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### Authors

Lehman, Ronald  
Jones, Peter  
Lodgaard, Sverre  
[et al.](#)

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**Workshop on Arms Control  
and Security in the Middle East III**

**Ronald Lehman ❖ Peter Jones  
Sverre Lodgaard ❖ John Chipman**

**edited by  
Fred Wehling**

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# WORKSHOP ON ARMS CONTROL AND SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*by Fred Wehling, IGCC*

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## Introduction

Events in the second half of 1995 and the first months of 1996 dramatically illustrate the promise, and the pitfalls, of the Middle East peace process. On one hand, steps toward political, cultural, economic, and environmental cooperation among the parties continue, evidenced by the October 1995 economic summit in Amman and the water agreement signed by Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority in February 1996. On the other hand, serious concerns persist over the threats posed by conventional arms, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism, exemplified by the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, exchanges of rocket and artillery fire in Lebanon, and continued suicide bombings. These events demonstrate the continuing need to investigate the underlying dynamics and problems of the peace process and to propose cooperative solutions and confidence-building measures, particularly in the field of regional security.

To help meet this need, IGCC organized the third and largest of its series of Workshops on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East. Held 11–15 December 1995 in Petra, Jordan, near one of the country's most spectacular cultural landmarks, and with the co-sponsorship of Jordan's Higher Council for Science and Technology, the workshop brought together over 80 delegates from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Turkey, the Persian Gulf, North Africa, Russia, Europe, Canada, and the United States to address regional security issues in a multilateral context. (See p. 19 for the list of participants.) The workshop, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, was hosted by Dr. Abdullah Toukan, Science Advisor to His Majesty King Hussein, and chaired by Professor Steven L. Spiegel of UC Los Angeles. Working groups and panel discussions gave particular attention to regional arms control, threat perceptions and security doctrines, and economic and environmental aspects of security. Participants in the meeting were also honored by addresses by former Prime Minister Jawad Al-Anani and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Although the panel presentations occasioned much productive commentary, the liveliest and most informative discussions took place in the meetings of four working groups that followed each day's plenary session. These smaller groups, chaired by eminent persons from outside the Middle East and organized to reflect diversity of nationality, background, and opinion, considered and expanded upon the presentations in more relaxed, informal settings. Their discussions were conducted under Chatham House rules to encourage participants to speak freely, and they did, presenting a wide range of views on topics connected to the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) negotiations and other aspects of the multilateral peace process. Summaries of these discussions prepared by the working group leaders—Ronald Lehman of Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, Peter Jones of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Sverre Lodgaard of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and Dr. John Chipman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)—are collected in this IGCC Policy Paper.

While each working group's discussions soon took on a unique focus and character, three common themes stand out in the group leaders' reports:

- **Building regional security structures.**

The groups generally regarded current proposals for a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Middle East (CSCME) in a positive light, but there is little agreement on what form such an institution should take, what responsibilities and authority it should have, and who should belong to it. There is somewhat more agreement on the core functions of the Regional Security Center (RSC) to be established in Amman, but views on its specific programs and relationship to other regional institutions vary widely. There is also little agreement on the problem of defining the Middle East, an issue inherently connected to the design of regional security structures and a regional zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Substantial disagreements also exist over the proper role for the United States and other external powers, and over whether and when accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by all parties should be required. Several groups therefore concluded that in building regional institutions, "form should follow function," and membership and rules of operation should depend on the specific problems the institution would be

created to address. This suggests that no single forum may be capable of managing all regional issues, and that mutual security might best be enhanced by building a network of related political, security, and economic institutions as the peace process progresses.

- **Domestic sources of international conflict.**

The four groups agreed that the time had come to give more consideration to internal obstacles to the peace process and domestic sources of regional instability. Political and religious extremism, issues of national and cultural identity, economic disparities between and within states, and the limited base of support for some ruling regimes were identified as significant problems for the peace process. There was much less agreement, however, on how multilateral engagement can alleviate these problems, or on whether a palpable economic and social "peace dividend" must be realized in order to strengthen constituencies for peace. Likewise, working-group members differed significantly on whether economic development and democracy are either necessary or sufficient (or in some cases, even helpful) for building peace.

- **Continued dialogue on doctrinal and conceptual issues.**

There was widespread agreement that official and unofficial discussions at many levels would be needed to bring the peace process forward. These dialogues should focus on the meaning and application of mutual security, the incorporation of deterrence and reassurance into military and security doctrines, and on perceptions of continuing and emerging threats. Some groups considered how, whether, and when specific concepts of collective security and non-offensive defense could be applied to the region, while others focused on strategic asymmetries or the participation of elements of civil society in national security debates. The working groups urged expansion of military-to-military, expert-to-expert, and people-to-people contacts, though there was some disagreement on the forms these dialogues should take and the specific roles that serving officials, active and retired military officers, distinguished senior statesmen, business people, and educators could play in broadening the dialogue between and within societies.

