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Background Guide

General Assembly First Committee



GA1

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Background Guide: General Assembly First Committee.

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LMUN 2020: The Fifth Session.

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Letter from the USG

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Lagos Model United Nations (LMUN) Conference, 2020. This Conference is a great opportunity for deliberation on contemporaneous world issues and self-discovery. The aim of LMUN is to create a platform for delegates to hone and learn skills in leadership, teamwork, research, public speaking, negotiation and diplomacy. It is a time for delegates to put aside personal idiosyncrasies and embrace diverse worldviews, particularly in this era of globalization. It is our hope that delegates have a great MUN experience as they proffer solutions to the issues before them.

This year's staff for the **General Assembly (GA) First Committee** are; **Oloyede Agbolarin** (Under-Secretary General), **Temilola Adetona** (Chair), **Oladunmade Adewunmi** (Vice-Chair), **Ogundare Omobobola** (Researcher) and **Temiloluwa Omoniyi** (Researcher).

Agbolarin is a final year student of the faculty of law, University of Lagos. He was delegate at LMUN 2016, where he won the Outstanding Position Paper Award. He served as a delegate at LMUN 2017 where he was awarded the Distinguished Delegate Award. He won the Honourable mention award at GIMUN 2018. He was also part of the NMUN NY 2019 team that won the Outstanding Delegation Award. In addition to these, he has served in several official capacities, including as Chair of GA3 at LMUN 2019, a researcher for UNICEF at LMUN 2018, Chair of GA3 at GIMUN 2020, and Rapporteur of the IMO at GIMUN 2019. **Temilola** is a final year law student at the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos, with interests in Energy Resources, Taxation and International Law. He was a delegate at the 2018 LMUN Conference, where he received the Outstanding Delegate and Position Paper Awards. **Wunmi** is a final year law student at the University of Lagos. He began his MUN experience with LMUN in 2018 as a delegate, and in 2019 as a researcher. **Omobobola** is a 400-level law student at the University of Lagos, with interests in international law, renewable energy and diplomacy. She was a delegate at LMUN 2019 where he won the Distinguished Delegate award. **Temiloluwa** is a 200-level law student at the University of Lagos with interests in taxation law and human rights. She is passionate about the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and loves MUNs. She was a delegate at the LMUN 2019.

The General Assembly First Committee, one of the GA committees that acts as the representative and deliberative body of the UN, focuses on matters related to disarmament and international security, particularly on guidance for disarmament, regulation of armaments, and maintenance of cooperative arrangements that promote international peace and security. GA1 collaborates with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and several other UN entities on issues related to armament regulation and disarmament initiatives.

The two topics to be deliberated upon are:

- I. Addressing Conflict Situations in Middle East
- II. Achieving Multilateral Consensus Against the Use of Nuclear Weapons

Delegates are reminded that this background guide is not to serve as a replacement for your individual research but as an introduction to the topics being discussed. Delegates are encouraged to conduct their research beyond the background guides and make use of the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography which has been provided for in depth research. In order to prepare for the Conference, each delegate or delegation is to submit a Position Paper on the date communicated after registration and assignment of country and committee, in accordance with the guidelines in the LMUN Position Paper Guide.

Other essential documents which delegates are to download for further Conference preparation are; the LMUN Delegate Prep Guide and the LMUN Rules of Procedure. These documents are available on the LMUN website – www.lmun.ng.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact me at – usggeneralassembly@lmun.ng or the committee at – ga3@lmun.ng.

We look forward to seeing you at the LMUN 2020 Conference!

Oloyede Agbolarin

USG General Assembly, LMUN 2020

Abbreviations

ANWFZ	African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone
ATS	Antarctic Treaty System
AUMF	Authorization for the Use of Military Force
CANWFZ	Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone
CD	Conference on Disarmament
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FMCT	Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICNND	International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JCPoA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LANWFZ	Latin America Nuclear Weapon Free Zone
LNA	Libyan National Army
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NNWS	Non-Nuclear Weapon States
NPDI	Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NWFZ	Nuclear Weapons Free Zone
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
PNE	Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty
PRC	People's Republic of China

SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SEANWFZ	Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SORT	Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty
SPNFZ	South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMOVIC	United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YCHO	Yemen Comprehensive Humanitarian Operations

Committee Overview

Introduction

The General Assembly is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN). It was formed in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations. The General Assembly has all 193 Member States of the United Nations as members of the committee and it is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It exercises deliberative, supervisory, financial, and elective functions relating to any matter within the scope of the Charter of the United Nations.¹ The General Assembly is currently presided over by Tijjani Muhammad-Bande and is currently in its seventy-fourth session which was opened on 17 September 2019.

The General Assembly First Committee, also known as the Disarmament and International Security Committee, is one of six main committees at the General Assembly. It deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community, and seeks out solutions to the challenges affecting international security.² The committee considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.³

The committee has two main bodies under it which are the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

Governance, Structure and Membership

As outlined in the Charter, the General Assembly is comprised of all 193 United Nations Member States,⁴ and each Member State has one equal vote.⁵ The General Assembly holds its meetings called the “main part of the General Assembly” from mid-September to the end of December. For the remainder of the year, it is called the “resumed part of the General Assembly”. The First Committee sessions are structured into three distinctive stages: the general debate, thematic discussions and action on drafts. Decisions on important matters, such as the maintenance of international peace and security, the admission, suspension, and expulsion of members, and all budgetary questions, require a two-thirds majority. For all other matters, votes in the General Assembly require a simple majority and the majority of resolutions are adopted without a vote, illustrating the consensus-based nature of the General Assembly.

¹ United Nations, About the General Assembly.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Charter of the United Nations, 1945.

⁵ Charter of the United Nations, 1945.

The Committee works in close cooperation with the UNDC and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. It is the only main committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage.⁶

The General Committee is comprised of the President of the General Assembly and the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, as well as the Chairpersons of all the six General Assembly Main Committees; all positions are elected every session on a non-renewable basis. For the 73rd Session, the President of the General Assembly is Tijjani Muhammad-Bande (Nigeria), whilst the chairperson of the first committee is H.E Sacha Sergio Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia).

Mandate, Functions and Powers

Established in 1945 under Chapter IV of the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime. It considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.⁷

The First Committee under Chapter IV of the Charter of the United Nations may: Consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States (Article 17); Elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of other United Nations councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General (Article 18); Consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament (Article 11); Discuss any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, make recommendations on it (Article 11); Discuss, with the same exception, and make recommendations on any questions within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations; Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political co-operation, the development and codification of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields (Article 13); Make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among

⁶ General Assembly, Disarmament and International Security (First Committee).

⁷ General Assembly, Disarmament and International Security (First Committee).

countries; Consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs. The General Assembly may also take action in cases of a threat to the peace, breach of peace or act of aggression when the Security Council has failed to act owing to the negative vote of a permanent member.⁸

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

The 74th session of the General Assembly opened on 17 September 2019. This year's theme "Galvanizing multilateral efforts for poverty eradication, quality education, climate action and inclusion" was chosen by the new President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande.

The stated priorities for this year include climate change, universal health coverage, sustainable development goals, nuclear weapons and Small Island States (SIDS), as well as the adoption of a multilateral approach to nuclear weapon disarmament and the escalating tensions in the Middle East. The priorities that directly affect the General Assembly First Committee are the adoption of a multilateral approach to nuclear weapon disarmament and the escalating tensions in the Middle East. The priority set out before the community, hence, is to discuss and come up with resolutions which would reduce to the barest minimum, unrest and conflict in various parts of the world.⁹

Conclusion

Recognising the role and importance of this committee under the General Assembly, our strategic role in disarmament and international securities is one that imposes a great responsibility on delegates representing various countries. Hence it is expected that resolutions from this committee are directed towards bringing about peace as well as stability in fragile regions of the world and making a world a safer place by promoting international security.

⁸ General Assembly, Functions and powers of the General Assembly.

⁹ United Nations Agenda of the 74th session.

Annotated Bibliography

Charter of the United Nations (26 December 1945), available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.html> (accessed 22 January 2020)

The Charter of the United Nations should be one of the first reads for anyone learning about the General Assembly first committee. The Charter of the United Nations presents the structure and powers of the General Assembly and its purpose within the United Nations. By understanding the mandate of the General Assembly, delegates can better understand the powers and limitations of the General Assembly.

Disarmament and International Security (First Committee), available at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/first/> (accessed 27 January 2020)

The United Nations website on the General Assembly first committee provides an insight as to the mandate of the committee, how the sessions are operated and their working methods. It also refers to landmark resolutions which will be helpful to anyone researching on the General Assembly First Committee.

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Disarmament and International Security (First Committee), available at: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/first/> (accessed 12 January 2020)

Functions and Powers of DISEC, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/about/background.shtml> (accessed 12 January 2020)

Charter of the United Nations (1945), available at: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapteriv/index.html> (accessed 12 January 2020)

General Assembly of the United Nations, Agenda of the 74th session, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/74/agenda/> (accessed 14 January 2020)

Functions and Powers of the General Assembly, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/about/background.shtml> (accessed 14 January 2020)

I. Achieving Multilateral Consensus Against the Use of Nuclear Weapons

“The norm against the use of nuclear weapons, the most destructive weapons ever created, with potentially unparalleled human costs; has stood strong for seven decades. But the only absolute guarantee that they are never used again is through their total elimination” – **Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary General of the United Nations**¹⁰

Introduction

Since the world first experienced the practical impact of atomic weapons in 1945, there appears to have been a unanimous agreement that atomic and nuclear warfare should never again be resorted to in the prosecution of any conflict between nations. The United Nations (UN) has sought to eliminate such weapons since its establishment in 1945. In furtherance of this pledge, the world has witnessed the evolution and introduction of several approaches in the forms of treaties and regimes amongst others. The problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy were one of the first issues addressed by the newly established United Nations in 1946.¹¹ However, between 1945 and 1950, the number of nuclear weapons in the world increased from 2 to 304, and throughout the Cold War, the number of nuclear weapons proliferated unimaginably, reaching a peak of over 70,000 weapons in 1987.¹² While the efforts of the international nuclear disarmament regime have decreased the figure currently to below 13,865 warheads in 2019, nuclear weapons continue to pose a major international security threat.¹³

Recently, however, the building, amassing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons by several nations has led many to question whether the stance against nuclear weapons is as widely backed as it once was and whether all nations are equally dedicated to the fight against nuclear proliferation. This, in turn, has led to renewed calls for a greater spirit of multilateralism in deliberations and actions on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation to eliminate the existent polarisation complicating strategic relationships and stability.¹⁴

International and Regional Framework

The international effort towards denuclearisation is one that has taken expression largely in the establishment of a series of treaty networks aimed at disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as the creation of bodies and institutions to lead this charge. The various relevant arms of the United Nations, such as the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee), have spearheaded the establishment of different frameworks to achieve this mandate.

