

THE FUTURE OF ARMS CONTROL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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DECEMBER 1, 1994

- o Arab nations are dismantling the boycott of Israel;  
and
- o the Casablanca Middle East/North Africa Economic summit has engaged businessmen and governments in the practical work of regional normalization.

These steps toward peace enabled Prime Minister Rabin to remark recently that the Middle East is reaching "the end of the age of wars...." We in the United States recognize that these breakthroughs would not have happened if not for the initial courageous steps of Israel's leaders, and for Israel's continuing commitment to the peace process, despite the many desperate and violent acts of those opposed to peace. Israel has our admiration and support as it faces these challenges.

During his visit to the Middle East last month, President Clinton spoke of the essential features of an enduring peace. He said that the peace must be just. It must be based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace. This peace, he said, must be real, not mere words on paper, and not just the absence of war. All parties must condemn terrorist acts like the kind we witnessed in Tel Aviv just a few weeks ago. And finally, peace cannot come at the expense of any one's security.

Arms control agreements and confidence-building measures have crucial roles in securing the full and lasting peace that President Clinton described.

I suggest that a real peace in the Middle East must involve a wide-range of confidence and security building and arms control measures. Unilateral, bilateral, multilateral, and global arrangements, taken as a whole, provide the foundations of confidence upon which peace can be built. And an essential element in any successful agreement is its accompanying verification regime, specifically the ability to detect and deter violations and to ensure compliance even in times of tension.

#### Unilateral Arms Control Actions

Unilateral actions, such as pledges to conduct military activities with transparency or to refrain from activities perceived as provocative, can serve as vital first steps in the confidence-building process. These pledges need not be very significant of themselves, but in the right context they signal important intentions. In the area of special interest to me, nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, I note that Israel has made some notable unilateral gestures. These include signaling Israeli concern about proliferation by announcing its support for a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone, and, in addition to signing a global treaty banning chemical weapons, calling for the establishment of a regional chemical-weapon-free zone. Combined with similar pledges of others in the region, these types of gestures will be, I trust, significant steps toward the creation of such zones.

truly global in scope, with 167 parties -- including the recent addition of Ukraine. International commitment to nonproliferation, based on the growing number of states joining the treaty, is growing.

The NPT provides security benefits in every region of the world while fostering cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social development. The Treaty is especially important for regions of high tension and instability where it can ensure that nuclear activities are subject to international oversight. It has created a stable security environment, and a framework through which regional arrangements can be negotiated, as in the case of Africa -- which is on the verge of implementing a nuclear-weapon-free zone -- or further strengthened, as in Latin America. Indeed, complementarity with regional agreements was built into the Treaty. Article VII (Seven) of the Treaty states that nothing in the Treaty "affects the right of any group of states to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories."

The NPT has been indispensable in addressing the proliferation problems that arose with the breakup of the Soviet Union. The commitment of these states to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon parties has done much to ease the tensions and reduce risks during this dangerous period.

Israel, of course, is not a party to the NPT. We hope that you will see fit to join it at some point in the future, taking into account your and others security. In the meantime, we believe that this Treaty adds to your security as it does to ours and that you will do what you can to support it.

While global agreements can strengthen regional agreements, unilateral actions and bilateral and regional agreements help to galvanize international regimes. Currently the Conference on Disarmament is seeking a mandate to negotiate a non-discriminatory and verifiable world-wide ban on the production of fissile material for weapons. While this objective is being pursued, the United States has unilaterally stopped producing fissile material for weapons and has voluntarily put more than ten tons of high enriched uranium under international safeguards. If others also take such unilateral steps the process to negotiate the cutoff convention will take on added momentum. In addition to these efforts, we are seriously considering how a fissile cutoff convention may be implemented in the U.S. which allows for effective and credible verification with minimum intrusiveness. This is a challenging problem.

Israel is an active participant in another important negotiation at the Conference on Disarmament, that on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT has a high priority because it will strengthen our efforts to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Until the Treaty has been

and cooperation, and with an eye toward the goal of securing a lasting peace in this region, we look forward to working together with the State of Israel on this vital issue.