The four discussion summaries in this Policy Paper indicate much of the current scope of agreement, and of disagreement, on security issues in the multilateral peace process. In addition to this report, selected papers presented at the Petra

workshop are available through IGCC Online (see p. 22). In addition to the four discussion leaders, the workshop participants, and the distinguished supporters mentioned above, the editor would like to thank Nancy Bakir, Sue Greer, Marilyn Samms, and Maissa Sanders for all their hard work to make the workshop a success. Regardless of the positions taken on the many issues involved in the peace process, IGCC hopes that these reports and

the views expressed therein (which are not attributed to individual participants, and do not necessarily reflect those of IGCC or any of the workshop's supporters and sponsors) will help further the mutual understanding and respect for the views of all parties, which are essential components of peace.



# REPORT OF WORKING GROUP ONE

*Ambassador Ronald F. Lehman*  
*Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories*



## Defining the Middle East

**E**arly in the discussion, members of the group concluded that we should be precise about what we mean in defining the Middle East, even if there were no precise definition in common use. Some felt that it would be useful to develop a common definition of the Middle East, perhaps as a confidence-building measure. Believing that form follows function, this group highlighted a national security approach to defining the Middle East. Several stressed that no economic definition of the Middle East is now possible because so little trade takes place within the region and because key economic relationships are mostly with parties outside the region.

The effort to derive a national security definition of the Middle East first raised the question of whether Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) or non-WMD should provide the range of possibilities. This led immediately to a discussion of interrelationships. Kuwait's security would not seem to be of immediate interest to Israel, and yet the Gulf War had demonstrated that events far away could bring military strikes against Israel. This suggested the importance of a more comprehensive definition. Still, even if everything seems related to everything, some things are more related than others. Israel thinks it is Israel and the Arab League, but Israel was not seen as a central player currently in the security calculations of Northern Africa and the Gulf. India goes further in saying that the only arms control region is the globe.

Dissatisfaction with the progress made on a comprehensive, security-driven definition of the Middle East led to an exploration of the notion that a number of definitions might be needed, each involving those nations relevant to a specific problem. This in turn led to a discussion of whether the countries in a definition should be contiguous or simply pre-occupied with the issue. The significant role of players from outside the region seemed to be a part of the very concept of the Middle East, somewhere between the "Far East" and "Near East." Who coined the term "Middle East?" Was it from inside the region or from outside? Someone suggested that the phrase could be attributed to Alfred Thayer Mahan, the American geostrategic thinker. The Middle East was one of the contact points of the "island empires" to the "heartland." Others believed the term was of British derivation and a legacy of the colonial era. Now, one speaker observed, the boundaries of the Middle East could be defined by the ebbing and flowing of Russia to the north. Neither the Northern Caucasus nor Central Asia want to be part of the Middle East, said one, because they prefer to be part of CSCE and tied to Europe. Likewise, Mauritania and Djibouti are part of the Middle East in some definitions, but not in others.

Several noted that one could use the terms “region” and “zone” to capture different aspects of relationships. Consider, for example, how the definition of Europe varies between NATO, the WEU, the EU, the OSCE, and the CFE Treaty.

In an effort to bring together this wide-ranging discussion, the concept was presented that, as a practical matter, we have no choice but to apply different definitions to different issues and circumstances. The Middle East may be described with Venn diagrams, overlapping circles with much in common and much separate. In reality, the circles of the Middle East are constantly in movement, but the basic relationships remain the same. One single definition, however, would not be particularly useful in dealing with different practical matters.

Several times during the discussion of the definition of the Middle East, consideration was given to historical, economic, and social definitions. Each item was seen as significant, but not sufficient to define the Middle East in a productive way. The Middle East is not the same as the Islamic World. It is not the lands where Arabic is spoken. It is not oil fields, nor Holy Lands, nor desert lands, nor water drainage zones. The discussion of these alternative factors, however, led naturally into the discussion of the security implications of economic and social problems.

Group discussion quickly made clear that economic and social difficulties were believed to be of far greater security significance in the years ahead than would be state-to-state military balances. Three basic questions drove the discussion:

1. Would prosperity reduce conflict in the region?
2. Does democracy reduce conflict?
3. Are ideology and nationalism causes of violence?

Several speakers stressed that rapid change is destabilizing and can lead to violence. Overall, economic development was seen as vital to long-term peace, but economic disparities between and within nations could be a problem. When in doubt, however, prosperity was to be preferred.

Likewise, democracy was to be preferred if tempered to conditions, but it could perhaps bring as many problems as it would solve. In the views of many participants, democracy will complicate the peace process and arms control. The alternative of maintaining authoritarian regimes, however, was

not seen as viable by most speakers. Lack of legitimacy of governments would inevitably lead to domestic violence that could undermine international stability.

The issue of ideology was not discussed at length, other than to note the end of the Cold War, and there was no agreement on the impact of nationalism on peace in the region. Speakers were divided on the security implications of religion. Some expressed concern about fundamentalist Islam; others said that threat was exaggerated. Some saw in Islam a potential common moral and legal thread which might reduce tensions. One speaker contended that problems caused by ideology, religion, nationalism, and democracy were really about economic conditions, and therefore the Jordanian model for managing these problems might be attractive.

## **Security Doctrine and a New Security Order**

The discussion of the two questions of security doctrine and a new security order in the Middle East tended to overlap from the beginning. Some felt that most of the speakers had not really discussed military doctrine, but rather had spoken about broader security policy. On that level, said one, it still fell short because there had been no discussion of the importance of democracy for regional security. Democracy was less important for its transparency than for its legitimacy and accountability. Others felt that transparency was more important and that experts should focus on this because the peace process could not wait for the spread of democracy. Following the Gulf War, President Bush had pressed for democracy, arms control, and the peace process, and the allies had to urge him to de-emphasize the democracy theme for pragmatic reasons.

