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The Spirit of Tlatelolco: Imagining a Nuclear Weapon Free World

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To the Special Meeting on Consolidation of the Regime Established in the Treaty of Tlatelolco
and on the Worldwide Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban
of the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Organization of American States
March 15, 2007

Tlatelolco, Raratonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba, Semipalitinsk – the exotic names of the sites where each nuclear weapon free zone was established can seem far away in Washington, but the contribution of nuclear weapon free zones to global security can be found close by.

If we left here today and drove up Constitution Avenue, took Thirteenth Street north four miles and turned right on Piney Branch Road, in about 24 minutes, we would be in the area of application of city ordinance number 2703, which has for over 23 years maintained a Nuclear Free Zone in the City of Takoma Park, Maryland.¹ We would be as much protected by the Spirit of Tlatelolco as by the largest nuclear arsenal in the world. The Spirit of Tlatelolco is the imagination of an effective legal prohibition on nuclear weapons, and it points the way toward the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and beyond to the ultimate achievement of an effective legal prohibition on nuclear weapons worldwide.

On behalf of Physicians for Social Responsibility and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Committee on Hemispheric Security today on the crucial and immediate importance of achievement of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.² Grateful to the Chair, His Excellency Ambassador Javier Sancho

¹ Takoma Park Nuclear Free Zone Act, ORDINANCE No. 2703 To Declare the City of Takoma Park, Maryland A NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE. Be it ordained by the Mayor and Council of the City of Takoma Park, Maryland, December 8, 1983. Available online at: <http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/committees/nfz/nftpcord.htm>

² We particularly commend the Organization of American States for its ongoing vital work to promote nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, notably including General Assembly Resolution 2245 on the Consolidation of the Regime Established in the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean