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EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Disarmament Forum* explores options for a new arms control dialogue in the Middle East. Authors analyse the current security dilemma facing the region, including the nuclear question—while some states are advocating the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction throughout the Middle East, others seem intent on nuclearization. Would, for example, a regional approach to the nuclear fuel cycle lessen non-proliferation fears while permitting greater reliance on nuclear energy? Also in this issue, lessons are drawn from the last official dialogue on arms control—the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group—which stalled in 1995, and ongoing diplomatic efforts in the region are examined, with a view to potential future arms control activities.

Issue 3, 2008 of *Disarmament Forum* will focus on the "hot topic" of uranium weapons. Between calls for a moratorium on uranium weapon use and assurances from national and international sources that these weapons are safe and have valuable military utility, there is both uncertainty and confusion amongst decision makers and the wider public on the scientific and legal debates at hand. What exactly are these weapons and what is their perceived utility? What legal regimes are applicable to their use? What are the known and suspected health and environmental effects? What sort of research needs to be undertaken to have a more complete view of the issues?

UNIDIR was extremely active during the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), held in Geneva from 28 April to 9 May. On 30 April, with the support of the Government of Japan, UNIDIR held a seminar on "Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education", which featured the testimony of two *hibakusha*, as well as educators who focus on this issue. We invite you to listen to the moving and inspiring presentations from this seminar, which are available in streaming audio or download from our web site.

On 2 May, UNIDIR held two seminars: "A Fissile Material (Cutoff) Treaty and Its Verification: Progress Report from the International Panel on Fissile Materials", with the International Panel on Fissile Materials; and "Working toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons", with the Government of Norway and the Nuclear Threat Initiative. On 7 May, the seminar "The Entry into Force of the CTBT: New Opportunities?" offered the opportunity to discuss the renewed prospects for entry into force, and to present the initial results of a UNIDIR research project on the history of the CTBT negotiations and the future of the treaty.

The bloggers at Disarmament Insight (www.disarmamentinsight.blogspot.com) have been very active during the NPT PrepCom and the Oslo negotiations to ban cluster munitions. Check out their informative posts and links to valuable related resources—and come back often!

After over ten years as Director of UNIDIR, Dr Patricia Lewis will be leaving the Institute in August. A humanitarian and scientist, Patricia has focused UNIDIR's activities on building a more secure world for all of its inhabitants. Her conviction in the power and importance of dialogue, as well as her ability to listen, has enabled her to bring individuals holding a range of perspectives together to work toward this goal. Patricia's passion, strength and warmth have characterized all aspects of these endeavours. She was an integral part of the conception and launch of *Disarmament Forum* in 1999 and has offered constant support to the *Disarmament Forum* team. On a personal level, I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to have worked alongside her and learned from her, and to be able to call her both a mentor and a friend. All of us at UNIDIR look forward to continuing to collaborate with her in her new capacity of Deputy Director and Scientist in Residence at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Kerstin Vignard

Filling a critical gap, or just wasting time? Track Two diplomacy and regional security in the Middle East

Peter Jones

Many followers of Middle East[1] affairs will be familiar with the term "Track Two Diplomacy", particularly in dialogues between Israelis and Palestinians.[2] However, there is also another, less well-known, field of Track Two activity under way in the absence of an official regional dialogue on security issues and arms control. This paper will review the phenomenon of Track Two on regional security issues in the Middle East and analyse the difficult question of how to measure the success, or even impact, of such processes.

The paper begins with a brief analysis of Track Two diplomacy, which outlines the differences between traditional Track Two (aimed at bilateral dispute resolution) and regional security dialogues. The paper then comments on the only official regional security process in the region, the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group process, and situates regional security Track Two in relation to it. Briefly referencing the main Track Two projects on security issues under way in the region (which are described elsewhere),[3] the paper analyses how these dialogues make their impact. The paper concludes with thoughts on where Middle East regional security Track Two may be going.

Track Two diplomacy

The term "Track Two Diplomacy" was coined in 1981 by Joseph Montville.[4] Montville used the term to denote the growing number of unofficial dialogues taking place with respect to conflict resolution. He defined Track Two as being:

> …unofficial, informal interaction among members of adversarial groups or nations with the goals of developing strategies, influencing public opinion, and organizing human and material resources in ways that might help resolve the conflict.[5]

Depending on how one defines it, however, Track Two had been around since at least before the First World War in the form of the various "peace societies" that had pressed for disarmament. There had also been an institutionalized form of what we would now call Track Two for many years in the Asia–Pacific region.[6]

In the form that we presently recognize it (quiet, unofficial dialogues to help resolve conflicts), Track Two first arose in the 1960s. John Burton and colleagues at University College London convened

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a process to help resolve a dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia. Since then, an active "scholar–practitioner" community has arisen.[7] In the Middle East, an ongoing set of Track Two dialogues between Israelis and Palestinians has been a key, if quiet, feature of regional diplomacy.[8]

The field is not without critics. Some practitioners of official diplomacy are concerned that "amateurs" should not engage in such activities lest they damage the diplomatic process.[9] Some scholars question whether Track Two can claim to be a discipline, and argue that poor standards of analysis into what makes such interventions successful have led to a field which lacks academic credibility and official legitimacy.[10] Supporters of Track Two note that serious study of the field is under way, to the extent that the need which many of the processes have for confidentiality allows.[11] They question whether the calls of the social scientists for academic experiments to determine the efficacy of Track Two can ever be achieved in real world circumstances.[12]

For the purposes of this paper two issues are worth noting. The first is that Track Two finds itself between different traditions of social science as regards international relations. The "realist" school tends to favour explanations of international affairs that stress interest-based bargaining, the competition for power between states and zero-sum games. Social-psychological and constructivist theories tend to stress interpersonal relations, community-building and the development of norms.[13] While neither realism nor constructivism is as definitive as presented here, most Track Two is more comfortable in the latter tradition. Track Two tends to stress interpersonal dynamics and social-psychological techniques. In a region where realism is much in evidence, such as the Middle East, gaining a foothold for new approaches is difficult.[14]

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A second point is that the great bulk of research and writing on Track Two is about resolving specific conflicts between (usually) two parties. Thus, most of the terminological and analytical concepts with which we assess Track Two are rooted in the dynamics and traditions of various schools of "conflict resolution". While probably inevitable, this does raise questions as to how much of this literature is relevant to Track Two aimed at developing new approaches to regional security.

The official regional security process: ACRS

From 1991 to 1995, the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS) met as one of the five multilateral groups of the Middle East peace process. ACRS produced significant progress on confidence-building measures and the beginnings of a conceptual dialogue on regional security.[15] ACRS stalled on two issues: the question of the relationship between the bilateral track of the peace process and the multilateral track (which was not a problem unique to ACRS, as the other four multilateral working groups also foundered on it); and the issue of whether and how to capture Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity within the ACRS process—an issue unique to ACRS.

ACRS suffered from a number of systemic flaws. Two stand out.[16] As a working group of the peace process, ACRS promoted a vision of Middle East regional security squarely within the Arab–Israeli dynamic. While Arab–Israeli peace is undoubtedly an important aspect of regional security, it is not the only one and the structure of ACRS overplayed this issue. Second, ACRS excluded several states such as Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and Syria.[17]

The relationship between ACRS and Track Two has evolved. Some of the first Track Two activities supported and complemented ACRS by providing studies to develop the ACRS agenda and regional officials' understanding of the issues they would face.[18] Track Two was also meant to stimulate the creation of a community of experts across the Middle East, at both the official and academic levels,

who could support an intensive and ongoing regional arms control process.[19] As ACRS went into abeyance, some in the region saw Track Two as a way to keep a semi-official process going during what was supposed to be a temporary lull, though some of the most successful of such activities took on a life of their own when it became apparent that ACRS was not going to restart.[20]

Track Two and regional security in the Middle East: projects and objectives

Track Two on regional security in the Middle East has thus now moved beyond the ACRS years and come into its own. The main groups currently active are:[21]

- the Consortium of Middle Eastern research institutes, sponsored by Canada and Denmark, which is looking at models for a cooperative regional security system;
- the Center for Middle East Development (CMED) at the University of California, Los Angeles, which hosts dialogues on various themes relating to regional cooperation;
- the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) meetings on Gulf security;
- the Cooperative Monitoring Center (CMC) at Sandia National Laboratory in the United States (with a regional office in Jordan), which is doing studies with regional experts on technical aspects of arms control, especially on verification issues;
- Gulf 2000, resident at Columbia University in New York, which runs a highly respected e-mail discussion forum and has hosted meetings on Persian Gulf issues;
- the Stanley Foundation, based in Iowa, also active on Persian Gulf security;
- the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, which run specific meetings on Middle East security issues;
- the Italian Landau Network–Centro Volta, which runs meetings on different issues of arms control and regional stability; and
- the ongoing work of several institutes on both sides of the Mediterranean affiliated with the European Union's EuroMeSCo network, otherwise known as the Barcelona Process, examining cooperation across the Mediterranean.

Several other Track Two projects are now ended or are in stasis. These are:

- the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) project, a multi-year research project involving experts from across the region to examine the creation of a regional security regime in the Middle East (this project has been carried forward by the Consortium mentioned above);
- a project run from DePaul University in Illinois, which gathered a small group from Egypt, Israel and Jordan for in-depth discussions of the nuclear issue that stalled the ACRS process;
- a project on the possible creation of a weapons-of–mass-destruction-free zone (WMDFZ) in the Gulf run by the Gulf Research Centre (GRC), based in Dubai;
- a project on bioweapons run by Search for Common Ground, which branched into cooperative work among regional countries on pandemic preparedness;
- maritime safety activities sponsored by the Canadian government; and
- meetings on various aspects of regional security and threat perceptions run by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

For the purpose of analysing the differences between these various projects, they can be separated between:

- those that take a primarily or exclusively subregional focus, concentrating on either the Persian Gulf or the Mediterranean as specific areas in which a regional cooperation and security system should be developed before a region-wide system (Gulf 2000, Stanley Foundation, GRC, IISS for the Persian Gulf and the Barcelona Process for the Mediterranean);
- those that believe that a region-wide cooperation and security system should be explored, though this does not preclude the development of subregional approaches at the same time (the Consortium, CMED and SIPRI projects); and
- those that do not explore the question of regional or subregional approaches, but are more interested in exploring other issues such as confidence-building measures and arms control and security cooperation in the Middle East (UNIDIR; CMC; Search for Common Ground; DePaul University).

Of course, the distinctions are often not as clear as drawn here, and some projects look at various aspects of these questions (e.g. Pugwash and the Landau Network).

A second level that distinguishes many of the projects concerned with regional security is their orientation with regard to the question of what *kind* of security is sought.[22] Most Middle East regional security projects have concentrated on "collective" and "cooperative" security, in their state-centric meanings. *Collective security* is often used to describe a system whereby a group of states perceives a common threat or enemy and has banded together against it. One of the more famous examples of this is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). *Cooperative security,* in modern usage,[23] posits that a group of states has identified a common set of issues or concerns and is establishing a set of rules of conduct or a mechanism whereby the states can come together to discuss their concerns and try to develop more predictable relations. One example of this is the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE. Another is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN. [24]

Interestingly, the two types are not mutually exclusive. In Europe, the OSCE and NATO coexist, as did the OSCE's predecessor (the CSCE) with both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In Asia, ASEAN coexists with collective defence arrangements such as the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), which involve certain ASEAN countries—Malaysia and Singapore—and Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. One does not therefore have to pick and choose; each type of arrangement can exist within a given space, provided the objectives are not mutually contradictory.

The importance of this issue to any understanding of Middle East regional security Track Two is that some projects in the region have been primarily focused on collective security, while others have been examining cooperative security concepts. Some of those who were most keen on a Persian Gulf system in the wake of the US-led invasion of Iraq were largely advancing the idea of a collective security arrangement between the United States and certain Gulf countries, possibly to form the backbone of an eventual broader system.[25] Others, whether talking about the idea of a Persian Gulf first approach or a wider pan-regional structure, have been advancing the idea of a primarily cooperative regional security system.[26]

In the case of those projects examining a regional, or subregional *collective* security system, the participating states would be only a certain number of regional countries and they would be banding together with the United States to resist a perceived aggressor. In the case of those Middle East Track Two projects examining a *cooperative* system, it is expected that a much greater number of regional countries would participate (and that the system would be open to all) and that it would not be aimed at countering a specific country so much as developing a code of conduct and associated dialogue mechanisms to give that code effect. In other words, there would be no common threat perceived by all, in the form of a specific other country, but rather a general agreement that uncertainty and lack of common standards of behaviour are the danger. Of course, as noted previously, the two kinds of systems could coexist in the Middle East, as they do elsewhere.

Roles, limitations and assessment of regional security Track Two

Trying to develop ways of understanding the role of regional security Track Two, and of measuring success, is difficult. This should not be surprising. Some of the most difficult questions in the field of analysing Track Two (even the more intensively studied bilateral dispute resolution model) are the roles and limitations of such processes, and how to assess effectiveness.[27] This is even more the case for regional security Track Two.[28]

Ball, Milner and Taylor, in their analysis of regional security Track Two in the Asia–Pacific region,[29] note four possible roles on which criteria for success can be developed and judged.

- Track Two processes can serve as a mechanism for the development of policy advice to governments, particularly as regards new issues or longer-term questions. In this sense, Track Two, if accepted by regional governments, can serve as a kind of reserve of intellectual capacity.
- Track Two processes provide a "laboratory" for the development and testing of ideas. New concepts or specific proposals can be debated in an atmosphere within which governments are not committed.
- Track Two offers an alternate route to the continuation of regional security discussions where official routes are blocked. This implies a high degree of confidence in (and probably control over) Track Two.
- Track Two performs a socialization role. At the most basic level, it permits participants to get to know each other. Beyond this, it is assumed that participants develop a keener appreciation of each other's perspectives and concerns. Ultimately, they can achieve shared understandings on difficult issues.

Ball et al. note a number of limitations, some of which are specific to regional security Track Two in the Asia–Pacific. First, by developing a notion of regional Track Two that is closely linked to government, this region has developed a model whereby Track Two is often an extension of official diplomacy. While this ensures that ideas are transmitted, it can also mean that some of the problems of the official process are found in Track Two. This is a phenomenon that one scholar has called the "autonomy dilemma"; the more autonomous Track Two is of governments, the more freedom it has, but the less immediate and measurable its impact, and vice versa. For example, some ideas may not be on the agenda due to official sensitivities and there may be problems bringing all actors into the process.[30]

A second perceived limitation of Asia–Pacific regional security Track Two is that it has, to date at any rate, largely ignored civil society. In the Asia–Pacific region a set of processes regionally referred to as "Track Three" has sprung up, largely comprised of civil society groups whose agendas are often critical of governments in such areas as human rights, and who feel themselves excluded from the semi-official Track Two.[31]

A final limitation of this type of regional security Track Two appears to be its inability to move quickly in the face of pressing issues or a rapidly changed regional environment. This may be a function of the highly institutionalized nature of Asia–Pacific regional Track Two.