Discussion turned briefly to technical aspects of security doctrine, including the offense/defense relationship, which lead quickly to discussion of the current dispute in the Arms Control and Regional Security Talks (ACRS) over a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Was this just an issue between Egypt and Israel, or was there something more that could be said by others about this? Are weapons of mass destruction a major issue in the security doctrines of other states? It was felt that much more attention also



needed to be focused on inter-Arab disputes, on Iran, and the role of extra-regional states. This lead naturally back to the discussion of new security arrangements.

Current military doctrine takes into account parties that have been excluded from the political process (countries such as Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Iran), and yet it was unclear how a new security order could come into being while these countries are outside that process. Yemen, for example, might have supported Kuwait if it had not been excluded from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Others countered that because countries like Iran and Iraq had been hostile to the peace process, it was not clear how they could be brought into it.

The inter-relationship of doctrine and order reappeared again in the debate over Sadat's decision to seek a bilateral peace with Israel. Sadat, it was argued, had made that decision because pressing for a multilateral peace from the beginning would only result in a militarized peace at the lowest-common denominator. The effect, emphasized one speaker, was to highlight Egypt's role both in the Arab world and with those outside the region. Unintended consequences then became the theme for discussion. Egypt's actions, said some, created counter-coalitions. The dilemma is that the kind of collective security system built around an active role for the United States, while attractive to Israel, would create concerns to the south and east. In some cases, such regional arrangements are necessary; in other cases they are a problem. Some arms control could be more easily accomplished at the global level, especially as the spread of technology presents global threats. In other cases, that only makes exclusion easier.

Perhaps a step-by-step approach from the bottom up is the best way to proceed, but some believe that a Conference on Security and

Cooperation in the Middle East, as favored by Crown Prince Hasan and other regional leaders, would be best. After all, President George Bush's call for a "new world order" called for normalization as well as democratization. The United States, said some, could press for an end to exclusion. Others argued that the conditions must be right and that the United States could neither dictate the conditions nor dictate the will to act. One noted that the United States could not force Israel to go to the Oslo negotiations. Others noted that the United States had made steps to reach out to excluded countries, citing the Iran-Contra affair. Several argued for calling a multinational security conference, and then seeing whether Iraq and Iran accept invitations.

It was agreed that both doctrines and regional security structures require mutual understanding of threat perceptions. Each party needed to bring its map of threats to the table so that the discussion could move from rhetoric to problem solving. In this sense, ACRS could provide the foundation and be a catalyst for a CSCME. One participant recalled that Israel has suggested that it might join those Arab states which favor a CSCME. Others argued that this should not be pressed, at least until respect for international law were stronger. Compliance would be important for peace, but greater predictability in general would be even more necessary early on.

In summary, members felt it was important to look ten; twenty; thirty years down the road, and to think several chess moves ahead. There is too much focus on the Arab-Israel axis, and not enough attention to conflict within states, the understanding of which requires looking at more basic social and economic forces.



## REPORT OF WORKING GROUP TWO

*Peter Jones, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*



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**W**orking Group Two developed a set of four mutually reinforcing principles for the consideration of regional security questions and made a number of concrete suggestions for further work in this area.

The principles agreed on by the group were:

- The most appropriate approach to the range of security issues facing the region is a functional one. It was pointed out that different issues have different technical, geographical, economic, and social aspects. The definition of the region with respect to limitations on conventional weapons would be quite different to that with respect to limitations on weapons of mass destruction, for example. It would therefore be fruitless to try to develop an all-encompassing approach to regional security, beyond the level of basic general principles.
- Efforts to construct security dialogues and mechanisms should stress practicality in the first instance. Group members were agreed that large structures should be avoided at the beginning, and that an emphasis should be placed on keeping expectations, both public and official, in check.
- Those working on security issues in the region should recognize that they are embarked on a process of managing issues, rather than necessarily resolving them. Indeed, many of the issues cannot be “solved” in any conventional sense, but can only be managed until such time as events alter their significance (bearing in mind, of course, that the act of managing contentious issues in such a way as to prevent their becoming publicly divisive can, in itself, contribute to such an alteration in their significance over time).
- As to the potential structure of any regional dialogue, flexibility will be the key to long-term success. It is important to develop any regional structure in a step-by-step fashion, and to maintain the flexibility to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities and respond to unforeseen problems. This principle recognizes the importance of the dynamism which could take over once the first steps are taken, and which could serve to propel the process along.

Discussion of these principles naturally led to a review of the proposal made by HRH Crown Prince Hasan for an integrative and multi-disciplinary approach to security dialogue in the region. The group agreed on the need for such a dialogue, but cautioned that the best approach might be to quietly “get on with it” rather than spending considerable time on the official track discussing what such a dialogue might look like. The group believed that

discussion of such a dialogue might best be kept to track-two for the time being. On the basis of the four principles, the group discussed a number of practical ideas for further work, primarily on the non-official track. The group divided future projects into two broad areas: projects intended to facilitate discussion among the region's experts and academics; and projects designed to promote "people to people" contacts in the region.

