

**Speech of the secretary of ABACC at the twenty years anniversary of ABACC at
Palacio San Martín**

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His Excellency, Ambassador Héctor Timerman, Foreign Minister of the Argentine Republic, His Excellency, Ambassador Antonio Patriota, Foreign Minister of the Federative Republic of Brazil, His Excellency Dr. Yukyia Amano, Director General of the IAEA, His Excellency Julio De Vito, Minister of Energy, Her Excellency, Ambassador Gioconda Ubeda, Secretary General of OPANAL. Diplomatic Authorities, Government Authorities and Nuclear Authorities from Argentina and Brazil, Dear colleagues from ABACC, Ladies and Gentlemen:

A doctorate thesis recently presented at the prestigious University College of London, in examining the genesis and the creation of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, concluded that there were six recurring and common elements to all the agreements that preceded the creation of ABACC. They were:

- Confirmation of the exclusively peaceful character of the use of nuclear energy in Brazil and Argentina.
- Reinforcement and construction of mutual trust (joint projects and exchange of information and reciprocal visits)
- Encouragement of the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the benefit of the population of the two nations
- Potential of cooperation with other countries in Latin America
- Common external policy in the nuclear area
- Encouragement of the concepts of regional peace and safety.

In fact, already in 1977, we can see these principles established in the first joint communication between the two foreign ministers. In it, the importance is reinforced of cooperation in the nuclear area and the start of the systematic exchange of technology through the interaction between the respective national commissions of nuclear energy. A series of presidential meetings followed; technical visits to nuclear installations of both the countries consolidated these ideas and produced the conditions required for the

presidential decision for the creation of a common regime of safeguard inspections. The signature, on 18 July 1991, of the Bilateral Agreement for the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy, created the Common System of Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, the SCCC, and a binational agency to manage this system, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, ABACC. The Agreement definitively and clearly sealed the commitment with the use exclusively for peaceful purposes of all the material and nuclear installations submitted to the jurisdiction or control of both the countries. It today represents a model reference of the long process of economic, political, technological and cultural integration of the two countries.

The creation of the SCCC guaranteed the establishment of uniform safeguard procedures to be applied both in Argentina and Brazil; accordingly, all the safeguard requirements and procedures became applicable in the two countries. The operators of the nuclear installations of both countries began to follow the same rules of control for nuclear materials and were submitted to the same type of verification and control. Without a shadow of a doubt, the process was a government action; so much so that the presidents of the two countries were always involved. However, it was not only this. There was also an involvement of communities – of scientists, of researchers and of technologists – of the two countries, who, from the start, in the most part, gave their absolute and complete support to the project. One only needs to remember the common documents of the Argentine Society of Physics and the Brazilian Society of Physics, which, in a joint statement, supported and encouraged the government actions. The position of these intellectuals was anchored in the firm understanding that the control of nuclear science and technology is something that is either developed autonomously or the control is abandoned, and also in the conviction that the countless benefits of the possible peaceful applications of this technology, in the most diverse fields of interest of society, constituted an inalienable right of all nations.

ABACC represents the first link of the integration between Argentina and Brazil in the nuclear area. Its existence clearly demonstrates the political desire of both the countries to provide total transparency in their nuclear programs. The creation of an environment of mutual trust facilitates the good understanding between the parties and produces the conditions required to confront the technological challenges. At the same time, it

provides the constructive collaboration in policies of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and encourages the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The two countries adhered voluntarily to these policies on becoming signatories of the international treaty known as the TNP and which should be known as the TNPDUP –Treaty of Non-Proliferation, Disarmament and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Dr. Amano,

Argentina and Brazil were capable of establishing a safeguard system that is unique in the world today and which, consolidated and matured over these twenty years, has become respected by the international community. Proof of this was in its acceptance at the last Conference of the Nuclear Suppliers Group-NSG, as a valid alternative to the Additional Protocol to the TNP. This perception has also been witnessed in academic theses and articles recently published by newspapers and specialized magazines in different parts of the world. These have presented the Argentine-Brazilian safeguard regime as a successful experiment and, taking into account the political and social characteristics of each region, one that is capable of being repeated.

