

Forum: Disarmament Commission

Issue: Establishing the role of international organizations in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation in the Middle East

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Introduction

The issue of the proliferation of weapons in the Middle East has been a crucial challenge for international peace and security. The region's complex geopolitical dynamics, which are recognized for national and regional conflicts, political instability, and nonstop tensions among countries, have contributed to the development and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction. Not only guns but also include nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, which can result in tremendous hazards to human life, are used. If this continues, the potential for arm races will increase, and the damage will not only be within the country but also affect the whole Middle East region, and even threatening international peace. In resolving these significant challenges, international organizations play a vital role in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation in the Middle East. Institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have been making diplomatic efforts to reduce and stop the spread of these dangerous weaponizations. Through various treaties, conventions, and monitoring programs since the 1900s, these organizations aim to ensure compliance with international standards and regulations and foster a relationship of trust and dialogue.

However, despite their unwavering efforts, the path to full disarmament and non-proliferation remains difficult due to various obstacles. The Middle East is a region where political and ideological beliefs are strictly divided, which leads to a lack of mutual trust. The regional power dynamics oppress civilians and hinder progress in reducing weaponization to maintain the power hierarchy. The potential to resolve this issue is highly unlikely in the immediate future, which is why more international organizations should pay greater attention to enhancing progress. The failure to address weaponization in the Middle East could result in catastrophic consequences, not only for the region but also globally, leading to a perpetuating cycle of arms races, further conflict, instability, and even civil war. The involvement of international organizations remains crucial in solving this issue, not only to mitigate the damage but also to create a sustainable method for long-term peace and security in the Middle East. The role of promoting disarmament and fostering diplomatic engagement by international organizations will be essential in addressing these pressing security concerns.

Definition of Key Terms

Disarmament

Disarmament is the reduction or withdrawal of military forces and weapons. Disarmament is essential for reducing tensions and conflicts between countries. By monitoring compliance and facilitating negotiations, the Middle East can ensure sustainable development and build trust.

Non-proliferation

The prevention of an increase or spread of something, especially the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons, is known as non-proliferation. Non-proliferation is crucial to mitigating conflicts and preventing arms races. International organizations are essential in fostering agreements and promoting transparency. These efforts will help enhance regional stability, especially in the Middle East.

Nuclear weapons

Nuclear weapons are explosive devices that release energy through nuclear reactions, such as fission, fusion, or a combination of both. Their catastrophic capacity and long-term environmental impacts make them a significant threat to global security. In the Middle East, the presence of nuclear weapons increases regional tensions and the risk of conflict. International organizations can foster dialogue, implement treaties, and prevent nuclear arms development.

Stockpiling

Stockpiling is the accumulation and storage of weapons or resources for future use. In the Middle East, stockpiling poses significant challenges to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, as excessive stockpiles increase the risk of weapons falling into the hands of non-state actors. It could also trigger conflict and undermine regional stability for both civilians and politicians. International organizations can promote transparency, monitor arms reserves, and encourage agreements to limit stockpiles. This would reduce tensions, prevent escalation, and enhance trust among countries.

Small arms

Portable firearms are designed for personal use by military, law enforcement, or civilian individuals. Small arms are characterized by their size, weight, and functionality. Examples include pistols, rifles, and shotguns. Small arms play a significant role in discussions around non-proliferation because they are small and easily transported across borders. Unlike nuclear weapons, which require significant expertise to handle, small arms are more accessible to ordinary citizens. Therefore, it is crucial to reinforce measures for the non-proliferation of small arms.

Background

The 1995 Middle East resolution (1995)

On December 15, 1995, representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen ratified the treaty establishing the Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ). This agreement recalled from the Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) of 1971 and the resolutions adopted during the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1993. Member states agreed to a protocol banning the development, production, or testing of nuclear weapons, as well as prohibiting the illegal disposal of nuclear waste in the ocean or discharging it into the atmosphere. The treaty emphasized that nuclear energy should be utilized solely for economic development and the social progress of member states. To ensure compliance, the MENWFZ treaty established a supervisory framework comprising the Commission of the MENWFZ and its subsidiary Executive Committee. These bodies were tasked with overseeing the implementation of the treaty's provisions and maintaining adherence to its terms. The 1995 Middle East Resolution further underlined the necessity of universal compliance with the Treaty on the non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It called upon member states to accede to the NPT and place their nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). These measures aimed to strengthen trust and accountability, contributing to regional stability and global non-proliferation efforts.