## Dialogue among Experts

In the first area, expert dialogue, the group outlined several ideas for further development. As an over-arching basis for all of these discussions, however, it was agreed that a need exists to try to develop "trade-offs" across a broad range of issues and to discuss them (an idea expressed by one participant as "exploring the territory of compromise.") Such an approach might help in terms of managing a wide range of complex issues. At the least, having a firm sense of the complex interplay of the many issues facing the region would inform expert discussion to a much greater degree.

As to the organizational aspects of such meetings, group members expressed the view that every effort must be made to keep dialogues relatively small (perhaps twenty people per meeting) and focused. This approach was recognized as the best way of stimulating an in-depth exchange of views.

Turning to specific ideas for discussion among regional experts, a number of potential topics were raised by the group. Some of these were issue-specific. They tended to relate to ideas for regional track-two dialogues over issues such as: future common hardships to be faced by the region (water, energy, environment, health care, education, etc.); transnational issues (crime, terrorism, etc.); and issues which would necessarily involve discussion of regional concerns which affect, and are affected by, those outside the region (inter-regional trade, investment, and resource issues that go beyond the confines of the Middle East). It was recognized that all of these issues are being dealt with, in one way or another, by the Middle East peace process, but the group felt that the time had come to encourage expert discussion of these issues in a more public forum.

In the area of security, as it is more classically defined, the group believed that a useful service might be performed by having regional experts meet to consider a number of issues. For example, it was suggested that the meaning of concepts such as deterrence and reassurance is changing in the Middle East, and yet, the terms continue to be used by in ways that are not necessarily recognized by others in the region. Thus, a workshop to discuss these terms, and others like them, might be useful. Specifically, the workshop would be designed to elicit views from regional experts on what they mean when they use these terms.

Similarly, a workshop on regional threat perceptions was suggested to give regional experts an opportunity to meet and to share views on this subject. One group member suggested that participants be asked to prepare threat perceptions for countries other than their own, and then to compare these with perceptions prepared by nationals of that country.

## Dialogue among Populations

All of these ideas were for dialogue on the level of experts. On a deeper level, however, it was soon recognized that a need exists to find ways of allowing the common people of the region to participate in the process in some way. Several group members expressed the concern that the peace process was primarily one of experts and officials, and that the common people of the region had yet to feel that it had any direct benefit to them. Moreover, many group members could point to individuals who had lost a loved one in the region's many conflicts and who were, at best, suspicious of the process. At the least, group members felt that a need exists to find ways of bringing the peace process to the average citizens of these countries, and encouraging them to at least consider how the changing realities of the region could affect them.

A number of ideas were discussed in this connection. Despite widely differing social and governmental systems, it was agreed that there are some proposals worthy of further consideration. Group members agreed that one way of promoting more direct contacts between peoples might be through the media. In this context, an exchange of journalists was

discussed. Such an exchange could involve having journalists from the various countries of the region exchange positions for a period of some months, and then cover events in their home countries for their “new” employer. Group members recognized that this experiment might be slow to get going due to differing perceptions of the role of the press in some countries of the region, but they believed that it might at least help to open the peoples’ eyes as to the perceptions of their neighbors.

More specifically, the group discussed the idea of encouraging the peoples of the region to, as one group member put it, “jointly explore their shared history.” In this context, the group discussed the idea of picking a historical event and then holding a series of small workshops involving the decision makers of the day and contemporary experts. For the purposes of discussion, the group picked the period leading up to the 1967 war as a subject for a possible workshop. The purpose of such a workshop would be to explore the decisions made leading up to the conflict and to elicit from those in positions of responsibility at the time their decision-making process. What did they think was going on? What were their perceptions of the other side’s intentions? What information was missing? It was the strong belief of the

group that what would emerge from such a workshop was a sense that this was a war which need not have happened, that it was stumbled into through a combination of lack of information, misunderstandings, and just plain ignorance of the other side’s fundamental perceptions of its security requirements.

In order to share the results of such a workshop series with the widest possible audience, the group agreed that it would be desirable to consider having the national broadcasting authorities of the countries involved jointly produce a documentary, based on the workshop series, featuring interviews with the decision makers of the day and contemporary experts. Such a documentary could then be simultaneously broadcast in the participating countries of the region.

This was but one idea for such a workshop series. The important thing would be to get the regional participants talking about their shared history, and exploring it together. Though the group agreed that this last idea was an ambitious one, all believed that the time is now ripe to consider such steps as a means of reaching out beyond small groups of experts to the people of the region.



## REPORT OF WORKING GROUP THREE

*Dr. Sverre Lodgaard, Director  
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva*



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### Defining the Middle East

**T**he geographical definition of the Middle East may be established on a cultural basis. Culture shapes interaction patterns, and is a major determinant of cooperation and conflict.

In large measure, the delimitation of the region is also determined by how the outside world perceives it and deals with it. In the case of the Middle East, countries in all parts of the world claim an interest in oil, religion, or the Arab–Israeli conflict. In this respect, the Middle East is unique. However, while external actors can do much to forge a region, they can also use sticks and carrots to carve it up and incorporate its members into wider, global contexts. For instance, the trading patterns testify to a region apart.