¹⁰ United Nations Elimination of Nuclear Weapons Only “Absolute Guarantee” against their use, Says Secretary-General in Message for International Day, 22 September 2015, United Nations’s former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Kristen Sen & Norris, *Status of World Nuclear Forces*, 2018.

¹³ Max Roser and Mohamed Nagdy, “Nuclear Weapons” (2019).

¹⁴ United Nations Disarmament Chief Calls for Consensus in Disarmament Commission to Rid World of Nuclear Weapons, Exploiting Fresh Spirit of Multilateralism.

Several key resolutions have already been put in place by the General Assembly towards the achievement of this mandate. These resolutions provide a prescriptive framework to guide further action on the mandate. In 1996, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 1(1); Establishment of a commission to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy,¹⁵ this resolution was following the effects of the nuclear bomb detonated over the Japanese city of Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulting in the death of approximately 120,000 people. The commission was established to make proposals for the control of atomic energy to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes. Other resolutions made for the achievement of this mandate are Resolution 71\258 (2016),¹⁶ Resolution 70\33 (2015),¹⁷ Resolution 69\4 (2014),¹⁸ Resolution 68\46 (2013)¹⁹ and Resolution 67\56 (2012).²⁰ Some of the principal treaties regulating the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons are as follows:

- Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was created as a result of the Resolution 71\258 (2016), which the General Assembly decided to convene in the 2017 United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons and achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The TPNW includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participation in any nuclear weapon activity including undertakings not to develop, test, acquire, produce, possess, stockpile or use nuclear weapons. This treaty is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons.²¹ The treaty was passed on the 7 July 2017. The treaty provides a time-bound framework for negotiations leading to the verified and irreversible elimination of its nuclear weapons programme and it constitutes an “unambiguous political commitment” to achieve and maintain a nuclear weapon-free world.²²

- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT, is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology,²³ to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament, general and complete disarmament. Between 1965 and 1968, the treaty was negotiated

¹⁵ General Assembly 1946 Resolutions adopted on the Reports of the First Committee.

¹⁶ General Assembly Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 23 December 2016, Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A\RES\71\258).

¹⁷ General Assembly Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 2015, Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A\RES\70\33).

¹⁸ General Assembly Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 9 October 2014, Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations: requests under Article 19 of the Charter (A\RES\69\4).

¹⁹ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 5 December 2013, Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A\RES\68\46).

²⁰ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 2012, Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A\RES\67\56).

²¹ Insights into Editorial: Between Disarmament and Deterrence, 16 October 2017.

²² Nuclear Threat Initiative, Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

²³ United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

by the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, a UN-sponsored organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. The NPT consists of a preamble and eleven articles. The treaty is sometimes interpreted as a three-pillar system, the first pillar is non-proliferation, the second pillar is disarmament and the third pillar is peaceful use of nuclear energy. A total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five Nuclear-Weapon States.

- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START)

The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty is a bilateral treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. The treaty was signed on 31 July 1991 and entered into force on 5 December 1994. The treaty is divided into 2 treaties, known as START I and START II.

- Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

The United Nations established the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral disarmament-negotiating forum in 1979.²⁴ The body has only negotiated one treaty related to nuclear disarmament over the past 30 years, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a multilateral treaty banning all nuclear explosions, for both civilian and military purposes and in all environments. It was adopted by the General Assembly on 10 September 1996. The CTBT acts as a barrier to the development of nuclear weapons and the improvement of existing nuclear weapon designs. The treaty provides a legally binding norm against nuclear testing. Between 1945 and 1996 when the CTBT was adopted, there were over 2000 nuclear tests combined conducted by the U.S., the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom and China.²⁵

- Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)

Since the conclusion of CTBT negotiations in 1996, the CD has been locked in a perpetual stalemate.²⁶ Negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) have not commenced even 18 years after agreement on the Shannon Mandate (a mandate adopted by the CD in 1995 that proposed the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material). The Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) is a proposed international treaty to prohibit the further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.²⁷ Negotiation of the treaty is yet to begin, and the terms of the treaty are not defined. Fissile material is material capable of sustaining a nuclear fission chain reaction. It includes high-enriched uranium and plutonium. The Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty [FMCT] would strengthen nuclear non-proliferation norms by adding a binding international commitment to existing constraints on nuclear weapons-usable fissile material. The proposed treaty

²⁴ Nuclear Disarmament Resource Collection, Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 7 August 2018.

²⁵ Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: Background and Current Developments, 10 July 2006 - 1 September 2016.

²⁶ Nuclear Disarmament Resource Collection, Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

²⁷ Draft for discussion prepared by the International Panel on Fissile Materials, 2 September 2009.

would also ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The treaty will not apply to existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

- International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism

The Act of Terrorism Convention, formally renowned as the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of terrorism, was adopted in 2005 by the United Nations. It had been created to criminalize acts of terrorism and promotion of police and judicial cooperation to stop, investigate and penalize those acts. The convention has 115 signatories and 114 State parties as of September 2018, as well as the nuclear powers China, France, India, Russia and the US.²⁸ The convention needs the parties to collaborate in preventing and prosecuting acts of terrorism by adopting necessary legislative and technical measures to shield nuclear material, installations and devices, and to forestall unauthorized access to them by third parties.²⁹

- Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

A Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone (NWFZ) is outlined by the United Nations as an agreement that a group of States has freely established by written agreement or convention that bans the utilization, development, or preparation of nuclear weapons in an exceedingly given space. NWFZs have a similar purpose to, but are distinct from, the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The five Nuclear-Weapons States are a party to it. The first efforts to create a nuclear weapon-free area began in the late 1950s with several proposals from various zones. All the early efforts struggled amidst the US and Soviet Union conflict. Article VII of the NPT affirms the right of countries to establish zones free of nuclear weapons;³⁰ the General Assembly reaffirmed that right in 1975 and outlined the criteria for the zones.

- African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (ANWFZ) Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty)

The African Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, was signed by 47 of Africa's 53 States. It prohibits States from conducting research on, developing, manufacturing, stockpiling, acquiring, possessing, or having control over any nuclear explosive device by any means. State parties are also banned from receiving assistance on research or development of any nuclear explosive device on their territory. It was opened for signature on 11 April 1996. The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (ANWFZ) covers the entire African continent, as well as some islands.

- Antarctic Treaty

The Antarctic Treaty is collectively known as the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS). The treaty regulates international relations concerning Antarctica, the Earth's only continent without a native human population. The Antarctic Treaty was signed in Washington on 1 December 1959 by the twelve countries whose scientists had been active in and around Antarctica.

²⁸ Nuclear Threat Initiative, International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

²⁹ First Session of Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorist Bombings and Nuclear Terrorism to be held at Headquarters, 24 February - 7 March.

³⁰ High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (26 September 2013).

The treaty entered into force in 1961 and currently has 54 parties. The treaty was the first arms control agreement established during the Cold War. The primary purpose of the Antarctic Treaty is to ensure "in the interests of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord."³¹ To this end, it prohibits military activity, except in support of science; prohibits nuclear explosions and the disposal of nuclear waste; promotes scientific research and the exchange of data; and holds all territorial claims in abeyance.

- Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (CANWFZ)

The Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (CANWFZ) treaty is a legally binding commitment by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan not to manufacture, acquire, test, or possess nuclear weapons. The treaty was signed on 8 September 2006 at Semipalatinsk Test Site, Kazakhstan, and is also known as the Treaty of Semipalatinsk, Treaty of Semei, or Treaty of Semey.³² The treaty was ratified by Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, and entered into force on the 21 March 2009. The establishment of such a zone began with the Almaty Declaration in 1992.³³ The resolution called for the establishment of such a zone was adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in 1997 and reaffirmed in 2000.

- Nuclear-Weapon-Free Status of Mongolia

The Resolution 3261 F (1974) of the General Assembly provided for the possibility of a single-State Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SS-NWFZ).³⁴ It states that "obligations relating to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones may be assumed not only by groups of States, including entire continents or large geographical regions but also by small groups of States and even individual countries".³⁵ This led to the formation of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Status of Mongolia. The treaty obligations provide that an individual, legal person or any foreign State shall be prohibited on the territory of Mongolia from committing, initiating, or participating in the following acts or activities relating to nuclear weapons:

- i. developing, manufacturing, or otherwise acquiring, possessing, or having control over nuclear weapons
- ii. stationing or transporting nuclear weapons by any means
- iii. dumping or disposing nuclear weapons-grade radioactive material or nuclear waste. Transportation through the territory of Mongolia of nuclear weapons, parts, or components thereof, as well as of nuclear waste or any other nuclear material designed or produced for weapons purposes shall be prohibited.

³¹ Secretariat of The Antarctic Treaty, About the Antarctic Treaty.

³² Information on treaties, organizations, and regimes relating to disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

³³ Turkmenistan Joined IAEA; One step further for the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

³⁴ Nuclear Threat Initiative, Nuclear-Weapon-free-status-Mongolia.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

- Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty (Bangkok Treaty)

The Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ), also known as the Bangkok Treaty of 1995, is a nuclear weapons embargo treaty between 10 Southeast Asian Member States under the auspices of the ASEAN: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.³⁶ It was opened for signature at the treaty conference in Bangkok, Thailand, on 15 December 1995 and it entered into force on 28 March 1997,³⁷ and obligates its members not to develop, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over nuclear weapons, to prevent in the territory of State parties the stationing of any nuclear explosive device; to prevent the testing of any nuclear explosive device; not to dump radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter at sea anywhere within the zone, and to prevent the dumping of radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter by anyone in the territorial sea of the States parties.

- South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone (SPNFZ) Treaty of Rarotonga

The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (SPNFZ) Treaty, known as the Treaty of Rarotonga, bans the manufacture, possession, stationing, and testing of any nuclear explosive device in Treaty territories for which the parties are internationally responsible; it also bans the dumping of radioactive waste at sea. Three Protocols extend the Treaty's provisions to States outside the zone: Protocol I requires States with territories in the region to apply the prohibitions on manufacture, stationing, and testing of nuclear explosive devices to their territories; Protocol II commits the five declared Nuclear-Weapons States not to use or threaten to use any nuclear explosive device against Parties to the Treaty or Protocol Parties' territories within the zone; and Protocol III commits the five Nuclear-Weapon States not to test any nuclear explosive device within the zone.

- Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (LANWFZ) (Tlatelolco Treaty)

The Treaty of Tlatelolco is also known as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Under the treaty, the State parties agree to prohibit and prevent the "testing, use, manufacture, production or acquisition by any means whatsoever of any nuclear weapons" and the "receipt, storage, installation, deployment and any form of possession of any nuclear weapons." There are two additional protocols to the treaty: Protocol I binds those overseas countries with territories in the region (the U.S., the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands)³⁸ to the terms of the treaty, while Protocol II requires the world's declared Nuclear-Weapon States to refrain from

³⁶ Nuclear Threat Initiative, Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty (Bangkok Treaty).

