



PRINCIPLES OF ESTABLISHING A MIDDLE EAST WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION FREE ZONE (MEWMDFZ)

F. H. HAMMAD, ADEL M. ALI
Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority, Cairo, Egypt

The Middle East is one of the most dangerous regions in the world. It has suffered conflicts and wars- with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) implications-at higher frequency and intensity than any other region during the last 60 years. The Middle East was the largest importer of conventional weapons in the world since the second gulf war and the UNSCR 687, which aimed at destroying the Iraqi WMD capabilities and capacity. This arms race is fueled by stockpiles of nuclear and other WMD. In addition several countries remain outside the global nonproliferation and disarmament regimes such as the NPT, CWC and BWC.

The situation is further complicated by the serious problems facing the Middle East peace process, which is not only threatening peace and security in the region but also in the world. This unstable risky situation cannot continue like this and cannot be handled step by step any more. The establishing of a MEWMDFZ in the context of a regional security system is the only way out. It is a difficult and remote objective but a tenable one. It is essential is to work out the technical, legal and political framework of the envisaged system.

This paper deals with efforts undertaken to establish a (MEWMDFZ) and the development of the underling principles, based on lessons learnt from the evolution of NWFZs as well as regional and global nonproliferation, arms control and disarmament (NPACD) developments.

THE SUPPORT TO ESTABLISH A MENWFZ AND A MEWMDFZ

The most important are:

In 1974, following the Oct.1973 war, Iran and Egypt submitted a draft resolution to the UNGA on the establishment of a MENWFZ , which was adopted as resolution 3263 on Dec. 1974. Since then, this resolution is adopted annually.

In April 1990, President Mubarak declared Egypt's support for ensuring that the ME becomes a zone free from all types of WMD and the establishment of verification measures to ascertain full compliance by all states in the region.

The Mubarak initiative received the widest regional and global support. The most important are:

The endorsement of UNSC resolution 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999)

The support of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension meeting which extended the NPT expressed in Decision 2, the principles and objectives document and the ME resolution

The ME resolution was further supported by the 2000 NPT review conference which also called upon Israel (with name) for first time to join the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards. This also gave a strong support to the IAEA relevant General Conference resolutions.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE NWFZS MOVEMENT AND OTHER RELATED REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The most important are:

Security and political considerations played major roles in establishing the NWFZs. This is why long times were taken for the development of most of the zones. Some important examples:

- The regional and global threat of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 was the major driving force for establishing the Tlatelolco treaty and the NPT.
- The declaration of the denuclearization of Africa in 1964 by the OAU in response to the French nuclear testing in Algeria gave support to the Latin America movement and was also the driving force to the African movement to establish the zone.
- The African efforts to conclude the Pelindaba treaty was only possible after the political change in South Africa which ended the apartheid regime and led to the accession of South Africa to the NPT in 1991.
- The driving force for the Rarotonga treaty (1985) was the threat to the region from nuclear testing in South Pacific. The associated protocols were completed in 1996 after the end of the last French and Chinese tests.

The scope of NWFZs evolved with time.

-While Tlatelolco (1967) and the NPT (1968) allows peaceful nuclear explosions (and the implicitly the possession or the handling of nuclear devices), Rarotonga (1985) prohibits stationing of any kind of nuclear weapon (assembled or unassembled). Further, Pelindaba (1996) prohibits R&D, manufacturing, storing and acquisition of nuclear weapons.

-Verification in all NWFZs is undertaken by the IAEA. The role of commissions created by the various treaties is nominal. Verification of dismantling of nuclear weapons that existed was addressed only by Pelindaba, which required multilateral verification.

Cooperative monitoring regional - global verification is also an important development, which is being applied in the IAEA-Euratom arrangement and the IAEA-ABACC arrangement.

The collapse of the non-cooperative punitive UNSCOM monitoring and verification imposed by UNSCR 687 (1991) on Iraq.

The development of the IAEA Model Protocol (IAEA InfCirc 540) additional to InfCirc 153 as well as the CWC with more openness and intrusiveness

ESTABLISHMENT OF MEWMDFZ

In view of the important regional and global developments a set of Principles for nonproliferation and disarmament were developed in connection with establishment a MEWMDFZ with a co-operative integrated monitoring and verification system, which deals with nuclear, biological, chemical and missiles. It is also based on regional–global verification as well as the transparency embodied in the CWC and the IAEA additional protocol. The essential political factor that has to be satisfied is that the peace process has to be restored. It is also important to work towards establishing the MEWMDFZ as a part of the regional security system. Since establishing zones take long times, it is essential to start addressing and studying the political, legal and technical aspects of the potential MEWMDFZ.