

# UC San Diego

## Policy Papers

### Title

Policy Paper 04: Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East

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## **PREFATORY NOTE**

All discussions at the Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East were off the record, to ensure open and direct conversation. Some of the participants were governmental officials, but all participants attended in a nonofficial capacity.

This report does not reflect the position of any individual or any of the parties involved in the Middle East peace process. Rather, it is a summary of the conversations and highlights the workshop's major themes and concerns.

## SUMMARY

The Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East, sponsored by the University of California's Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, was a private and unofficial symposium intended to promote dialogue on arms control in the Middle East. It also provided information on and explored the applicability of the U.S.-Soviet arms control experience. Due to the historic distrust among the parties in the Middle East, the workshop emphasized technical procedural measures that might be implemented to reduce uncertainty and increase transparency and information, thereby ameliorating, although not eliminating, suspicions. Special attention was paid to methods of reducing the likelihood of inadvertent war brought on by tensions, crises, misperception, and escalation. It was recognized that although technical measures cannot overcome political differences, they can facilitate political agreements by reducing the risks such agreements might entail.

The following were among the major issues discussed:

- *The importance of the complexity and interconnectedness of the Middle East:* It was repeatedly emphasized that the region is characterized by myriad threats and that a state's response to one threat may unintentionally increase the insecurity of another state, even if it was not the intended target. That some of these threats come from countries not included in the peace process makes that process more difficult, as do threats posed by subnational and nonstate actors.

- *The prominence of asymmetries in military capabilities, population size, geography, economics, and politics:* It was generally recognized that there will be a need for tradeoffs that take into account the security needs of the different parties in addressing these asymmetries. There was general recognition that verification procedures and technologies can help offset these asymmetries by increasing transparency and confidence.

- *CSBMs and CBMs:* The relationship between confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), which focus on efforts to address the military aspects of security, and confidence-building measures (CBMs), which include measures to enhance the political environment, was extensively discussed. While much of the discussion centered on political CBMs, it was generally agreed that it is not an either/or situation; rather, CSBMs and CBMs are complementary and reinforcing.

- *The interaction between the political, military, and technical aspects of the peace process:* There was considerable discussion of whether and how CBMs, broadly defined, are dependent on political will and in turn can facilitate and enhance political agreements. Whether priority should be placed on grand gestures or on smaller steps that incrementally lay the groundwork for broader and more encompassing political agreements also received considerable attention. Although all parties are understandably risk-averse, technical measures can reduce risks and allow states to take risks they might not otherwise contemplate.

- *Accidental war:* Participants recognized that a future war would inflict unprecedented devastation. This led to an awareness of the need for measures to reduce the possibility of accidental war and considerable interest in the methods and procedures developed within the European context to reduce uncertainty and misperception.

- *Whether or not the Soviet-American arms control experience provides relevant lessons for the Middle East:* The consensus was that although there are important political and military differences that distinguish the East-West context from the Middle East, technical and procedural developments drawn from the superpower experience may have utility in the region.

- *Nonofficial forums:* Finally, it was generally agreed that nonofficial forums are extremely important because they allow for open, frank, and direct exchanges of views, thereby increasing understanding of the concerns and fears held by the various parties. The importance of “getting to know each other to prepare to deal with each

other” was emphasized, and the ability to do so in a private capacity enables a breakdown of barriers that might otherwise impede negotiations.

There was a broad consensus that the interaction between academics, technical specialists, and policymakers leads to fruitful cross-pollination. Opportunities for the various parties to meet unofficially and with outside, nonofficial experts provide a useful complement to the official negotiation process, and such meetings should be held on a regular basis.

## Concrete Proposals

The following proposals can be distinguished as declaratory, political, operational, and structural CBMs. *Declaratory* measures are public statements of intent and policies that, if more widely known, might enhance the political environment. *Political* measures include official contacts to develop understanding and trust. *Operational* measures do not reduce the size of the military; they reduce or limit the capability to take offensive action or launch a surprise attack and decrease the possibility of accidental war brought about by misperception, miscalculation, or inaccurate information. *Structural* measures seek a reduction in the level of armaments.

