



2011 CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR POLICY CONFERENCE

A MIDDLE EAST WMD FREE ZONE CONFERENCE: PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

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KELLY: Good morning, everybody. Welcome to this panel on “A Middle East WMD Free Zone Conference: Preparing for Success.” I’m Allison Kelly and I’m the director for disarmament and nonproliferation in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin. And for my sins, or hopefully for my future incarnation I chaired the negotiations at the NPT Review Conference last year on the Middle East issue.

We have a very distinguished panel here this morning. To my left I have Ambassador Seyed Hossein Mousavian of Princeton University. Immediately to my right I have General Shlomo Brom from the Institute of National Security Studies in Israel. And to the right, Ambassador Khaled Shamaa from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Egypt. I won’t read out their biographies. You can find them on page 35 and 36 of the conference booklet.

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The Middle East resolution agreed at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference called upon all states in the Middle East to take practical steps aimed at making progress toward *inter alia* the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical and biological – and their delivery systems.

The 2010 review conference last May endorsed a number of practical steps, of which the first was that the U.N. secretary general and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Middle East resolution – that’s the U.S., U.K. and the Russian Federation – in consultation with the states of the region would convene a conference in 2012 to be attended by all states of the Middle East on the establishment of the zone, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the states of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear weapons states. It was agreed that the 2012 conference would take as its terms of reference the 1995 resolution.

Reactions from the U.S., which was at the conference last May, and Israel, which was not, were negative in the immediate aftermath. Nine months later it would be useful to have a considered assessment from panelists as to whether the 2010 text provides a satisfactory basis for progress towards a zone.

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Recent months have seen turmoil and change in the political establishment in a number of states in the region, including in Egypt, which has been a major player on this issue over the years. How will this play into the process? What is required now to get the process on track?

The 2010 text sets out certain steps, including the designation of a facilitator and of a host government, and for underpinning work by international organizations and by civil society, which has played such a significant role in work to date. What can the panelists say at this stage?

What can we learn from the past in terms of what to do and what not to do? The ACRS process registered some limited progress. What can we draw from that on substance and process? What should be

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the agenda of the 2012 conference? The 1995 resolution is broad. Where should we start? How will the issues of Israeli nuclear capability and the Iranian issue be addressed?

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Attendance. Will all states of the region participate? What are the expectations of panelists? What should be the level of participation and the duration of the conference? How high, how long? What should be the outcome on substance and on next steps? What will constitute success? What needs to be done in the period between now and the conference to make it a success, and how can we do it?

So to start us off in answering these questions I would like to call on Ambassador Shamaa. Khaled, would you like to make the first pitch on this?

SHAMAA: Thank you. Thank you very much, Ambassador Kelly. Thank you for your introduction, your questions, but more importantly I'd like to thank you very much for your contribution in making the 2010 NPT Review Conference a success. And you, among several actors of that conference, have been critical in that success.

Before answering your questions, let me start with just two quick observations. First of all, of course, to thank the Carnegie Endowment for the opportunity, and also for an evolving thinking on all things nuclear, as witnessed by the name of the conference itself, that was shifted all the way from nonproliferation in previous years to this year's nuclear policy. Of course, hoping that George Perkovich's obvious fingerprints here will take it even further up to nuclear disarmament, which is no longer considered inappropriate, and we have to thank President Obama for that.

Second, I couldn't but notice that the Middle East was absent from Jessica Mathews' list of most pressing issues yesterday. That of course was in contrast to Ambassador Celso Amorim's going – no less than stating that the biggest challenge to the nuclear order is actually the Middle East.

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Now, being from the region, my views might be biased, but I believe that at least what happens in the Middle East is liable to define the future of the NPT, or the nuclear order, whichever way you want to call it, of course not withstanding two more global elements, which is nuclear disarmament and nuclear cooperation.

I shall not go through the history of Egypt's long-standing quest for a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. I believe this is quite known. But simply to say that that started jointly with Iran, actually, in 1974, at the United Nations General Assembly.

After these almost 40 years we have come to the point of an agreement at the 2010 NPT Review Conference in terms of work plan comprising a process for the implementation of the 1995 resolution, and establishment of the WMD-free zone in the Middle East. Of course that is basically as a result of a long-standing goal that has passed from being an objective by Egypt and the Arab states into becoming a global objective.

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Now the agreement on implementation process for the 1995 resolution – which, by the way, was absent from the resolution itself – was made possible through this global support for the goal of establishing a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, but more specifically, American cooperation that started well before the review conference. Of course the U.S. cooperation, pivotal as it is, was not possible without the new thinking and leadership by the Obama administration. That started, of course, with his famous Prague speech and his pledge to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Thus, what we encountered in 2010 was a U.S. administration that was willing to engage and cooperate towards enhancing and strengthening the NPT. And as a matter of fact, the work plan agreed on the Middle East comprises many ideas that are actually American ideas, and effects that have been endorsed at the top of the U.S. administration. And that is in response to your question with regard to the actions and aftermath.