The group, however, took a third point of departure. In considering policies to enhance security in the area—policies promoting confidence building and arms control in particular—the functional criterion takes on a special import. Following this criterion, the frameworks of cooperation depend on the tasks to be pursued. The circles of participation are drawn to promote the objectives that are being sought. As a rule of thumb, the group argued that form should follow function.

### Functional Approaches

Sometimes, it is difficult to determine who to invite. If the core countries can not agree on this, initiatives may not get off the ground.

What if an invitee declines to participate, as Syria has done in the case of ACRS? Clearly, others may nevertheless move ahead, although the commitment to implement common understandings may be weak. In ACRS, this commitment rests on a voluntary, reciprocal basis. What if either Iran or Iraq should refuse to join negotiations on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction? Then the core group and the co-sponsors of the peace process would need to assess the likely political developments in the holdout country; the possibility that it might evade or break out of its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations; and the effects of going or not going forward without the holdout government.

No conclusion should be drawn in the abstract, up front. A pragmatic approach is preferable.

What if a country in the region is not invited to join? What if its participation is blocked, even if on most accounts it arguably belongs? The doors might then be opened for outreach activities of various kinds; for functional links, observer status etc., while waiting for formal incorporation. Group members argued that rigid membership discussions should be avoided. In this respect, reference was made to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, which has been distressingly stuck on the enlargement question for quite a while, but which has also secured substantial contributions from many states on the waiting list for membership.

## Institutional Considerations

At low levels of cooperation, bilateral arrangements are increasingly appropriate. The shaping of the political Middle East in the Cold War image is gone. While the region still has important conflicts in common, the Arab-Israeli conflict no longer has the organizing, region-wide role that it used to have. For a while, Arab nationalism has been on the decline. The Gulf war and the peace process created new alignments, but also a more fragmented mosaic of cooperation and conflict. Border conflicts and other bilateral tensions have emerged to a larger extent than before.

At high levels, the CSCME is the most comprehensive proposition. If and when it comes into being, it is likely to go beyond the domain of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, say, to include Turkey as well. It was pointed out that this idea, too, might come into being in a gradual fashion, emerging some day as the sum total of a number of cooperative undertakings. It is not so much that it has to be created: Rather, as the peace process and its working groups and cooperation projects move ahead, it will simply happen. The role of external actors will diminish, and the conduct and control of the negotiations will more and more move to the region.

In between the bilateral and the region-wide frameworks, there are the three sub-regions of the Middle East: the Gulf area, the Maghreb, and the central area, *i.e.* Israel and its neighbors. These sub-regions stand out rather distinctly in the eyes of regional and external parties alike.

However, as states increasingly act in their own national interest, cooperation and conflict extend beyond these sub-regional boundaries. For this and other reasons, the sub-regions—and the spheres of converging and diverging interests—are sometimes difficult to delineate.

The group took a cautious view of the need for regional organizations. Rather, it preferred to approach these issues in terms of institutionalization of political processes, in a way similar to the evolution of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

International bureaucracies sometimes grow big and ineffective. Arms control organizations are not plentiful and they have not been around for long periods of time, yet the record is mixed. In any case, form should follow function: institutions should be as strictly tailored—and limited—to needs as possible.

Apart from the specific functions that they are asked to perform, institutions carry two advantages of a more general nature. First, they help sustain activities within their remit. This is well known: While operating under guidelines drawn up by their political superiors, organizations develop vested interests in the promotion of their functions. Second, institutions represent a permanent capacity to exploit new opportunities. For instance, when the major political changes in Moscow were set in motion in 1985, the Stockholm conference was in session, ready to convert the new framework conditions into practical results. The Stockholm document of 1986 became a major breakthrough for confidence building and arms control. In the more fluid political landscape of the Middle East, institutions may offer similar advantages when it comes to turning new opportunities into concrete gains.

## Structural Arms Control

The group agreed that if the peace process keeps progressing, ACRS negotiations must sooner or later lead to considerations of structural arms control. For the peace process to proceed, progress must be made along three tracks. Two of them are obvious: the political track and the arms control track, with confidence-building measures constituting a web of connections between the two. The third is the ability of governments to come to grips with domestic sources of insecurity and unrest. If governments

cannot do this successfully, they may not be able to shoulder the compromises that international agreements require. Self-confidence is an important prerequisite for mutual confidence and for the effective pursuit of international accords.

In the nuclear field, there is an important distinction to be drawn between discussions and negotiations. The clearer the line between the two is drawn, the easier will it be to start discussions on how to deal with the nuclear weapons issues. On the Israeli side, there is also a need to distinguish between the conditions that would permit negotiations to begin, and the conditions that would permit actual denuclearization to start. Substantial periods of time will probably separate these stages. However, references to “slippery slopes” should not be allowed to substitute for hard thinking about how the process can be prudently paced and controlled.

In the field of conventional weapons, CSBMs and joint doctrinal considerations are the likely preludes to structural arms control. This has always been part of the philosophy of confidence-building measures: in due time, they are supposed to pave the way for constraints, controls and reductions of military forces.

Is the concept of non-offensive defense a useful one in the Middle East? Can it breed the pragmatism that we wish to see in the military domain, gradually enhancing crisis stability and strategic stability in the area? In large measure, the three sub-regions have to be treated separately, for the conventional force equations are basically different and specific to each sub-region.