While all are likely to enhance stability and security, the appropriateness of each depends on the wider political environment. Because timing is of the utmost importance, it may be that in the immediate future declaratory statements will be the most useful, operational CBMs will be appropriate once basic political agreements have been reached, and only when peace has taken hold will structural measures be implemented. The following proposals thus constitute a *menu* of actions that can be taken to facilitate and enhance the political process. The proposals themselves generated extensive discussion over their timing, relevance, applicability, and feasibility. Not surprisingly, on many there was extensive disagreement between Israeli and Arab participants. There was, however, general agreement that the airing

of concerns and the reasons behind them increased mutual understanding of the issues and the sensitivities of the regional parties.

### **Declaratory Measures**

- General renunciation of the use of force and the threat to use force. It was suggested that such a declaration of intentions would help create a political environment favorable for the peace process.

- A statement from the Palestinian Liberation Organization that it renounces violence within Israel. Although it was recognized that such a statement might not be fully effective, it was argued that it might help change the political environment.

- An Israeli signing of the Geneva Human Rights Convention.

### **Political Measures**

- Reduction of vitriolic rhetoric, especially that conveyed through the media.

- Meetings between Israeli and Syrian officers on the Golan Heights under the auspices of the UNDF and/or Israeli and Syrian observers with UNDF inspectors.

- Meetings between representatives of the Lebanese army and Israel concerning the redeployment of the Lebanese army into the southern part of Lebanon, under the auspices of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

- Meetings between Israeli and Jordanian officials at the Allenby Bridge.

- Israeli recognition that its unilateral actions can undermine the positions of the other actors; therefore, there is a need for Israel to work with the other parties to address problems of mutual concern.

- Open appointment of Israeli military attachés in Egypt and Egyptian military attachés in Israel.

- An Israeli agreement to stop deportations, cease detentions without trials, and other measures of either individual or collective punishment.

## Operational Measures

- Egyptian reduction of its munitions depots along Line A in Sinai, along with a cutback in the size of military exercises near Line A.
- An Egyptian invitation to Israel to send observers to the next Egyptian cross-Suez exercise.
- An invitation from Egypt for the parties to observe some of its military exercises, conducted according to the rules of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).
- An agreement not to allow the deployment of foreign troops within the borders of the “confrontation” states.
- Multilateral trips of official representatives to observe the workings of the Risk Reduction Center set up as part of the CSCE process, as well as the procedure developed to facilitate observations of military exercises.
- Creation of a Crisis Management Center that would gather and disseminate information, perhaps initially maintained by personnel from the United States, Russia, and the United Nations, to which would be attached representatives from the regional parties.
  - Establishment of bilateral and multilateral hot lines.
  - Advance notification of military exercises.
  - Demonstration of technological capabilities developed to enhance monitoring and transparency as well as the capabilities of computer simulations to examine a number of different scenarios.
  - Demonstration of Open Skies overflight procedures, safeguards, and capabilities by third parties such as the United States.
  - Enhancement of technological exchanges between regional and extraregional parties.
  - Creation of an ongoing technological working group to identify security and verification needs in the region and develop mechanisms to meet them.
  - Establishment of a regionwide E-mail network to enable the exchange of information.
  - Creation of a registry of all arms sales to the region, perhaps maintained by the United Nations, with reports both by suppliers and recipients.

- Discussions leading to an increased Palestinian role in the internal security of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

### **Structural Measures**

- A ban on the testing of missiles and weapons of mass destruction.
- Limitations on the types of weapons sold to the region, with particular emphasis on weapons that facilitate a first strike, such as Stealth technology and missiles.
- Accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) by the states in the region.
- Establishment of a Nuclear Weapons-free Zone in the Middle East.

## **Summary of Substantive Sessions**

The workshop included four substantive sessions in which experts gave presentations on the agreements, procedures, and technologies developed in the European experience that enhance transparency and increase mutual security. There was extensive discussion during the sessions concerning the relevance and applicability of these experiences to the Middle East. The four session topics were “Remote Monitoring,” “Information Sharing and Confidence Building,” “Security-enhancing Mechanisms,” and “On-site Inspection Techniques.”

### **Remote Monitoring**

Remote monitoring is the mutually accepted use of distant or unattended sensors to facilitate or enhance mutual security arrangements. Examples include the remote or intermittent monitoring of facilities by technical means; unattended ground sensors; aerial overflights; and international satellite systems. Remote monitoring is part of treaties or agreements, including the Limited Test Ban Treaty, IAEA



Safeguards Agreement, the Open Skies Treaty, and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and it has been used in the Middle East, including as part of Sinai II.