Naturally on the question of next steps that you posed, I believe the obvious answer here is to begin implementation of that process adopted by the NPT Review Conference, and here the first step is appointment by the U.N. secretary general of a facilitator, and second step would be the designation of a host government. That is precisely what is spelled out in the document that was initiated and adopted by the conference.

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It goes without saying that these two steps are only procedural and should not be viewed as anything more than that, and thus there should be no reason for any further delay in implementing them. But nevertheless, in and of themselves, in spite of being procedural, they still represent an important confidence-building measure by the three repository states, particularly the U.S., and at the same time they represent an implementation of a commitment by these three states.

Now once appointment of facilitators and subsequently the designation of a host government are accomplished starts the more diplomatically intensive part in this process, which is the consultations that the facilitator is mandated to undertake with the states of the region in conjunction with the SG and the three repository states on the necessary preparations for the convening of the 2012 conference.

Having said that, I would like to go back to your earlier question on whether 2010 text provides a satisfactory basis for progress towards a free zone. Basically the whole point is not about the text, but more an issue of political will. And it is here once again the importance of political leadership to guide this process into the right path. The objective is enhancing and strengthening the NPT, and that is precisely why this role has been accorded to the three repository states, and it is here again the importance of American leadership, as well of course as Russian and British leadership in this regard.

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Evidently issues like the agenda of the conference, attendance, level of participation, duration of the conference, as well as the outcome and next steps are the main issues that have to be dealt with by the facilitators, as well as the U.N. secretary general, in the preparatory consultations or the preparatory phase with the states of the region, as well as with regard to the conference itself.

In essence the 2012 conference represents the launching of a negotiating process, ideally with the participation of all states of the region. Objective – the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and

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other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. And as spelled out in the 2010 document, terms of reference would be the 1995 resolution.

The question that begs itself here is whether such an objective can be achieved in a conference that lasts for a few days – two, three, four, whatever that may be the case. Rationally that is not quite feasible in practical terms. Therefore, the concept is that of a process of negotiations and not a one-time event to be launched by that conference, by the 2012 conference and based on these terms of reference by the 1995 resolution.

Thus, going back again to your other question regarding the success of the conference, that can be measured through an agreement specifying the follow-on steps – in other words, the negotiating process and what steps should be taken in that regard – as well as a commitment to the objective of establishing a zone free of all of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, or whichever way you want to formulate it.

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Now on this specific element, the element of commitment, I would just like to remind everybody that I have not heard of any state that has stated openly its opposition to the goal of the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. On the contrary, all states have expressed their support for that objective.

Now it would be useful to have a look at what is it exactly in terms of the terms of reference of the 1995 resolution. And here it has to be pointed out that the resolution contains some key elements. First, calling on states in the region not party to the NPT to accede to it, thereby accepting an international, legally binding obligation not to acquire nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices, and to accept IAEA safeguards on all their nuclear activities.

Second, it urges the non-parties that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities to accept full-scope IAEA safeguards. And of course here with regard to the issue of unsafeguarded facilities I believe it has become even an additional or a paramount importance in view of the aging factor of such facilities and the catastrophic safety and health consequences which I'm sure we can all appreciate more following our discussion yesterday about the incident in Japan.

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The third element of the resolution is for all states in the Middle East to take practical steps aimed at making progress towards the establishment of an effectively verifiable zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This is basically the essence of that negotiating process that is supposed to be launched by the 2012 conference.

You posed another question with regard to the role of civil society and international organizations, both of which are extremely important but different in nature in relation to their contribution to that process, first to the conference and to the negotiating process.

With regard to international organizations, as spelled out they have a very specific goal and that is the preparation of background documentation for the 2012 conference. These documents should include the modalities for the zone, in particular for the case of the IAEA modalities relating to verification of

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nuclear activities, as well as other elements that can be included in an eventual treaty to be concluded on the establishment of the zone, and here of course the agency has had some good experience, whether through previous studies that it has conducted on the Middle East zone, but also its involvement in negotiations of other nuclear weapon-free zones.

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As for civil society, this is an extremely important goal, both for civil society from within the region – in other words, local civil society – but of course civil society and various institutes outside the region, which have in the past undertaken tremendous efforts in raising awareness regarding the importance of achieving establishment of a Middle East nuclear weapon-free zone. As a matter of fact, sooner rather than later. And the purpose here is to prevent what we can describe as a meltdown of the global nuclear order, otherwise the so-called NPT.

On the developments in the region, and more specifically what has happened in Tunisia and Egypt and in several other countries, I would like to leave you here with one final thought in this regard. The youth and people of Egypt have sought democracy and justice, and they got them. They will also seek their security, including their security against nuclear threats. And rest assured that they will get it, preferably in a manner that enhances the nuclear order, enhances the NPT.