³⁷ Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Bangkok), Inventory of International Organizations and Regimes, James Martin Centre for Non-proliferation Studies.

³⁸ Nuclear Threat Initiative, Treaty of Tlatelolco.

undermining in any way the nuclear-free status of the region; it has been signed and ratified by the USA, the UK, France, China, and Russia.

Bilateral Efforts

The drive towards the denuclearisation of the arsenals of the nuclear-powered countries is one that has been propelled not just by broad-based treaties, but also by bilateral treaties and agreements between different nations. Some of the bilateral efforts are as examined below:

- Treaties between the Russian Federation and the United States

The world's Nuclear-armed States possess a combined total of nearly 14,000 nuclear warheads, and more than 90% belong to Russia and the United States.³⁹ This is why many treaties are created to reduce the Nuclear Arsenals in these two countries. These treaties include:

1. Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I & II): This refers to efforts by the United States and the Soviet Union. It only saw the limitation of the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), leaving both nations to increase numbers of both bombers and warheads. SALT I also produced the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) in 1972, which banned nationwide strategic missile defences. It is necessary to note that the US withdrew from the ABM treaty in 2002.⁴⁰ SALT II lasted from 1972-1979.⁴¹
2. Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START I & II): Following the Cold War, another bilateral treaty was reached between the United States and Russia on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. This was the START I (enacted in 1994),⁴² which placed limitations on the numbers of deployed launchers, the number of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles and, for the first time, warheads. START II complemented START I by attempting to establish further limits on strategic nuclear weapons for each party.⁴³
3. Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT): While both START II and III failed to materialize, the United States and Russia negotiated the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) in 2002. SORT provided for a significant reduction of deployed strategic nuclear warheads in each arsenal to 1,700 - 2,200.⁴⁴ However, SORT was often criticized for having a weak verification regime that relied on the START I regime.
4. Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START): The New

³⁹ Arms Control Association, Nuclear Weapons, "Who Has What at a Glance", July 2019.

⁴⁰ "U.S.-Soviet/Russian Nuclear Arms Control", Arms Control Today 32 (June 2002); Daryl Kimball and Tom Collina, "The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty at a Glance", Arms Control Association.

⁴¹ Paterson Thomas G, "American foreign relations: a history", Vol. 2 (7 ed.). Wadsworth. p. 376.

⁴² Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Strategic Offensive Reductions (START I) | Treaties & Regimes | NTI.

⁴³ Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II), Federation of American Scientists.

⁴⁴ The Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) at a Glance Factsheet and Briefs, Arms Control Association.

START is an agreement for nuclear arms reduction between the United States and Russia, establishing a limit on deployed strategic warheads.⁴⁵

5. Treaty between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles (INF Treaty): The INF Treaty is a bilateral agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was the first treaty to reduce nuclear arms instead of establishing an arms ceiling.⁴⁶
6. Treaty between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes (PNE Treaty): The PNE Treaty allows the United States and the USSR to conduct underground peaceful nuclear explosions at any location under their jurisdiction or control.⁴⁷
7. Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty): The ABM Treaty is an agreement between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to cease the construction of a national anti-ballistic missile system to limit the development and deployment of defensive missiles.⁴⁸

- India-Pakistan Non-Attack Agreement

The Agreement obligates India and Pakistan to refrain from undertaking, encouraging, or participating in actions aimed at causing destruction or damage to nuclear installations or facilities in each country.⁴⁹

- Joint Declaration of South and North Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula

The Joint Declaration was a treaty in which South and North Korea agreed not to possess, produce, or use nuclear weapons, and prohibited uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing.⁵⁰

- Lahore Declaration

The Lahore Declaration was an agreement between India and Pakistan that called for both to reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, among other confidence-building measures.⁵¹

- US-DPRK Agreed Framework

The Agreed Framework was an agreement between the United States and North Korea, which called for replacing a North Korean nuclear reactor in exchange for normalizing relations and other incentives.⁵²

⁴⁵ Jesse Lee, "President Obama Announces the New START Treaty, The White House", *Whitehouse.gov*.

⁴⁶ "INF Treaty", United States Department of State.

⁴⁷ Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes (PNE Treaty), NTI.

⁴⁸ Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, Bureau of Arms Control, United States Department of State.

⁴⁹ India-Pakistan Non-Attack Agreement NTI.

⁵⁰ Joint Declaration of South and North Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, NTI.

⁵¹ Lahore Declaration February 1999, Joint Statement | Memorandum of Understanding, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

These are some of the key bilateral agreements that form a part of the framework regulating nuclear weapons.

Multilateral Efforts

The existent international treaty framework on nuclear disarmament has been examined thoroughly above. The mere existence of such a robust treaty regime is illustrative, to a large extent, of the level of multilateralism that has been embraced in the past and which would now be appraised herein. However, this attempt at a multilateral approach is not without its struggles.

Attempts at negotiating legally binding multilateral nuclear disarmament treaties have proven challenging. The United Nations established the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral disarmament-negotiating forum in 1979. The 65-member, consensus-ruled body has only negotiated one treaty related to nuclear disarmament over the past 30 years, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. Nineteen years after it opened for signature, the CTBT has yet to enter into force. Entry into force of the CTBT requires ratification by all States with nuclear power reactors and/or research reactors (in 1996), known as Annex II States. Eight of these countries, including the U.S. and China, are yet to ratify.⁵³

Since the conclusion of CTBT negotiations in 1996, the CD has been locked in a perpetual stalemate. Negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) have not commenced even 18 years after agreement on the Shannon Mandate (a mandate adopted by the CD in 1995 that proposed the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material).⁵⁴ Many consider an FMCT ripe for negotiation and the next logical step toward nuclear disarmament. In 2009, CD Member States agreed upon a program of work, CD/1864, but were unable to implement it due to procedural blockages.⁵⁵ Over the past three years, Pakistan has emerged as the single detractor, objecting based on national security and substance. Pakistan fears its national security will be at risk if its rival and neighbour, India, is left with a larger existing fissile material stockpile and therefore has the capacity to continue to produce nuclear weapons after the implementation of the treaty.⁵⁶ Pakistan argues that an FMCT would not address existing stockpiles of fissile materials, and would therefore further non-proliferation but not disarmament.⁵⁷

⁵² US-DPRK Agreed Framework, NTL.

⁵³ The other six States that have yet to ratify the CTBT include the DPRK, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran and Israel. "Status of Signature and Ratification: Annex II States Only", Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, updated February 2012.

⁵⁴ Paul Meyer, "Is There Any Fizz Left in the Fissban? Prospects for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty", Arms Control Today, December 2007.

⁵⁵ Ray Acheson, "The Conference on Disarmament in 2009: Could do Better", Disarmament Diplomacy 91 (Summer 2009).

⁵⁶ Paul Meyer, "Free the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty: Functionality over Forum", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists: Web Edition, 19 September 2011. A.H Nayyar and Zia Mian, "Pakistan", in the publication Reducing and Eliminating Nuclear Weapons: Country Perspectives on the Challenges to Nuclear Disarmament, International Panel on Fissile Materials, May 2010.

⁵⁷ The Shannon Mandate, as contained in CD/1299, was agreed upon in March 1995 as the basis for negotiations of a FMCT.

Pakistan's conceptual argument taps into the longstanding confrontation between the nuclear weapon "haves and have nots". Paradoxically, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) members Pakistan and India vocally support nuclear disarmament while simultaneously increasing their nuclear arsenals and delivery systems. Many NAM members and other NNWS believe that the NWS are not fully meeting their Article VI obligation.⁵⁸ Apart from the bilateral negotiations on New START, there have been no negotiations or efforts on disarmament measures since the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations. Moreover, unilateral and US-Russia reductions have been perceived by many NNWS as nothing more than efforts to streamline existing nuclear arsenals, rather than steps towards complete nuclear disarmament. Perhaps most notably, all Nuclear-Weapon States are pursuing some degree of nuclear modernization.⁵⁹

On 7 July 2017, a United Nations conference adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first international treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons comprehensively, including banning the development, acquisition, test, use, threat of use and possession of nuclear weapons. Although no nuclear weapons possessing States have signed the treaty, the treaty's passage is a significant development in disarmament politics.⁶⁰

Other Significant Efforts

Beyond bilateral, multilateral and plurilateral efforts at disarmament, there have also been efforts made by national governments, commissions, members of civil society, and others in form of cooperation on initiatives to promote progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear disarmament groups include the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Peace Action, Greenpeace, Soka Gakkai International, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Mayors for Peace, Global Zero, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. There have been many large anti-nuclear demonstrations and protests. On 12 June 1982, one million people demonstrated in New York City's Central Park against nuclear weapons and for an end to the cold war arms race. It was the largest anti-nuclear protest and the largest political demonstration in American history.⁶¹ In the United Kingdom, the first Aldermaston March organised by the Direct Action Committee and supported by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament took place on Easter 1958, when several thousand people marched for four days from Trafalgar Square,

⁵⁸ John Burroughs, "Reaching Nuclear Disarmament", *Beyond arms control: challenges and choices for nuclear disarmament*, ed. Ray Acheson (New York: Reaching Critical Will, 2010), pp. 161-162.

⁵⁹ Ray Acheson, "Introduction" in the publication *Assuring Destruction Forever*, Reaching Critical Will, March 2012.

⁶⁰ United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

⁶¹ Jonathan Schell, "The Spirit of June 12", Archived 2019-05-12 at the Way back Machine the Nation, 2 July 2007. 1982 - a million people march in New York City Archived 2008-05-16 at the Way back Machine.

London, to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment close to Aldermaston in Berkshire, England, to demonstrate their opposition to nuclear weapons.⁶²

The Middle Powers Initiative was established in support of NNWS efforts to reduce and eliminate worldwide nuclear weapons arsenals. Following the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the Middle Powers Initiative launched the “Article VI Forum” in October 2005 to examine the legal, technical, and political requirements to fulfil non-proliferation and disarmament commitments for a nuclear weapon-free world.⁶³

Several independent international commissions have played an important role by providing expert recommendations in the form of nuclear disarmament action plans. These commissions include the 1996 Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons sponsored by the Australian Government, the 1998 Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament sponsored by the Japanese Government, and the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Commission. The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission was established in 2003 amidst stagnation on nuclear disarmament and serious challenges facing the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It issued a report that concluded “the Nuclear-Weapon States no longer seem to take their commitment to nuclear disarmament seriously- even though this was an essential part of the NPT bargain, both at the treaty’s birth in 1968 and when it was extended indefinitely in 1995”.⁶⁴ The report offered several recommendations for multilateral cooperative actions to counter this trend, including a call to adhere to disarmament obligations, ratify the CTBT and FMCT, and change nuclear postures.