Remote monitoring can be useful in a number of arrangements. One scenario is in the monitoring of borders or checkpoints to increase the transparency of troop movements. Unattended ground sensors, aerial overflights, and satellites can either provide real-time information or document movements that may not be allowed by an agreement. Information gained from such technologies would facilitate diplomatic efforts to defuse a situation and ameliorate the risks of misperception and misunderstandings.

A second scenario consists of the monitoring of an airfield or garrison, especially in sensitive areas and as part of agreements concerning declarations of exercises or major movements. Aerial overflights, international technical means (including satellites), unattended ground sensors, and item or facility monitors increase transparency by providing technical information concerning the movement of weapons systems that might be considered particularly dangerous.

It was emphasized that the information gained from such technical measures is context-neutral, and thus must be analyzed by appropriately trained experts sensitive to the particular and immediate environment. Although technology will not solve the problem, it can facilitate the political process by reducing the uncertainties and risks of agreements.

### **Information Sharing and Confidence Building**

The importance of CBMs lies in increasing transparency in military activities, especially near sensitive borders, and the reduction in the possibility of premeditated surprise attacks as well as accidental war. Such measures have been prominent in Europe as part of the CSCE and have been implemented between Pakistan and India, which have agreed to joint border patrols and meetings, the establishment of hot lines,

advance notification of major exercises, and to not attack nuclear-related facilities. CBMs can reduce suspicions and increase the willingness to take political risks. They cannot replace political talks, but they can reinforce and facilitate them.

To be effective, CBMs must be seen as evenhanded and enhancing both regional and national security. They can be built incrementally, moving from simple to complex, and may include the participation of nonregional states or actors. Examples of such CBMs include the following:

- Geographic constraints—e.g., demilitarized zones—to reduce offensive and increase defensive capabilities.
- Advance notification of major military exercises or activities, including location, duration, and rough size.
- Mutual exchange of information about the size of the military, its deployment, doctrine, and budgets.
- Provision for monitoring activities, including on-site observers and/or aerial overflights.

Given the distrust in the Middle East, initially there may be a need for nonregional actors to participate in the gathering of data and the monitoring of activities. But eventually the regional actors should take a direct and leading role.

It was pointed out that in the Middle East there has been considerable experience both with formal and informal CBMs, including Sinai II and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty as well as tacit red lines and diplomatic signals. Whether such “operational” CSBMs should precede efforts to limit or even reduce military capabilities (i.e., “structural” CSBMs) was a topic of considerable discussion. While some argued for a comprehensive approach that takes into account weapons of mass destruction as well as conventional weapons, others favored incremental steps leading to increased trust before taking more profound measures. The interconnectedness of the security concerns of individual actors was emphasized, as were the asymmetries

in capabilities, including technical expertise in monitoring. A role for third-party training and initial participation was suggested.

### **Security-enhancing Mechanisms**

There have been a number of international efforts and agreements that have sought to enhance international security and stability. Examples include the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Biological Weapons Convention. In part, such agreements establish international norms, the breaking of which can be seen as threatening and destabilizing. Enforcement is difficult, as the Iraqi efforts to develop nuclear weapons demonstrated. It is even more problematic with chemical and biological weapons, given that they can be produced in ostensibly civilian plants.

One method of decreasing threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems lies in agreements among producers to limit or eliminate exports, or at least to create an information exchange of such exports. Examples of such efforts include the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Australia Group on chemical weapons. Such efforts have had limited success, given the members' economic interest in selling weapons or dual-use technologies that have both civilian and military applications and also the existence of nonmember suppliers of technologies and weapon systems.

While many countries have laws necessitating the review of exports and the limitation or rejection of those considered dangerous, bureaucratic miscommunication and political considerations frequently impede their effectiveness. While such export controls are not infallible, they can delay programs, thereby enabling diplomatic efforts at their elimination; they can also make such programs more expensive, potentially deterring them or leading to their discontinuation as overly burdensome. Nevertheless, there is a need to enhance cooperation and increase information both unilaterally, within individual governments, and multilaterally, among the various exporters. The problem, however, is not one-sided (i.e., only on the export side), and the limitation of demand through political agreements is also necessary.

## **On-site Inspection Techniques**

The purpose of on-site inspections (OSIs) is to lessen suspicion between states by providing agreed-upon levels of access to and observation of activities. This provides confidence that potential adversaries are not preparing for hostile actions or that their activities are within the constraints and limitations of previously negotiated agreements. Provisions for OSIs are included in the NPT, CSCE, and CWC. OSIs complement national technical means of gathering information on compliance, and they can both ensure compliance and clarify concerns about noncompliance.