Turning to the Middle East, Kaye[32] argues that regional security Track Two has three roles. She also posits that they usually run sequentially, a point not emphasized in the analysis of Ball and his colleagues.

- First, the "socialization" of the participating elites is a process whereby these elites are introduced, usually by Western experts, to various concepts relating to security, with much

of the work taking place in informal workshops (this is a somewhat different socialization role to that described by Ball and colleagues).

- Second, the "filtering" of externally generated policy ideas to the local environment is a process whereby the regional participants take the ideas presented during the socialization period and re-form them in ways that are relevant to their regional reality. If particularly successful, this role goes beyond straightforward reformulation of specific ideas and toward a broader reformulation of the conflict itself in ways which are more amenable to new approaches to regional security.
- Finally, the "transmission" to official policy, which involves a more formal process whereby the ideas developed in the other two roles are translated into official policies across the region. Some tangible indicators of success are lower defence budgets or arms control agreements.

Kaye notes three possible limitations of such processes: the difficulty of finding participants who have sufficient security credentials to be credible, but who are still open to new thinking; the fact that regional elites may simply be unprepared to shift from realist thinking toward cooperative security concepts (in those cases where such a shift is necessary, i.e. cooperative security projects); and that regional elites may be unprepared to accept the notion that it is in their interest to develop new approaches to regional security when a basic difference (the Arab–Israeli dispute) has not been resolved.

Writing specifically about Track Two as a vehicle to assist in the development of a Gulf WMDFZ (GWMDFZ), a final author notes four possible roles for Track Two.[33]

- The development of a cadre of regional experts who are conversant with the issues under discussion and with each other's views.
- The provision of a forum in which people, including officials from countries that do not recognize each other, can meet to discuss the issues.
- The development of a structured, ongoing process in which regional experts can tackle the complex issues that will arise if a WMDFZ is to be created.
- The provision of a forum for the development of ideas for a broad regional security architecture, which will be a precondition for the creation of a WMDFZ.

Measuring success

As discussed, it is notoriously difficult to develop firm criteria or definitions for the success of any type of Track Two diplomacy, particularly for Track Two devoted to regional security. Most indicators are rather general and include the "socialization" of elites toward new ways of thinking about security, and the development of epistemic communities capable of developing and transferring ideas into tension-prone regions. (Another possible role for Track Two would be the identification and development of a "next generation" of regional scholars and officials.)

These are worthy goals. But we are still left with the question of how to measure them. How do we "learn" from previous projects? How do we assure those funding such efforts that their money is generating positive returns? There are no easy answers. Are we to measure success by agreements achieved on the official track that are inspired by Track Two work? That may take a long time and the connection between regional security Track Two and eventual official agreements may be tenuous. Do we measure success by numbers of meetings and the political, military or academic stature of those attending? These are tangible indicators of something, but do they necessarily capture the validity of the work being done?

One indicator that can provide some evidence that the idea of Track Two on security matters is taking root in the Middle East would be the extent to which regional governments and institutions begin to support it. Such work must be led by the region rather than by outsiders if it is to have political credibility in the region. Presently, virtually all Middle East regional security Track Two is supported by outsiders, primarily foundations and governments in Canada, Europe and the United States. Beyond financial support, there is a need for greater regional leadership in project leadership and intellectual terms. One notable exception is the Gulf WMDFZ project sponsored and carried out by the Dubai-based Gulf Research Centre. In the end, however, we remain more reliant on general indicators for the worth of these projects than we might like.[34]

Possible future approaches for regional security Track Two in the Middle East

Both Jones and Kaye suggest, in different ways, a model of regional security Track Two in the Middle East that bears some resemblance to the Track Two that has emerged in the Asia–Pacific region. The primary reason for this is that most Middle Eastern governments are likely to be more comfortable with a Track Two process that is under their "tutelage"; it should ease concerns that these dialogues might develop in ways with which they are not comfortable. It would also tend to ensure that any results from the process would be transferred to the official level, given that a close relationship between the two levels would be a "built-in" feature of the process. That said, there is a danger that the problems which have arisen in Asia over such questions as the "autonomy dilemma" might simply be replicated and reinforced in the Middle East.

Most Middle Eastern governments are likely to be more comfortable with a Track Two process that is under their "tutelage".

Of course, Asia and the Middle East are not the same. There is no network of regional think-tanks in the Middle East as exists in Asia; it will have to be built. At least two current projects are seeking to build such networks. The Consortium process, sponsored by Canada and Denmark, is advancing by means of a consortium of regional institutes, which are working together to host inclusive workshops on cooperative regional security themes. Another process, supported by the Near East and South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University in Washington, is sponsored by the US government and has established a Regional Network of Strategic Studies Centers to undertake workshops and projects. Institutes from certain countries, such as Iran, are not invited to participate, and its membership, reflecting the NESA Center's broader mandate from the US Department of Defense, includes India, Pakistan and other countries not traditionally thought of as part of the Middle East.

Another key difference is that the Asia–Pacific model of regional security Track Two exists to support an ongoing official process of discussions on such issues, which is centred on ASEAN. With the demise of ACRS, no such official process exists in the Middle East, and even ACRS was not entirely inclusive. Regrettably, there is no sign that any official process will restart in the Middle East in the near future. Could a Track Two process be a stepping-stone to the development of an official process? Alternatively, can a regional security Track Two process exist indefinitely in the absence of such an official process, and perhaps "stand in" for it in some way over time? The answers to these questions are not yet clear. In principle, it should be possible, but some regional governments may not be prepared to accept the idea of a standing, semi-institutionalized Track Two process on regional security questions, particularly if it is perceived as an attempt to go around the issues that rendered it impossible to continue with ACRS.

Conclusion

Track Two on regional security in the Middle East may be approaching something of a crossroads. Several highly useful projects have been run, or are being run. A cadre of regional academics, military officers and other officials has taken part in these and valuable products have been developed. However, it is not entirely clear that these products have made their way into mainstream discourse around the Middle East and there is as yet no sense that a core of Middle Eastern states have emerged that regard Track Two as worthy of ongoing support. Moreover, as noted, it is unclear how long such processes can be sustained in the absence of an official process.

Expectations should be kept realistic. Long-standing regional problems are not going to be solved overnight. Even if a more institutionalized regional Track Two security process springs into being, possibly along the lines of the one that exists in Asia, only an official process on regional security can tackle many of the issues facing the Middle East. Track Two exists to encourage the development of such a process and to support it. Therefore, a tendency to insist on firm "accomplishments" from Track Two should be avoided, at least in public. But those who have sponsored Track Two in the region to date are entitled to ask when regional leaders will emerge to begin to play a greater role.

Notes

1. Middle East is intended to convey the sense meant by the term "Middle East and North Africa" (MENA).
2. For a comprehensive analysis of Israeli–Palestinian Track Two see H. Agha, S. Feldman, A. Khalidi and Z. Schiff, 2004, *Track-II Diplomacy: Lessons from the Middle East,* Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press.
3. For more background on Track Two and regional security in the Middle East see D.D. Kaye, 2007, *Talking to the Enemy; Track Two Diplomacy in the Middle East and South Asia,* Santa Monica, CA, RAND, at <www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG592.pdf>; Emily B. Landau, 2006, *Arms Control in the Middle East: Cooperative Security Dialogue and Regional Constraints,* Brighton, Sussex Academic Press and JCSS, chapter 2; P. Jones, 2005, "Track II Diplomacy and the Gulf Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone", *Security and Terrorism Research Bulletin,* no. 1, October, at <www.grc.ae/bulletin_WMD_Free_Zone.pdf>, pp. 15–17; D.D. Kaye, 2005, *Rethinking Track Two Diplomacy: The Middle East and South Asia,* Clingendael Diplomacy Papers no. 3, The Hague, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, at <www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050601_cdsp_paper_diplomacy_3_kaye.pdf>; Agha et al., op. cit., chapter 8; D.D. Kaye, 2001, "Track Two Diplomacy and Regional Security in the Middle East", *International Negotiation: A Journal of Theory and Practice,* vol. 6, no. 1; and M. Yaffe, 2001, "Promoting Arms Control and Regional Security in the Middle East", *Disarmament Forum,* no. 2, pp. 9–26.
4. The term was first mentioned in W.D. Davidson and J.V. Montville, 1981–82, "Foreign Policy According to Freud", *Foreign Policy,* vol. 45, winter, but is generally attributed to Montville.
5. J.V. Montville, 1992, "Transnationalism and the Role of Track-Two Diplomacy", in W.S. Thompson et al. (eds), *Approaches to Peace: An Intellectual Map,* Washington, DC, US Institute of Peace, p. 255.
6. From 1928 to 1961 the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), an international non-governmental organization, existed as "a pioneering channel of unofficial diplomatic dialogue". The IPR disbanded following difficulties during the McCarthy era. The quotation is from L.T. Woods, 2003–2004, "Letters in Support of the Institute of Pacific Relations: Defending a Nongovernmental Organization", *Pacific Affairs,* vol. 76, no. 4, winter, at <pacificaffairs.ubc.ca/history/woods.pdf>, p. 611. For more on the IPR see P.F. Hooper (ed.), 1994, *Rediscovering the IPR: Proceedings of the First International Research Conference on the Institute of Pacific Affairs,* Manoa, University of Hawaii.
7. For a history of Track Two see R.J. Fisher, 2002, "Historical Mapping of the Field of Inter-active Conflict Resolution", in J. Davies and E. Kaufman (eds), *Second Track/Citizen's Diplomacy: Concepts and Techniques for Conflict Transformation,* Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 61–80.
8. See Agha et al., op. cit., and Fisher, 2002, op. cit. One of the longest running Israeli–Palestinian Track Two projects was run by Herbert Kelman. See H.C. Kelman, 2003, "Interactive Problem-solving: Informal Mediation by the Scholar-Practitioner", in J. Bercovitch (ed.), *Studies in International Mediation: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey Z. Rubin,* New York, Palgrave MacMillan, at <www.wcfia.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/hck_IPS.pdf>.
9. See Cynthia J. Chataway, 1998, "Track II Diplomacy from a Track I Perspective", *Negotiation Journal,* vol. 14, no. 3, July. See also R.J. Fisher, 2006, "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Prenegotiation", *International Negotiation,* vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 65–89.

10. See N.N. Rouhana, 2000, "Interactive Conflict Resolution: Issues in Theory, Methodology, and Evaluation", in D. Druckman and P.C. Stern (eds), *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War,* Washington, DC, National Academy Press, and N.N. Rouhana, 1995, "Unofficial Third-Party Intervention in International Conflict: Between Legitimacy and Disarray", *Negotiation Journal,* vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 255–270, July.
11. See R. Fisher, 1997, *Interactive Conflict Resolution,* Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, and his edited volume *Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution to Peacemaking,* New York, Lexington, 2005.
12. H. Saunders et al., 2000, "Interactive Conflict Resolution: A View for Policy Makers on Making and Building Peace", in Druckman and Stern (eds), op. cit.
13. For a brief review of the main theories of international relations see S.M. Walt, 1998, "One World, Many Theories", *Foreign Policy,* spring.
14. One model of how Track Two can play a role in both is the concept of "hard" and "soft" Track Two. Soft Track Two consists of dialogues aimed at breaking down psychological barriers between groups, while hard Track Two is more aimed at solutions to differences between states. Agha et al., op. cit., pp. 3–5.
15. For more on ACRS see the article by Emily B. Landau in this issue of *Disarmament Forum* and the various articles and books cited therein. See also D. Griffiths, 2000, *Maritime Aspects of Arms Control and Security Improvement in the Middle East,* IGCC Policy Paper no. 56, San Diego, CA, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation; J. Peters, 1996, *Pathways to Peace: The Multilateral Arab–Israeli Peace Talks,* London, The Royal Institute of International Affairs; and M. Yaffe, 1994, "An Overview of the Middle East Peace Process Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security", in Fred Tanner (ed.), *Confidence-building and Security Co-operation in the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Middle East,* Malta, University of Malta.
16. For more on this line of analysis see P. Jones, 2005, "Arms Control in the Middle East: Is It Time to Renew ACRS?" *Disarmament Forum,* no. 2, at <www.unidir.org/bdd/fiche-article.php?ref_article=2278>.
17. Syria and Lebanon opted to remain out of the multilateral process until their bilateral dispute with Israel was resolved. Iran, Iraq and Libya were not invited to participate in ACRS, although it is unlikely they would have come had they been invited as Israel was present.
18. Personal discussions with organizers of and participants in early ACRS-related Track Two projects.
19. So-called epistemic communities are networks of experts who have jointly developed a common set of understandings on an issue. See E. Adler, 1992, "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control", *International Organization,* vol. 46, no. 1, winter, pp. 101–145.
20. For example, the Canadian-sponsored maritime safety activities. Personal exchange between the author and David Griffiths, a consultant on maritime security issues and former Canadian naval officer who ran the maritime CBM process for the Canadian government after the demise of ACRS.
21. See Kaye, 2007, op. cit., pp. 31–73 for a summary and analysis of the various regional security Track Two projects under way, and those that were active in the past. In the interests of full disclosure, the present author was Project Leader of the SIPRI project and is now involved in the Consortium project, which is being funded by Canada and Denmark.
22. These ideas are further developed in P. Jones, 2007, "Is a Common Threat Perception a Necessary Precondition for the Creation of a Regional Security and Co-operation System?" *Conflict INFOCUS,* no. 21, at <www.rccp-jid.org/conflictinfocus.htm>. For an informed and thoughtful discussion of some of the different kinds of security see D. Dewitt, 1994, "Common, Comprehensive and Cooperative Security", *The Pacific Review,* vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 1–15.
23. For more on cooperative security see J. Nolan, 1994, *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century,* Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution. Confusion exists because the term "cooperative security" was employed after the First World War by President Wilson and the League of Nations in a way more akin to what we now call collective security; a group of states banding together to collectively deter and resist aggression. In this paper, the term is not used in that sense.
24. It should be noted that the OSCE and ASEAN have important social and economic functions, respectively, which go beyond narrowly defined security.
25. See, for example, the different ideas proposed in M. Yaffe, 2004, "The Gulf and a New Middle East Security System", *Middle East Policy Journal,* vol. XI, no. 3, fall, at <www.mepc.org/journal_vol11/0409_yaffe.asp> and J.A. Russell, 2003, "Searching for a Post-Saddam Regional Security Architecture", *MERIA Journal,* vol. 7, no. 1, March, at <www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/publications/russellMERIA.pdf>.
26. See, for example, P. Jones, 1998, *Towards a Regional Security Regime for the Middle East: Issues and Options,* Stockholm, SIPRI, at <www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?id=10473>; P. Jones, 2005, *A Gulf WMD Free Zone within a Broader Gulf and Middle East Security Architecture,* Gulf Research Center Policy Analysis Papers; The Stanley Foundation, 2007, *The Future of Gulf Security: Project Summary Report,* at <www.stanleyfoundation.org/resources.cfm?id=267>; and F. Leverett, "The Middle East: Thinking Big", *The American Prospect Online,* 21 February 2005.