In 2008, Japan and Australia established the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) to reinvigorate international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts and to help shape a consensus at the then-upcoming 2010 NPT Review Conference. Japan and Australia joined again in September 2010 to create the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI). The group consisted of twelve countries (Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates) that aimed to facilitate the implementation of the measures from the consensus document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.⁶⁵ In April 2014, the NPDI adopted the “Hiroshima Declaration” that contained concrete proposals for both disarmament and non-proliferation, including calls to negotiate the FMCT, increase nuclear safety and safeguards, encourage the entry into force of the CTBT, and increase transparency in disarmament reporting.⁶⁶ However, as the NPDI consists

⁶² “A brief history of CND”, Archived from the original on 2004-06-17. “Early defections in March to Aldermaston”, Guardian Unlimited, 1958-04-05, Archived from the original on 2006-10-08.

⁶³ “About MPI”, Middle Powers Initiative, 8 August 2011.

⁶⁴ Hans Blix, “Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Arms”, Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (Stockholm), 1 June 2006.

⁶⁵ Tom Bayur of Turkey on behalf of the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), The NPDI Joint Statement to the NPT PrepCom, 30 April 2012.

⁶⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, “Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative”, Australian Government.

mainly of U.S. allies protected by U.S. extended nuclear deterrence, its disarmament approach is often considered more moderate than the ones of the NAC or NAM that call for delegitimizing nuclear weapons.

Role of International Systems

The international system that regulates the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons consists of several bodies ranging from the United Nations and its relevant organs to non-governmental organizations and civil societies, as well as other international organizations and partnerships.

At the forefront of this issue is the General Assembly First Committee which plays a leading role in framing and guiding progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by providing normative frameworks on disarmament and international security matters.⁶⁷ In a bid to further guarantee success in this charge, many important resolutions have been passed, some of which include: Resolution 71/258 (2016) which led to the creation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon; Resolution 70/33 (2015); Resolution 69/41 (2014); Resolution 68/46 (2013) and; Resolution 67/56 (2012).⁶⁸

Several other agencies and institutions have also been set up. An example is the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), established in 1957 as a specialised agency of the United Nations. Today the IAEA is the closest institution that can be described as a global governance nuclear body.⁶⁹ The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.⁷⁰ In the quest to facilitate greater multilateral participation in nuclear disarmament matters, the Committee on Disarmament, later renamed the Conference on Disarmament, was created in 1979 to be a central disarmament negotiating body in the international system.⁷¹ The Committee has been highly instrumental in the negotiation of key disarmament instruments and its greatest success remains the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CD, however, seems to have been stuck in a stalemate since 1996.⁷² The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) was created in 1998 to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to support regimes in the disarmament of WMDs.⁷³ UNODA supports dialogue on disarmament and confidence-building measures by providing organizational support and current information on disarmament initiatives and agreements.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Nuclear Threat Initiative, General Assembly, 2018.

⁶⁸ UNODA Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, Treaty overview.

⁶⁹ John Carlson (n.d.), A New International Framework for Nuclear Energy; Nuclear Threat Initiative.

⁷⁰ About the International Atomic Energy Agency.

⁷¹ Nuclear Threat Initiative, Conference on Disarmament (CD), 2018.

⁷² Jozef Goldblat, "The conference on disarmament at the crossroads: To revitalize or dissolve?" (2000) 7(2) *The Non-proliferation Review*, p. 104-107.

⁷³ UNODA, *About us*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Regional efforts have also been made to address nuclear disarmament and international security. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is also committed to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. To achieve this, OSCE assists its Member States in developing national action plans to support improved legislation, training, and awareness-raising activities to promote non-proliferation.⁷⁵ Regional entities have also taken leading roles in disarmament efforts through the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs).⁷⁶ These zones are spread all across the different continents.

Anti-nuclear power groups have also emerged in almost every country that has had a nuclear power Programme.⁷⁷ Protest movements against the use of nuclear weapons first emerged in the USA at the local level and spread quickly to Europe and the rest of the world. Anti-nuclear power groups have undertaken public protests including the occupation of nuclear plant sites, and other strategies involve lobbying, petitioning government authorities, influencing public policy through referendums, campaigns and involvement in elections.⁷⁸ Some organizations that have been formed are; The ATOM Project, The European Nuclear Disarmament, the Friends of the Earth International, the Global Zero, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, Greenpeace International, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Civil society groups around the world must encourage meaningful diplomatic engagement with the Nuclear-Weapon States to reduce its nuclear weapons and missile capabilities, reduce tensions in the different regions and strengthen ties with governmental and non-governmental partners around the globe.

Shortcomings in Legal and Institutional Frameworks

In 1996, the International Court of Justice concluded that the use of nuclear weapons would be generally contrary to the principles and rules of International Humanitarian Law or human rights.⁷⁹ All States are under an obligation to pursue and conclude negotiations that will lead to nuclear disarmament and with the recent adoption of the ban treaty, the legal framework towards the elimination of nuclear weapons is stronger than ever but it is overruled by its shortcomings. Under the international humanitarian law (IHL), there is no prohibition for use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Rather, the use of nuclear weapons is controlled so far as it is prohibited if it is likely to cause civilian casualties or environmental impact. In 1996, the General Assembly asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to provide its advisory opinion on the threat of use of nuclear weapons.⁸⁰ The ICJ held that nowhere in international law is there a specific authorization on the use or threat of nuclear weapons. It also held unanimously that a threat or use of force that contradicts the Charter of the United Nations is not lawful. These limitations do not allow

⁷⁵ OSCE, Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

⁷⁶ Arms Control Association, Nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ) at a glance, 2017.

⁷⁷ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Civil Society and Disarmament".

⁷⁸ The Role of NGOs in the New Nuclear Age, Daryl G. Kimball, Executive Director, 26th United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, Nagasaki, Japan, December 2016.

⁷⁹ *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1996, p. 226, International Court of Justice (ICJ), 8 July 1996.

⁸⁰ Melina Lito, "A global ban on nuclear weapons: Are we there yet?"

for complete achievement of the mandate. For instance, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which bans nuclear testing in the atmosphere due to environmental considerations, was signed in 1996 but has not yet entered into force because of that the ban treaty cannot be used to further uphold the commitments established by the NPT. For instance, if a nuclear-armed State joins the ban treaty, there would be no time frame for meeting the treaty's objectives work. The Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons faces many challenges, largely due to the perennial tension between Nuclear-Weapon States and Non-Nuclear-Weapon States. The Treaty has been under severe strain for some time. The two most daunting challenges facing the NPT are disarmament and non-proliferation. Although nuclear weapons numbers have fallen sharply since the peak of Cold War numbers in the mid-1980s, many Non-Nuclear-Weapon States argue that disarmament is not occurring fast enough. This tension will undoubtedly have a significant impact on non-proliferation efforts.⁸¹ Other challenges facing the non-achievement of the mandate can be observed as an outgrowth of the many of the numerous treaties adopted as well as ambiguity within some of the Treaty's provisions. The crafters of the NPT could not have predicted current global trends and as such were not able to draft a Treaty that could evolve with the changing times.

Strengthening International Treaties and Frameworks

Ever since the establishment of the United Nations, treaties have been resorted to as one of the most reliable means of achieving global aims and desires. However, the shortcomings of these have caused the United Nations itself to discuss severally how to strengthen and promote the international treaty framework and international institutions.⁸²

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) for instance is one that needs strengthening most especially in terms of implementation. Non-Nuclear-Weapon States are required under the NPT to conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA. In 1997, the IAEA Board of Governors approved the model Additional Protocol, generally known as the AP.⁸³ The IAEA Director-General as at April, Yukiya Amano, has noted that not all countries that are party to the NPT have implemented the safeguards and the AP and has thus encouraged States Parties to the NPT without comprehensive safeguards agreements in force to bring such agreements into force without delay as the combination of comprehensive safeguards agreement and the AP needs to become universal.⁸⁴

There is also a need to ensure that more and more countries become a party to the various multilateral treaties aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and security globally. Quite commendably, in September 2019, Lesotho, Ecuador, Chad and Bolivia deposited legal

⁸¹ The Good Faith Issue, this article was published in Government Gazette, October 2012.

⁸² Strengthening and promoting the international treaty framework (Agenda item 91).

⁸³ Strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty ahead of the Review Conference in 2020, Security Council Briefing, 2 April 2019.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

instruments expressing consent to be bound by various multilateral treaties related to the peaceful use of nuclear technology in the hands of Acting Director-General of the IAEA, Cornel Feruta.⁸⁵ The four Nuclear-Weapon States remain outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other prevailing treaty regimes must necessarily be brought into the fold.

Greater cooperation is also required between States to promote the practical success of international treaties and institutions. Maintaining and strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime is a component of the international collective security system. Further progress in this area depends to a large extent on the results of bilateral US-Russian cooperation.⁸⁶

If we are to strengthen the international framework as regards nuclear disarmament, we must see to it that more modern approaches are adopted. With the continued erosion of the disarmament and arms control framework that have reaped significant gains, all States must work collectively towards a new twenty-first-century approach to rid the world of nuclear weapons. While the 50-year-old Non-Proliferation Treaty has played the greatest role in preventing the catastrophic consequences of an atomic war, Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has said the instrument's durability should not be taken for granted at a time when the acquisition of arms is prioritized over the pursuit of diplomacy. Thus, newer approaches must be embraced and the NPT and its 3 pillars- disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy- must continue to remain the focal point.

Reducing Nuclear Stockpiles

Nuclear stockpiles are largely accumulated stock of nuclear materials, held in reserve for future usage. According to SIPRI, the worldwide total inventory of nuclear weapons as of 2019 stood at 13,865, having that amount of weaponry has the capacity of killing millions of people directly and indirectly through the after-effects of a nuclear attack. According to the global nuclear weapon stockpiles, the U.S. nuclear stockpiles increased rapidly from 1945, peaked in 1966 declined after that and by 2012 the U.S. had several times fewer nuclear weapons than it had in 1966. The Soviet Union developed its first nuclear weapon in 1949 and increased its nuclear stockpile rapidly until it peaked in 1986.⁸⁷ As the cold war tensions decreased and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the soviet and Russian stockpile decreased by over 80% between 1986 and 2012.

The U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons stockpiles are projected to continue decreasing over the next decade.⁸⁸ The treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons is the first international treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons comprehensively including banning the

⁸⁵ Four Countries Join Treaties to Strengthen Nuclear Safety and Security.

⁸⁶ Overcoming Impediments to U.S.-Russian Cooperation on Nuclear Non-proliferation: Report of a Joint Workshop (2004), Chapter 4: The International Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime.

⁸⁷ Max Roser and Mohamed Nagdy, "Nuclear Weapons".