Iran Nuclear Deal and The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) (2015)

Iran Nuclear Deal, which is also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is an agreement made in 2015 between Iran and the global power; United states, United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, and Germany. The mjr goal for JCPOA was to prevent Iean from developing nuclear weapons while allowing peaceful nuclear activities. With the strict international oversight, Iran will have more compliance with the agreement and allow the country to feel relief from armed tension. According to the JCPOA, Iran has agreed to reduce the total number of machines used for uranium by more than half, reducing to around five thousands working machines in 10 years. The IAEA has also involved in the regular access of Iran's nuclear facilities to verify the compliance, which gave no room for Iran to develop their chemical and nuclear weapons. However, in 2018, as the US president Donald Turmp withdrew from the JCPOA, Iran has went back to the increasing tensions in producing chemical weapons. In recent years, JCPOA is in a fragile position as they lost the power to revive the deal with all the member states.

Middle East weapon free zone (2019–present)

In November 2019, the United Nations held the first conference to establish a Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ). This idea was first proposed in the 1970s by Iran and Egypt, and it became more prominent with the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which was adopted during the Nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The goal of the conference was to create a treaty that would ban the development, production, and possession of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons in the Middle East. Participating countries also discussed ways to ensure that all nuclear facilities in the region would be under international inspection. However, key countries like Israel and the United States did not attend the conference, which made it harder to achieve progress. Despite this, the countries that participated showed their dedication to

promoting disarmament and peace in the region. International organizations like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) were identified as essential in overseeing and verifying compliance with such agreements. Although there are still many challenges, including political tensions and distrust between countries, this conference was a step forward in the effort to make the Middle East a safer and more stable region.

Major Parties Involved

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

IAEA is an international organization that promotes the peaceful use of nuclear energy and ensures that nuclear technology is not used for unethical, inhumanitarian, or military purposes. IAEA was established in 1957 and plays a crucial role in enhancing safe, secure, and sustainable nuclear application worldwide. IAEA focuses on three objectives which are verification, safety and technology transfer. The verification is to inspect nuclear facilities in member states to make sure that nuclear materials are not diverted for military use which is essential in preventing nuclear proliferation. The safety is for developing international safety standards which will provide instruction to ensure the protection and safety of innocent people. Lastly, the technology transfer is where IAEA supports the country with the usage of nuclear protection. IAEA work with 175 different member states and ensure compliance with treaties such as NPT.

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

OPCW is an international organization dedicated to ban all the chemical weapons and prevent their spread worldwide. OPCW was established in 1997 and they mainly work to enforce the provisions of the treaty of Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) that is aimed for the prohibition of development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons. OPCW work with three objectives which are verification, disarmament, and assistance. Similar of IAEA, OPCW monitor the chemical facilities and stockpiles which could potentially create chemical weapons. In working for the disarmament, OPCW supervises the destruction of declared chemical weapons. And lastly for assistance and protection, OPCW supports the nations in developing the measures to protect against chemical weapons.

Iran

Iran has faced numerous challenges regarding disarmament and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in recent years. Despite the efforts of international organizations, tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear program continues, raising concerns about regional stability and security. The lack of comprehensive trust between Iran and international powers has exacerbated the conflicts. The role of international organizations, such as the UN and the IAEA is crucial in promoting disarmament and ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in Iran. This

complex situation underscores the need for stronger global cooperation and consistent diplomacy to establish peace in Iran.