27. The fact that it is so difficult to measure outputs is one of the criticisms made by Rouhana. Others argue that precise measurements are not possible in a subjective field. For one discussion of the debate see T. Pearson d'Estree, L.A. Fast, J.N. Weiss and M.S. Jakobsen, 2001, "Changing the Debate about 'Success' in Conflict Resolution Efforts", *Negotiation Journal,* vol. 17, no. 2, April, pp. 101–113.
28. As three scholars much involved in regional security Track Two processes in the Asia–Pacific region note: "… many (if not most) of the benefits of Track 2 security dialogue are intangible and, therefore, not readily quantifiable". See D. Ball, A. Milner and B. Taylor, 2006, "Track 2 Security Dialogue in the Asia-Pacific: Reflections and Future Directions", *Asian Security,* vol. 2, no. 3, 2006, p. 182.
29. See Ball et al., op. cit., pp. 179–182. Ball et al. acknowledge that their analysis builds on B. Job, 2003, "Track 2 Diplomacy: Ideational Contribution to the Evolving Asian Security Order", in M. Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features,* Stanford, Stanford University Press.
30. See H.J. Kraft, 2000, "The Autonomy Dilemma of Track Two Diplomacy in Southeast Asia", *Security Dialogue,* vol. 31, no. 3, September, pp. 343–356. See also Seng See Tan, 2005, "Non-official Diplomacy in Southeast Asia: 'Civil Society' or 'Civil Service?'" *Contemporary Southeast Asia,* vol. 27, no. 3, December, pp. 370–387.
31. Tan, op. cit., p. 377.
32. Kaye, 2007, op. cit., pp. 21–29.
33. P. Jones, 2005, "Track II Diplomacy and the GWMDFZ", op. cit., p. 16.
34. One interesting point, based on the reviews done of the above six authors, is that they are all talking about Track Two regional security dialogues as essentially being instruments of developing cooperative security models and are largely concerned with Track Two as a means of introducing new conceptions of security to troubled regions. There has not been an analysis on the question of whether regional security Track Two devoted to developing collective security concepts would differ significantly, and how.

ACRS: what worked, what didn't, and what could be relevant for the region today

Emily B. Landau

The Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS) was one of the five working groups that together comprised the multilateral track of the Madrid peace process of the early 1990s.[1] These region-wide arms control talks—active 1992–1995 and encompassing 14 regional parties—were truly a unique experience in regional security dialogue in the Middle East. In fact, looking back upon this dialogue, and even taking into account its shortcomings (which will be discussed), a certain nostalgia is aroused for this period of hope that opened up in the early 1990s. On the other hand, in today's more sombre regional situation, the severity of perceived common threats could actually provide the basis for a strong common interest that states might build upon to once again activate a much-needed regional dialogue framework.

The logic of ACRS—as set out by the conveners—was to focus primarily on the security relations among the states of the region, and to enhance their sense of mutual confidence and stability. Indeed, the seminar framework chosen for the talks was purposely designed to encourage dialogue among the participants, and an appreciation of the threat perceptions and concerns of the other. The goal was to reach agreement upon a shared understanding of arms control that made sense for the participating states and for the region as a whole.[2]

In the words of then US Secretary of State James Baker, the agenda of the talks would be to consider "a set of modest confidence-building or transparency measures covering notifications of selected military-related activities and crisis-prevention communications. The purpose would be to lessen the prospects for incidents and miscalculations that could lead to heightened competition or even conflict."[3] This arms control logic was drawn directly from the superpower experience of the Cold War, when arms control came to be understood most significantly as a process for stabilizing the nuclear deterrence relationship that developed between the two superpowers. In the regional context, the idea was to improve understanding and mutual confidence and build stability step by step, beginning with confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). CSBMs are virtually any militarily significant measure that is mutually agreed upon among states and viewed as contributing to their common sense of security without impinging upon their core security concerns. CSBMs are the essence of a "win–win" approach to security, and they embody the logic of a dynamic, step-by-step inter-state process.[4] It was believed that once confidence was established—and with parallel movement on improving inter-state relations more generally through peace negotiations—states could move to the more difficult stage of arms control, when weapons of mass destruction (WMD) arsenals would be the direct focus of attention.

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Indeed, a quick review of the talks reveals that while the motivating factor for convening them was no doubt the commonly perceived interest to mitigate the dangers associated with WMD in the region, the talks themselves dealt in the main with CSBMs that were not directly related to WMD. The initial successes of ACRS were achieved with these measures before the talks were put on hold indefinitely.

Achievements in the talks and tensions revealed

A brief description of the initial successes of ACRS will be followed by a more in-depth explanation of the dynamic that led to the demise of the talks. This paper devotes more attention to the explanation of why the talks broke down because it significantly expands upon the commonly cited reason for this breakdown, namely, the insolvable zero-sum positions on the nuclear issue held by Egypt and Israel. It develops an approach that places this bilateral dynamic in a broader regional framework; it evaluates the impact of region-wide dynamics, especially inter-Arab politics and Egypt's role within them.

The 14 regional participants in ACRS began the dialogue process in 1992 by participating in two plenary sessions that were conducted basically as educational seminars; they provided the setting for Russian and US representatives to present the regional participants with their own experiences with arms control in the 1970s and 1980s. Only from about the third plenary did work begin on defining an agenda for the Middle East, and intersessional discussions were initiated on conceptual and operational topics. These meetings continued until 1995, although the last plenary (which had the authority to approve decisions) took place in Tunis in December 1994.

From 1993 to 1995, discussion in the "operational basket" of ACRS focused on four categories of CSBMs, and at the sixth and final ACRS plenary significant progress was achieved with regard to all four.

- *Maritime issues:* two documents were endorsed on SAR (search and rescue) and INCSEA (incidents at sea), and Tunisia agreed in principle to host an additional exercise at sea as well as a meeting of senior naval officers from the region.
- *Prenotification and military exchange:* an agreement on prior notification of military exercises was concluded, and the parties agreed to exchange information regarding military personnel, unclassified military documents, and military training and education.
- *Regional communications network:* six parties (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Oman, the Palestinians and Tunisia) agreed in principle to participate in a temporary network set up in The Hague, and Egypt offered to host the permanent hub in Cairo later on.
- Establishment of three *regional security centres:* a decision was taken to set up a primary centre in Jordan, with secondary ones in Qatar and Tunisia. Their objective was defined as crisis prevention, management and resolution.[5]

Although the talks were put on hold before these CSBMs could be formally adopted by states and put into practice, clear agreement on them was secured within the framework of the talks—which was no small achievement. They thus created a tangible outcome, which proved that such agreements are possible. They are sure to be an important point of reference for any future regional security dialogue in the Middle East.

The primary success of ACRS was that it followed a logic of placing weapons in context.

The primary success of ACRS—reflected in the discussions over, and initial agreement on CSBMs—was that it followed a logic of placing weapons in context. This means attributing importance and granting priority to the reality of security concerns among states in the region as a key to lowering tensions, rather than focusing exclusively on the elimination of weapons per se. As such, ACRS placed emphasis on states rather than treaties, and gave priority to their relations rather than solely their weapons and arsenals.

There is no doubt that from the beginning the dispute between Israel and Egypt on the nuclear question was evident in the dynamics of the talks. Egypt clearly advocated focusing discussions on eliminating WMD (first and foremost the nuclear weapons attributed to Israel), while Israel preferred to advance the goal of regional security. Israel wanted to postpone discussion of nuclear capabilities until after peace agreements had been achieved with all of its neighbours.

While there was almost across-the-board agreement on discussing CSBMs in the first stage of the talks, Egypt's opposition to continued attention to these measures without parallel discussion of the nuclear question increased. As of early 1995 Egypt resisted, and later began strongly to oppose, continuing discussion on any further regional arrangements as long as the topic of creating a WMD-free zone was not placed squarely on the agenda of ACRS. This position—and the ensuing and steadily mounting tension between Israel and Egypt—made the prospect of convening another plenary in 1995 impossible, and finally led to the United States' decision to put the talks on hold indefinitely, as of December 1995.

Explaining the demise of ACRS: focus on the regional context

On the face of things, and in light of the centrality of the overt Egyptian–Israeli tensions, the explanation of the demise of ACRS would seem to be quite straightforward, and focus primarily on the dispute over the nuclear issue.[6] The Egyptians were willing to go along with the idea of CSBMs for a while, but finally became frustrated by the fact that discussion did not move on to the nuclear issue. In an attempt to play according to the "CSBM rules of the game", Egypt even suggested that a good CSBM could be Israel joining the NPT. This of course did not square with the conceptual logic of CSBMs, which is to focus on those areas where agreement can be more easily attained because they do not touch upon or threaten the core security interests of the parties involved. For its part, Israel was satisfied with the confidence-building process, and was not willing to discuss the nuclear issue in the way that Egypt wanted. Israel felt it had made a major concession when in late February 1995 (after coming under significant pressure to show some flexibility toward Egypt's position) it stated its willingness to open discussion of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East two years after peace agreements had been signed with all of its neighbours, including Iran and Iraq.

So what is missing from this explanation? First of all, it ignores all the other participants in the talks. It ignores the fact that other Arab states were not only willing to proceed with CSBMs, but viewed them as intriguing and important. Many participants in ACRS have described the talks as "eye-openers" as regards the views they had previously held on regional realities.[7] So, in its opposing view, Egypt was not only opposing Israel, but the rest of the Arab participants as well. Because there was nothing in the talks that was obviously threatening Egypt in particular (indeed Egypt could have benefited from the enhanced regional security that was developing), it is difficult to limit the explanation to an Egyptian–Israeli dynamic.

Similarly, this explanation does not relate to the fact that it was Egypt alone that was emphasizing the paramount urgency of the nuclear issue. Why was Egypt—which has a peace agreement with Israel—the only state displaying such concern, to the point that toward the end it began referring to the nuclear issue as a direct and immediate threat?

These questions begin to make more sense when we probe deeper into the dynamics of the process. In fact, when attention moves away from the point of breakdown in the talks and to the process itself, one realizes that, in many ways, ACRS had the characteristics of a regional process in the making:

- ACRS was the first attempt to apply in a comprehensive manner the concept of arms control to the Middle East;

- the structure of ACRS was unique: it was a multilateral dialogue that included Israel, and it was conducted according to a seminar-like format; and
- regarding the content of the talks, there was a determined attempt to identify areas where a win–win logic could apply. Such a logic—encapsulated by the idea of CSBMs—distanced participants from the problematic zero-sum thinking that very often dominates in the Middle East.

I would argue that all these unique features of the talks were apparent to Egypt at the time. As such, Egypt recognized that these talks—together with other regional forums that were gathering momentum in the early 1990s—were creating a new dynamic in the Middle East that had important potential implications for the way regional politics would be conducted in the future. While for the organizers of ACRS this was a positive development, for Egypt—with its leadership agenda—it was a potentially threatening new reality.

Egypt entered ACRS with a clear arms control agenda that it believed would be readily accepted by the other Arab states. Egypt hoped to use this agenda—and the acceptance by the other states of its interpretation of arms control—as a means to enhance its regional leadership role in the new framework being established.[8]

Having Israel as an active participant in the talks presented a particularly difficult challenge for Egypt because Israel was not only outside Egypt's normal sphere of influence, but it was perceived to be a rival for regional leadership. The growing acceptance of the idea of CSBMs within the framework of ACRS translated for Egypt into a growing acceptance of the arms control logic advocated by the United States and Israel, rather than its own, which viewed arms control as the elimination of WMD. This caused Egypt to feel increasingly uncomfortable in the talks.

Explaining Egypt's attitude toward the talks in this manner draws on a reading of the normative framework of inter-Arab politics over the course of the twentieth century, and especially the link between Egypt's identity as regional leader and the norm of Arabism, or Arab nationalism. Over the years, rules of the game developed in the Arab Middle East political sphere that included Egyptian expectations regarding the means for establishing its leadership role among the Arab states. These norms took on relevance for Egypt in the new dialogue framework established in the 1990s as well. Basically, the expectation was that if Egypt succeeded in presenting itself as the champion of the Arab national interest, it would gain the legitimacy it needed to claim its leadership role.

According to the norm that developed, leadership was not something to be asked for or demanded, but rather to be *granted* in light of behaviour. Egypt had to make it clear that its interest was the Arab interest—and with its arms control agenda, this is exactly what Egypt was trying to do.

Of course, Egypt never mentioned its concern with leadership in relation to the ACRS talks, and insisted that it was motivated solely by the issue of controlling WMD. However, in the same period in which ACRS was active, Egypt was openly discussing its desire to reassert its leadership role with regard to other dynamics (such as through mediation in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, where it sought vindication for its decision to forge peace with Israel); there is thus no reason to believe that the situation was different with regard to ACRS. In fact, multilateral frameworks posed a particularly poignant challenge to Egypt's leadership as they were establishing new forms of regional relations in the Middle East. Thus Egypt's leadership interest with regard to these talks was very likely especially strong.

The negative impact of the regional normative framework on Egypt's attitude toward the talks, and in turn on the talks themselves, was not sufficiently taken into account at the time. As such, while a major aim of the arms control talks was to influence the broad context of security relations in the region, ACRS did not go far enough in terms of incorporating the impact of pre-existing regional norms

and realities, especially as they did not seem to be directly related to security concerns. However, in reality, key features of the prior regional setting became an important, if implicit, factor of influence because the regional dynamics that began to develop within the talks clashed with these well-established regional practices and politics. The dispute between Israel and Egypt over the nuclear issue was thus an overt manifestation of a more complex regional dynamic. Appreciating the significance of the regional framework that was established in ACRS allows us to place the difficulties that emerged between Israel and Egypt on the nuclear issue within their proper regional setting.

Applying the ACRS experience to current realities

An important question is what we can take from this regional experience of the early 1990s in dealing with security challenges in the Middle East today.[9] It should be clear that the answer to the question of whether and how the ACRS experience can be applied to current regional realities and arms control dilemmas depends very much on one's understanding of ACRS and the reasons for its demise. Indeed, there are two types of insight that emerge from this initial round of arms control talks. The first is conceptual, and goes to the particular arms control logic that was chosen for, and implemented in, the talks: namely, step-by-step progress that focuses on shaping inter-state relations through win–win cooperative efforts. Was this the correct approach to take? According to the explanation advanced in this article, the soundness of this logic was actually underscored by both the successes and the failures of ACRS. While the achievements of the talks (CSBMs) lend direct support to the value of the arms control logic that was chosen, the failures can ironically also be explained in these terms: they reflected insufficient attention to the impact of the pre-existing regional context of inter-state relations in the Middle East.