⁸⁸ Historical nuclear weapons stockpiles and nuclear tests by country, Norris, Robert; Hans M Kristensen 1 July 2010 "Global nuclear weapons inventories, 1945-2010" Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

development, acquisition, test, threat of use, and possession of nuclear weapons and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which prohibits Nuclear-Weapon States from transferring nuclear weapons or assisting Non-Nuclear-Weapon States in the developments of nuclear weapons.

Both treaties have helped significantly in the reduction of nuclear stockpiles, although no Nuclear-Weapon States have signed the treaty for the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the treaty's passage is a significant development in disarmament politics.

At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the extension of the NPT was agreed to by State parties and this called "for a systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally" and "Establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction". The 2000 NPT review conference still on the reduction of nuclear stockpiles laid out thirteen practical steps towards nuclear disarmament including "unequivocal undertaking by the Nuclear-Weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals".⁸⁹

Though there have been many failures the number of nuclear weapons in the world has declined significantly since the Cold War: down from a peak of approximately 70,300 in 1986 to an estimated 13,890 in early-2019.⁹⁰ These reductions have been carried unilaterally by at least four Nuclear-Weapon States, as well as bilateral legally binding agreements between the US and the Russian Federation.

Nuclear weapon powers continue to upgrade their arsenals despite an overall reduction in nuclear warheads, though it may seem like there have been great improvements in the reduction of nuclear weapon stockpiles, the stockpiles are only decreasing in size and not in capability which affects progress in the achievement of the mandate.

Conclusion

To date, negotiated nuclear arms control and reduction agreements have been an exercise conducted almost solely between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and, following the latter's collapse in 1991, the U.S. and Russia. That was logical, given the size of the nuclear superpowers' arsenals compared to those of other Nuclear-Weapons States. However, U.S.-Russia bilateral nuclear arms control discussions have hardly made any headway, and it has become increasingly necessary for more focus to be placed on multilateral efforts as opposed to bilateral or plurilateral efforts between the nuclear powers.⁹¹

Fortunately, most countries in the world — the Non-Nuclear-Weapon States — are committed to remaining free of nuclear weapons, including some countries that once

⁸⁹ Nuclear Disarmament Resource Collection, Nuclear Disarmament and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), 7 August 2018.

⁹⁰ Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, "Status of World Nuclear Forces", The Federation of American Scientists.

⁹¹ Steven Pifer and James Tyson, "Third-country nuclear forces and possible measures for multilateral arms control".

possessed nuclear weapons. Thus, the world must continue to further embrace the spirit of multilateralism in the quest for nuclear disarmament, for the consequences of a full-blown nuclear dispute places not only the nuclear powers at risk but even the rest of the world.

Further Research

Delegates are required to conduct a further inquiry into the fundamental aspects of the topic and ask questions such as: What further multilateral efforts are being made as regards the regulation of nuclear weapons? Are countries more open to nuclear non-proliferation as opposed to nuclear disarmament? Which of these directions is more probable to gather multilateral support? What are the ways by which the existing international system can be made stronger? How can greater participation be elicited from all relevant nations? How can the United Nations do to secure greater cooperation towards non-proliferation and disarmament? What role can civil society groups, NGOs and religious organizations play in encouraging multilateral cooperation?

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Thinking Outside the Box in Multilateral Disarmament and Arms Control Negotiations is the third volume of papers from UNIDIR's project Disarmament as Humanitarian Action: Making Multilateral Negotiations Work. It examines the difficulties in attaining the threshold of consensus in the multilateral disarmament and arms control context and suggests approaches to overcome them.

John Burroughs, "Reaching Nuclear Disarmament", Beyond Arms Control: Challenges and Choices for Nuclear Disarmament, ed. Ray Acheson (New York: Reaching Critical Will, 2010), available at: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/publications-and-research/publications/105-beyond-arms-control-challenges-and-choices-for-nuclear-disarmament> (accessed 12 December 2019)

Beyond arms control: challenges and choices for nuclear disarmament is a collaborative work of non-governmental researchers and activists who critically examine the mainstream discourse of nuclear weapons. The book explores some of the most important challenges that governments and civil society will in reviewing the Non-Proliferation Treaty, highlighting the prospects and pitfalls for nuclear disarmament in the current world order.

Nuclear Threat Initiative, “Nuclear Disarmament Resource Collection”, available at: <https://www.nti.org/analysis/reports/nuclear-disarmament/> (accessed 13 December 2019)

This is the official website of the Nuclear Threat Initiative. The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization with a mission to strengthen global security by reducing the risk of use and preventing the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and to work to build trust, transparency, and security. It has a collection of treaties and regimes which form the international framework governing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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This is the official website of the Nuclear Threat Initiative. The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization with a mission to strengthen global security by reducing the risk of use and preventing the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and to work to build trust, transparency, and security. It has a collection of treaties and regimes which form the international framework governing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Paul Meyer, “Free the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty: Functionality over Forum”, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists: Web Edition, 19 September 2011, available at: <https://thebulletin.org/2011/09/free-the-fissile-material-cut-off-treaty-functionality-over-forum/#> (accessed 12 December 2019)

This article critically examines the international community’s efforts to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. It bemoans the lip service paid to the negotiation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and the apparent failure to make any progress.

Paul Meyer, “Is There Any Fizz Left in the Fissban? Prospects for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty”, Arms Control Today, December 2007, available at: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007-12/features/there-any-fizz-left-fissban-prospects-fissile-material-cutoff-treaty> (accessed 12 December 2019)

This article examines the pursuit of a multilateral ban on the production of fissile material highly enriched uranium and plutonium. It also questions the self-imposed stalemate in the achievement of this aim.

Stephen Pifer and James Tyson, “Third-Country Nuclear Forces and Possible Measures for Multilateral Arms Control”, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/third->

[country-nuclear-forces-and-possible-measures-for-multilateral-arms-control/](#) (accessed 13 December 2019)

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II. Addressing Conflict Situations in Middle East

“Humanitarian response, sustainable development and sustaining peace are three sides of the same triangle to prevent escalation of conflicts” – **António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations**⁹²

Introduction

The Middle East is an economically, politically, and culturally sensitive region which occupies a unique and strategic geographical position. Hence, it is no coincidence that every great power in history has sought to advance its interests in the region. This desire to advance interests, by countries within and outside the region, has led to a series of conflicts. The region is home to the greatest single oil reserve.⁹³ This vast amount of oil has been a major cause of foreign involvement in the region which had gone on to spark several campaigns of violence.

In addition to its strategic position, the Middle East is the place of origin and spiritual centre of the three most prominent monotheistic religions, namely Christianity, Judaism and Islam.⁹⁴ This unique attribute has also contributed to religious wars, conflicts and unrest. The Shi’a- Sunni divide plagues the Islamic world, while Jerusalem; a city considered holy in Islam and Christianity and central to Judaism, has been “destroyed at least twice, besieged 23 times, attacked an additional 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times”.⁹⁵ Quite notably, due to its geopolitical importance, any inter- and intra-state conflict in the Middle East has the potential not only of destabilising the region as a whole or upsetting the regional balance of power but also affecting global stability.

There is no common agreement on the geographical areas and the Middle East countries. The precise amount of countries existing in the region has not been universally recognised. However, according to the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the primary international agency for the Middle East, the countries internationally recognised as belonging to the Middle East include: the Kingdom of Bahrain, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Iraq, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan State of Kuwait, Lebanese Republic, Libya, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Kingdom of Morocco, Sultanate of Oman, State of Palestine, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Yemen.⁹⁶ For this background guide, the ESCWA guide for the countries in the Middle East shall be used.

92 Remarks to the Security Council Open Debate on “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace” by United Nations Secretary General António Guterres, 10 January 2017.

93 The Position of Oil in the Middle East: Potential Trends, Future Perspectives, Market and Trade.

94 Diverse religious identities of the Middle East.

95 Eric H. Cline’s tally in Jerusalem Besieged.

96 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia – Member States [Website].

Impact of Conflict in the Middle East

Over the years, the Middle East has been engulfed in conflicts and this has had adverse effects on the area. The region is riddled with human rights violation, political instability, humanitarian crises and economic issues amongst others all resulting from the constant conflicts arising in the region. Conflicts in countries such as Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen have caused tragic loss of life, deep recessions, driven up inflation, worsened fiscal and financial positions, and damaged institutions. In Iraq and Afghanistan, inflation peaked at more than 30% during the mid-2000s and in Yemen and Libya at more than 15% in 2011, on the back of a collapse in the supply of critical goods and services, combined with a strong recourse to monetary financing of the budget.⁹⁷ Syria presents a more extreme case, where consumer prices rose by more than 300% between March 2011 and May 2015. Such inflation dynamics are usually accompanied by strong depreciation pressures on local currencies, which the authorities may try to resist by heavy intervention and regulation of cross-border flows. For example, the Syrian pound, which was allowed to float in 2013, officially trades at one-tenth of its pre-war value against the U.S. dollar.⁹⁸

In addition, the harmful effects of the turmoil have spilled over into neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, and Turkey, into the broader Middle East and North Africa, and even other regions, notably Europe. To varying degrees, these countries face large numbers of refugees, weak confidence and security, and declining social cohesion that undermines the quality of institutions and their ability to undertake much-needed economic reforms.⁹⁹

Beyond bombing homes, schools, hospitals, and irreplaceable cultural architecture in Syria, the Syrian Government and Saudi-led coalition have each resorted to blocking aid and impeding critical supplies from reaching starving children. The Syrian Government imposes sieges in various regions of Syria, including in so-called “de-escalation zones” such as Ghouta, severely restricting access to food and medical care for the civilian population. The Saudi-led coalition imposed a nation-wide blockade on all of Yemen’s ports and airspace, in a country where malnutrition, cholera, and diphtheria were already ravaging children and have now reached epidemic levels. The United Nations Secretary-General placed the Saudi-led coalition on his annual “List of Shame” for violations against children, despite extraordinary threats by the Saudi Government to be taken off the list. An upsetting impact of conflict in the Middle East is the unlawful video executions by warlords and national armies alike. It is not just ISIS that has promoted itself with gruesome acts of violence and savagery. Human Rights Watch documented Iraqi army soldiers and Khalifa Haftar-aligned Libyan militias proudly recording depraved acts of torture and executions of detainees. The Egyptian army and police in Sinai have also staged “shoot-outs” to cover up

⁹⁷ The Economic Impact of Conflicts and the Refugee Crisis in the Middle East and North Africa: IMF staff discussion note.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ IMF Country Report No.14/153, “The Syria Crisis as Felt in Jordan” *Selected Issues Paper* (2014) International Monetary Fund, Washington.

such executions. Governments failed to investigate, condemn, or appropriately punish repeated unlawful acts by their forces, despite sometimes promising to do so.¹⁰⁰