And I will just like to give you a small example in this regard. The other day I was in a conversation with a foreign ambassador in Cairo and he was describing to me that he went to Tahrir, he met with the youth from the Tahrir Square, and he asked them specifically about how do they view, what are their thoughts with regard to the WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

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The answer as told to me by that ambassador was quite simple. We want the same rule to apply to everyone. In other words, that can be translated into equality and justice. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Khaled, for that very structured presentation, which I think has given us a very useful start. Now I'd like to give the floor to Shlomo, who I am certain is going to give us quite a different perspective of a non-NPT state, but where the issues of course of security and stability in the Middle East remain critical. Thank you.

BROM: Thank you. I believe that I am not going to surprise anyone in this audience by saying that the Middle East chapter in the final document of the NPT Review Conference was not received well in Israel, to say the least. It is perceived as a U.S. surrender to Egyptian blackmail. Egypt threatened to block consensus on the final document and the U.S. blinked first.

The result is a very one-sided document that singles out Israel, makes no mention of the Middle East member states of the NPT that non-comply repeatedly with the NPT, and I am referring of course to Iran and Syria, which makes the whole idea of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East somehow unrealistic.

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If the international community cannot really deal with serious violations of the NPT, what is the use of another treaty that will establish prohibition on the possession and use of nuclear weapons in the Middle

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East? It is no wonder as a result that the present position of the Israeli government is refusal to participate in the 2012 conference because it is suspected that a conference that is based on this document will be only a forum for Israel-bashing, for the purpose of putting pressure on Israel to adhere to the NPT.

And Israel has a problem with the NPT because it doesn't work in the Middle East, as I already pointed at. But the idea of a WMD-free zone conference in 2012 is problematic also because of the more fundamental reason from the point of view of Israel, and that is the question of the source of authority for this conference. Because Israel does not oppose a dialogue with the other Middle Eastern states and external actors that are relevant on establishing a regional security regime in the Middle East that will include also arms control agreement with the purpose of achieving eventually a WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

It actually participated in this kind of discussions during the '90s in the framework of ACRS that was already mentioned. But then the source of authority for this discussion made much more sense from the point of view of Israel because the source of authority was the Madrid peace conference and it reflected a much more comprehensive approach to the problem, to the issue of Middle East security.

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One cannot divorce the idea of a regime such as WMD-free zone from the political realities of the Middle East. How exactly can someone expect Israel to conclude this kind of agreement with a state that denies the right of Israel to exist and says that Israel should be wiped off the earth? And at the same time, as I said, is a member state of the NPT and it's not complying with the NPT and is engaged in a military nuclear program?

Arms control agreements are always possible together with a political process that deal with the conflicts between the states. And therefore, the frame of this conference made a lot of sense. While here the source of authority is the NPT review conference, which means that the subject of a WMD-free zone is isolated, is taken out of the conference, and all discussions are subjugated to the question of Israeli adherence or non-adherence to the NPT.

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What Israel would like to see is a comprehensive approach and a parallel progress in the relationship between the states of the Middle East, in the gradual build-up of a new security regime in the Middle East that will include, let's say, at first-stage some very basic norms and rules of conduct, such as a commitment of all the states of the Middle East to the idea of a peaceful non-existence and non-use of force to serve political purpose.

The implications of what I said so far is that it will take serious persuasion to convince the Israeli government to change its approach and participate in the 2012 conference. Israel actually, right after the review conference, got some – (inaudible) – assurances from the Obama administration that it – that assured Israel that the conference will not be used for Israeli-bashing.

The question is, A, how credible are these assurances. And B, are they sufficient? Will they assure that the approach that will be adopted by this conference will be the kind of comprehensive approach that is acceptable to Israel? That means, of course, that trying to refer to very concrete questions that were asked by

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you that, first of all, the host country and the facilitator will have to be accepted by Israel to enable a fair play, which I said was not the case of the final document.

So with all due respect, for example, for the nonaligned movement, I don't think that the majority of the nonaligned states that usually adopt quite lightly the Arab positions on this kind of subject and reject the Israeli position are good candidates to be host countries or facilitators.

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Then the next question is the agenda and the terms of reference of the conference. Here what we believe should we do is to look at the only other example of regional security and arms control dialogue that we have, and that is ACRS talks during the '90s, to learn the lessons of these talks, to adopt what is good, and to change what was bad and didn't work.

So what was good was the comprehensive approach, but there were several weaknesses in the ACRS process. The first weakness was the question of participation. The states that participated in the ACRS talks were a kind of coalition of the willing. As a result, we were in the real absolute situation in which the four member states of the NPT that were or are engaged in severe violation of the NPT – that is, Iran, Syria, Iraq and Libya – didn't participate in the ACRS talks. So what is the purpose of negotiating WMD-free zone or other arms control arrangement without the participation of the relevant states?

