

Conference track «20.11 The Global South: its Position and Role in the English-Speaking World»

Nuclear Weapons in the Caribbean: The Treaty of Tlatelolco as a Direct Consequence of the 1962 Crisis

Academic supervisor – Скальная Юлия Андреевна

Саранча М.И.¹, Харьютина З.А.²

1 - Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Россия, *E-mail: mariiasarancha@yandex.ru*; 2 - Lomonosov Moscow State University, Юридический факультет, Moscow, Россия, *E-mail: zlata.kharyutina.05@mail.ru*

As the global superpower standoff of the 20th century repeatedly brought the world to the brink of destruction, it was the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 that starkly revealed the region's vulnerability to the nuclear threat. The presence of Soviet nuclear warheads in Cuba made Latin America a potential theatre of war, demonstrating that the region could become a hostage in the geopolitical games of the superpowers [1, 4]. In 2026, with nonproliferation concerns again taking centre stage in the international agenda, Latin America's experience stands as a unique example of how a regional initiative can not only prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction but also create a sustainable security model recognised worldwide.

The idea of a nuclear-weapon-free zone was first formally raised by Brazil in the UN General Assembly in September 1962, only weeks before the crisis erupted. However, it was the joint declaration issued on 29 April 1963 by the presidents of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Mexico that gave decisive political momentum to the project [4]. This collective stance reflected a shared determination never again to allow the region to be used as a staging ground for nuclear confrontation.

Following the abovementioned declaration, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution 1911 (XVIII) on 27 November 1963, welcoming the initiative and offering technical assistance. Mexico, assuming a leadership role, convened a preparatory meeting in November 1964, which established the Preparatory Commission for the Denuclearisation of Latin America (COPREDAL) with its headquarters in the Tlatelolco district of Mexico City.

These events and the ones that followed have constantly attracted not only political but also scholarly attention in Russia as well as abroad due to the shifting dynamics of the fragile geopolitical balance between the two sides of the Atlantic. In 1984, J.R. Martinez Cobo released a research on the current state of affairs after a 20 years' gap within the context of the at-the-time recent Falklands War [1]. While in 2025, N.A. Kutnaeva published an article on the Treaty of Tlatelolco closely following the joint efforts taken by Latin American States between March 1965 and February 1967 to prevent the global catastrophe [4]. With the new geopolitical tensions of 2026 these efforts are worthy of consideration once again.

In this speech, we will focus on the legal and institutional aspects that presented most difficulties in navigating complexities as well as ones that served to the multilateral acceptance of the final resolutions and made it possible for the treaty to enter into force on 25 April 1969, and for the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL, headquartered in Mexico City), to become the major body entrusted with the verification of compliance [1, 2].

Among those aspects are: the issue of maritime transit of nuclear weapons by non-party states, the right to carry out peaceful nuclear explosions, individual entry-into-force requirements, and the long journey of Cuba towards signing the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1995. In conclusion, we will consider how the Treaty of Tlatelolco has endured through decades and the legacy it has left not only in Latin American and Caribbean states but also in the world's history.

Источники и литература

- 1) Martinez Cobo, J.R. "The Tlatelolco Treaty: An Update." In IAEA Bulletin, No. 26, Vol. 3. pp. 25–30, 1984.
- 2) Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (with annexed Additional Protocols I and II). Done at Mexico, Federal District, on 14 February 1967. United Nations Treaty Series, No. 9068.
- 3) United Nations General Assembly Resolution 77/35. Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco). Adopted 5 December 2022.
- 4) Кутнаева Н.А. Договор о безъядерной зоне в Латинской Америке и Карибском бассейне // Латинская Америка. 2013. № 12. С. 30–43.