The second and related set of lessons emanates from an examination of the way this arms control logic was actually implemented: what facilitated success and what undermined it. This is the basis upon which we can consider the concrete possibilities for applying such logic again today. Here we need to examine whether and how specific regional conditions can support the kind of regional security dialogue that was begun in ACRS.

The value of the analysis of Egypt's attitude toward ACRS presented above is primarily in sharpening our awareness of the importance of regional context when attempting to promote any kind of new regional dynamic, even if it seems there is no obvious or direct relation to the issue being discussed. As noted, it was the lack of attention to prior regional norms and politics that was primarily responsible for the demise of ACRS and its indefinite suspension. Therefore, the first lesson of ACRS is that when contemplating and discussing arms control and regional security in the Middle East, the broad underlying context of regional relationships—whatever they may be at the given moment—is a central factor to be taken into account. Insufficient attention to this factor puts at risk the gains that can be made through win–win confidence-building dialogue. The key here is to make sure that all parties have a strong common interest in participating, based on the belief that they have more to gain than to lose by taking part in a region-wide cooperative security endeavour.

The first lesson of ACRS is that the broad underlying context of regional relationships—whatever they may be at the given moment—is a central factor.

Regional realities have changed significantly since the early 1990s, so the particular constellation of factors that had an impact then may be of lesser relevance today, and other regional factors may have come to the fore. For Egypt, its regional standing is today being directly challenged by other states in the region, most prominently Iran, with its nuclear and hegemonic aspirations. When Egypt looks toward Iran, any perceived challenge to its regional position from Israel very likely pales in comparison. The perception is that Iran also has an easily mobilized constituency spread throughout

the region that it can appeal to in order to enhance its regional power and influence: namely, the Shiite population.

While Egypt's sensitivities as far as its leadership role most likely remain constant, a change in the identity of the likely challenger is significant. This is because Iran is a growing concern for many other states in the Middle East, each for its own reasons. This common fear of Iran's regional designs—bolstered by its nuclear advances—may create a common interest that states can build upon as a basis for cooperative regional security dialogue. In this regard, Egypt's leadership role would be enhanced as a by-product of the very process itself, just as in ACRS it was perceived to be weakened. Consideration of such dialogue draws on the importance of a strong common interest as a key precondition for pursuing meaningful cooperation, an insight that emerges not only from ACRS, but from other regional cooperative endeavours in the Middle East as well, both past and present.[10]

A related issue, raised elsewhere, concerns the importance of thinking about subregional groupings as a focus for regional security cooperation, in addition to region-wide initiatives.[11] This also underscores the centrality of strong common interests, because the rationale for targeting such subregional groups of states is the fact that they have common interests that are not necessarily shared by the entire region. Of course, adherence to this logic could create a much more complex regional process, with cross-cutting and overlapping dynamics, and might create new difficulties. However, the potential value of getting regional dialogue frameworks moving and active overrides any possible complexities, therefore this option should be seriously considered.

Any indication that conditions are currently ripe for regional dialogue?

In the years following ACRS, and especially after 11 September 2001, the approach to non-proliferation became very much based on individual states. Each suspected nuclear proliferator was dealt with on its own, through different modes of diplomacy or military force. While there was some success with this approach—most notably in the case of Libya—the failures are more stinging, especially the case of the Iranian nuclear file, which has been dragging on for five years, with no end in sight. This in itself gives cause to redirect at least some arms control energies back to the regional sphere, and to efforts to create new rules of the game in the security realm.

In the shadow of the Iranian nuclear threat—and in light of the common concerns that it arouses—there are two theoretical options for pursuing regional security dialogue: with or without (and most likely as a counter to) Iran. At this point dialogue with Iran in the regional sphere, which includes Israel, is not a realistic option. Dialogue among regional states without Iran is more realistic, and has a conceptual logic as mentioned above; still, it does not yet seem to be on the cards.

Nevertheless, the gathering in Annapolis that took place in November 2007 might be a step in this direction, if it maintains its implicit focus on the regional setting rather than becoming almost exclusively geared toward achieving agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.[12] Annapolis benefited from the commitment of a strong external power, which put a lot of energy into securing wide regional participation, and this is in line with another lesson of ACRS: namely, the essential role of an extra-regional convener of regional dialogue. Indeed, the common fear that a nuclear Iran will use its strategic advantage to impose its will and agenda on the Middle East seems to have been on the minds of the US architects of the meeting. According to some reports, the Bush Administration still hopes to use this meeting to launch a regional dynamic that will include and bolster the more moderate or status quo forces in the region as a means of confronting Iran,[13] but this remains to be seen. In any case, the dynamics leading up to Annapolis are a stark reminder of the complex array of regional inter-state interests and relations that will surely have an impact on any region-wide cooperative framework envisioned for the future in the Middle East.

Notes

1. For general analyses of the multilateral talks see: Joel Peters, 1994, *Building Bridges: The Arab-Israeli Multilateral Talks,* London, Royal Institute of International Affairs; and Dalia Dassa Kaye, 2001, *Beyond the Handshake: Multilateral Cooperation in the Arab–Israeli Peace Process, 1991–1996,* New York, Columbia University Press. The ACRS Working Group in particular has been discussed and analysed in a number of studies. See especially Bruce Jentleson, 1996, *The Middle East Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) Talks: Progress, Problems and Prospects,* IGCC Policy Paper no. 26; Bruce Jentleson and Dalia Dassa Kaye, 1998, "Security Status: Explaining Regional Security Cooperation and Its Limits in the Middle East", *Security Studies,* vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 204–238; Shai Feldman, 1997, *Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in the Middle East,* Center for Science and International Affairs Studies in International Security, Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press; Peter Jones, 1997, "Arms Control in the Middle East: Some Reflections on ACRS", *Security Dialogue,* vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 57–70; Peter Jones, 2003, "Negotiating Regional Security and Arms Control in the Middle East: The ACRS Experience and Beyond", *Journal of Strategic Studies,* vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 137–154; Peter Jones, 2005, "Arms Control in the Middle East: Is It Time to Renew ACRS?" *Disarmament Forum,* no. 2, pp. 55–62; Emily Landau, 2001, *Egypt and Israel in ACRS: Bilateral Concerns in a Regional Arms Control Process,* JCSS Memorandum no. 59, Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University and Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies; Emily B. Landau and Tamar Malz, 2003, "Assessing Regional Security Dialogue through the Agent/Structure Lens: Reflections on ACRS", *Journal of Strategic Studies,* vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 155–179; and Emily B. Landau, 2006, *Arms Control in the Middle East: Cooperative Security Dialogue and Regional Constraints,* Brighton, Sussex Academic Press and JCSS.
2. The analysis of the ACRS talks presented here is based on Emily B. Landau, 2006, op. cit.
3. Remarks by Secretary of State James A. Baker, III before the Organizational Meeting for Multilateral Negotiations on the Middle East, held at the House of Unions, Moscow, 28 January 1992.
4. See Ariel Levite and Emily Landau, 1997, "Confidence and Security Building Measures in the Middle East", *Journal of Strategic Studies,* vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 143–171. For more on CBMs and CSBMs see Johan J. Holst and Karen A. Melander, 1977, "European Security and Confidence-building Measures", *Survival,* vol. 19, no. 4, July–August; J. Alford (ed.), 1979, *The Future of Arms Control: Part III: Confidence-Building Measures,* Adelphi Paper no. 149, London, International Institute for Strategic Studies; Johan H. Holst, 1983, "Confidence Building Measures: A Conceptual Framework", *Survival,* vol. 25, no. 1, January–February; Alan Platt (ed.), 1992, *Arms Control and Confidence Building in the Middle East,* Washington, DC, US Institute of Peace Press; David B. Dewitt and Gabriel Ben-Dor (eds), 1994, *Confidence Building Measures in the Middle East,* Boulder, CO, Westview; Michael Krepon (ed.), 1995, *A Handbook of Confidence-Building Measures for Regional Security,* Washington, DC, Henry L. Stimson Center, second edition; and James Macintosh, 1996, *Confidence Building in the Arms Control Process: A Transformation View,* Arms Control and Disarmament Studies no. 2, Ottawa, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.
5. Emily B. Landau, 2006, op. cit., pp. 42–47.
6. Additional explanations are raised by other analysts, and some did have a contributing effect, for example the fact that key players in the WMD field such as Iraq and Iran were not participants in the ACRS talks. However, these were surely not the core of the problem. One explanation that is often advanced as a core factor relates to the fact that the multilateral talks in general were tied to the bilateral track of Madrid, so when the bilateral peace process faltered the multilaterals suffered too. But in this regard, two facts should be kept in mind: first, ACRS began to falter long before the peace process ran into problems, and second, at least one multilateral working group—on water—was active well into the twenty-first century, surviving even the second intifada. This means that when there is a strong mutual interest in cooperating on regional issues, activities can persist even in the face of bilateral problems. Having said this, it is also true that during ACRS, participants expressed their adherence to the centrality of the bilateral–multilateral link, and this put a strain on the talks. In this regard, Jones maintains that "a dynamic needs to be found … in which it is more difficult to use the Arab-Israeli dispute as an excuse not to begin serious consideration of a new regional security architecture." (See Peter Jones, 2005, op. cit., p. 58).
7. Based on in-depth interviews conducted by the author with close to 25 participants in ACRS, during the years 1998–2000.
8. The explanation of Egypt's attitude toward the talks in the coming paragraphs is based on a much more developed and documented explanation in Emily B. Landau, 2006, op. cit.
9. One set of answers to this question is included in an article written by Peter Jones in 2005 (op. cit.), which formulates key insights, such as the fact that the process has value in itself; that the goal of regional security dialogue is not a new agreement per se, but rather a new *approach* to regional security; and that any such process will be complex, thus it is of central importance to be realistic about what can be achieved, especially in the short term.
10. See Emily B. Landau and Fouad Ammor, 2006, *Regional Security Dialogue and Cooperation in the South: Exploring the Neglected Dimension of Barcelona,* EuroMeSCo research paper no. 48, October, at <www.euromesco.net/images/regional%20security%20dialogue%20eng.pdf>.
11. Peter Jones, 2005, op. cit.

12. See Emily B. Landau, 2007, "Regional Security Cooperation in the Middle East: Glimmer of Hope on the Horizon?" *Conflict in Focus,* no. 21, at <www.rccp-jid.org/conflictinfocus.htm>.
13. See David Brooks, "Present at the Creation", *New York Times,* 6 November 2007, at <www.nytimes.com/2007/11/06/opinion/06brooks.html>. In this op-ed explaining that the current peace process initiated by the United States is not really about Israel and the Palestinians, but rather about confronting Iran, Brooks ends by saying: "The Bush administration is not about to bomb Iran (trust me). It's using diplomacy to build a coalition to balance it, and reverse an ugly tide."

Nuclear futures for the Middle East: impact on the goal of a WMD-free zone

Merav Datan

A book entitled The Nuclear Age in the Middle East by Shimon Yiftah, published in Israel in 1976, opens with an overview of the state of affairs and potential trends in the apparently pending nuclearization of the Middle East. Egypt, Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia are mentioned as partners in various nuclear negotiations with France, the Soviet Union and the United States.[1] These developments are presented as evidence of the dawn of the nuclear age in the Middle East. Yiftah then poses the following questions:

- Do these deals carry regional and international risks of the spread of nuclear weapons to a sensitive and explosive region?
- Could the building of nuclear power plants be prevented or delayed?
- What are the motives of France, the Soviet Union and the United States?
- Do Egypt and Israel need nuclear power plants?[2]

Except for secondary facts such as the names of political leaders and the specific partnerships behind some of the deals, the opening pages of this book and the author's questions are as relevant today as they were over 30 years ago.

Today, Iran and Israel are under the international spotlight for assumed or suspected nuclear weapons programmes, outside or in spite of the global non-proliferation regime. Over a dozen Arab states have announced plans to develop nuclear power programmes and are in various stages of negotiations or research and development. France, the Russian Federation and the United States are once again key players seeking to influence nuclear developments in the Middle East, this time joined by international bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and newcomers such as Japan.

Leaders and alliances aside, today's political context differs in at least one significant way from that of three decades ago. The international community has a clearly identified and universally agreed vision for the Middle East: [3] a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This vision, or goal, has been confirmed at the highest political levels and by all states in the region. It would turn the Middle East into the first freely negotiated WMD-free zone (WMDFZ), improving on the already existing nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) elsewhere around the world by incorporating the de facto link among nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, a link that is particularly pertinent to security dynamics in the Middle East.

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This article will explore the goal of a WMDFZ in the Middle East, as well as WMD-related programmes and nuclear plans in the region, in an attempt to address the following questions: how does the potential nuclearization of the Middle East affect progress toward the goal of a NWFZ or WMDFZ? What are the underlying interests and concerns behind current plans to pursue nuclear power? What alternative approaches to energy and security needs might contribute to a WMDFZ?

The goal of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East

The goal of a NWFZ in the Middle East has been recognized in UN General Assembly resolutions since 1974 (following a proposal by Egypt and Iran),[4] and the resolutions have been adopted by consensus since 1980. NWFZs have been successfully negotiated and adopted elsewhere around the world, and more such zones are being pursued. But in the Middle East the goal of a NWFZ came to be linked with a WMDFZ in the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT). This is because of the de facto link that states in the region have made among WMD.[5]

Table 1. Middle Eastern states with potential WMD capabilities

Country	*Nuclear capability*	*Chemical*	*Biological*
Algeria	✓[a]		
Egypt	✓[b]	✓	✓
Iran	✓[c]	✓	✓
Iraq	✓[d]	✓	✓
Israel	✓[e]	✓	✓
Libya	✓[f]	✓	✓
Saudi Arabia	✓[g]		
Syria	✓[h]	✓	✓

Notes:

[a] Algeria has safeguarded nuclear facilities. France conducted its first nuclear tests in Algeria during the 1960s.

[b] Egypt has safeguarded nuclear research facilities.

[c] Iran disclosed clandestine nuclear activities in 2003. Its current nuclear programme and uranium enrichment activities in particular are the subject of international attention, including Security Council resolutions demanding that it cease uranium enrichment. Iran denies having any plans to develop nuclear weapons.

[d] The Iraq Survey Group concluded in 2004 that Iraq had not reconstituted its nuclear weapons programme since 1991, but that Iraq's nuclear ambitions had not disappeared. In 2003 and 2004 there were reports that Iraq had made illicit transfers of WMD materials into Syria prior to the war in Iraq,<www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iraq/nuke.htm>.

[e] Israel has never confirmed having nuclear weapons, but according to foreign estimates has up to 200 nuclear warheads, <www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/israel/nuke-stockpile.htm>.