So we have to define the Middle East. And by the way, in ACRS there was much work was done on the definition of the region and we had more or less a consensus on the definition of the region. And all the states in this region should participate. And that's, by the way, includes also Turkey, that is more and more a Middle Eastern actor and not an external actor. And the role that they played in ACRS was of an external actor.

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The second issue is the agenda. The agenda must discuss the conditions that can enable a real discussion on WMD-free zone in the Middle East. And that includes a number of items. First item is the present violations of the NPT because without dealing with these violations no progress can be made.

The secondary one is what should happen with the other components of regional security regime that can enable the establishment of WMD-free zone. And the third element is emphasis on dealing with all the elements of a WMD-free zone and not focusing only on the nuclear element. Because, with all due respect to nuclear weapons, they were never used in the Middle East, while chemical weapons were used quite extensively in the Middle East, and from the point of view of Israel, that is a small state, it doesn't feel less vulnerable to chemical and biological weapons than to nuclear weapons.

If all these elements will be assured, I would say that it gives a fair chance that Israel will consider coming to it and trying to persuade it to participate in the 2012 conference as coming with clean hands. Thank you.

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KELLY: Thank you, Shlomo, for setting out the position so clearly. That was very clear. And I now give the floor to Seyed. We look forward to your presentation.

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MOUSAVIAN: Thank you very much. I am supposed to address the Iranian issue. Eight years of negotiations between Iran and the P5-plus-Germany on the nuclear issue have failed, and will likely continue to do so as long as the existing negotiation strategy and the hostilities between Iran and the U.S. exist.

The nuclear program with Iran is a subsidiary issue of Iran-West relations, specifically Iran-U.S. relations. In the pre-revolutionary era the United States had such close ties with Iran that the U.S. laid the foundation for Iran's nuclear program and supported a complete domestic nuclear-fuel cycle. This sparked a race for Western countries to compete for lucrative projects, for use of dollars to nuclearize Iran. I am convinced if the shah were alive today, Iran would have a nuclear arsenal on par with those of Pakistan, India and Israel, and the U.S. and the West would have continued its close ties with Tehran.

After the revolution, despite Western support for Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran and his use of chemical weapons against Iranian civilians, Iran remained committed to NPT, decided to shrink the ambitious nuclear projects of shah and join the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, CTBT, to demonstrate its opposition to weapons of mass destruction.

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In response, the West withdrew from all nuclear arrangements and contracts with Iran and sanctioned and isolated Iran. This was mainly due to hostilities between Washington and Tehran, triggered by the American diplomats being taken hostage in Tehran in 1979.

Finally the IAEA referred Iran's file to the United Nations Security Council in 2006 and the P5-plus-1 countries have imposed a most comprehensive sanctions against Iran, while Iran remains as a member of the NPT and around 3,000-man-led inspections over eight years. After these inspections the IAEA continues to confirm that they have found no evidence of any diversion by Iran of declared nuclear materials to military purposes.

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Meanwhile, countries such as India, Pakistan and Israel are rewarded through strategic relations with the U.S. and the West, even though they are not members of the NPT and possess nuclear arsenals. India and Pakistan have had sanctions removed and cooperation in the nuclear sector has even resumed with India.

At the same time, 11 of unilateral and multilateral sanctions imposed against Iran are equivalent to those which would be called for were Iran, like North Korea to have acquired and tested the nuclear bomb. Nevertheless, sanctions, dual-track policy, covert actions, sabotage, and even a malicious strike will not compel Iran to change its nuclear policy, or to comply with the demands of the IAEA or the United Nations Security Council.

A comprehensive package for simultaneous negotiations on both Iran-U.S. bilateral relations and the nuclear issue is essential to end the present deadlock on the nuclear issue. The Iran-U.S. package should be negotiated directly between Tehran and Washington, while Iran's nuclear issue could be negotiated in the framework of the P5-plus-1 talks.

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To make the Obama administration's engagement policy successful, the language of threats, angry rhetoric, hostile actions, sanctions and other forms of pressure should be put on hold for the duration of the negotiation. It also would be conducive to the success of the talks if the areas of common interest were prioritized.

A comprehensive package on nuclear issue. Negotiable arrangements are needed to resolve the existing nuclear deadlock. Any viable solution needs to satisfy and exceed the bottom lines of both parties. For Iran, this means its right under the NPT to enjoy peaceful nuclear technology, including enrichment. I should reiterate that regardless of who rules Iran, this condition will remain the same. This has been the bottom line for Iran before and after the revolution. For the P5-plus-1 countries the bottom line is non-diversion to military purposes.

My package has three parts which I should emphasize each part are not pre-condition to the other parts and should be seen as one package. Part one. The P5+1 countries should assure Iran that in the event of an agreement it will first remove Iran's nuclear from the agenda of the IAEA board of governors and the United Nations Security Council. Second, recognize Iran's right to nuclear technology, including enrichment.