A non-provocative or non-offensive system of military defense is a force posture which is most cost effective when fighting in a defensive mode, in defense of home territory. Particular weapons are neither offensive nor defensive. They can be used for both ends, although they are not equally suited for offensive and defensive purposes. The distinction between “offensive” and “defensive” is therefore not a matter of weapons, but of mode of combat. When looking at the totality of a military posture— deployment pattern, armaments and equipment, infrastructure and logistics, training and doctrine—its offensive or defensive character can be determined. In Europe, the concept of non-offensive defense influenced the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), which got a distinctly non-offensive profile. Before that, neutral and non-aligned countries

had, in effect, practiced non-offensive defense for decades without sticking such a label to it.

Policies of non-offensive defense may be difficult to adopt in the Middle East. Here, political aggrandizement by military means has not disappeared from the strategic considerations of states; resource bases differ much more than between the Cold War blocs; and the Middle Eastern geography is less advantageous for defense. Mountains, rivers, forests, and urban areas tend to favor the defender. In large measure, these conditions exist in Europe, but not so much in the Middle East. On the other hand, the peace process is progressing, and the European neutrals did very well in a system featuring big asymmetries in their disfavor.

Except for disengagement zones, group members felt that the utility of this concept for the Middle East remains to be demonstrated. However, frequent references to terms like “defensive,” “self-defense,” “non-offensive,” and “non-provocative” may be taken to indicate a shared sense of direction which has not yet found its proper conceptual articulation and practical expression.

Moreover, the view was voiced that the most constructive approach might be to press ahead with political changes, whereupon military restructuring would follow suit. In this connection, it was observed that in Europe, pervasive political changes have already reduced the relevance of European CSBMs and made significant amendments to the CFE treaty virtually unavoidable. Some participants nevertheless believed that in due time, the Middle East would also have its conventional forces agreement.

## Conceptual Developments

Experiences over the last decades speak to the significance of conceptual innovations and new security philosophies. Thirty-five years ago, arms control was introduced. Twenty years ago, the first, feeble CBMs had been elaborated. Fifteen years ago, the concept of common security was introduced, followed by the notion of non-offensive defense. Recently, the concept of cooperative security was developed in response to the changing character of international security over the past few years.

These conceptual innovations have obviously had a great political impact. They

have shaped people's minds and redirected security policies to more effectively address contemporary realities. However, while these approaches have been developed in the global post-Cold War setting and in the East-West framework for application in Europe, in particular, the Middle East remains short on conceptual departures tailored to the specifics of the region.

In the philosophy of cooperative security, the emphasis is less on preparations to counter threats than on the prevention of threats in the first place. Thus, the significance of confidence building is obvious. Militarily, the basis for cooperation is mutual acceptance and support for the defense of home territory as the exclusive national military objective, and the subordination of power projection to the constraints of international consensus. There is a close relationship between cooperative security and non-offensive defense. A fully-developed

cooperative security framework would, furthermore, include provisions for collective security as a residual guarantee in the event of aggression.

In the Middle East, it is not easy to discuss approaches and concepts reflecting long-term security objectives. Sometimes, it is asserted that there is nothing long term in the Middle East. Still, there seems to be an emerging interest in cooperative security. Some scholars take a theoretical interest in what cooperative security blueprints might look like. Politicians now have to think about how cooperative arrangements may add up to something more substantial than the sum of component parts. Recently, political conditions have begun to inspire such considerations. It is the role of a forum like this one to stretch perspectives somewhat, and discuss and develop concepts that may inspire the formulation of day-to-day policies.





# REPORT OF DISCUSSION GROUP FOUR

*Dr. John Chipman, Director  
International Institute for Strategic Studies, London*



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## Introduction

Over the two days of discussion, this working group discussed four main issues: the prospects of domestic and international conflict in the Middle East region; the most important forces in Middle East domestic politics that affect the peace process; the need to discuss military doctrines and security policies within track-two diplomacy; and finally, the future of ACRS and its transition towards a regionally rooted organization.

This report summarizes the discussion on these four main subjects and offers brief conclusions that reflect areas of consensus in the group.

## Domestic and International Security

The group was convinced that there remained prospects of both international and domestic insecurity in the Middle East. On the whole, most felt that there remained important possibilities of domestic dissent as a consequence of the peace process in the countries of the Levant and that in the Gulf, whereas problems of regime security would become more prominent, there was the added problem of severe inter-state rivalry. The last twenty years in the Levant have seen a formal state of war but only limited conflict of an international character. This period has convinced the leaders of the principal powers of the fruitlessness of war and there was tacit acceptance of the basic territorial *status quo*. The likelihood of wars of territorial aggrandizement was therefore low.

In the Gulf, however, despite two recent wars, the basic hierarchy of regional power remained unsettled. The three main powers, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, still had pretensions of regional primacy and were still rivals. The prospect of major war could not so easily be ruled out here. While international war was unlikely in the Levant, one participant warned that elements in Israeli policy may inspire fear among her neighbors which could keep tensions high even as a peace process was being consummated. Israel's

desire to maintain a qualitative edge in arms, and her wish to see any Palestinian state demilitarized would be “détente consuming.” Added to this, any move to formalize her relationship with the United States through a defense pact might inspire further concerns.