In truth, it can be confirmed that this system has several advantages in comparison with general safeguard agreements. The Quadripartite Agreement goes beyond a usual safeguard regime that connects a state-party with the IAEA. It involves two neighboring state-parties, an agency created by them – ABACC- and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Therefore, it represents a much more complete safeguard regime. The “neighbors watching neighbors” concept is recognized as efficient and effective.

During these twenty years, ABACC has operated with institutional policies designed for the continued technical training of its human resources. The application of these policies, always allied to the use of “state-of-the-art” equipment, are relevant factors involved in the success of ABACC and in the independence of its conclusions. Accordingly, the mature relationship with the IAEA, constructed over time, allows for both the agencies to work in harmony and with great objectivity. Mechanisms developed for joint operation, such as the common use of equipment (the Joint Use Agreement), allow for a significant optimization of resources. The integration with the IAEA has become even

more intense this twentieth anniversary year because, to the large satisfaction of us all, ABACC has become part, as an OBSERVER, of the Board of Governors of the IAEA.

I would like here to express my special thanks to Dr. Yukiya Amano, the Director General of the IAEA, for the dignified and respectful treatment that has been offered to ABACC ever since he became the head of the Agency. Dr. Amano, the partnership that ABACC maintains with the IAEA is, in our understanding, fundamental, for both the agencies to comply with their institutional objectives with efficiency and effectiveness. The strong integration of ABACC with the other international participants involved in the application of safeguard regimes provides the exchange of experience and knowledge, which is extremely valuable to all concerned. ABACC has benefited from technical cooperation with the IAEA, with EURATOM, with the United States Department of Energy, and with other international partners.

A determinant factor in the achieved success is the continued support and recognition received by ABACC from the two governments – Brazilian and Argentine. I am not only referring to recent governments; this support and recognition has been constant and not only in the historic series of joint declarations. It goes further; it is established in the financial support provided to the ABACC actions and programs. It also appears very palpably in the technical cooperation of ABACC with the laboratories from the different bodies and institutions of the two countries, always with the complete support of the two governments.

I want here to recognize and thank the commitment of the two countries over these last twenty years, represented by the diligence of the two chancelleries and of the Members of the Commission, to assure the good performance of ABACC, guaranteeing the resources required for its operation and maintaining its institutional independence. These are essential actions that allow the Agency to perform its mission and achieve the objectives for which it was created.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all have perfect awareness of what the history of an institution reflects, in truth, pieces of the history of each one of the personnel that works or worked in it. Its

victories, its defeats, its moments of triumph and its failures. The dedication, the sweat, the tears, the sadness and the happiness. When we celebrate the twenty years of a successful institution, such as ABACC, and with this perception, I want to thank and pay homage to, on this day, all the persons that in some form have contributed to this success.

They have collaborated occupying the most varied positions in the institution; they were secretaries, members of the commission, they worked in support tasks, they were officials from the different sectors or inspectors. Some, many in fact, have never occupied any position in the institution; however, they were fundamental in engineering the initial technical and political arrangements that made possible the creation of ABACC.

I would not dare to name them here; I am aware of the enormity of the task! Persons whose names are established in the history of the two countries because they occupy the most important positions; but also persons that work long hours in complete anonymity. All of them are performing fundamental roles in this collective construction. To everybody, our recognition and our deepest thanks. However, a special mention must be made to those companions who are no longer with us. We remember with fondness and recognition, DAN BENINSON; JORGE COLL, CAMILO PAGANINI, MARCIO COSTA and, most recently, OSVALDO CRISTALLINI.

Lastly, but not of any lesser importance, I want to pay a special respect to the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean – OPANAL. ABACC and OPANAL are two organizations that work hard in two different pillars of the Treaty of Non-Proliferation, Disarmament and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, and for this reason are complementary. We are exerting our best efforts to increasingly improve the cooperation relationships between our two institutions. Authorities, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the name of ABACC I want to say that we feel extremely honored by this ceremony. I thank you all for attending, the Argentine Government and especially the Chancellor, his Excellency, Ambassador Héctor Timerman, for the noble reception and the courtesy of receiving the Secretary of ABACC as an OFFICIAL GUEST OF THE GOVERNMENT. Thank you!