Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay—resulting in the signing of the historic *Cooperation Treaty of the Bacia do Prata* (1969). Its formulation occurred during Arturo Illia's, last Argentinean democratic president before the 1966 Military Coup, government. Its intention was to institutionalize this dispute within a nature of economical and military cooperation. The fulfillment of the treaty finally allowed the creation of the first step of a real approximation between both countries, in the context of the above mentioned macroregion and complex interdependency. The *Cooperation Technical-Cooperative Multilateral Agreement of Itaipu and Corpus* followed in October 1979, signaling the mitigation of tensions and the overcoming of divergences between Argentina and Brazil concerning the building of Itaipu. This new subregional diplomacy became

known for the highly elaborate, relying on the strategic fluvial bay shared by several states, and permitting the energetic utilization of water resources.

It may be ventured that with the outbreak of the Falklands War, a new definition of tensions existed in the relationship between Argentina and Brazil. The intervention of a NATO member in as distant of a region as the south cone served as a warning against the nature of the north-south conflict. Eventually Brazil held Great Britain's intervention as a threat to the security of the South American continent itself propitiating Brazil's support to Argentina. In the context of the inter-American agenda of the 80's, the USA carried out an unilateral policy centered around the Central-American and South Atlantic conflicts and the Latin-American external debt. This unilateralism deepened the comprehension of the crisis of the inter-American security system with an orchestrated answer on behalf of the Latin-American countries in relation to Washington. In such an atmosphere, it is possible to become aware of the whole process of the political, economical, diplomatic and nuclear cooperation between Argentina and Brazil. Both countries perceived the crisis in the relations of the inter-American security system and the isolation to which they were subdued by this "North-American unilaterality" relative to the region.

Decades of watching the game played by the hegemonic powers over the region (mainly Great Britain and the USA), created an "external" atmosphere to the tensions and rivalries between Argentina and Brazil. The Falklands War ended this undefined game. One may say that the Falklands episode made possible a kind of "non-written alliance" between Argentina and Brazil over regional security issues. Furthermore, with the economic embargo on Argentina declared by the CEE, Argentina's products obtained access to the international market via Brazilian ports and, thus, the bilateral commerce between both countries experienced a significant increase. After the breaking of diplomatic relations between Buenos Aires and London, Brazil became the representative of Argentina's interests in the Great Britain. This historical and political-diplomatic experience indicates that the resolution of the bilateral political and economic problems of the Bacia do Prata helped to found the present Argentine-Brazilian nuclear cooperation.

### **Nuclear Cooperation Diplomacy**

The development of confidence building measures, first of all, showed willingness and political intention on both sides to overcome conflicts and create credibility. Second, it determined diplomatic instruments involved in preliminary negotiations, distinguished the contingency's essential parameters, and accomplished compromises that would concretely substantiate the very existence of confidence building. Hereupon, the criteria were established and, finally, also the verification instruments.

The first steps were in place towards a broader understanding between former antagonists still in the transition period from military regimes to democracy. In 1980, the governments of the neighboring countries signed the *Agreement for the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy*. This agreement created the first cooperation mechanisms in the field of research applied to nuclear technology, of the physical protection of fissile material, of the exploration and mining of uranium, of nuclear security, of training and qualification, and of interchange of technical-scientific information. It was

by means of this first agreement that Argentina had access to the *Centro de Informação Computadorizado do Brasil*, exchanging Argentinean zirconium for Brazilian enriched uranium in some Argentinean research reactors. An important second agreement was created by which *Nuclebrás's* (Brazilian Nuclear Companies) subsidiary, *Nuclep* (Heavy Equipment), built parts of the pressure recipient for the third Argentinean reactor supplied by the Federal Republic of Germany. The third agreement referred to a common coordination of nuclear policies in international forums, declaring that this cooperation would allow both countries to better face the conditions of growing difficulties present in the international supply of nuclear materials and equipment.

This first document represented a transcendental measure of institutionalized cooperation in the face of the traditional perceptions of rivalry between both countries. Thus, there was an easement of the points of tension which made possible the reciprocal supply and the technical cooperation between scientists concerned with the growing restrictions of the non-proliferation international regime. After the re-establishment of democracy in both countries, a new cycle of nuclear cooperation began. Truly, this second cycle acquired an unprecedented political dimension in Argentinean-Brazilian relations. Presidential visits (Alfonsín-Sarney) to the nuclear installations of each country and periodical meetings took place. Simultaneously, the Nuclear Commissions of both countries suffered a remodeling—an institutional “demilitarization.”