Whether democracy would create peace in the region depended a great deal on what the causes were of the tendency among democracies of avoiding war between themselves. If it was the fact that they shared common norms and values then perhaps the emergence of democracies in the Middle East would strengthen peace; yet if the real cause of peace among democracies was the existence of procedural constraints which a multi-party system enforced, then peace in the Middle East might depend more on countries adopting democratic practices that more closely modeled Western systems.

## Actors in Domestic Politics

All agreed that in the new Middle East the role of the military will be crucial. For some, the military will be the protectors of the policies of change, and this means that civil-military relations will need to be carefully handled: peace partly depends on the military retaining a stake in national politics and life. Others felt that the future belongs to the businessmen and entrepreneurs on whom the burden of creating a new economic life in the Middle East largely depends. Extremists might not be moved by the prospect of economic gain, but most would, and therefore there is a need to encourage the development of a more liberal economic system. Clearer economic rules and more predictability would both derive from, and support, a less arbitrary political order.

Others felt that problems of identity would still plague domestic security: There are few genuine nation-states in the Middle East, and the development of pluralist politics might inspire the development of competing nationalisms. Instability might also be in prospect in the Gulf if these retainer states changed their practice of giving to the people and began demanding more from them. In such circumstances there may be less tolerance for local autocracies. Overall, most felt that the combination of longevity of leadership and the suppression of accountability

had created nascent domestic tensions. Decisions on how leaders absorbed, co-opted, or eliminated opposition would be vital in determining domestic and therefore regional security.

Overall, there was strong support for military engagement in security discussions, though it was agreed that in the early days it would be more effective if it involved knowledgeable retired military men rather than active officers.

## The Future of ACRS and Transition to Regionally Rooted Organizations

It was accepted that ACRS would not die. The co-sponsors had invested much in the process and Egypt in particular had been a vital intellectual godparent of the process. A *modus vivendi* would be found of breaking the current impasse. The group also agreed that US involvement remained key to the process, if only because many of the participants engaged in order to impress or curry favor with the United States.

There might be some advantage, according to a few participants, in creating ‘breakout’ groups in ACRS itself, particularly to discuss sensitive issues. But again, the suggestion that alliance building was taking place, or conspiracies being plotted, needed to be avoided. The ethos of wide-ranging ACRS discussions should be preserved. Perhaps, as had happened in the past, implementation of certain agreed norms would move faster among some countries, but universality in creating norms and practices had to be preserved.

To this was added a footnote about Syria: We must think about the prospects of Syria joining the process. It was not inevitable, even in the context of a peace treaty, that Syria would participate. but if it did, the country would slow the process down until Syria, coming in from the cold, acclimatized itself to warmth of the ACRS process.

In any case, considerable effort had to be placed in giving life to the Regional Security Center. Here one could build a common security culture and language, discuss doctrines, and train people for the verification of arms control and other agreements. The RSC would also be useful

in testing prospects for a more autonomous regional security institution.

For many it was clear that one had to work from the inside out and from the bottom up: Collaboration with the Palestinian–Jordanian–Israeli triangle would have useful spillover effects. It was important to understand that in this region one would have to work from a “pre-comprehensive” to a “comprehensive” to a “post-comprehensive” peace. The fruits of peace must come soon if a constituency was to be created in the region in favor of peace. To this end, better education about the sources of conflict and the history of the region was necessary to change prejudices of the past.

One warning was offered at the end of the deliberations. It would be a mistake to institutionalize too quickly. A new regional security institution should not become merely a forum for highlighting quarrels, as we have often seen in the GCC itself. In this region, a degree of informality remains, in itself, a useful confidence builder. It could be dangerous, finally, to build complex new security temples on shifting domestic sands.

## **Military Doctrines and Security Policy**

Everyone accepted the assertion of one participant that it is important to distinguish carefully between military doctrine and wider security policy. National debates must be encouraged on security in order to avoid a highly militarized version of security dominating national planning. It follows from this that elements of civil society have to impose themselves more on domestic debates that until now have been dominated by the military.

In general, there was skepticism about the utility of developing military-to-military talks in the region if they were confined to the military, given the reluctance of armies in the region to be transparent even within their own countries about defense policy. Still, it is necessary to find a common language and a more balanced regional civil-military ethos that will allow for more open discussion of security policy in the area. There was therefore strong support for the idea already mooted by the French government of inspiring discussion among military planners in the presence of and provoked by a variety of civilian experts from outside the region. From time to time, and to encourage frankness, such civil military relations could take place on a bilateral basis, but it would be important to ensure that such activity did not give outsiders the impression of alliance building. Two other ideas, which received neither strong support nor impassioned disapproval, were mooted along these lines. First, the RSC should consider running simulation exercises. Second, retired distinguished persons of both civilian and military background could be sent to countries in the region to meet serving leaders and pave the way for more official understandings.