Another devastating impact of conflict in the Middle East is the use of children as soldiers. Houthi-Saleh forces resorted to recruiting children to help fight in Yemen. Child soldiers were also used in the Syrian conflict by multiple parties, including Kurdish armed groups and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran recruited Afghan immigrant children to fight in support of Syrian Government forces. Many people in the Middle East have fled their countries in record numbers over the past five years. Millions of Syrians escaped Syria, while the hundreds of thousands who sought refuge in Europe faced a widespread backlash against refugees. Libyans, Iraqis, Yemenis, and Egyptians joined the ranks of millions of refugees and internally displaced in the Middle East who have lost their homes, livelihoods, and communities.¹⁰¹

The life expectancy of people living in the Middle East is low due to constant wars in the region. The first Arab-Israeli war of 1948 is the first in a series of large wars in the region. The Algerian war of independence is one of the most serious conflicts during the 1950s and accounts for a large share of the total battle-related fatalities during this decade. After 1980 the region has contributed a major share of global conflict fatalities. The war between Iran and Iraq (1980-88) is by far the most deadly of these, but the later internal conflicts in Iraq also contribute significantly to the overall trend.¹⁰² Also, there is high infant mortality rate in the region which is caused mostly by malnutrition, diseases and the toxic aftermath of nuclear wars.¹⁰³

The war in Yemen has led to many human rights violations and setbacks internally and now Yemen is considered one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), out of a total population of nearly 30 million people, 22 million Yemenis require humanitarian assistance.¹⁰⁴ According to the World Health Organisation, seven million Yemenis are on the brink of famine, including 2 million children. There are 900,000 people infected with cholera, and more than 2,000 have already died.¹⁰⁵ The UN OCHA also claims that less than half of all of Yemen's medical facilities are functioning and more than half of all Yemenis lack regular access to safe drinking water. In the education sector, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has reported that two million Yemeni children are not attending school and 75% of all public-school teachers have not been paid their salaries in over a year.

¹⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch World Report 2018.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Scott Gates, Havard Hegre, Havard Mogleiv Nygard and Havard Strand, *Consequences of Armed Conflict in the Middle East and North Africa Region* (2010).

¹⁰³ Stathis N. Kalyvas and Laia Balcells, "International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict" (2010) 104(3) *American Political Science Review* 415-429.

¹⁰⁴ Yemen Humanitarian Update, Covering 26 March - 03 April 2018, Issue 9.

¹⁰⁵ World Health Organisation Report, 9 November 2017.

Sources of Conflict in the Middle East

The United Nations has through its resolutions identified three major sources of conflicts in the Middle East. Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967), 478 (1980), 986 (1995) and 1483 (2003) highlight three primary political sources of conflict in the region as: authoritarianism – a form of government characterized by strong central powers and limited political freedom; patriarchy – where men hold the power and women are largely excluded from holding any form of political power; and electoral restrictions which are unfair to a particular group of people. Also, conflicts arise from socio-cultural issues stemming mainly from the interpretation of scripture by religious clerics. Economic issues are the last source recognized by the United Nations as a source of conflict in the Middle East. Religion is still a justification point and the most effective factor in people's lives in the Middle East. Propriety, blot, honour and code of ethics are derived from religion in the Middle East. Even in Turkey as a unique successful secularist State among the other countries, religion is the first important justification point on labelling any act as “right” or “wrong”.¹⁰⁶

Owing to the great influence of religion, the interpretation of the holy scripts, which lies within the purview of the clerics, plays a foremost role in shaping the social life and the perception of the other sects and religions. Religious interpretations can indeed be used to sharpen exclusive identities and lend conviction and passion for destructive social/political programs, but it also could be used as a source of mutual understanding for reconciliation and human fellowships in modern societies.¹⁰⁷

Also, socio-cultural issues especially sectarian clashes have been continuing, as Yemen, Iraq and Syria are now enmeshed in sectarian-civil wars. These conflicts have the appearance of intra-state wars but have been noted to have some level of indirect interference and participation through proxy elements. Sectarian clashes in the Middle East are majorly between the Sunni and Shi'a Muslim sects. The 1979 Iranian revolution brought to power the first religious regime in the modern history of the Middle East. Until then, secular regimes reigned across the region, and although religion was present in public life, it was not a key factor in Middle Eastern politics. In Syria, the Assad regime has played upon the fears of minority groups to rally support from Shi'a militias from outside Syria, such as Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iraqi groups.¹⁰⁸

Indeed, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war may have led to the rise of political Islam on the ruins of Pan-Arabism, but the movements that embraced it were never close to gaining power anywhere in the Middle East before the Iranian revolution. The Islamic Revolution not only put religious figures in charge of a key Middle Eastern powerhouse, but it also stirred sectarian tensions. Attempts to export the revolution to neighbouring Arab countries led to

¹⁰⁶ A.N. Muhammed, *Non-violence and Peacebuilding in Islam* (University Press of Florida, Gainesville: 2003), p. 156.

¹⁰⁷ O. Ramsbotam, T. Woodhouse and H. Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 3rd ed. (Polity Press, Cambridge: 2012), p. 341.

¹⁰⁸ Aaron Reese, *Sectarian and Regional Conflict in the Middle East: Middle East Security Report 13* (Institute for the Study of War, Washington DC: 2013) p. 7.

a backlash, culminating in the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s. Contained and humbled by the failure to win over Shi'a communities in the Gulf States, Iran turned inward temporarily. The 2003 US invasion of Iraq, which removed the Saddam Hussein regime, opened a new window of opportunity for Tehran to establish a Shi'a crescent stretching from western Afghanistan to the shores of the Mediterranean. The Shi'a revival, and the surge in sectarian politics in Iraq and later in Syria, within the contexts of the Arab Spring, led to the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other radical Sunni groups. ISIL presented itself as the champion of Sunni Islam against the rise of Shi'a power and Iran's expansionist policies. To counteract ISIL and Sunni rebellions in Syria and in Iraq, Iran established Shi'a militias, while the Gulf States supported Sunni groups, which resulted in proxy war between the two sides wreaking havoc across the region.

However, in the Muslim societies in the Middle East three factors typically initiated unrest or riots. These include economic, political and socio-cultural issues. For example, in Tunisia, for 24 years of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, deep socio-cultural issues especially from the pressure of alienation to religion (going to mosques until eighteen, wearing a scarf, etc) and political issues (prioritizing only pro-western persons at all levels of the State, hierarchy, manipulated elections and minority governments) contributed to the eventual revolution. The key process factor here is how governments reply to people's demands. Conflicts could escalate or de-escalate depending on how governments reshape their policies according to people's demands.¹⁰⁹

Role of International Bodies and Third-Party Countries in Addressing Conflict Situations in the Middle East

Several nations seek to advance their interest in the Middle East and these advancements into the Middle East have in one way or another either affected the conflict situation in the region.

The role of most international bodies in the Middle East has been fairly limited to humanitarian efforts as opposed to political efforts such as conflict resolution, peacekeeping and mediation. The countries in the Middle East have long favoured an assertion of their independence. This is evident in the Alexandria Protocol which created the Arab League. The Protocol explicitly included "respect for the independence and sovereignty" of all its members, and, in Article 8, also stated that "systems of government established in the other Member States" are "exclusive concerns of those States".¹¹⁰ The pact however lacks a requirement that any member be prohibited from pursuing a foreign policy which could be detrimental to the policy of the League or to any of its Member States. This reluctance, coupled with interests of third-party countries like the U.S., China

¹⁰⁹ C. Yenigun, "Conflict Resolution for the Middle East: Sectarian Rapprochement" (2016) 3(2) *Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, pp. 13-27.

¹¹⁰ The Alexandria Protocol; 7 October 1994.

and Russia attempting to create a hegemony in the region, has weakened the influence of international bodies in the Middle East.¹¹¹

However, despite the restrictions the United Nations has had to face due to working under strained resources in highly complex issues that often involve power struggles among various third-party countries which have geopolitical interests in the region, the United Nations has still sought to attempt to peacefully quell conflicts in the region.¹¹² A clear example of these restrictions is in Gaza where the United Nations has tried to bring in peacekeeping forces based on recommendation from Israel but this attempt was thwarted by Hamas. This singular move restricted the United Nations from taking a protective approach, thus forcing a humanitarian approach to address security concerns in Gaza.¹¹³ The UN OCHA in Gaza has repeatedly stated that Palestinians living in Gaza are “locked in” as they face harsh movement restrictions that have only intensified since the takeover by Hamas in 2007.¹¹⁴ The United Nations has thus had it tough in addressing human rights abuses that have escalated since the U.S. announced shifting its embassy to Jerusalem.¹¹⁵ According to the United Nations Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov, this has resulted in the death of 60 Palestinian protesters, including six children, and over a thousand people have injured after Israeli troops fired live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas at protesters demonstrating in “the Great March of Return” The United Nations Special Coordinator also stated that the United Nations has a vital role to play in the future of Gaza and Israel and called on the international community to support with the end of violence in Gaza, claiming the support would be essential in order to prevent war.

The United Nations have also made efforts to placate the crisis in Lebanon ever since March 1978 when the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was created. The agency was created to confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, restore international peace and security, and assist the Lebanese Government in restoring its effective authority in the area by the Security Council.¹¹⁶ However in August 2006, the mandate was expanded by virtue of the Security Council¹¹⁷ to monitor the cessation of hostilities; accompany and support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the south of Lebanon; and extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons.¹¹⁸ The UNIFIL since April 2000 has however largely been monitoring the Blue Line; a 120 kilometre stretch that borders Israel from South-eastern Lebanon to South-western Lebanon. The UNIFIL also serves as a mediator between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israeli Defence Forces to increase confidence in both parties manage conflict and strengthen the relationship between both armies to

¹¹¹ Marco Pinfari, “Regional Organizations in the Middle East”.

¹¹² Allison Miller, “The United Nations and Middle Eastern Security”.

¹¹³ The Middle East Monitor, “Hamas rejects Israeli idea for UN peacekeepers in Gaza”.

¹¹⁴ UN, “Locked in: Humanitarian impact of two years of blockade on the Gaza Strip – OCHA special focus” August 2009.

¹¹⁵ UN News, “Security Council calls for calm following deadly Gaza clashes; diplomats debate US embassy move”.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, *About*.

¹¹⁷ Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*.

further deescalate any impending aggravation. Towards the humanitarian aspect, the UNIFIL also helps the local population through its civilian branch in actively participating in community events, performing free medical services to the locals, thus creating a relationship of trust which is necessary for the success of the UNIFIL mandate.¹¹⁹

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is one of the primary representations of the United Nations in Iraq. Established in 2003, and greatly expanded in 2007, it remains active today. The UNAMI has a goal that is centred on assisting both the government and the people of Iraq and is responsible for numerous initiatives that are critical to promoting increased levels of security. In addressing the conflict in Syria, in February 2015, the Security Council demanded Houthi rebels to “immediately and unconditionally” withdraw from all government institutions release the Syrian President and engage in UN-brokered negotiations to work towards democratic transition.