By signing the *Nuclear Policy Joint Declaration of Foz de Iguaçu* (1985), both countries compromised themselves to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, reaffirming a willingness to cooperate concerning nuclear development. This willingness to cooperate provoked regional effects; remaining countries were invited to participate actively in the same nuclear cooperative process. In this sense, Latin America in general, and South America in particular, conceived scenarios for cooperative political enterprises, integration, and orchestration, creating compatible policies and technical standards aimed at nuclear regional stability. The 1985 initiative clearly reflected that the two most developed economies in the region assumed that political leadership, by means of a long term process, would embrace all the remaining countries. The idea of a joint performance in terms of regional leadership, contrary to the previous competition, reinforced the interdependence comprehension that, from this moment on, was to be found in the cooperative relations established between both countries.

The *Iguaçu Declaration*, a political document, along with the *Memorandum for the Brazilian-Argentinean Integration*, became an immediate antecedent of the *Integration and Bilateral Cooperation Program* (1986), followed by a *Joint Declaration on Nuclear Policy* and the *Brazilian-Argentinean Friendship Memorandum*. Between 1986 and 1989 both countries signed altogether 24 protocols embodying varied aspects. From then on, new instruments were created that brought together, with decisive moves towards the verification stage, even more cooperation and consolidation of confidence building joint programs. It is worthwhile to mention the *Brasília Declaration* (1986), which cleared the way to transparency concerning other regional and international actors. The *Viedma Declaration* (1987) and the *Iperó Declaration* (1988), opening the two most sensitive installations to reciprocal inspection, represent a remarkable progress of the legal and technical aspects of verification.

Finally, with the *Ezeiza Declaration* (1988)—the decision to face a joint project, relative to quick reproducer reactors, was reaffirmed—constituting the sole case of technical-scientific

collaboration between developing countries. With this declaration, the Working Group was converted into a Permanent Committee, holding periodical meetings of the chancellery's officials and Atomic Energy Commissions in order to unify international positions, develop nuclear cooperation in scientific and theoretical levels, and design proposals for a system of mutual security. The Contents of these declarations were divulged in the AIEA meetings and in the "Organismo para a Proscripción de Armas Nucleares en America Latina y el Caribe" (OPANAL), as a way of demonstrating the transparency of peaceful aims of both countries' nuclear programs to the international community. The *Bilateral Nuclear Agreements* caused the nuclear issue in the south subregion to stop being a setback for the extension of relations between states that would form the future Mercosul. Based on these initiatives, the possibility of a conflict—essentially strategic—became distant and was decisive in broadening this cooperation, by incorporating Paraguay and Uruguay in the process.

### **A Model of Regional Confidence Building for Nuclear Security**

According to recent specialized publications, there is a total of 477 power reactors and 301 research reactors in the world. Of these, in the Americas alone, there are 140 power reactors and 98 research reactors. In Latin America and the Caribbean region, there are 7 power reactors and 19 research reactors. These latter numbers present a capacity of nuclear development in the region, though such a development was largely carried out through international technical, scientific and financial cooperation, within the scope of the region as a whole as well as in the subregional or intraregional area.

The acquisition of nuclear technology in the international market is a necessity for developing countries. This means that, parallel to the development of a domestic nuclear policy, the countries that are nuclearizing themselves had to create nuclear diplomacy. This represented a new foreign policy, in a competitive world, that would respond to a double challenge. First, to establish scientific, technological, and commercial relations with knowing exporters of equipment, and second, to adapt the rules established for the commerce of delicate equipment and to the regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons control.

As a sign of harmony concerning nuclear disarmament—the Latin-American region, in 1967, adopted the *Treaty of Proscription of Nuclear Weapons*, known as the *Treaty of Tlateloco*. The Treaty of Tlateloco created the idea of a nuclear weapon-free zone. Although Tlateloco was a positive instrument of nuclear non-proliferation, the Treaty sustained, over a considerable period, an ambiguity concerning the nuclear powers interpretative declarations to the point that Argentina and Brazil (including Chile) did not completely ratify their main Additional Protocol II. One of the objections of the major countries in the region—those that sought nuclearization—was that Tlateloco established distinctions between the signatories, creating an adverse position to the principle of juridical equality of the member states. These arguments caused Argentina and Brazil, despite their active participation in the creation of Tlateloco, to spend many years without complete and unrestricted adherence to the Treaty. Only in the 90s did both countries adhere completely to

Tlateloco, after the completion of the nuclear cooperation agreements and of the establishment of a transparency of each other's nuclear programs to the guarantees of the International Agency of Atomic Energy (AIEA).