[f] Prior to 2003 Libya was engaged in acquiring dual-use nuclear technology from a variety of countries. In 2003 Libya agreed to destroy all of its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, <www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/libya/nuclear.htm>.

[g] Saudi Arabia does not have WMD or a nuclear energy programme, but does have long-range ballistic missiles. Saudi Arabia denies that the country is considering acquiring nuclear weapons, <www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/saudi/index.html>.

[h] A series of unconfirmed US media reports in September 2007 claimed that Syria was developing a secret nuclear installation with support from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. These were followed by an October 2007 Israeli air strike in Syria directed against an alleged nuclear facility under construction, but the nature of this facility has not been confirmed, <www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/syria/nuke.htm>.

Source: GlobalSecurity.org, *States Possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction*, at <www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/wmd_state.htm> (page last modified 28 April 2005). The above information includes unconfirmed reports of possible nuclear plans and activities.

A WMDFZ in the Middle East was first put forward by Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak in 1990.[6] Since 1990 the goal of a WMDFZ has been recognized by all relevant members of the international community, including all states of the region, as well as the UN Security Council.[7] All members of the NPT have acknowledged this goal through the 1995 NPT Middle East Resolution and the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, indicating that all states except Israel accept this goal.[8] Israel has acknowledged this goal separately by joining the annual United Nations General Assembly consensus resolution on a NWFZ with an explanation of vote that refers to the goal of a WMDFZ once regional peace and security have been achieved. Israel's position is that peace and stability must prevail in the region before nuclear issues can be addressed: "the establishment of peaceful relations, reconciliation, mutual recognition and good neighborliness, and complemented by conventional and non-conventional arms control measures" is a precondition for achieving the vision of a WMDFZ or establishing a NWFZ in the Middle East.[9]

The Middle Eastern states may support the goal of a WMDFZ, but the fact remains that WMD, specifically chemical weapons, have been used in the region,[10] and the majority of countries in the region have some form of WMD-related research, development or weaponization programme (see Table 1).[11] Moreover, the Middle East remains the region with the greatest concentration of states that are not party to one or more of the international treaties dealing with WMD (see Table 2): the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the NPT, as well as the

Table 2. Middle Eastern states' membership of international treaties dealing with WMD

State	*NPT*	*CWC*	*BTWC*	*CTBT*
Algeria	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bahrain	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comoros	✓	✓		s
Djibouti	✓	✓		✓
Egypt	✓		s	s
Iran	✓	✓	✓	s
Iraq	✓			
Israel		s		s
Jordan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kuwait	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lebanon	✓		✓	s
Libya	✓	✓	✓	
Mauritania	✓	✓		✓
Morocco	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oman	✓	✓	✓	✓
Qatar	✓	✓	✓	✓
Saudi Arabia	✓	✓	✓	
Somalia	✓		s	
Sudan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Syria	✓		s	
Tunisia	✓	✓	✓	✓
UAE	✓	✓	s	✓
Yemen	✓	✓	✓	s

Notes: ✓ = full members; s = signed but not ratified agreement.

Sources: Jez Littlewood, 2004, "Strengthening the Role of the BTWC and CWC", in *Building a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East: Global Non-Proliferation Regimes and Regional Experiences,* Geneva, UNIDIR and League of Arab States, p. 29; additional NPT, CWC and BTWC data: *Status of Multilateral Arms Regulation and Disarmament Agreements,* at <disarmament.un.org/TreatyStatus.nsf>, 19 March 2008; CTBT data: Status of Signature and Ratification, 19 March 2008, at <www.ctbto.org>.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Having already broken the WMD taboo, and in light of deep-rooted political tensions and a frequent resort to the use of force, the potential for nuclear conflict in the Middle East is all too real.

Regional energy needs and security dynamics

Legitimate energy needs have an influence on security dynamics in the Middle East. There is a growing demand for energy in the Levant and Maghreb, and Gulf states are keen to diversify their energy options. This has contributed to a general interest in nuclear energy within the region. The potential "nuclearization" of the region raises concerns about the potential for nuclear proliferation because of the inherent adaptability of civil nuclear programmes to military purposes.

It should be remembered that nuclear technology was originally developed for military use. The military-to-civil adaptability of nuclear programmes was essentially an afterthought, following the research, development and use of nuclear weapons. The history of nuclear power has shaped not only the inherent physical duality of nuclear programmes, but also their association with political power and national military security. These factors should be kept in mind when assessing energy needs and the nuclear option.

Regional energy needs

The growing need for energy in the Middle East is indisputable. The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals and other expressions of the right to sustainable development have recognized developing countries' energy needs. Nuclear energy has been promoted by the industry, by nuclear-capable states and by international bodies as a possible solution to growing energy and climate change concerns.

During 2006 and 2007, more than 10 Arab states announced an interest in exploring nuclear power plans, and several have begun negotiations or discussions with international bodies over facility and fuel possibilities. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, described as "the world's most aggressive salesman for nuclear power",[12] spent much of December 2007 and January 2008 visiting Middle Eastern Arab states to peddle French nuclear technology. In an interview with Al Jazeera television he framed the nuclear energy option as a matter of equity, rhetorically asking "why should Arab countries be deprived of the energy of the future?" and even going so far as to suggest that nuclear power could help in the struggle against terrorism: "Terrorism flourishes in the embrace of despair and backwardness. We want to help Arab countries develop, and we want to upgrade the economies of the 21st century."[13]

Sarkozy's efforts bore fruit in the form of deals or offers of nuclear technical advice for Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. However, these deals or offers are still in the form of agreements in principle rather than concrete plans to build nuclear power plants. Before these and other deals lead to the proliferation of nuclear capabilities in the Middle East, it would be valuable to ensure that this is the best approach to meeting the region's energy needs, and that it will not aggravate already existing security tensions.

The duality of nuclear technology—and the *political* as well as physical implications of this duality—deserves serious attention before any irreversible decisions are taken. The competing interests and conflicting concerns of external players regarding the nuclear energy–nuclear proliferation relationship reflect this duality; actors are worried about the spread of nuclear weapons technology but eager to benefit from the interest in nuclear energy. The United Kingdom is actively involved in talks with Israel and with Arab states on this issue; it unequivocally calls on Israel to join the NPT, while

at the same time engaging in activities that undermine this call, such as multibillion-dollar arms sales to Saudi Arabia.[14] In its turn, the United States supports the goal of a WMDFZ and simultaneously enables Israel to maintain its current nuclear policy.[15]

The status and prestige that even civil nuclear capability bestows is illustrated by the growing international controversy over access to the nuclear fuel cycle. This has become a critical question for the promotion and spread of nuclear energy. Multilateral nuclear approaches and proposals for limited access may be gaining ground among developed and nuclear-capable states, but they are facing growing opposition among developing countries.[16] Most Arab states fall into the category of developing countries that resent the efforts of developed states to limit their access to proliferation-sensitive technologies.

Regional security dynamics

Iran, which has been party to the NPT since 1970, is now the focus of international headlines because of concerns that it seeks a nuclear weapons capability. But these headlines have provoked mixed feelings among other Middle Eastern states, reflected more broadly in the reaction of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The NAM is hesitant to criticize Iran because of the perceived right to access all parts of the fuel cycle, despite the fact that many NAM countries are concerned about Iran's ambitions. Analysts outside the region and in Israel suspect that the nuclear plans recently announced by a number of Arab states are linked to security concerns regarding perceptions of nuclear proliferation in the region:

> The Middle Eastern states say they only want atomic power. Some probably do. But US government and private analysts say they believe that the rush of activity is also intended to counter the threat of a nuclear Iran.
>
> By nature, the underlying technologies of nuclear power can make electricity or, with more effort, warheads, as nations have demonstrated over the decades by turning ostensibly civilian programs into sources of bomb fuel. The uneasy neighbors of Iran, analysts say, may be positioning themselves to do the same.[17]

Israel's nuclear arsenal, calculated by sources originating outside of Israel to be some 100–200 nuclear weapons,[18] remains a concern and is criticized in annual United Nations General Assembly and IAEA resolutions. It also provides a focus for the dissent of various states parties to the NPT, which Israel has never joined. In contrast to Israel's position, discussed earlier, the Arab states' official position is that before arms control and regional security can be addressed, Israel's nuclear weapons must be dealt with.[19]

This deadlock has been described as a "chicken and egg" paradox. As long as each side insists on the realization of its precondition, there will be no progress on any side—a situation that suits the absolutists on all sides. At the root of these polar opposite starting positions are the perceived threats and the perceived military balance between Israel and the Arab states. In the past, when Israel decided to acquire a nuclear capability, its leaders were driven by a subjective but real concern (according to the logic of national security) about the Arab states' conventional military superiority and their determination that the state of Israel should cease to exist. Today there is little doubt about Israel's ability to win a conventional war, but neither this nor Israel's nuclear capability are of much value in confronting the current prevailing security threat: terrorism and cross-border rocket attacks on southern and northern Israel by Hamas and Hizbullah respectively.

The regional security situation has changed in other ways since Israel first developed its nuclear capability and accompanying policy of deterrence through ambiguity. The change in key Arab

states' positions on Israel (e.g. peace treaties between Israel and Egypt and Israel and Jordan, the ongoing peace process—including the Madrid and Oslo agreements—and the offer of normalization embodied in the Arab Peace Initiative[20]), the shifting regional military balance, and the evolving nature of immediate threats to Israel's perceived national security all necessitate a renewed assessment of the real threats to Israel and the best approach to defusing these threats. Israel's current policy in relation to WMD—being the only state in the world not party to any of the three main treaties relating to biological, chemical or nuclear weapons—suggests to some an intention to retain the option of WMD development and use. Its nuclear potential, in combination with its conventional superiority, could be seen as promoting proliferation of WMD, and serves as a convenient—and the most salient—excuse for the Arab states and Iran to retain or develop WMD capabilities and options even where other considerations should in fact prevail. At the same time, Israel's lack of strategic depth[21] means that any proliferation of WMD across the region is a serious threat to its security; the lack of depth also means it is unlikely to be able to establish an effective system of missile defence unless it is part of and dependent on a multi-layer ballistic missile defence system of the United States.

How then will the nuclear era play out in the Middle East? What are the potential consequences, including unintended, of a dozen or so countries building large-scale nuclear facilities and seeking to ensure non-discriminatory access to nuclear fuel? It is not possible to predict precisely what kind of Pandora's box might or might not be opened by the pursuit of nuclear energy sources and options, but history teaches that in the Middle East conflict can, and does, erupt frequently and suddenly.

Impact on the goal of a WMD-free zone

A WMDFZ is consistent with everyone's long-term security interests.

The goal of a WMDFZ in the Middle East has been used as a "political football",[22] with each side holding the other responsible for the lack of meaningful progress. But it can also be argued that a WMDFZ is consistent with everyone's long-term security interests and that if any one side indicates a willingness to relax its current entrenched position, others will relax their positions as well. If so, then a show of flexibility is likely to create a real political opening and would increase external political pressure on other sides.

In order to reverse the current trend toward proliferation and to make concrete progress toward disarmament, the prevailing concerns of each of the relevant players must be addressed. Once the parties involved are confident that their security concerns can be addressed through the political process, negotiations on the building-blocks of a WMD disarmament regime can have some prospect of moving forward constructively. Progress toward the goal of a WMDFZ in the Middle East, however, depends not only on the states of the region. As we have seen, outside powers also have interests in the region and influence security dynamics.

The de facto link among WMD in the region means that there must be progress on nuclear weapons for progress to be achieved on biological or chemical weapons. The inherent duality of nuclear technology, combined with the political value and status associated with nuclear capability, means that the spread of nuclear technologies is likely to hamper such progress. The outside players who seek to promote civil (or more accurately, commercial) nuclear programmes in the Middle East recognize this fact and have sought to address it through proposals for control of the nuclear fuel cycle, such as the IAEA's Multilateral Nuclear Approaches.

The controversy and sensitivity surrounding questions of access to the entire nuclear fuel cycle will determine the feasibility and nature of nuclear energy programmes in the Middle East. Proposals for a regional nuclear fuel supply could address regional access concerns but aggravate

regional proliferation concerns, depending on how such a "fuel bank" is established and how secure or proliferation-prone it is perceived to be.

Nuclear energy—and access to the entire fuel cycle—is perceived as a right not only because of Article IV of the NPT but also because it is a stark example of the divide between the haves and have-nots. In the nuclear case this divide touches on both development and security issues, generating perceptions of a *double* double standard: developing countries are denied energy options available to the developed world, and developing countries cannot be trusted to use this technology for non-military purposes, even though they have declared their interest to be for purely peaceful purposes and even though some of the developed countries actually do have nuclear weapons. In short, the potential spread of nuclear technology in the Middle East stands to aggravate all aspects of North–South tension and trigger fierce debate as plans for the simultaneous promotion and control of this technology are considered and discussed.

These observations relate directly to several of the Arab states now considering or even planning nuclear power plants, especially those in North Africa. Their official and stated position is that their interest is for peaceful purposes, and they continue to take the lead on diplomatic exercises that highlight the goal of a WMDFZ or NWFZ. Without questioning the good faith of these positions, the spread of nuclear technology will still affect regional security dynamics because of its inherent duality, its political prestige, and the demonstrated influence that nuclear capabilities can have, even without acknowledgement or proof of a weapons capability. The cases of Israel and Iran, and regional and international reactions to their nuclear programmes, illustrate this point.

Israel's reservations regarding a WMDFZ are based on regional security concerns and perceptions relating primarily to "conventional" threat perceptions. Perceptions of new nuclear threats arising from nuclear energy programmes will likely galvanize Israel's position and increase Israel's reservations. If the Middle East appears to Israel to be an increasingly hostile neighbourhood, then it has even less incentive to actively pursue regional WMD disarmament according to the logic of national security planning that prevails in Israel.

Security and energy alternatives

The energy–security link for the purposes of this article refers to the security of energy supplies as well as security in the military (so-called "hard security") sense, in an attempt at a more holistic and realistic approach to security and the sources of conflict, which encompasses both development and defence needs. Success in security and disarmament efforts in the Middle East requires that so-called "soft security"[23] issues such as development and human rights be addressed as these are a frequent and recurring source of insecurity and conflict.

Peace process and Middle East WMDFZ efforts will continue to fail unless they are complemented by a process that addresses the past and the more human, social and psychological elements that undermine security. This entails not only identifying mechanisms for the promotion of sustainable development and human rights, but also agreeing on a forum for the airing of past injustices. These mechanisms can be initiated on the local level, without waiting for an overall solution. One idea to promote peace and development would be to undertake joint economic programmes around sustainable energy.

Any peace process, including the pursuit of a WMD disarmament regime, must be part of an iterative process. Political demands will need to be constantly checked against underlying security concerns, threat perceptions and political and social realities in order to prevent a breakdown. Confidence- and security-building measures must then be developed, tailored to address these specific concerns.