Given the nature of the conflicts in the region, intervention specifically from third party States have been important to establish peace. However, conflicts have occasionally escalated beyond the initial levels, as a result of nationalistic interests from such third-party States. The U.S. has been primarily involved in the conflict situation, particularly with the Security Council Resolution 678 (1990),¹²⁰ authorizing all Member States to use force to compel Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. Capitalising on the resolution, The U.S. was able to address the influence of Saddam Hussein. The U.S. is now working to bring an end to Israel- Palestinian conflict.

The U.S. also arranged the Madrid Conference between the USSR, Israel, Syria, Lebanon and a delegation from Palestine, and was officially the first time Israel recognised Palestine, and the first time these parties sat together. Although the Madrid Conference did not bear any fruit in regard to resolving the Israel-Palestinian crisis, it set the tone for the Oslo Accords; the first sign of any form of agreement between Israel and Palestine. However, there has still been no comprehensive formal agreement between the parties; only a few regulatory agreements.

Pursuant to an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) to prevent 9/11 from repeating itself,¹²¹ the U.S. has gone on thirty-seven campaigns to varying effectiveness in the Middle East.¹²² The first exercise of the AUMF was in Afghanistan which was at the time led by the Taliban. The U.S. has had varying levels of successes and defeats in its Middle Eastern campaign ranging from its lowest point being the war in Iraq and the success it achieved by reducing the Iranian nuclear stockpile and its reluctance to get involved in the Syrian Civil War.

¹¹⁹ United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon Missions Report, 2019.

¹²⁰ Security Council Resolution 678 (1990).

¹²¹ Authorisation for Use of Military Force of 2001 Pub.L. 107–40.

¹²² Matthew Weed, “Presidential References to the 2001 Authorisation for Use of Military Force in Publicly Available Executive Actions and Reports to Congress”.

However, in recent times the Islamic State has rapidly grown the Middle East, curtailing the influence of various interests. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was formerly a part of Al-Qaeda based in Iraq but was sent out of the Al-Qaeda network for its unnecessary use of violence and killing of Muslims. The U.S. has collaborated with various nations, including Saudi Arabia to try to improve what has been happening. However, the excessive use of force in this regard has been condemned by the international community, including the United Nations. In Yemen, Saudi Arabia has overseen a proxy war with Iranian-backed Houthi rebels. This war has killed more than 10,000 and brought millions to the brink of starvation. Despite the international outrage the US has backed the Saudis in the Yemen conflict.

The Russian Federation also has various engagements in the region and has sought to maintain a presence in the Middle East. During the Arab Spring, while the U.S. refused to support American allies, in a bid to promote democracy, Russia supported Assad in Syria. This has had positive feedback from other countries in the region as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel have all sought out Russian ties following the Arab Spring, showing that the Syrian war has served as an avenue for Russia to insert itself in Middle Eastern affairs. The Russian involvement in the Middle East has also coincided with the U.S. retreating from the Middle East.¹²³

Russia has defended its support of Assad as it claims that it only wants to bring stability to its last remaining ally in the region and to protect the Russian naval base in Latakia.¹²⁴ The Russian support of the Assad-led Government has ranged from political, economic and military support; providing Assad with the tools to quell the pro-domestic protesters. Russia has also used the Syrian war as an opportunity to strengthen ties with Iran as both countries have partnered militarily against the anti-Assad forces.¹²⁵ Russia has also teamed up with Egypt to support the Libyan National Army in its quest to control all of Libya during the Second Libyan Civil War. Although Russia is a clear supporter of the Libyan National Army (LNA), this support is very limited, evinced by Russia's refusal to be drawn into the involvement in the running of government similar to its Syrian occupation¹²⁶ The most significant symbol of Russia's support of the Libyan National Army has been the presence of Russian fighters.¹²⁷ Russia however also maintains a relationship with Government of National Accord; the LNA's rival, keeping all avenues open for any future occurrence.¹²⁸

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has also adopted a One Belt, One Road view in addressing the conflict, with attempts to expand China's influence over the Middle East

¹²³ Eugene Rumer, "Russia in the Middle East: Jack of All Trades, Master of None".

¹²⁴ Guardian, "Russian Military Presence in Syria Poses Challenge to US-Led Intervention".

¹²⁵ TASS, "Russian Military Advisors Work with All Syrian Army Units — Russian General Staff".

¹²⁶ Yury Barmin, "Russia's Endgame in Libya".

¹²⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "Putin's Not-So-Secret Mercenaries: Patronage, Geopolitics, and the Wagner Group".

¹²⁸ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "Russia's Mediation Goals in Libya".

while also simultaneously trying to reduce the U.S. influence.¹²⁹ Besides the economic and political efforts of China in the region, the PRC has also commenced significant anti-terrorism initiatives by collaborating with regional powers, providing its naval forces and selling arms to Middle Eastern countries.¹³⁰ China has partnered with Iraq to fight ISIS by providing military training to Iraqi forces and also sharing valuable intelligence,¹³¹ and with Iran militarily when both countries had a joint military exercise in the Persian Gulf in 2017.¹³²

Also to combat the threat posed by the East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement, China has had to partner with Turkish forces to enhance each other's counter-terrorism stance.¹³³ Despite its active military efforts in the region, China has refused to militarily align with any country in the Middle East. The PRC only seeks to assist in any counter terrorism effort and not support or oppose any country in the already fragile region. China also has a track record of increased diplomatic efforts in the Middle East; acting as a mediator in the Yemen Crisis by inviting a Houthi delegation to Beijing and hosting talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia.¹³⁴ In relation to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Xi Jinping himself has sought out the establishment of a Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders.

Shortcomings in Legal and Institutional Frameworks

In a bid to address the conflict situation in the Middle East, various legal and institutional frameworks were drafted by the United Nations and other third-party countries. However, these legal and institutional frameworks have not been able to address the conflict situation in the Middle East as some of these frameworks have shortcomings.

A quarter of a century after it was adopted, Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) has turned out to be a road map to limbo. Israel still occupies several of the territories it captured in 1967; no Arab State except Egypt has recognized Israel's sovereignty nor formally ended the state of war with Israel; and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians still inhabit squalid refugee camps. There was a failure to resolve territorial disputes arising from the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. These disputes involved the return of the Sinai to Egypt and the return of the Golan Heights to Syria. Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) and the Egyptian President's peace initiative failed to bring peace.¹³⁵

The shortcoming is that the language of the resolution is vague enough for each of the parties to see what it wants to see and interpret the rest out of existence. The U.S., for example, sees Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) as the embodiment of the principle of land for peace, which has been the core of U.S. policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict since

¹²⁹ John Calabrese, "China's Role in Post-Hegemonic Middle East".

¹³⁰ Olimat Muhammad S, "China and the Middle East since World War II".

¹³¹ Mordecai Chaziza, "China's Middle East Policy: The ISIS Factor".

¹³² South China Morning Post, "China and Iran Carry out Naval Exercise near Strait of Hormuz as US Holds Drill with Qatar".

¹³³ Reuters, "China's Xi calls for greater counter-terrorism cooperation with Turkey".

¹³⁴ The Middle East Observer, "Features of China's policies in the Yemeni war".

¹³⁵ Shortcomings of the Syrian Golan.

1967. But the U.S. has not specified what land Israel should give up, what peace guarantees the Arab States should provide, nor what would constitute a “just settlement” for the Palestinians. For ten years after the 1967 war, Egypt, Jordan and Syria interpreted Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) in unison. It meant that Israel had to give back all of the territory captured in the war. Until Israel did so, the Arab League agreed, it would have no peace, no recognition and no negotiations. One of the shortcomings of the resolutions is that it does not say what should come first, Israeli withdrawal or Arab recognition of Israel. Each side insisted that the other make the first concession.¹³⁶ Traditionally, the Arab States argued that the only way to implement 242 was to convene an international conference that would consider all of the issues at once and have the power to enforce a solution. This negotiating format has always been unacceptable to Israel. The three front-line Arab States also forswore bilateral negotiations with Israel. Syria, in particular, has worried that if Israel got recognition and peace on its Egyptian and Jordanian borders, Israel would never negotiate the return of the Golan Heights.

Israel contends that Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) requires each of its neighbours to recognize Israel’s right to exist and to negotiate bilaterally a secure border. That procedure, followed with Egypt in 1977-79, led to Egypt’s recognition of Israel and Israel’s withdrawal from the Sinai. One of the shortcomings of Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) was that it implied the need for a negotiated settlement, and suggested an endpoint for the negotiations, but it did not establish a mechanism or a forum for negotiations. Arab States have argued that Israel’s position defies the language of Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) that calls on Israel to withdraw “from territories occupied in recent conflict.” But Israeli officials reply that the resolution does not specify that Israel must withdraw from “all territories” or even from “the territories” captured in 1967. This was no linguistic accident, Israel argues. It contends that the word “the” was deliberately omitted to leave open the possibility that Israel could fulfil its part of the resolution by withdrawing from some, but not all of the territory it occupied in 1967.¹³⁷

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear weapon is a fundamental instrument as regards stability in the Middle East but it is not without its shortcomings. Under the deal, international monitors are authorized to monitor declared Iranian nuclear sites through numerous electronic means including, but not limited to, fibre-optic seals, cameras, sensors that detect radioactive particles, and commercial satellite imagery. The USA said that IAEA inspectors would have “24/7 access” to Iran’s “key nuclear facilities.”¹³⁸ It is however claimed that the inspection regime would not provide sufficient access to Iran’s military sites. IAEA inspectors may request access to these sites if genuine concerns of non-compliance arise but it can take up to 24 days to resolve a dispute over an access

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ The New York Times, “Obama’s Address on the Iran Nuclear Deal”.

request. This provision means that Iran would be able to covertly advance its nuclear ambitions while still abiding by the deal.¹³⁹

The Oslo Accords is an agreement signed between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on 13 September 1993, meant to effectively bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to its end by means of territorial concessions and facilitating the creation of the Palestinian Authority.¹⁴⁰ The accords were divided into two: The first chapter, dubbed Oslo-A, detailed a declaration of principles on Interim Palestinian self-government; while the second chapter, Oslo-B was finalized in 1995 and included an expansion of the Palestinian Authority's territories, mutual security engagements and the regulation of Israeli-Palestinian relations.¹⁴¹ The Israeli-Palestinian Oslo Accords, however, did not discuss four major issues, which were deemed "final status issues" to be resolved at an indeterminate later date.¹⁴² These issues were: the status of Jerusalem; final borders; the fate of Israeli settlements; and the fate of Palestinian refugees.¹⁴³

The Stockholm Agreement marks a much-needed breakthrough on Yemen, but there are certain issues with its provisions.¹⁴⁴ The document includes three key provisions: a ceasefire along the Hodeidah front and the redeployment of armed forces out of the city and its port; an agreement on prisoner exchange; and a statement of understanding on the Yemeni city of Taiz. The ceasefire is a highly significant development given that Hodeidah's port is the entry point for most of Yemen's food imports, commercial goods and humanitarian aid; currently, the country relies on imports for some 90% of its food and basic commodity needs.¹⁴⁵ This also marks the first time that Houthi forces have agreed to withdraw from one of the conflict's most significant front lines. Various points in the agreement are vaguely worded and open to different interpretations by the warring parties. For example, it talks of "the mutual redeployment of forces from the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Raslssa"; while the Houthis interpret this as removing military presence but not withdrawing, the other side thinks that the Houthis should withdraw fully.¹⁴⁶

Another challenge is the fact that Houthi forces and their affiliates have become highly entrenched in Hodeidah. Even if and when Houthi military forces make their exit, the handover of power would not be achieved immediately as local security forces, such as the police, are full of Houthi partisans and sympathizers. Dismantling these unofficial networks to re-balance civilian power will be difficult and will need to be approached carefully. Making progress on Taiz is crucial, but the provision in the agreement, which calls for the formation

¹³⁹ The Guardian, "Republicans fume over Iran nuclear deal but hope of undermining accord is slim".