Israel

Israel has faced many challenges in achieving disarmament and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. With its unknown progression on nuclear weapons, Israel's regional security remains controversial. This has caused distrust and tension with neighboring countries, making it harder to find peaceful solutions. International organizations like the United Nations and the IAEA are trying to encourage disarmament and prevent nuclear proliferation. However, similar to Iran, their efforts are often stopped by political disagreements, lack of trust, and conflicting ideologies between countries in the region.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1950s	Iran's nuclear program starts with the assistance of the US in part of "Atoms for Peace" program under the administration of US President Dwight D. Eisenhower.
1953	Iran launches the civilian nuclear program initiative to achieve nuclear cooperation agreements with other nuclear capable countries.
1968	The Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is opened for agreement. NPT has recognized five nations for "nuclear weapons states"; the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, and China. All the states in the Middle East have signed and ratified NPT today.
December, 1974	Egypt and Iran proposed Resolution 3236 to the UN General Assembly for the establishment of the Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (MENWFZ) is officially granted.
1980	Israel joins the international consensus regarding the MENWFZ which further enhanced the establishment of the zone.
1990-1991	The Gulf War occurred. Iraq fired Scud missiles various times towards Israel and Saudi Arabia.
May 2003	The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is launched by President George W. Bush to counter WMD proliferation. PSI is a global attempt to stop the trafficking of WMDs in 105 nations today.

2010	NPT Review Conference discusses disarmament in the Middle East. They claimed to achieve nuclear non-proliferation and implement the MENWFZ.
March, 2011–present	The Syrian civil war witnessed the use of chemical weapons which resulted in “Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons” stated by OPCW. The UN Security Council Resolution 2118 also forced Syria to eliminate chemical weapons stockpiles and allow inspections by UN and OPCW.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Establishing Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ)

The first attempt was done by UN in 1995 May. The UN adopted the “resolution on Middle East” during the NPT review and extension conference to establish the MENWFZ. It urged the nations in Middle East, particularly Israel to accede to the treaty and place nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguard. This resolution made the groundwork for future negotiation and discussion on non-proliferation and disarmament in Middle East.

IAEA advancing Nuclear Transparency and MENWFZ Goals

The second major attempt was by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1970s but increased the focus in 1990s. IAEA developed and implemented the safeguards and verification mechanisms for nuclear facilities in the Middle East. They worked relentlessly with the Middle Eastern countries to ensure and inspect that nuclear facilities are used solely for peaceful purposes. They were responsible to inspect, monitor, and cooperate technically with the countries to build transparency and trust among the states which have significantly reduced the restraining influences on each other. The IAEA also enhanced and advanced the goal of a MENWFZ in the region.

OPCW addressing Syria’s Chemical Weapon Crisis

The organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and UN collaborated to supervise the destruction of Syria’s declared chemical weapons stockpile from 2013 to 2014. The use of chemical weapons in Syrian Civil War have brought a devastating influence in its nation and threaten the neighboring countries. The Syrian Civil War was an immediate crisis to resolve as it resulted in massive loss of life, destruction of infrastructure and land, and most importantly, violation of Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) which Syria has signed in 2013. With the collaboration of OPCW and UN, the removal and destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons have begun under international supervision. This operation which involved many countries and international organization was a significant effort to reduce the chemical weapons proliferation in Syria.

Possible Solutions

Enhancing Transparency

International organizations like the IAEA can encourage Middle Eastern nations to provide detailed information about their nuclear programs and permit regular inspections. During these inspections, countries should clearly explain the purpose and location of their nuclear activities. If any violations are discovered, penalties such as the temporary closure of nuclear facilities could be imposed. These measures would help ensure nuclear technology is used only for peaceful purposes and reduce suspicions among countries in the region.

Strengthening Regional cooperation

The United Nations (UN) and the Arab League can work together to create a framework for Middle Eastern countries to collaborate on security problems and limit the development of nuclear weapons. Regular discussions, shared monitoring systems, and joint efforts to develop civilian nuclear energy programs could help reduce tensions and discourage competitive arm races. By working together, these countries can create a safer and more stable environment.

Providing Benefits for Disarmament

To motivate nations to dismantle their nuclear weapons programs, incentives such as financial aid, access to peaceful nuclear technology, or lifting of trade restrictions could be offered. By showing the positive consequences of disarmament, these efforts could encourage more countries to take action and support long term peace.

Imposing strict sanctions on Violators

Nations that violate the agreements or misuse nuclear technology should have economic penalties, trade restrictions, or limits on importing and exporting advanced technologies. Consistent penalties would send a strong message that violations will not be tolerated, encouraging nations to respect agreements and prioritize peaceful uses of nuclear energy and reduce the potential for weaponization.

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