

Meanwhile Argentina's political decline was even more marked. The country's political situation was such that people began to think of it as ungovernable and this resulted in a military *coup d'état* in 1966. US reaction included a freeze in military cooperation, leading Argentina to turn to Europe for weapons and military equipment and assistance in producing its own. Two years after the coup, Argentina decided to construct its first nuclear reactor Atucha I, in cooperation with the German firm Siemens.

All of this occurred in the context of the beginning of what was to be called the "Brazilian miracle." A coup in Brazil in 1964 led to a military government that ensured national unity and stability at home, and this in turn attracted much investment from abroad. From 1968 to 1978 the growth rate in Brazil exceeded that of any country in the Americas. Demographic trends were already making Brazil beat its neighbour in population growth but now economic and industrial growth as well dwarfed the Argentine competition.⁴

Relations between the two countries did not improve at this time, despite military governments off and on in Buenos Aires and constantly in the new capital of Brasilia. Indeed, the nationalism of the two countries' armed forces at this time added fuel to the rivalry and Argentine sensitivity to its reduced circumstances increased the tendency to be annoyed by Brazil's continued successes and obvious moves to overtake its often rather smug rival.

This drift towards worse relations must be seen in the context not only of the two countries moving towards increased use of nuclear energy but also in ways related to the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967, banning the production and acquisition of nuclear weapons in the Americas but allowing for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of the following year. The Tlatelolco accord was signed by both countries in 1967 but Argentina did not ratify it. And while Brazil ratified the agreement, it was on the condition that it would only apply when ratified by all Latin American states. Neither country placed its activities in the nuclear field under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

As for the NPT, both Argentina and Brazil joined others saying the accord was merely a way for the established nuclear powers to stop others from acquiring the very weapons they had ensured already for themselves, as well as a means to maintain their technological dominance on the world scene. The promises by nuclear weapons states to cut or abolish their own arsenals were of course for many years *lettre morte* and this ensured considerable freedom of movement by non-nuclear states.

By this time the prestige of both countries was closely linked to the nuclear issue. Brazil in particular became active as not only a regional power but also potentially one with world status.

⁴ Details of economic and population growth over this period are given in Enjolras José de Castro Camargo, *Estudo de problemas brasileiros* (São Paulo, Editora Atlas, 1989), pp. 29-66. See also the interesting handling of these matters in "Brazil- unstoppable," *The Economist*, I(303) (25 April 1987), pp. 3-26.