Reaffirming previous compromises signed by Alfonsín and Sarney, the new Presidents Menem and Collor raised the process of reinforcing confidence building in the nuclear area to a new level. On 28 November 1990 they signed the *Joint Declaration of Brazilian-Argentinean Nuclear Policy*, before the AIEA's General Director and OPANAL's General Secretary. Giving substance to the declaration, they established a *Common System of Nuclear Materials Accountancy and Control* (SCCC), with the purpose of guaranteeing that the materials employed in the nuclear activities of both countries would be exclusively used for peaceful ends. The second goal indicated the intention to negotiate an agreement on safeguards with AIEA and make operational the necessary measures for the functioning of the Treaty of Tlateloco in both countries. This represented the end of the unilateral-independent nuclear development conception, inaugurating a new cycle of cooperation relations, transparency, and confidence building in the international regime of non-proliferation context.

Continuing with the convergence policy, both countries signed, in July 1991, the *Bilateral Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy* in Guadalajara (Mexico), which was implemented in December of the same year. It established a compromise on the peaceful use of the atom between both countries and before the international community. Both countries committed themselves to refrain from the following: (1) carrying out, encouraging or authorizing tests, and the usage or fabrication of complete nuclear weapons; and (2) receiving, depositing or creating installations for nuclear weapons. And, most importantly, they recognized that, at present, there was no technical distinction between explosive nuclear devices for peaceful ends and/or for military ends, renouncing, any nuclear explosion.

To administrate the SCCC, the Agreement creates the *Brazilian-Argentinean Agency for the Accountancy and Control of Nuclear Materials* (ABACC), which has an international juridical nature and is formed by technicians from both countries. The ABACC represents a guarantee that the pacific use compromise will be held and that the installation and materials of the nuclear programs of both countries would remain under its jurisdiction. Perhaps one of the novelties of this kind of agreement, which provides coverage to the SCCC and organizes ABACC, is that the bilateral Agency assumes the nature of an international organism, named "Latinatom."

In the context of the initiative of the Bilateral Agreement, there are two other diplomatic convergences that indicate a new model of regional cooperation: (1) The signing of the *Four Party Agreement*, constituted by Argentina, Brazil, ABACC and the United Nation's International Agency of Atomic Energy (AIEA); and (2) the ratification of the *Tlateloco Treaty*, creating legitimacy, transparency and confidence building, within the non-proliferation international regime. The first of these was signed on the day after the Bilateral Agreement, but its full functioning began two years later, providing ABACC with the time necessary to constitute itself with a similar role of the EURATOM, without the binding ties that the European organism maintained with the AIEA. The Four Party Agreement holds the same responsibilities as the Safeguard's Agreement between EURATOM and AIEA. Together with the Four Party Agreement follows the institutionalization of a trilateral verification, i.e. of the regional organism (ABACC) over the installations of either

country, of AIEA over the installations of both countries and over the verification and control activities on behalf of ABACC, concerning the technical effectiveness of the system used by the bilateral agency. It is interesting to note that this verification mechanism institutionalized by the Four Party Agreement creates a dual action in the verification task. The other issue refers to the costs for both countries. Each end up paying for the verification costs of AIEA and ABACC.

The second diplomatic compromise refers to the ratification of the *Tlateloco Treaty*. In 1992, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile presented at the OPANAL Conference, held in Mexico, a number of amendments, quickly approved, with the purpose of allowing the functioning of this regional juridical regime. By means of the adhesion to the Tlateloco Treaty, the countries demonstrated their political will towards the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy in the region. On the other hand, the Tlateloco Treaty required that both signatory countries fulfill safeguards agreements with AIEA, which meant that Argentina and Brazil, original signatories of the Tlateloco since 1967, ratified it in 1994. After the adhesion movement was completed, carried out by the two most developed countries with the greatest nuclear potential in Latin America, there was a new meaning imbued in the idea of a nuclear weapons free zone in the region. With this step, the international community's concern about the risks of a nuclear instability in the region was eliminated, placing us in the forefront of nuclear non-proliferation on a global level.