Third, lifting the sanctions. And fourth, as required by the NPT, cooperate with Iran in the development of peaceful nuclear technology to the same extent as they do with other non-weapons states.

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The second part is about Iran's commitment. In response, and to ensure the P5-plus-1 on non-diversion to military purposes, Iran could take the following steps. First, operationalize the religious leaders' fatwa banning the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The Iranian parliament could pass legislation declaring Iran a non-nuclear weapons state, and strengthening legal export control mechanisms for nuclear material and technology.

Second, Iran can establish a consortium with other countries on fuel cycle activities with Iran based on the official proposal made by Ahmadinejad during September 2005 speech at the United Nations General Assembly meeting. This would enhance the transparency of Iran's nuclear program and thereby reduce regional and international concerns.

Third, with the parliament's approval, Iran could resume provisional implementation of the additional protocol and the subsidiary arrangement to its safeguards agreement. Fourth, Iran could commit to cooperate with the IAEA on the removal of all remaining ambiguities about its past nuclear-related activities. Five, during a period of confidence-building, Iran could limit its enrichment activities to its actual fuel needs.

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Six, during a period of confidence-building, Iran could commit not to enrich uranium above 5 percent, as long as the international community provides fuel rods for Tehran research reactor. In an interview with al-Jazeera on February 2010, Iran's foreign minister, Ali Akbar Salehi, said if the P5-plus-1 countries supply the fuel for TRR – Tehran research reactor – we are stopped at 20 percent enrichment.

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Seven, Iran could promise to export all enriched uranium not used for domestic fuel production. Recently Mr. Abbasi, the director of atomic organization of Iran, said Iran is determined to lay the foundations for the export of nuclear products to other countries. Eight, Iran could make its centrifuge production fully transparent at every site so that the IAEA would be able to verify the number of centrifuges Iran has produced in the past and will produce in the future and verify the locations. Nine, during the period of confidence-building Iran can promise not to reprocess spent fuel from power or research reactors.

The third part of the package is related to WMD-free zone in the Middle East. The United Nations Security Council, in cooperation with the regional powers, should proactively pursue a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East. Iran was the first country in the Middle East that proposed a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in the United Nations General Assembly.

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There has been zero progress on the establishment of WMD-free zone for four decades because Israel has repeatedly obstructed it, apparently wishing to maintain its monopoly on nuclear weapons in the region. Israel's nuclear policy and its refusal to join the NPT have established a national security threat for others in the region, leaving some countries to pursue a nuclear capability which would fuel an arms race in the region.

Recent developments in the Middle East suggest that the world powers will not be able to prevent some Muslim countries in the Middle East from acquiring nuclear capability in the next decade. That's why there is an urgent need for serious initiative to establish a WMD-free zone in the Middle East which could potentially facilitate a regional security arrangement, increasing the prospect of finding a just peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and prevent a race for nuclear capability in the Middle East. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you for that, Seyed, and for the proposals. I would point out, of course, that we have quite a concrete initiative with the 2012 conference coming up. We have about 25 minutes left, colleagues, so I think I'll open the floor immediately to questions and maybe take a few at a time. The gentleman up there, straight up there. Maybe could I ask all contributors to identify – to give their name and affiliation and to try and ask a question and keep it brief because there are quite a few questions. This man here.

[00:51:59]

Q: Thank you. Paul Meyer, Simon Fraser University. I'm picking up on a point that Ambassador Shamaa referred to about the confidence-building potential of even preparatory steps for the conference. I think we all recognize the Middle East is a region which could use some confidence-building.

I'd like to ask reactions whether the panelists might support as a confidence-building step at this stage a treaty that all three countries represented on the panel have signed – and I'm thinking of the CTBT – a coordinated ratification of that treaty as a step towards creating a conducive atmosphere for an eventual conference on the WMD-free zone idea. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you for that. Shall I start to my right? Khaled?

SHAMAA: Sure. Whichever way you want. You're going to go one by one?

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KELLY: Yes.

SHAMAA: OK. With regard to Ambassador Paul Meyer's question, and it has been quite some time since I've seen him, mind you, in the case of Egypt our position is very clear on that. Our position is that – and especially after we have heard General Brom on this matter – as long as Israel rejects the NPT as an instrument, a legal instrument that – if I can understand correctly what he said – that has failed in a sense, then actually that puts a big question on why then does Israel require, or is so adamant about states in the region complying with that treaty that Israel does not recognize?

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There is a troubling concept here, and of course this issue of a free rider on a legal regime I believe is something that detracts from the value of that legal regime. And this is precisely the problem in the Middle East. The status quo of one state being a free rider on a legal regime in the region does not help to strengthen that regime, to enhance its efficiency, and nor to apply it properly.