Alternative energy sources

Energy security for the region has a direct bearing on the feasibility of non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The presence of a nuclear power programme complicates non-proliferation efforts as it increases the need for safety and security measures and multiplies the number of proliferation access points, whether to governments (independent of their actual intentions) or to non-state actors. Thus a WMD disarmament regime can only succeed if it accommodates energy needs and related security concerns.

The region's legitimate energy needs can be best addressed through a combination of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy sources, primarily solar and wind. These will not give rise to proliferation or other security concerns. Admittedly, they do not have the political prestige of nuclear technology, but their capacity to address real energy needs could serve to redirect the current interest in nuclear energy and accompanying efforts to achieve nuclear capability. Alternative energy scenarios for the Middle East that propose a combination of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources have been developed and can be built upon.[24]

Nuclear capability and fuel cycle access

A global approach limiting access to sensitive fuel cycle technologies across the board—along the lines of a Comprehensive Fissile Material Treaty,[25] which goes beyond current Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty proposals—could address regional proliferation concerns and engage relevant states in a way that does not aggravate threat perceptions in the Middle East. Recommendation 12 of the WMD Commission, which calls for a verified suspension of sensitive fuel cycle activities, should also be explored in this context.[26] In some cases sensitive fuel cycle activities could be limited and placed under IAEA monitoring as either an interim or a confidence-building measure.

Ratification of the CTBT

Of the 44 states whose ratification is needed for entry into force of the CTBT, four are in the Middle East: Algeria, Egypt, Iran and Israel. Of these, all have signed the CTBT but to date only Algeria has ratified it. Egypt has issued official statements linking its ratification to the nuclear policies of Israel.[27] Egypt's position could relax if it were reassured that regional non-proliferation concerns and disarmament objectives are being pursued in a context that involves Israel and is geared toward disarmament, and if Israel would take the first step of ratifying the CTBT.

Israel participates very actively in CTBT work. On the matter of ratification of the treaty, however, Israel continues to express reservations over the readiness of the verification regime and over Israel's "sovereign equality" status in the treaty's policy-making organs (referring to the geographical groupings of states for the purposes of election to policy-making organs and, presumably, the unlikelihood of Israel being chosen as a representative state of the Middle East and South Asia region).[28]

Israel's verification concerns reflect a belief that a foolproof verification system is a precondition for ratification, a position that is impossible to satisfy, has not prevented the development of verification systems in the past, and ignores the reality that even a less than perfect verification system can be a better guarantor of security than no verification system.

Israel has much to gain and risks little by ratifying the CTBT. It is assumed—and even rumoured—that Israel's primary reason for not ratifying the CTBT is its close relationship with the United States, which has actively rejected ratification of the treaty. However, ratification would in fact—and particularly in light of its relations with the United States—enhance Israel's standing as a responsible

state worthy of "sovereign equality", and would reassure the international community and its neighbours that Israel supports nuclear disarmament. As the only country in the region and one of the very few in the world not party to the NPT, and precisely because of its policy of nuclear ambiguity, Israel is in a unique position with respect to the value of CTBT ratification and the message this act would send to the region and the world. If Israel were to ratify the CTBT it would then be harder for Egypt to resist ratification, and if Egypt were to follow suit, Iran would remain the only country in the region that has not ratified the treaty. Ratification by Iran would go some way toward demonstrating the peaceful intentions of its controversial nuclear programme.

Israel is in a unique position with respect to the value of CTBT ratification and the message this act would send to the region and the world.

No first use of WMD

Unilateral commitments to no first use (NFU) of WMD by the states of the region, based essentially on their current stated policies and relevant treaty membership, would not entail significant risk or require significant departures from current policy, and these commitments could pave the way for a regional no first use of WMD agreement, and a first step toward a WMDFZ.[29] Despite the concerns and unconfirmed reports regarding the nuclear capabilities and ambitions of some states, none of the Arab states is currently known to have a nuclear weapons programme and all are members of the NPT, which would prohibit their developing or acquiring nuclear weapons. Therefore a nuclear NFU pledge would basically be a mere formality.

With respect to biological weapons, the BTWC prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention of these weapons and "there is no doubt among the … states parties to the BTWC that any use of biological or toxin weapons in armed conflict or for hostile purposes would be a breach of the convention".[30] According to international law, states that have signed but not yet ratified a treaty are legally prohibited from taking action that would violate the affirmative provisions of the treaty. Thus the states that have signed but not yet ratified the BTWC would be legally prohibited from using biological weapons; those states that have neither signed nor ratified do not have biological weapons programmes. Iran is party to the BTWC, the NPT and the CWC, and has argued before the International Court of Justice that the existing body of international law indicates a prohibition on the use of nuclear weapons.[31] Thus it should have no legally based objection to a pledge of no first use.

The main obstacles to pledges across the region covering all WMD are therefore the chemical weapons-related reservations of several Arab states and the nuclear policy of Israel, which are interrelated: several Arab states and the Arab League as a group are on the record as linking their refusal to join the CWC with Israel's refusal to join the NPT.[32] However, Israel's stated policy that it "will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East", taken at face value, is essentially a no first use policy. If all states in the region were to make NFU pledges relating to all WMD in parallel, their arguments regarding one another's WMD capabilities would nullify each other.

Conclusions

Understanding the energy–security link in the Middle East is crucial for progress toward a WMDFZ. Further nuclearization of the Middle East—including the development of nuclear energy programmes—is likely to prevent progress toward a WMDFZ, particularly in light of the controversy and sensitivity regarding the question of access to all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle. The risk of nuclear proliferation inherent in any nuclear programme should be perceived as a matter of physical capability, complicated by the status associated with nuclear capability, rather than a question of trust. Informed domestic debate about real energy needs and security concerns can reveal alternatives.

The nuclear era is a relatively recent phenomenon in the context of the history of the Middle East, where the three cultures of Arabs, Jews and Persians have interacted and coexisted for centuries. For the same reason, the region has the potential to overcome and outlive the dangers and threats created by the nuclear era. This will require progress on regional peace and security that takes into account human and social elements, as well as WMD disarmament, and that begins with active efforts to de-escalate nuclear tension. Further analyses could explore the most logical order or sequencing of these and other efforts. For the present, any of the proposed elements of progress might be pursued independently, yet in parallel, with a view to identifying political openings and flexibility, and repeatedly reassessing the feasibility of these elements and others that stand to contribute to the goal of regional peace and security and a WMDFZ.

The relevance of both the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and WMD proliferation to regional security suggests an additional possible measure of political and symbolic value. The WMD threat is not a priority issue between Palestinians and Israelis, but the conflict between them is often cited, rightly or wrongly, as an obstacle to broader regional security, including arms control and disarmament. Today's Palestinian leaders could issue a decree stating that a future Palestinian state renounces all WMD and will join all WMD-related treaties. As a practical matter, such a decree would be largely symbolic, given the absence of Palestinian WMD programmes, but as a political gesture it would make a direct link between the peace process and WMD disarmament, and it would help set the tone and political approach needed for progress on both issues.

Notes

1. Shimon Yiftah, 1976, *The Nuclear Age in the Middle East* [in Hebrew], Tel Aviv, Am Oved Publishers.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. For the purposes of this article, the Middle East is considered as including Iran, Israel, and the members of the League of Arab States, i.e. Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine (representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization were recognized in 1976), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (although Comoros, Somalia and Sudan are not generally considered to be within the Middle East for the purposes of NWFZ discussions).
4. UN General Assembly resolution 3263 (XXIX), 9 December 1974.
5. Alan Dowty, 2001, "Making 'No First Use' Work: Bring All WMD Inside the Tent", *The Nonproliferation Review,* vol. 8, no. 1, spring, pp. 79–85.
6. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Letter dated 19 April 1990, UN document CD/989, 20 April 1990.
7. See, for example, UN Security Council resolution 687 (1991), 3 April 1991.
8. Resolution on the Middle East, in 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, *Final Document: Part I,* UN document NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), Annex; 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, *Final Document: Volume I, Part I,* UN document NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II).
9. This is the most recent statement of Israel's position: "Israel remains committed to a vision of the Middle East developing into a zone free of Chemical, Biological and Nuclear weapons as well as ballistic missiles. Yet we are also realistic enough to know that in the current realities of the Middle East, this noble vision is not going to materialize any time soon." Mr Meir Itzchaki, Representative of Israel to the Conference on Disarmament, "The Establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East: Explanation of Vote", Geneva, 9 October 2007.
10. Michael Barletta and Erik Jorgensen, 1998, *Weapons of Mass Destruction Capabilities in the Middle East,* Center for Nonproliferation Studies, at <cns.miis.edu/research/wmdme/capable.htm>.
11. Barletta and Jorgensen, op. cit.
12. "Sarkozy Pushes for Nuclear Energy in MidEast", *Washington Post,* 20 January 2008.
13. Ibid.
14. "BAE Confirms £5bn Eurofighter Sale to Saudi Arabia", *The Times,* 19 August 2006.
15. The United States' seemingly conflicted position on Arab states' acquisition of civil nuclear technology also deserves mention, though further analysis is beyond the scope of this article.
16. Chairman's Working Paper, Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, UN document NPT/CONF.2010/PC.I/WP.78, 11 May 2007, paragraph 40.

See also Statement by HE Ambassador Norma Golcochea Estenoz (Cuba) on behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference, 30 April 2007.

17. William J. Broad and David E. Sanger, "Fearing Iran, Arab States Seek Nuclear Power", *International Herald Tribune,* 15 April 2007, at <www.iht.com/articles/2007/04/15/news/nuke.php>.
18. GlobalSecurity.org, *Israel Special Weapons Guide: Nuclear Weapons Stockpile,* at <www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/israel/nuke-stockpile.htm>.
19. This view is reflected in NPT review process documents and the annual General Assembly resolution "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" (sponsored by a number of Arab States), as well as annual requests for inclusion of an item on "Israeli Nuclear Capabilities and Threat" in the IAEA's General Conference agenda. See, for example, UN General Assembly resolution 62/56, 5 December 2007, UN document A/RES/62/56, 15 January 2008; IAEA document GC(51)/1/Add.1, 16 July 2007, and responses (documents GC(51)/25, 14 September 2007; GC(51)/32, 20 September 2007).
20. The Arab Peace Initiative is a proposal endorsed by the Arab League, which offers peace and normalization of relations with Israel through a process of negotiation that addresses core outstanding issues such as Palestinian refugees' right of return and the status of Jerusalem. Israel has not accepted the offer to negotiate regional peace through this initiative because of disagreement over these core issues, although they are points of negotiation, not preconditions.
21. Strategic depth refers to the availability of territorial space to wage offensive and defensive operations.
22. Rebecca Johnson, 2007, "Rethinking Security Interests for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East", *Disarmament Diplomacy* 86, autumn, at <www.acronym.org.uk/dd/dd86/86nwfzme.htm>.
23. The terms "hard security" and "soft security" are used to distinguish between military security and underlying human needs that lead to insecurity, such as development, education and health. The terminology is problematic because the separation of these concepts, with the resulting separation of expertise and tendency to prioritize hard over soft security, undermines efforts and capacities to address root causes of all instability and conflict. The concept of "human security" seeks to address this link between defence and human needs.
24. Greenpeace, 2007, *Energy [R]evolution - A Pathway to a Sustainable Clean Energy Future for the Middle East,* at <www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/mediterranean/reports/energy-r-evolution-a-pathwa.pdf>. See also Greenpeace, 2007, *Egypt and the Great Energy Debate,* at <www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/mediterranean/reports/egypt-and-the-great-energy-deb.pdf>.
25. Felicity Hill, 2006, *Time for a Comprehensive Fissile Material Treaty,* Greenpeace International, at <www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/comprehensive-fissile-material.pdf>.
26. Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, 2006, *Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms,* at <www.wmdcommission.org>, recommendation 12.
27. Minister Plenipotentiary Amr Aboul, Deputy Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, Statement by Egypt at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, New York, 23 September 2005.
28. State of Israel, Statement by Dr Itshak Lederman, Senior Director for CTBT Affairs and Special Projects, at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Vienna, 18 September 2007.
29. This proposal and the analysis that follows draw on Eitan Barak, "Regional No First Use Treaty: First Step in the Right Direction?" presented at a Greenpeace seminar, Tel Aviv, Israel, 15 February 2007, and on a forthcoming paper by Eitan Barak and Merav Datan.
30. Jez Littlewood, 2004, "Strengthening the Role of the BTWC and CWC", in *Building a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East: Global Non-Proliferation Regimes and Regional Experiences,* Geneva, UNIDIR and League of Arab States, p. 26.
31. Note Verbale dated 19 June 1995 from the Embassy of the lslamic Republic of Iran, together with Written Statement of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, International Court of Justice, Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, at <www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/95/8678.pdf>.
32. "Arab League Reiterates Rejection of Chemical Arms Ban Treaty", *Xinhua General Overseas News Service,* 8 March 1993, cited in Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2007, *Israel Chemical Chronology, 1948–2003,* at <www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/Israel/Chemical/3664.html>.

The internationalization of the nuclear fuel cycle: an Arab perspective

Mohamed I. Shaker

As a result of economic development needs, particularly the need for energy in the developing world and concerns over the use of fossils fuels and climate change, there is a resurgent interest in civil nuclear energy. In addition, renewed interest in nuclear weapons in some regions highlights global concerns about managing the nuclear fuel cycle in a more robust manner to stem potential proliferation. Increased use of nuclear fuel, new nuclear energy generators and nascent industries in countries not hitherto producers of nuclear energy will change the way in which nuclear fuel cycles will need to be managed. Energy production and safe, secure, proliferation-resistant fuel cycle management will be fundamental to sustainable economic development in the near future. Multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle could be seen as a way to support the nuclear non-proliferation regime, combining greater international or regional oversight with economies of scale to meet increasing energy demands.

The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Dr Mohamed ElBaradei, first revived interest in the idea of an international nuclear fuel cycle in 2003, in an article he wrote for *The Economist*.[1] ElBaradei identified three areas of vital importance: how to guarantee the supply of fuel for nuclear-generated electricity; how to set up one or more international repositories for spent nuclear fuel; and how to bring about multilateral oversight over those parts of the front end of the nuclear fuel cycle that are of proliferation concern. (See Figure 1 for an overview of the nuclear fuel cycle.)

The internationalization of the fuel cycle is not a new idea. The first feasibility study on a regional nuclear fuel cycle was the Regional Nuclear Fuel Cycle Centres Study of 1975–1977, which emphasized the back end of the cycle, specifically, reprocessing and plutonium containment. The second was the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation study of 1977–1980, which touched upon the possibility of regional fuel cycle facilities and prospects for multilateral cooperation on plutonium storage.[2] Diminishing concerns over the likelihood of a "plutonium economy", the disinclination of some countries to give up national control over reprocessing, and a general lack of political will, however, meant that neither study resulted in further pursuit of multilateral approaches.