¹⁴⁰ Peace Agreements & Related, *Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements ("Oslo Accords")*.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² The Oslo Accords: A Closer Look.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Stockholm Agreement*, 13 December 2018.

¹⁴⁵ Yemen food security update, 31 March 2015.

¹⁴⁶ Yemen Peace Agreements.

of a joint committee from both sides of the conflict and the Yemeni civil society to determine the working mechanisms for upcoming consultations, has not resulted in any real action on the ground. Another major downside of the Stockholm consultations is that they failed to reach an agreement on two other key issues: the reopening of Sanaa International Airport and the reunification of Central Bank of Yemen, which was split along conflict divide in September 2016.¹⁴⁷

The Viability of a Two-State Solution in Palestine

The struggle between the Israelis and the Palestinians is one of the most enduring and explosive of all the world's conflicts, with roots in the historic claim to the land which lies between the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

Over the past 100 years, Palestine has had to deal with colonisation, expulsion and military occupation, followed by a long and difficult search for self-determination and for coexistence with the nation they hold responsible for their suffering and loss. For the Jewish people of Israel, the return to the land of their forefathers after centuries of persecution around the world has not brought peace or security. They have faced many crises as their neighbours have sought to wipe their country off the map.¹⁴⁸

The two-state solution proposes two separate nations coexisting independently; the independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel. On 29 November 1947, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, a proposal by the United Nations, which recommended a partition of Mandatory Palestine at the end of the British Mandate as Resolution 181 (II) (1947).¹⁴⁹ The resolution recommended the creation of independent Arab and Jewish States and a Special International Regime for the city of Jerusalem. The two-state solution proposes to use the Green Line; the demarcation line set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between the armies of Israel, and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. After the Six-Day War, the territories captured by Israel beyond the Green Line came to be designated as East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula and are often referred to as Israeli-occupied territories.

However, there have been many deliberations and there persists four issues that have proved most challenging and each issue is a bedrock stance by each party. The first issue is that there is no consensus about precisely where to draw the line. Generally, most believe the border would follow the lines before the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, but with Israel keeping some of the lands where it has built settlements and in exchange providing other lands to the Palestinians to compensate. Israel has constructed barriers along and within the West Bank that many analysts worry creates a de facto border, and it has built

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ The British Broadcasting Corporation; A History of Conflict in the Middle East.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine

settlements in the West Bank that will make it difficult to establish that land as part of an independent Palestine. As time goes on, settlements grow theoretically making any future Palestinian State smaller and possibly breaking it up into non-contiguous pieces.

Another issue is Jerusalem, seeing as both sides claim Jerusalem as their capital and consider it a centre of religious worship and cultural heritage. The two-state solution typically calls for dividing it into an Israeli West and a Palestinian East, but it is not easy to draw the line — Jewish, Muslim and Christian holy sites are on top of one another. Israel has declared Jerusalem its “undivided capital,” effectively annexing its eastern half, and has built up construction that entrenches Israeli control of the city.

The remaining issues are not as defined as the first two, but still present pertinent matters requiring action; the issue of refugees seeing as the Palestinians were not a party to the drawing of the Green Line and they rejected UNSC 242, saying that it did not call for an independent Palestinian State and referred to them as refugees. The last issue is that of the security of both nations.

For most of the parties involved in this conflict, the two-state solution is the most preferred. In 2008, Search for Common Ground (SFCG), the world’s largest non-governmental conflict-resolution organization, released the results of a survey it commissioned, conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) of the University of Maryland, to determine attitudes of the Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli publics on the potential for nonviolent methods. The poll found that 72% of the Palestinians indicate readiness to move beyond the cycle of violence if Israel will agree to a settlement that includes the establishment of a Palestinian State based on 1967 borders. At the same time, fewer than one in five Palestinians favour pursuing a violent struggle to gain all historic Palestine. 72% of the Jewish-Israeli public also indicates readiness to agree to a Palestinian State based on 1967 borders if the Palestinians will refrain from violence for an extended period. As on the Palestinian side, less than one in five support a maximalist ideology, in this case holding on to the Occupied Territories permanently.¹⁵⁰

Gallup polling in Israel and the Palestinian Territories found non-Jewish (mostly Arabic speaking) Israelis expressing the highest level of support for the peace process, at 89%, followed by 72% support among Palestinians living in the West Bank, 70% among Jewish Israelis, and 62% among Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip.¹⁵¹

The U.S. Congress approved a resolution supporting a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on 6 December 2019.¹⁵² The resolution expresses the belief that only a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can ensure Israel’s survival as a secure Jewish and democratic State and fulfil the legitimate aspirations for a Palestinian State.

¹⁵⁰ Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA): The Potential for a Non-violent Intifada II.

¹⁵¹ Gallup News; Israelis, Palestinians Pro Peace Process, but Not Hopeful.

¹⁵² H.Res.326 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding United States efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution.

The death of the two-state solution has long been heralded by political commentators and analysts. Now, however, the vision of having an independent Palestinian State existing side by side with Israel appears more quixotic than ever. The Government of Israel had decided to annex Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, after the elections — something that would prove a hinderance to the two-state solution.¹⁵³

The two-state solution, for want of feasible and fair alternatives, remains the only viable and sustainable option on the table. The status quo is unconscionable for Palestinians, while an alternative one-state solution is unpalatable to Israelis. The two-state plan has failed not because of the fundamental irreconcilability of both positions, but from a lack of trust and imaginative leadership. The obstacles to the two-state solution itself are not insurmountable — the basic plan has been sketched out in countless peace negotiations such as the Madrid Conference of 1991,¹⁵⁴ Oslo Accords of 1993/95¹⁵⁵ and the Taba Summit of 2001.¹⁵⁶ Israel would annex parts of its settlements in a fair exchange of land and retain some military warning stations close to the Palestinian-Jordanian border. The new Palestinian State would be demilitarised, at least for a long time, but it would likely receive East Jerusalem as its capital. Palestine would grant the right of return to Palestinian refugees, while Israel might repatriate a demographically insignificant refugee population and accept partial responsibility for the 1948 exodus.

Settlements in the West Bank, which are illegal under international law but have proliferated in recent decades, are often regarded as the greatest impediment to a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Israel's skyrocketing housing prices and financial incentives created by successive Netanyahu administrations have led more and more people to settle in the West Bank. Israeli settlers should be faced with a fair choice. They can accept the authority of the Palestinian Government that must afford the economically productive settler minority the same rights as those that Israel grants its sizeable population of Arab Palestinians.

Conclusion

The Middle East is a region that is strife with constant and several conflicts. The war in Syria is not yet over and Libya is still torn by violence and instability. While there are new hopes for de-escalation in Yemen, the road to peace is still long. The concept of a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine is being dismantled piece by piece and tensions have risen again on the border between Israel and Lebanon. In an unstable situation, regional powers are competing to shift the Middle Eastern balance of power in their favour and this only adds to instability. Too often confrontation and militarization prevail over the search for win-win solutions. The risk of new escalations and new conflicts continues to be high, and we all know that a conflict in the Middle East could easily devolve into a large-scale war

153 2019 Harvard Public Opinion Project.

154 The Madrid Framework.

155 The Oslo Accords.

156 The Taba Summit.

with global implications. Against this backdrop, improved relations between Israel and the Arab World would bring a much-needed breath of fresh air.¹⁵⁷

There is however hope for the region in the light of diplomatic efforts and willingness on the parties in the region to solve these conflicts and proffer lasting answers to the problems. These deliberations should respect the powerfully rich and divergent histories of the people of the region while also understanding the geography and strategic location of all the parties in the region.

Further Research

Delegates should consider with regards to countries affected by violent conflicts, the following questions: How can the territorial integrity of countries like Syria, Yemen and Libya be sustainably restored? How can political participation in Arab countries be increased? How can the Israeli-Palestinian wound finally be healed? How can the occurrence of a global war or proxy wars be extinguished? Are there peace proposals or multilateral agreements that Member States can work towards? What steps can be taken to prevent a violent Intifada?

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This article compares the utility of rival "diffusionist" and neo-Gramscian political economy frames to explain this. Multiple international factors deter democratization. The failure of Western democracy promotion is rooted in the contradiction between the dominance of global finance capital and the norm of democratic equality; in the periphery, neo-liberalism is most compatible with hybrid regimes and, at best, "low-intensity democracy".

Mandy Turner, "Peace Building as Counter-Insurgency in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", available at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/peacebuilding-as-counterinsurgency-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory/AE37296FC1C29602BC02ED626A72665C>

157 The Cairo Review, Keeping the Hope of Peace Alive.

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This examines peace building as counter insurgency in the occupied Palestinian territory. A review of international studies, detailing the activities of the United Nations to counter the insurgents in Palestine using peace building measures

Melissa Dalton, H. Shah and T. Robbins, “US Support for Saudi Military Operations in Yemen” (2018) *Centre for Strategic and International Affairs*, available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-support-saudi-military-operations-yemen> (accessed 11 December 2019)

This is a publication on how the United States has provided intelligence, military advice, and logistical support to the Saudi Arabia–led military intervention in Yemen. The U.S. stated goals for this assistance are to restore the UN-recognized government of Yemen and preserve Saudi territorial integrity from incursion by Yemen-based Houthi rebels. Deepening Iranian support for the Houthi rebels has also reinforced U.S. concern for Yemen’s trajectory.

Robert O. Freedman, “Russian Policy: Towards the Middle East under Yeltsin and Putin”, (2001) *Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs* 461, available at: <http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp461.html> (accessed 11 December 2019)

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