With regard to the CTBT in specific, our position, as I've said, was very clear. We are not joining any additional legal obligation pending accession of Israel to the NPT, provided, or with the catch here is, if we do start serious negotiations on the establishment of a nuclear WMD-free zone in the Middle East, then confidence-building measures can be taken in that process, but also confidence-building measures are not necessary legal measures, and I think you appreciate the difference in that regard.

And after all, we are a non-nuclear weapons state partner to the treaty, so we are under a legal obligation not to acquire or develop nuclear weapons.

KELLY: Shlomo?

BROM: Well, I think it's a good idea. It suits the concept that I presented of starting to take steps to change the environment and create the conditions that will enable establishment of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. And I believe that discussion and ratifying agreements such as the CTBT and other ideas that were discussed in the nuclear context is a good idea. And I think that it may be supported.

I am not representing the government of Israel. It's my personal idea. I think that there is a good chance that it will be supported also by the Israeli government.

[00:56:30]

KELLY: Thank you. Seyed?

MOUSAVIAN: I'm also not representing the Iranian government, but being about 30 years in the Iranian foreign policy, my understanding is that Iran would be prepared to adhere and to be committed to the maximum level of international arrangements, protocols, conventions which exist on nuclear issue if and when the international community is prepared to fully respect the rights of Iran within the framework of these conventions and arrangements.

KELLY: Thank you. Up here on my left.

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Q: Thank you. I'm – (inaudible) – Foundation for Peace and Conflict Research in Frankfurt. I have a question, first one to the gentleman on the left side, and that is, taken by yourself, your states by themselves, the prospects look very dim for a fruitful conference. At the same time I realize – I sense common ground. My question is whether you adhere to my question. That is that if Egypt gives more leeway to Israel to put the nuclear issue at a later stage on the agenda because, Mr. Shamaa, you said it's a process. I think that this is something that Israel might accept. Question, is this so?

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General Brom, my question is, Israel can get out a lot of it. It's not just about the nuclear thing. I think the wise conference, the wise element is it's WMD, so it's not just the nuclear. Why is this not attractive to Israel? And on top of this, your government at this point of time can get out of isolation, can shape the ideas. Why not joining the process because it serves in the agenda. Ambassador Khaled quoted it, "freely arrived at." Even if it's in the NPT context, General Brom, it's freely arrived at. You need not to sign something that you don't want to sign.

My question to Mr. Mousavian is, I think you stated it rightly. All these kinds of things and stuffs does not go to the heart of the problem, and thus I would call it dramatized relationship between Tehran and Washington. At the same time I see the problem. The big countries, the big figures in your country, I think, around the ayatollah I think do not seem prepared to create a dialogue. And as long as this is not the case, why worry?

KELLY: OK, thank you. Yes.

[00:59:29]

SHAMAA: Thank you very much, professor. You know, just one point here in response to what you said with regard to the priority. Of course in the text it's, you know, parallel progress on all three tracks and we are fine with that. They are all WMDs. But I have to insist here on the issue of a certain priority. Mind you, after all we are here in a conference held by Carnegie on nuclear order, on NPT.

Definitely there is a reasoning behind that. It's not the Carnegie conference on chemical weapons because there is an imminent threat with regard to the nuclear issue. Not just regionally, actually. It's an imminent threat to the whole global regime. This is the whole issue. And I think that, having heard the two gentlemen with me, General Brom and Ambassador Mousavian, you are right in saying there is some commonality, but also in what they say I think you can understand why it has become such a pressing issue that we get started with this process.

[01:00:42]

And frankly, the issue is not about Israel-bashing nor is it about Iran-bashing. It's about nobody's bashing. It's about establishing an order in that region that determines very clearly the rights and responsibilities of all states in that region that ensures their security, with the absence of nuclear weapons, that allows for peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a format that ensures the security of everyone. That is the whole purpose of the exercise.

BROM: Well, I think that I said that Israel is supporting the idea of a process of dialogue on regional security and arms control. Israel was not the one that stopped the ACRS discussion too rigid, that

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insisted on Israeli commitment that it will adhere to the NPT. Israel didn't stop the ACRS discussions and Israel was always ready to resume them, and when there were ideas about different program for these discussions, the Israeli approach, response was generally positive.

What Israel is opposing is a process that is focusing on the nuclear issue, and it is divorcing it from the political realities. That doesn't work. Let me take my hat as an academician and look at the history of nuclear programs all over the world. States gave up the nuclear option when it became redundant, when the costs outweighed the benefits. That is not the situation in the Middle East when it concerns Israel because Israel is still facing existential threat.

[01:03:12]

The existential threat is a threat by other states that is aimed at its existence. There were some positive political processes in the Middle East that led to the conclusion of peace agreement with Egypt, with Jordan, but this process was derailed, and as long as there will not be a real change in the environment, the discussions will continue to be quite futile.