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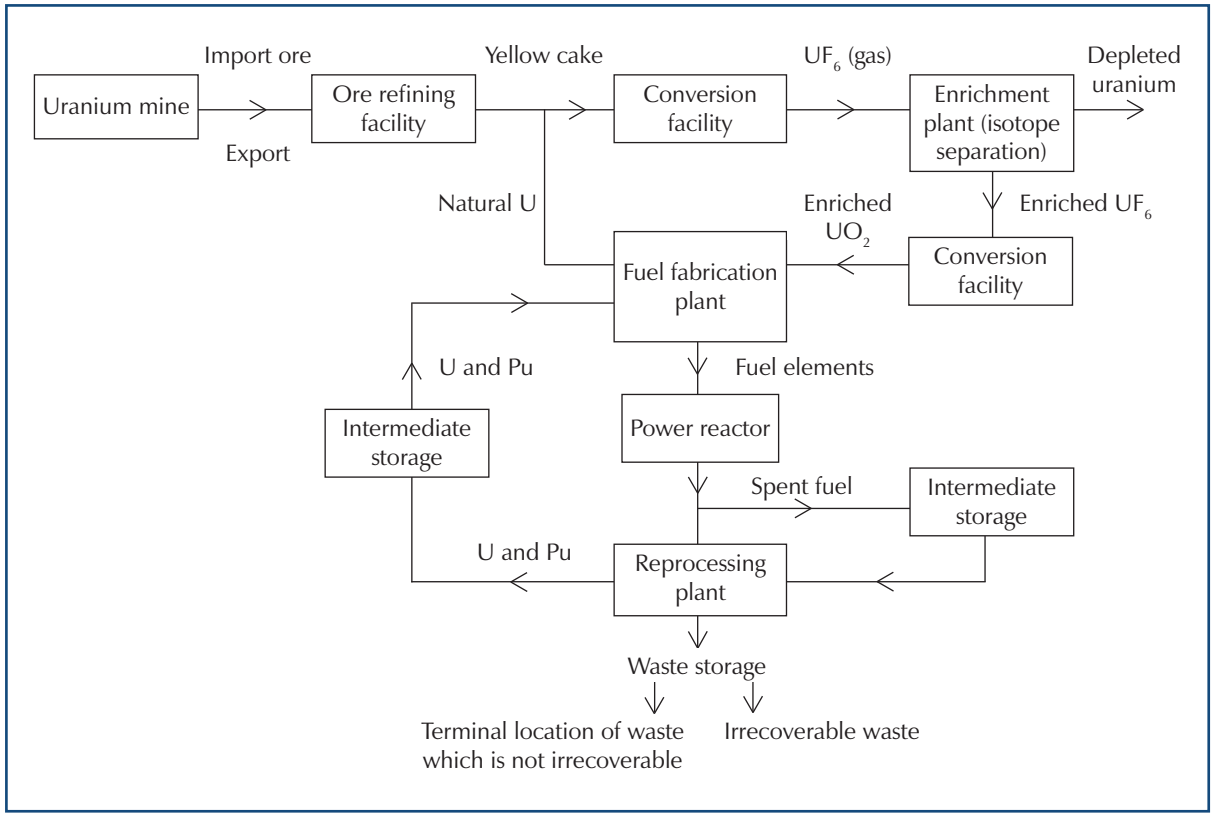
Figure 1. The nuclear fuel cycle



Source: Based upon Figure 6, p. 17 of IAEA, 1981, *IAEA Safeguards: An Introduction,* Vienna, document IAEA/SG/INF/3.

In 1982, the IAEA Expert Group on International Plutonium Storage examined the prospects for IAEA-supervised management, storage and disposition of spent nuclear fuel, but again no consensus was reached as states were unwilling to renounce sovereign control over nuclear technology and fuel. The same fate met studies undertaken by the IAEA Committee on Assurances of Supply in the 1980s, which went into abeyance in 1987. The UN Conference for the Promotion of International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy in 1987 also failed to reach an agreement on a set of principles of international cooperation because of the reluctance of the major supplier states to concede benefits and assurances to user states.

Recent serious challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the civilian nuclear industry's apparent preparation for worldwide expansion, have led the questions of assurances of non-proliferation and of supply and services to regain prominence. Perhaps this time the topic may gain more momentum.

The 2005 study undertaken by an IAEA Expert Group on Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle focused on a number of so-called sensitive aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle, i.e. uranium enrichment and spent fuel storage, reprocessing and disposal. As noted by the Expert Group, the "rapidly growing global demand for electricity, the uncertainty of supply and price of natural gas, soaring prices for oil, concerns about air pollution and the immense challenge of lowering greenhouse gas emissions, are all forcing a fresh look at nuclear power".[3] Moreover, confidence in the safety of nuclear power plants is increasing as the technical and organizational basis of nuclear safety improves. The prospect of new nuclear power stations on a large scale is very real. An increasing number of states are considering developing their own nuclear facilities and nuclear know-how and seeking

assurances of supply in materials, services and technologies. There are 29 reactors being constructed in 12 developing and developed countries in addition to 4 units being planned in China alone. Some go so far as to say that there is a nuclear power renaissance.

The Arab world, and particularly the Middle East, is a region looking to nuclear energy to meet its growing energy and desalination needs. Arab interest has also partly been triggered by the major breakthrough in the nuclear field achieved by Iran. However, as the region's security and arms control discussions are stalled, many are concerned about nuclear proliferation risks such as diversion, clandestine parallel programmes, break-out and the spread of nuclear technology throughout the region. Arab states do not want to be left trying to catch up in this drive toward new sources of energy and therefore should carefully consider the potential benefits of proliferation-resistant, multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle.

An Arab nuclear fuel cycle

The Arab Atomic Energy Agency is an Arab scientific organization, based in Tunisia, concerned with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, its development and technological applications. It is a subsidiary of the Arab League, but it has an independent identity. Its main role is to coordinate among Arab states, and to assist in research activities, human resources development, and technical and scientific information. It also seeks to coordinate scientific and technical activities with concerned regional and international organizations. It aims to establish unified regulations for radiological protection and the safe handling of radioactive materials; to support and protect patents in the peaceful uses of atomic energy; and to encourage and assist Arab scientists in the field of nuclear sciences and technologies to attend relevant conferences.[4]

Until now, the Agency has generally been dormant. However, decisions made at the March 2007 Arab Summit in Riyadh could prove a turning-point. One of the decisions was to undertake joint Arab cooperation activities for the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and related technology and to carry out a practical programme including "joint ventures for the development of nuclear technology applications in various developmental fields especially energy, water, medicine, agriculture and industry". The Secretary General of the League of Arab States was requested, with the participation of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, to form groups of experts and specialists to consider ways and means for such cooperation to take place within an integrated Arab framework.[5]

The Summit also adopted a resolution inviting Arab countries to use or expand the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes for all fields of sustainable development, with due consideration to the diversity of their needs and to the strict observation of the provisions of all international treaties, conventions and regulations that they have signed.[6] Among the executive steps to be taken, the Summit provided support to the Arab Atomic Energy Agency as the organ for joint Arab action in this field and called upon Arab countries that had not yet joined the Agency to do so without delay. The Summit requested the agency to develop an Arab strategy for the mastering of nuclear sciences and technology for peaceful purposes until 2020.[7] The Riyadh Declaration and Decisions struck a balance between peaceful nuclear ambitions and the reaffirmation of "the importance of clearing the region from all weapons of mass destruction [WMD], away from double-standards and selectiveness and warn against launching a dangerous and devastating nuclear arms race in the area".[8]

It was also decided at the Summit to suspend the work of the Technical Committee on the preparation of a draft treaty on the establishment of a WMD-free and especially nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (a committee that was established at the initiative of Arab countries in 1994), until the Arab policies that have been followed during past decades are assessed in the light of current international conditions. The Technical Committee has drafted a treaty establishing a WMD-free zone

in the Middle East; however, the Arab League has not made the text available as it has not yet been finally approved by the League, and other relevant parties outside the framework in which the draft was negotiated have not yet been approached.

The suspension of the work of the Technical Committee reflects frustration on the part of the Arab states with the lack of implementation of the Middle East resolution of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was sponsored by the three depository governments (the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States) in conjunction with the three decisions made at the conference (including the decision on the indefinite extension of the NPT). The consensus attained with regard to the latter in particular would not have been possible without the Middle East resolution.

Nonetheless, the League decided at the Riyadh Summit to convene an extraordinary session of the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States, to be preceded by a meeting of senior officials from Arab countries, to consider and assess Arab efforts to free the Middle East from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (although no date has been set for this meeting).[9] The clear message of the Riyadh Summit is that the Arab states would prefer to develop peaceful nuclear activities in a Middle East completely free of WMD and in conformity with all the relevant international instruments of which they are members. There would be no stability or security in the region in the presence of any nuclear-weapon capability.

The clear message of the Riyadh Summit is that the Arab states would prefer to develop peaceful nuclear activities in a Middle East completely free of WMD.

Could the Riyadh call for joint Arab action in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy lead to a regional or Arab nuclear fuel cycle, a cycle that would foster greater coordination and cooperation and at the same time ensure regional control that could be effectively verified internationally? It is clear that Arabs have the expertise, the scientists, uranium ore deposits, research reactors, fuel fabrication skills (on a small scale), accelerators and other nuclear-related laboratories, including hot cell laboratories, for such an initiative. However, in the present international context and given the policies of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Arab states would face difficulties in investing, individually or collectively, in the sensitive activities of uranium enrichment, fuel reprocessing or heavy water production. Although enrichment activities for peaceful purposes are permitted under the NPT, and despite the fact that numerous non-nuclear-weapon states parties to the NPT (including Brazil, Germany, the Netherlands and most recently Japan) are active in enrichment, international opposition to fuel cycle activities in Iran, Iraq and Libya could lead one to believe that an Arab enrichment plant would not be tolerated, regardless of its location.

Potential Arab approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle

The nuclear fuel cycle involves a number of phases and will require many sensitive issues to be addressed for any internationalization or regionalization[10] to be achieved.[11]

Gradual build-up of a nuclear fuel cycle

The IAEA and its expert group has tended to focus on the so-called sensitive parts of the nuclear fuel cycle, namely uranium enrichment, reprocessing of spent fuel, and spent fuel disposal and storage. These are definitely important stages in the nuclear fuel cycle from the point of view of concerns regarding non-proliferation and supply, but a multilateral arrangement involving other stages of the process, for example uranium ore supply, fuel fabrication and even the supply of spare parts to nuclear power plants, could also be of great interest. As internationalization of the nuclear fuel cycle can only proceed in phases, early successes could be an incentive to address more sensitive stages of the process

and to involve more actors. And early successes would be more likely if the less sensitive stages of the cycle were addressed first. These could build trust and pave the way for discussions on cooperation regarding more sensitive aspects. In the Arab region, building up a regional nuclear fuel cycle would be expected to be gradual due to the diversity of the ongoing nuclear projects in the region.

A supply assurance mechanism

An assured supply mechanism is needed to address the possible consequences of interruptions in the supply of nuclear fuel. These vulnerabilities create incentives for building national enrichment and reprocessing capabilities. Such a mechanism would be a back-up measure to the operation of the commercial market in order to assure supply in instances of interruption for political reasons. It would neither be a substitute for the existing commercial market nor would it deal with disruption of supply due to commercial, technical or other non-political reasons.

The existing proposals deal with assurance of supply in different but complementary ways. Some of the proposals focus on assuring the supply of natural uranium and low-enriched uranium (LEU) stocks, and others focus on assurances of the supply of the nuclear fuel itself.[12] The IAEA Expert Group is of the view that there is a complementary need for greater transparency in uranium markets, and that assured access to a broader range of nuclear reactor technologies would be important to operators and countries seeking to reduce the risk of interruptions on political grounds.

The possible modalities of assuring supply could include a virtual reserve of natural uranium and LEU based on binding contractual agreements for the supply of such material, and binding commitments to fuel fabrication services. A virtual reserve is not a separate physical store, but relies on suppliers' assurances. The alternative is for an actual, physical bank of natural uranium or LEU to be established. The Expert Group found this impractical for technical and economic reasons, given the different types of reactor designs and variants of nuclear fuel required for them.

If Arab countries were satisfied that a reliable mechanism was in place, then it would relieve them from looking for alternatives—either seeking supplies from outside the region or developing national capacities—and thus minimize proliferation risks. As a number of Arab countries (e.g. Algeria and Egypt) have developed the technology of fuel fabrication, they may be more interested in assuring the supply of enriched uranium rather than the supply of ready-made fuel. A virtual reserve of Arab-fabricated fuel could then be made available for the parties to a regional nuclear fuel cycle.

Conditions governing eligibility for assurance mechanisms

Membership of any supply assurance mechanism, whether regional or international, would require a non-proliferation undertaking—the application of measures to guard against the diversion of material for non-peaceful purposes. Any assurance mechanism would have to be available to all member states of the accepted mechanism in a non-discriminatory manner (in accordance with the IAEA's Statute). For any mechanism, whether or not it involves the IAEA, certain release criteria would need to be defined and agreed upon. Another aspect requiring further assessment is how best to ensure that the application of the release mechanism is demonstrably non-political, and based on objective criteria.

Possible role of the IAEA

In addition to that of the IAEA, there have been numerous other proposals concerning the fuel cycle.[13] Many of these envisage a role for the IAEA, ranging from IAEA administration or ownership of natural uranium or LEU stocks to its administration of virtual stocks and associated parallel fuel fabrication

commitments. The IAEA's Statute allows it to establish its own stocks of nuclear fuel purchased from or donated by member states for supply to another member state against charges determined by the IAEA Board; to facilitate the supply of nuclear fuel from one member state to another; and also to facilitate the provision of enrichment and fuel fabrication services by one member state to another or to the IAEA. In this respect, a number of new legal arrangements would be required, especially if the IAEA were to establish an actual bank of nuclear fuel.

However, many of these proposals do not guarantee supply in case of its interception for political reasons. In light of this limitation, I will focus particularly on the IAEA's potential role of a guarantor and coordinator of supply as it is, in my judgement, the best fit with the energy and security needs of the Middle East region.

In 2004, the United Nations High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change urged:

> that negotiations be engaged without delay and carried forward to an early conclusion on an arrangement, based on the existing provisions of articles III and IX of the IAEA statute, which would enable IAEA to act as a guarantor for the supply of fissile material to civilian nuclear users. Such an arrangement would need to put the Agency in a position to meet, through suppliers it authorized, demands for nuclear fuel supplies of low enriched uranium and for the reprocessing of spent fuel at market rates and to provide a guarantee of uninterrupted supply of these services, as long as there was no breach of safeguard or inspection procedures at the facilities in question.[14]

The IAEA is favoured by many as a guarantor because of its membership, which is much broader than that of a commercial consortium. Furthermore, the IAEA's track record, reputation, credibility and relevant experience justify this role. However, the composition of the Board of Governors must also be considered; it is the most advanced countries in nuclear energy (and the major supplier countries) that have designated seats on the Board,[15] and they might not necessarily be in favour of certain potential recipient states. In this case the solution might be to democratize and universalize the export control regimes, especially the NSG, so that suppliers and users can consult about the guidelines to be adopted for the export of nuclear equipment and material. These guidelines are at present usually adopted without consultation with user states.

