



UNA-UK/FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH ONE DAY CONFERENCE

Guide to the afternoon sessions

*Creation of Road-map towards a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons
and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction (MEW MDFZ)*

Introduction

Nuclear Weapons Free Zones represent a symbolic and tangible mechanism by which the creation, proliferation and use of nuclear weapons is prohibited within a defined geographical area. They not only add to the security of the area in question, but support the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Five such zones currently exist, but the aim of creating a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East remains the most critical and difficult challenge.

The idea of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons first gained international support through the 1974 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3263 (XXIX), when it commended, "the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapons free zone in the region of the Middle-East". However, it was not until the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, and the formulation of a resolution on the Middle-East, that the idea was set out in a more substantial form which set out steps to facilitate a regional conference on a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction. In NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), it was urged that,

"Recognizing that, pursuant to article VII of the Treaty, the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones contributes to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime."

It was further reiterated in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document that,

"The Conference reaffirms the importance of the Resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and recalls the affirmation of its goals and objectives by the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The

Conference stresses that the resolution remains valid until the goals and objectives are achieved."

The document goes on to state that the UN Secretary General, in collaboration with the sponsors of the 1995 Middle East Resolution as well as countries in the region would seek to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of such a zone.

Group Discussion

Students are invited to debate within their group the key issues in the establishment of MEWMDFZ. It is entirely up to you how and what you debate, but students are encouraged to think about the issues in the context of drawing up a tentative plan towards the creation of the Zone. Throughout, a facilitator (a United Nations Association UK or Foreign & Commonwealth Office staff member) will be present to offer guidance and support.

Some of the issues that you may find helpful to debate may include:

- The utility of 'de-coupling' a MEWMDFZ from the overall Middle East Peace Process
- The pros and cons of encouraging Israel to officially declare its nuclear weapons
- Should the United States bring more pressure to bear on Israel through, for example, restricting its indirect military aid to the country?
- Will enforcing sanctions on Iran help bring it back into fruitful discussions and force it to facilitate enhanced IAEA inspections and monitoring?
- Should Israel join the NPT regime?
- Will the proposed 'nuclear fuel bank' facility encourage Iran to discontinue uranium enrichment processes?
- Is the MEWMDFZ merely 'pie in the sky', and a distraction from the greater Middle East Peace Process?
- How should the international community best engage with Iran?
- Will the current destabilization in North Africa and beyond, consign the MEWMDFZ to the scrapheap?
- What role can the UK, EU or United Nations play in fostering Middle East support for the proposed zone?
- How can a MEWMDFZ be promoted to Iran, Israel and others as 'security enhancing'?
- How will the potential absence of Egypt from negotiations affect the possibility of sustaining debate on the MEWMDFZ?
- What incentives, if any, might be brought to bear on Israel and Iran?
- Are Iran's security concerns justified?
- Does Iran have the right to enrich its own uranium?
- Can any productive discussion occur with Iran so long as it maintains such internal political tensions?

- Might current North African/Middle Eastern political upheavals, if they conclude with processes toward democratisation, aid future attempts to create a MEWMDFZ?
- What role might civil society institutions play in discussions?
- Can conventional arms be excluded from discussions?
- Would financial aid win over countries in the region?

Written Task

It is anticipated that the culmination of your group's discussion will be the creation of a simple 'Ten point plan of action' which sets out possible steps that might be taken by the international community and relevant parties in the region towards the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass destruction. Below are examples of ten-point plans from different political contexts:

National Committee on American Foreign Policy's Ten-Point Peace Plan for Northern Ireland (2003)

1. The full implementation of the Belfast Agreement;
2. A straightforward statement from all paramilitary groups that the war is over, along with agreement on the full decommissioning of their weaponry and a pledge that there will be a real, total, and permanent cessation of all paramilitary activity;
3. The normalization of British military forces, armaments, and installations to agreed peacetime levels;
4. The full implementation of the Patten Commission's recommendations;
5. Unconditional support for the Police Service of Northern Ireland;
6. The full restoration of the Northern Ireland government and all other institutions provided for in the Belfast Agreement;
7. The amendment of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) to eliminate or severely restrict the power to suspend the Northern Ireland governmental institutions called for and established under the Belfast Agreement;
8. The participation of all political parties in the development and implementation of a Bill of Rights;
9. Holding elections as scheduled;

10. The establishment of a Northern Ireland Peace Commission to monitor those issues agreed on but not capable of instant implementation and to report periodically to the public and to the British and Irish governments for their response and action.

The United States and European Union Common Principles on Small Arms and Light Weapons (1998)

1. Establish a working group to promote increased cooperation and information sharing (transparency), and to evaluate the progress made by the United States and European Union on the issue;
2. Cooperate in addressing the problems relating to the small arms issue, including working to complete the Firearms Protocol by 2000. This protocol is being negotiated in Vienna as part of the UN International Transnational Organized Crime Convention (TOC);
3. Coordinate efforts to provide assistance where the accumulation and spread of small arms is most severe;
4. Promote support for the observance and enforcement of the 1998 moratorium signed by all members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and targets the importation, exportation, and manufacture of light weapons;
5. Promote the observance of UN sanctions governing arms transfers to regions of conflict;
6. Cooperate in considering measures to combat illicit arms brokering and measures to prevent unauthorized retransfers;
7. Promote the inclusion of weapons collection and destruction measures in UN Peacekeeping mandates;
8. Cooperate for more effective coordination of assistance in regions severely affected by small arms;
9. Work together in regional fora on the issue;
10. Coordinate U.S.-EU planning for a successful outcome to the 2001 UN Conference.