KELLY: Thank you. Seyed. And could I also ask you, Seyed, to address perhaps one of the questions that you didn't address in your presentation, which is the specifics of the 2012 conference and the Iranian – would you envisage Iran attending? I take it your proposal would be a very useful starting point in getting there but maybe you could be a little bit more specific about the conference as it's envisaged as well. Thank you.

MOUSAVIAN: First, about the question raised about Iranian leaders, that they are preparing for Iran-U.S. rapprochement or not. You're skeptical about the domestic situation of Iran but I'm skeptical about the domestic situation in Washington and Tehran both.

[01:04:55]

But the reality is that during the president's time in New York he has been the first president ever after the revolution in 1979 who wrote an official letter to President Bush, the first president who wrote an official letter to President Obama. He then officially for the first time in the 32 years since the Iranian revolution congratulated President Obama, a U.S. president, on his electoral victory.

The high-level talks in Baghdad between ambassadors on Iraq issue in 2007, the Iran ambassador and U.S. ambassador. The high-level talks between William Burns and Jalili, Secretary of the National Security Council of Iran in Geneva 2009. These all events are completely new in Iran's foreign policy after 32 years and completely unprecedented.

Iran's religious leader by constitution is the ultimate decision-maker. There is no doubt all these events have been with his approval. Therefore, I believe these examples which I showed, I expressed to you are enough to show that Tehran has been prepared. But the problem is the U.S., as you heard yesterday from Bob Einhorn, they are looking for a piecemeal approach and Iran is looking for a comprehensive package in order to see the end-state of the issue.

That's why United States and the other members of European countries, they are expecting Iran for one step as a confidence-building. The Iranians, they have experienced this process the last 30 years many

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times with no result. That's why they want to see everything in one package in order to see where they are going, where is the end road.

[01:07:16]

On the 2012 conference, Iranians I'm sure – I'm confident they will be cooperative and positive because Iran is seriously after the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and you have seen the Iranian delegation in different conferences. They have been completely cooperative.

But about the whole conference, I'm not optimistic at all because you have only one country in the region that has nuclear weapon, which is Israel, and they would not give it up. Therefore, I do not understand, really, how this excellent initiative would – you would be able to realize. There is only one country and this is Israel. Who would be able to convince Israel?

I'm sorry to say – this is not really my idea but I want to mention a fact. I believe Israelis would be ready to consider this initiative seriously when if other countries like Iran and Egypt and Turkey, they gain capability on nuclear issue. When they gain, then the Israel would be ready to leave the monopoly.

KELLY: Question here? The gentleman here to my left.

Q: Hi. Thank you. I'm Reid Pauly from the Plowshares Fund. I just wanted to get to a maybe more concrete question that could be very quick, but if anybody has any ideas for an acceptable facilitator and potential location, and if you have any very good ideas, maybe we could go right down. Thank you.

[01:09:13]

KELLY: Shall I start this side this time? A facilitator or location for the 2012 conference. The text provides for a facilitator. This is of course now – I mean, without wanting to put the panelists on the spot, this is of course a matter for the co-sponsors and the U.N. Sec-Gen in the first instance, to come up with some proposals, consult the states of the region. So I'm not quite sure that it's yet at the point of the panelists. But would anybody like to say anything?

BROM: Well, a few days ago I had a talk with Gary Samore and he asked me the same question. And I said to him, if you want my advice, then don't ask the Middle Eastern states what is their choice. Because if Israel say, we say that if we prefer a certain host country and facilitator then automatically the other states will oppose it, and the same will happen if Egypt will say. So I think there is –

SHAMAA: Don't get so personal. (Chuckles.)

BROM: Well, knowing the Middle Eastern psychology, not differentiating between Egypt and Israel. We are the same. So I said to Gary –

SHAMAA: And Iran as well.

[01:10:43]

BROM: And Iran as well. So I said to Gary, ask them who they oppose to and then you will get a small list of states that are acceptable by everyone and then choose.

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SHAMAA: Well, maybe Gary is making too much of an issue of this matter. You know, it can be sorted out. This is not really the main thing. Go to First Avenue, New York, check with the secretary general, the U.N. secretary general. He should be, you know – he should have an answer on that.

I just want to – if you'd allow me, Alison, I just want to very quickly respond to a couple of points that are said. First, ACRS failed because Israel did not want even to discuss the nuclear issue. So I mean, that's history. That's done. We are now talking about a new process on the table. And I don't see much difference in what we are saying.

You say that you want a facilitator and a host government that is acceptable by Israel. True. Should be accepted by everyone in the Middle East. That's definitely – that goes without saying. That has been stated by us and by the Arab group, that it has to be – especially with regard to the facilitator – it has to be someone who has a good standing with all states in the region, someone who has enough political stature to pull traction to this matter. So that goes without saying.

[01:12:20]

Now the other issue is the issue of persuasion. Political leadership from the co-sponsors, from the U.S. in particular is important, but let me make this very clear. The exercise here is not about begging any single state in the region to attend this conference. I hear what you're saying, General, and part of it you seem hesitant, but on the other part I think there is a possibility for that conference to get some traction.