The NSG's current practices and supplier countries' domination of the IAEA Board may invite Arab countries to ponder whether the Arab Atomic Energy Agency could play the role of a guarantor of supply of fuel in a regional context. However, as the Agency is mainly involved in encouraging research in the basic sciences, it would have to be restructured to be able to undertake this new role.

The role of the nuclear industry

Consultations would be useful with the nuclear industry, particularly in the framework under which the nuclear industry would provide the required goods and services in support of an assurance of supply mechanism without negative effects on the diversity and stability of the existing commercial market in nuclear fuels.

Ensuring parity and non-proliferation

A supply assurance mechanism must be structured in a manner that would not result in a real or perceived division between nuclear technology haves and have-nots, and that would not undermine existing multilateral, treaty-based nuclear non-proliferation norms or state rights and sovereignty.

Article IV of the NPT (cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy) is particularly pertinent to this question.

The IAEA Expert Group was of the view that multilateral options for the nuclear fuel cycle could follow three patterns:

Type I: Assurances of services not involving ownership of facilities

- Suppliers provide additional assurances of supply
- International consortium of governments broadens assurances
- IAEA-related arrangements provides even broader assurances

Type II: Conversion of existing national facilities into multinational facilities

Type III: Construction of new facilities

Uranium enrichment

The IAEA Expert Group report expects that current suppliers could provide additional assurances of supply. An international consortium of governments could even step in to guarantee access to enrichment services, the suppliers being simply executive agents. The arrangement would be a kind of "intergovernmental fuel bank".

In a variation on this option, the IAEA would function as a kind of guarantor of supply to states in good standing. The IAEA might either hold title to the material to be supplied or, more likely, act as facilitator. In effect, the IAEA would be establishing a mechanism only to be activated in instances when a normal supply contract had broken down for political reasons.

As for the creation of a joint facility, the IAEA Expert Group took note of two precedents, the Anglo–Dutch–German company Urenco and the French EURODIF. Urenco has a governmental joint committee but is a commercial-industrial venture, and shows that the multinational or international concept can work successfully. EURODIF provides a different model as it enriches uranium in only one country, France, and provides enriched uranium to its co-financing international partners, thus restricting proliferation risks. The partners of EURODIF are France, Belgium, Italy and Spain (Iran was once a partner, but withdrew when its programme stumbled). Unlike Urenco, EURODIF is known never to have been a manufacturer of enrichment equipment.

Would it be possible to enlarge the two entities to accommodate more partners in the future? Admitting Iran as a partner in EURODIF indicates open-mindedness with regard to admitting countries from other continents. Could Arab countries benefit from this precedent, especially considering that in the present international context, they may be pressured to bypass enrichment in any regional arrangement (without giving up the right that is permitted under the NPT)?

National facilities for enriching uranium exist in other parts of the world (in countries such as Brazil and Japan). Such national uranium enrichment facilities could one day be converted to multinational facilities that would provide services, for example, to regional neighbours, and perhaps even beyond.

Reprocessing spent nuclear fuel

The IAEA Expert Group noted that present capacities to reprocess spent fuel for light water reactors and those under construction will provide sufficient reprocessing capacity globally for all expected demand for plutonium-recycled fuel over the next two decades. Currently all reprocessing plants are

essentially state-owned; in a multilateral approach, the IAEA could participate in the supervision of an international consortium for reprocessing services.

Converting a national facility to international ownership and management would involve the creation of a new international competitor in the reprocessing market. It would have the advantage of bringing together international expertise, but it would include a non-proliferation disadvantage related to the dissemination of know-how and the return of the separated plutonium; possession of plutonium would be of concern, because it can be readily used in the making of a nuclear device. Moreover, all except two of the existing facilities are in either nuclear-weapon states or non-NPT states (the two other facilities are in Japan). For these to be converted to international entities, appropriate safeguards would have to be ensured.

As for the construction of new joint facilities, the IAEA expert group believes that they will not be needed for a long time. In any case, any Arab nuclear fuel cycle is expected to bypass reprocessing (without giving up that right to it), given current international circumstances. The NSG has imposed a firm ban on the export of equipment related to reprocessing. The region would therefore have to rely on existing, foreign national facilities or internationally converted entities. The Arab countries may find Japan (a heavy oil importer) a reliable partner.

Spent fuel disposal and storage

There is currently no international market for spent fuel storage or disposal services, except for the readiness of the Russian Federation to receive Russian-supplied fuel and with a possible offer to do so for other spent fuel. These activities are therefore candidates for the development of multilateral approaches, primarily at the regional level. The IAEA is encouraged to continue its investigations.

The issue is of great sensitivity. Many domestic political and public acceptance issues will arise in connection with the import of nuclear materials to an existing repository. Public acceptance is already of crucial importance for setting up national repositories; it will be of even greater importance for multinational repository projects with nuclear waste and spent fuel coming from several countries. There was uproar in the Egyptian People's Assembly (parliament) for even contemplating a proposition from Austria to send the potential waste of its aborted single reactor to Egypt. In light of this experience, it is far-fetched to imagine an Arab country agreeing to host a regional repository in the framework of an Arab nuclear fuel cycle.

Conclusion

Internationalization of the nuclear fuel cycle can take place if the political will exists, under conditions of non-proliferation and smooth cooperation. It must be a gradual process with regard to the different stages of the fuel cycle. So far, most of the initiatives and proposals put forward are concerned with the supply mechanism, none has dwelt upon the merits of a multinational or regional nuclear fuel cycle as suggested by the IAEA Director General.

No supplier country alone should be able, for political reasons, to hamper or interrupt a cooperative venture in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The IAEA is well placed to encourage a potential regional nuclear fuel cycle in the Arab region. The only drawback is that most states advanced in nuclear technology, who are also members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, hold designated seats on the IAEA Board of Governors and thus can block the supply of nuclear material and equipment. A first step to reduce the influence of these states would be to open up the NSG and institutionalize dialogue among all interested states. At the moment, user states are often confronted with decisions made in their absence, which do not take their needs and concerns into consideration.

No supplier country alone should be able, for political reasons, to hamper or interrupt a cooperative venture in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Our objective should be to protect the user state that has lived up to its international arms control commitments and obligations, and to allow it to continue unhindered in its peaceful nuclear activities. Every individual state participating in an international or regional nuclear fuel cycle should feel that it has a say in the operation of such an enterprise. This participatory aspect is just as important as the guarantee of supply.

The formation of regional nuclear fuel cycles would challenge the dominance and current structure of the NSG. After Riyadh, are we going to witness the emergence of an Arab Euratom, which could be a prelude to an Arab Union, following the path that Europe has travelled since 1957? The experiences of the Tlatelolco Treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the Argentine–Brazilian Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABAAC) could also be instructive in strengthening the Arab Atomic Energy Agency for such a pivotal role. The individual Arab countries' experience in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy ought to be widely exchanged. The new spirit of Riyadh should encourage this to happen.

Notes

1. Mohamed ElBaradei, "Towards a Safer World", *The Economist,* 16 October 2003.
2. *Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle: Expert Group Report,* IAEA document INFCIRC/640, 22 February 2005.
3. *Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle: Expert Group Report,* op. cit., Executive Summary, paragraph 3.
4. For more information, see the Arab Atomic Energy Agency's web site, at <www.aaea.org.tn>.
5. League of Arab States, Development of a Joint Program for the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy, resolution S.384–OS19, 29 March 2007, unofficial translation.
6. League of Arab States, Development of Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy in Member States, resolution S.383–OS19, 29 March 2007.
7. Ibid.
8. League of Arab States, Riyadh Declaration, 29 March 2007, unofficial translation.
9. League of Arab States, Defining a Unified Arab Position on Practical Measures to be Taken to Free the Middle East from Nuclear Weapons, resolution S.382–OS19, 29 March 2007.
10. The IAEA Expert Group was of the view that a distinction should be made between the words "multinational" (implying several actors from different states), "regional" (several actors from neighbouring states) and "international" (actors from different states and international organizations, such as the IAEA). This paper uses the term international or internationalization because it is believed that the term encompasses any group of states or organizations and any or all parts of the nuclear fuel cycle. Internationalization, however, does not mean universalization.
11. The following is mainly based on Tariq Rauf, Head, Verification and Security Policy Coordination, IAEA, (unpublished), "New Framework for the Utilization of Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century: Assurances of Supply and Non-proliferation".
12. For a summary of these proposals see the annex to Tariq Rauf, op. cit., as well as Richard J.K. Stratford, Director, Office of Nuclear Energy, Safety and Security, US Department of State, "Future Directions", remarks made at the IAEA Special Event at the General Conference 2006: New Framework for the Utilization of Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century: Assurances of Supply and Non-Proliferation, Vienna, 19–21 September 2006. See also Germany, *Multilateralizing the Nuclear Fuel Cycle: German Proposal,* discussion paper, IAEA document INFCIRC/704, 4 May 2007, a proposal for an enrichment plant under sole IAEA supervision with regard to export controls.
13. These include the 2006 proposals from Presidents Bush and Putin on cooperation in civil nuclear energy; the Reliable Access to Nuclear Fuel proposal from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States; the IAEA Multilateral Nuclear Approaches proposal; the World Nuclear Association's Assuring Security of Supply proposal; Japan's Standby Arrangement proposal; the UK Enrichment Bond proposal; and the Nuclear Threat Initiative's Nuclear Fuel Bank proposal.
14. *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility,* Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, United Nations, 2004, UN document A/59/565, paragraph 130.
15. The Board of Governors has 35 members, of which 13 are designated by the Board itself (these are the members most advanced in nuclear technology), and 22 others are elected by the General Conference (based on geographic representation). See Statute of the IAEA, Article VI, at <www.iaea.org/About/statute_text.html>.

OPEN FORUM

Treaty or code of conduct?

A meeting of experts in electronics, recently held in Geneva, dealt with information and communication technologies and international security. The participants agreed that Internet-based attacks, which occur with an alarming frequency—though still on a relatively small scale—may degenerate into cyberwar, causing widespread devastation. They also agreed that to prevent such a catastrophe from happening, states must work out rules of what is allowed and what is prohibited in cyberspace, and strictly abide by them. They did not agree, however, on the kind of international document that should incorporate such rules: a treaty or a code of conduct.

An international treaty contains legally binding commitments and provides a basis for relevant national legislation. Once registered with the United Nations under Article 102 of the UN Charter, it may be submitted to the International Court of Justice in cases of disputes about the interpretation of its provisions or a breach of an international obligation. However, the treaty negotiating process is usually lengthy and the requirement of ratification may delay its entry into force for many years. Moreover, amending a treaty to render it more effective or to close the gaps that have become apparent in the course of its operation may encounter political, legal or bureaucratic obstacles, which are difficult to overcome.

A code of conduct appears easier to reach, because it can be agreed upon at a lower governmental level than a treaty, and because it may not require ratification. For the same reason it is easier to amend or to denounce. A code of conduct is not legally binding. It cannot use the services of the International Court of Justice.

I should like to suggest another approach, namely, the conclusion of a framework agreement. In such an agreement, a legally binding instrument, the "framework" would set out the objectives pursued without, however, specifying the obligations necessary to meet them. Instead, through a mechanism included in the agreement, provision would be made for the adoption of protocols. Each protocol would contain a concrete, though not legally binding, undertaking, which the parties would be expected, but not obliged, to assume. A similarly flexible procedure was used in the case of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Five protocols to this convention have already been concluded. My suggestion, if followed, would combine the virtues of a treaty with those of a code of conduct.

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UNIDIR FOCUS

NEW PUBLICATION

The Security Needs Assessment Protocol: Improving Operational Effectiveness through Community Security

By improving the design of field-level activities that pertain to community security, UNIDIR's Security Needs Assessment Protocol (SNAP) project is working to improve operational effectiveness—meaning the impact and sustainable success of any undertaking designed to effect social change in a community. The SNAP project aims to create a systematic and rapid means of assessing local security problems as they are understood by community members themselves. This protocol can be applied by interested agencies to conduct cooperative cultural research in the community, providing knowledge that can be used to better align resources with local needs.

This report documents how the agendas of agencies working in the humanitarian, development and security domains are converging on the effort to make operations more effective. A range of operational agencies have come to identify community security as a key element for achieving effectiveness.

A crucial challenge now facing these agencies is how to understand community security from the vantage point of community members themselves and how to use this knowledge to enable the design and planning of culturally attuned operations. Agencies currently lack the tools to achieve this, while the vast differences between communities mean that efforts to apply lessons learned and best practices can prove counterproductive.

Cooperative cultural research can surmount this problem, but it appears to have not yet been applied to this challenge. The report details some of the constraints under which research and project design must operate in the UN system, and how SNAP could help implementing agencies achieve greater operational effectiveness within such constraints.

In each issue of *Disarmament Forum*, UNIDIR Focus highlights one activity of the Institute, outlining the project's methodology, recent research developments or its outcomes. UNIDIR Focus also describes a new UNIDIR publication. You can find summaries and contact information for all of the Institute's present and past activities, as well as sample chapters of publications and ordering information, online at <www.unidir.org>.

The Security Needs Assessment Protocol: Improving Operational Effectiveness through Community Security

D. Miller and L. Rudnick
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NEW PROJECT

Multinational Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle

Over the next three years, UNIDIR proposes to carry out a detailed study on the political and legal aspects of the various proposals for multinational approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. These include the 3 July 2007 bilateral agreement between the Governments of the Russian Federation and the United States of America; the Reliable Access to Nuclear Fuel proposal from France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States; the IAEA Multilateral Nuclear Approaches (MNA) proposal; the World Nuclear Association's Assuring Security of Supply proposal; Japan's Standby Arrangement proposal; the UK Enrichment Bond proposal; and the NTI Nuclear Fuel Bank proposal.

The study will seek to involve experts from Canada, France, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and other relevant countries, from the International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM), the Independent Group of Scientific Experts (IGSE) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Outputs of the study will include a series of short reports or study papers in English and Russian detailing fundamental political and legal questions connected to these initiatives. Detailed papers by leading scholars linking technical issues with the legal and political possibilities will also form part of the output. The release of these papers will be timed for input into the bilateral coordination mechanism meetings, the Conference on Disarmament, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty meetings and other relevant forums. The project will further produce seminars and workshops and joint publications with other institutes. Outreach work, ensuring awareness and increased uptake by the international community of the proposals developed, will be a significant aspect of the study and will ensure the sustainability and distribution of the proposals made.

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