### Conclusion

Surprisingly, throughout the last two decades, Argentina and Brazil passed from a position of rivalry and tense relations concerning regional security conceptions to a gradual and balanced political and diplomatic approximation. Thus, the concern with regional stability becomes a privileged goal of both countries foreign policies, in order to create a more solid and stable basis for its own development and, indirectly, for the regional development itself. The cooperation is understood in the sense that independent and unilateral policies in the areas of nuclear and dual technology provoked doubts about the "peaceful" nuclear utilization's access restrictions to the dual technology and isolation in the present global agenda.

The understanding that the development of confidence building mechanisms would serve to create an adequate environment for a greater approximation and cooperation between both countries seemed to be a guarantee to achieve regional stability, simultaneously working as a foundation for international credibility concerning their nuclear programs, making possible the access to refined technologies in the international market. Therefore, both Brazil and Argentina placed themselves in the position of either acquiescing to this regime and, consequently, participating in its benefits, or by remaining out of it, being subject to all its restrictions. In terms of the process of consolidation of confidence building, one may say that Argentina and Brazil created a political and diplomatic architecture through the development of very well articulated mechanisms. Such an architecture became concrete both on the verification level and in the opening and transparency of the purposes of each nuclear program.

*The Bilateral Agreement Argentina-Brazil for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy* institutionalizes the control and verification of all the materials and nuclear installations,

overcoming the juridical scope of NPT's safeguards. The fact is that some countries with military nuclear material, members of NPT, only submit the materials and installations declared by themselves. The Bilateral Agreement, with the Four Party's clauses, inaugurates an extremely effective and innovating verification model. It creates its own verification and control mechanisms, in the bilateral scope (with the additional creation of ABACC) and, at the same time, approves the safeguards created in AIEA's multilateral scope. It is a model, therefore, that distinguishes itself by a guarantee of a more efficient verification, to the extent that a neighbor can better its neighbor, and which is also more universalistic, for it is more comprehensive in the inspection of safeguards than the present non-proliferation international regime.

In this new global administration of shared resources, one may observe that the regional convergence policy, such as the one developed by Argentina and Brazil, is a cooperative form that magnifies the global agenda in the nuclear security and dual technology field. Brazil already integrates, as a new member, the Regime of Missile Technology Control (MTCR), opening up access to the acquisition of high technology, besides the development of new programs in the airspace and nuclear areas.

Finally, the benefits of this kind of regional confidence building serve as a tool for other regions where there are conflicts (based on the nuclear capacity development) and the need for verification, transparency and confidence building devices and mechanisms exists. One way of thinking suggests that, with a good amount of realism, such a regime of regional confidence building would serve rival regions as the Hindu-Pakistan, as well as more complex conflict regions, such as the Middle East. At present, the important thing is to guarantee the full functioning of the mechanisms consecrated in the agreements between Argentina and Brazil, and to examine in what ways these could be extended to the entire Latino-American region. It would be valid, therefore, to consider ABACC as a model verification and accountancy institution of all the material and nuclear installations for a future "Latinatom" agency. In that way, such an agency would complement, with the verification and accountancy tasks of all the existing nuclear material in Latin America, the regional non-proliferation system, based on the Tlateloco Treaty and its execution organism, OPANAL. This regional system acquires an effectiveness and transparency that, besides consolidating the Latin-American Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, propitiates the region with greater benefits and bargaining power *vis-à-vis* the non-proliferation global system.

Some aims of this future regional organization, cooperative and integrated, may indicate a few benefits, such as: permanent increase of the aspects related to nuclear security (industrial and radioprotector); permanent increase of the aspects related to the effectiveness, including the optimization of operational and maintenance costs; and mutual support in urgent situations and/or emergencies in nuclear accidents. Such a possibility assumes the existence of a more homogenous social idiosyncrasy in the region; contiguity and neighborhood are useful and pragmatic factors so as to have not only a high degree of solidarity but, particularly, a common transparency, verification and confidence building policy. This regional cooperation allows for the accomplishment of a greater integration compromise and offers a tool in order to fulfill common projects in the region.

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