What we will reach at the end of the process or during the process, this is something that we'll have to discover ourselves, and the same goes for what Ambassador Mousavian has mentioned, and this is actually a scenario that I would not think that anyone here in this hall would like to reach. That's a matter that you just described.

KELLY: Any final words from anyone else? Is there a question there? Yes, this man here. I was looking behind you, but there's two of you. We'll take those two and that can be it. The man in the front first.

Q: Thank you. Francois Gere from France. I have a question for Ambassador Mousavian. In the framework he has presented, what would be the status and the future of the already produced amount of low enriched uranium? In that framework does the agreement reached with Brazil and Turkey remain valid?

[01:14:22]

My second question is, are a number of states in the region ready to some kind of quid pro quo between nuclear activities and covered biological activities which remain very, very important and dangerous issue for the region?

MOUSAVIAN: What do you mean by quid pro quo?

Q: Well, for instance, exchange of information about covered activities and information about the way those activities would stop or have stopped. Thank you.

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Q: Howard Morland. Nuclear weapons always have targets. I understand the U.S. still has nuclear weapons in Turkey and we're not crazy enough to attack Russia from Turkey, so I assume those weapons have targets in Iran. My question is, what are the list of targets to justify the Israeli nuclear arsenal? These would be targets that cannot be destroyed by Israel's conventional capabilities but require nuclear weapons and justify the arsenal.

KELLY: Well, both questions are very far from the agenda of the meeting, but we will – I'll start with Ambassador Mousavian.

[01:16:01]

MOUSAVIAN: Yes. On low enriched uranium stockpile, I think the agreement in Tehran between Brazil, Turkey and Iran could be a good start. Definitely this could not be the final solution for Iranian nuclear issue. But also this initiative, this agreement should not have been rewarded with Resolution 1929 when Iran was going to take a positive step, should not be rewarded with such tough sanctions immediately in response.

But what I have proposed in my package, first of all I am proposing that Iran would limit its enrichment activities with the domestic requirements section to export the LEU or HEU, whatever they have, as long as they don't need domestically for domestic consumption. Therefore, if P5-plus-1 is prepared to provide a fuel rod for Tehran research reactor, then Iranians would be prepared, first of all, to stop HEU 20 percent, and even to export LEU as long as they do not need for domestic consumption.

KELLY: Thank you.

BROM: Well, I think that the question about the targets – somehow in our thinking, looking at nuclear weapons as another kind of military weapon that you use for destroying targets. So it will allow – to return to the question – whether we have an operation and nuclear inventory or not, I don't think that is the right way to look at nuclear weapons. The only goal of nuclear weapons is deterrence.

[01:18:09]

And you know what is the meaning of deterrence? Deterrence is the threat that you will cause the other party an unacceptable price if they will try to what they are threatening to do. Thank you.

KELLY: Khaled, you have the last word.

SHAMAA: With regard to the issue of nuclear weapons and what General Brom said, it's security, deterrence, et cetera, but I – you know, in that region I just wonder if it is really necessary within this regional context, especially in view of the geographical population distribution, in particular with regard to the Palestinians, for instance.

Now we do not disagree much on the elements for the conference. Authority, with regard to the authority, that is the U.N. secretary general who is sending the invitations. So I don't think that anybody should have a problem with that. Emphasis on dealing with all elements of a WMD and not only nuclear – that's done, that's fair, that is what we've agreed. So we have this going.

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You know, basically all the elements are there. Still once again, what is remaining is the political will. And by the way, Israel was following the whole process of negotiation. To the best of my knowledge they were present at the review conference, not as a participating state but they were on the sidelines of the review conference. So you know, that was no surprise, or no agreement that was done behind their back. That is on the one element.

[01:20:01]

Just one final remark with regard to the region. The region as we understand it is the Arab states, Israel and Iran. This is the core of the region. The issue of Turkey, actually Turkey is not a Middle Eastern state. Turkey is a European state, even if it's not within the EU guarantee, and moreover, Turkey is a NATO member, so this is an element that will come into discussion during the conference once it starts with regards what type of security assurances or security arrangements that can be undertaken with the alliance. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Khaled. And thank you to everybody who contributed this morning. Just on that last point, Khaled, as the person who chaired the negotiations, let me just make it clear that only NPT states were involved in the negotiations on it and didn't have any consultations with Israel.

SHAMAA: I was not referring to you, Alison. You know pretty well what I –

KELLY: I'm just making it very clear on that point.

[01:21:12]

I think that the discussions this morning have given everybody a good flavor of the challenges ahead of us as we prepare for success for the 2012 conference. At the same time we must remember that we did get – make some progress last year and we will all have to keep working in the interim on this.

Could I ask everybody to give a round of applause to thank our panelists. (Applause.)

(END)