Types of OSIs include confidence-building visits, observations, baseline inspections, routine or update inspections to ensure that activities are within limitations, continuing monitoring, inspections to verify that weapons are being eliminated or converted according to treaty specifications, and challenge inspections.

Protocols concerning the frequency, scope, and extent of OSIs are an important part of the negotiation of agreements. Such protocols must take into account the need to verify treaty compliance on the one hand and the desire of states not to reveal information that may unduly damage either national security or proprietary rights on the other. These protocols should be as comprehensive as possible to minimize the chance of misinterpretation or misunderstanding on the part of the field inspectors. Issues necessitating negotiations include the frequency of either regular or challenge inspections; the time between notification of a desire to inspect a site and access to that site; the provision of transportation within the inspected country to the site; what can and cannot be inspected, and how the inspection is to be conducted; who is included in the inspecting party, how many inspectors, what type of equipment they can bring, and the types of escorts they receive. Negotiations concerning what type of identification tags and seals are acceptable are also necessary.

## The Political Environment

Throughout the workshop it was repeatedly emphasized that the technical and procedural measures examined in the sessions ultimately depend upon political agreements among the adversaries in the Middle East. Receiving equal emphasis, however, was the view that these measures can facilitate the political process and make more viable, because more reliable, security agreements that are part and parcel of any political agreement. That is, the relationship between politics and arms control is not unidirectional but reciprocal and interactive; both are necessary, and neither will succeed without close attention to the other.

There was general recognition that the Arab-Israeli political environment has recently undergone significant change due to global, regional, and domestic developments. *Globally*, the end of the Cold War has led to increased emphasis on economic and political competition on the one hand and a reduced acceptance of the use of military force on the other. For the *region*, the end of the Cold War has meant that the Middle Eastern states no longer can rely on external intervention placing limits on war *or* peace; in the former case the risks and dangers of military conflict have been raised while in the latter barriers to agreements have diminished. *Regional* politics have also been affected by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf War. The *domestic* environment has changed as well, due to the Labor government in Israel, the immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union, the Palestinian intifada in the Occupied Territories, and the perception of a growing threat from Islamic extremism.

While the importance of these changes in the environment was generally acknowledged, the difficulty of predicting their potential effects was stressed. That is, the same forces can lead to peace *or* to war, depending on how the parties involved address them. Though the current peace process is in large part a result of these changes, it is not immune to disruption from future negative political developments. Receiving considerable emphasis was the difficulty of “buffering” or “insulating” the negotiations from intentional efforts to undermine them, policies that unintentionally

are disruptive, or unexpected events. That the negotiations are part of a *process* was underscored, as was the importance of regional and external parties in reinforcing positive momentum.

How to reinforce the negotiations was a matter of considerable debate, with some arguing that the regional parties themselves must engage in significant concessions and agreements as quickly as possible and others maintaining that initially small or modest steps should be taken and then built upon. There was also discussion of whether external parties, especially the United States, should be moderators, mediators, or active participants. Notwithstanding these differences, there was a consensus that, at the least, external parties should do no harm or engage in policies that might adversely affect the peace process. There was general concern about the potential for uncontrolled arms sales to the region, especially weapons—such as missiles—that increase the incentive for a first strike and thus are destabilizing. It was generally recognized that although external parties play an important role both in the negotiations and in any peace agreement, including active participation in security measures, the regional parties themselves must have the will in order to make peace.

## **Conclusion**

As was pointed out more than once, the ongoing bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Israel and the Arabs are in themselves a form of confidence building, one that allows for the exchange of views. As one participant noted, the negotiations serve as a “weathervane.” The issues are complex and the legacy of distrust and even hatred from more than forty years of conflict is profound. The security concerns are real, the interconnections among problems multifarious, and the political problems considerable.

Recent international, regional, and domestic changes have made the need for peace more pressing and the threat of war more worrisome. Informal meetings, like

the one on which this report is based, can play an important role in increasing understanding of each other and of the procedures and technologies available. As many participants noted, a few years ago such meetings would have been impossible. Now they represent a regional interest in finding ways of creating the conditions for and exploring the modalities of arms control and security in the Middle East.