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in the Middle East III  
Petra, Jordan, 11–15 December, 1995  
List of Participants**

---

**Mr. Muhammad  
ABABNAH**

Royal Air Force, Jordan

**Dr. Taha Abdel-Alim Taha  
ADAM**

Dep. Dir., Al-Ahram Ctr. for  
Political and Strategic  
Studies, Cairo

**Mr. Zaid Abu ZAYYAD**

Bilateral Advisory  
Committee, Jerusalem

**Ms. Jumana Abu ZAYYAD**

Project Finance Div.,  
Arab Bank, Ramallah,  
West Bank

**Mr. Hussein AGHA**

Royal Inst. of Int'l Affairs,  
London

**Mr. M. AL-BAKHIT**

Royal Air Force, Jordan

**Prof. Hassan H.**

**AL-ALKIM**

Chairman, Dept. of Political  
Science, UAE U., Al-Aim

**Dr. Ali Saeed AL-AMERI**

Dep. Dir., The Emirates Ctr.  
for Strategic Studies and  
Research (ECSSR),  
Abu Dhabi, UAE

**Dr. Munther AL-MASRI**

Pres., Nat'l Ctr. for Human  
Resources and Development,  
Amman

**BG Abdul-Samad AL-  
MAWAJDAH**

Amman

**Dr. Hani AL-MULKI**

Gen. Sec., The Higher  
Council for Science and  
Technology, Amman

**MG (Ret.) Meir AMIT**

Chairman, Meir Amit  
Management Inc., Tel Aviv

**Dr. Kenneth APT**

Los Alamos Nat'l  
Laboratory, NM

**Dr. Uzi ARAD**

Min. of Defense, Tel Aviv

**Col. Majed AYYAD**

Amman

**Dr. Shaul BAKHASH**

Clarence Robinson Prof. of  
History, George Mason U.,  
Fairfax, VA

**Mr. Hanan BAR-ON**

Sr. Advisor to the Pres.,  
Weizmann Inst. of Science,  
Rehovot, Israel

**Amb. Tasheen Mohamed  
BASHEER**

Sr. Fellow, United States  
Inst. of Peace, Washington,  
D.C.

**Dr. John CHIPMAN**

Dir., Int'l Inst. for Strategic  
Studies (IISS), London

**Dr. Paul L.**

**CHRZANOWSKI**

Dir., Policy Planning and  
Special Studies, Lawrence  
Livermore Nat'l Laboratory,  
CA

**Mr. Pierre CONESSA**

Dep. Dir. for Strategic  
Affairs, Min. of Defense,  
Paris

**Brigadier Faisal DABAK**

Dept. of Disarmament and  
Security Studies, Amman

**MG Farouk DARAGMEH**

Amman

**Ms. Helene DEFROMONT**

Disarmament Section,  
Min. of Foreign Affairs, Paris

**Dr. Saif Abbas Abdulla**

**DEHRAB**

Kuwait U.

**Gen. Nader DHAHABI**

General Manager and CEO,  
Royal Jordanian Airlines

**Dr. Robert EINHORN**

Dep. Asst. Sec., Bur. of  
Political-Military Affairs,  
U.S. Dept. of State

**Mr. Yair EVRON**

Dept. of Political Science,  
Tel Aviv U.

**BG Mohammed FAHED**

Amman

**Dr. Edward T. FEI**

Dep. Dir. for Int'l Policy and  
Analysis, U.S. Dept. of  
Energy

**Ms. Nathalie FUSTIERE**

Strategic Affairs Section,  
Min. of Foreign Affairs, Paris

**MG (Ret.) Ahmed M.**

**Abdel HALIM**

Nat'l Ctr. for Middle East  
Studies, Cairo

**Minister-Counselor Omar**

**HILAIE**

Min. of Foreign Affairs and  
Cooperation, Rabat, Morocco

**Dr. Peter JONES**

Leader, Middle East Arms  
Control and Security Project,  
Stockholm Int'l Peace  
Research Inst., Sweden

**Dr. Ephraim KAM**

Dep. Head, Jaffee Ctr. for  
Strategic Studies,  
Tel Aviv U.

**Amb. Mahmoud KAREM**

Dir. of Disarmament, Min. of  
Foreign Affairs, Cairo

**Col. Walid KRISHAN**

Amman

**Amb. Ronald F. LEHMAN**

Asst. to the Dir., Lawrence  
Livermore Nat'l Laboratory,  
CA

**Mr. Sverre LODGAARD**  
Dir., United Nations Inst. for  
Disarmament Research  
(UNIDIR), Geneva,  
Switzerland

**Mr. Ahmad MANGO**  
Economic Advisor to HRH  
Crown Prince El-Hassan,  
Amman

**Mr. Abderraouf Ahmed  
Ounaies**  
Dir.-Gen. for American and  
Asian Affairs, Min. of  
Foreign Affairs, Tunisia

**Mr. Joe PILAT**  
Los Alamos Nat'l  
Laboratory, NM

**Dr. Alan PLATT**  
Sr. Advisor, Gibson, Dunn  
and Crutcher, Washington,  
D.C.

**Col. Omar QUTAISHAT**  
Amman

**Dr. Duygu Bazoglu SEZER**  
Prof. of Int'l Relations,  
Bilkent U., Ankara, Turkey

**MG (Ret.) Kamal  
SHANSOGH**  
Amman

**Dr. Kamal S. SHEHADI**  
Dir. of Research, Lebanese  
Ctr. for Policy Studies, Beirut

**BG Jonathan SHIMSHONI**  
Ya'ad Business Develop-  
ment Ltd., Tel Aviv

**Prof. Susan L. SHIRK**  
Dir., IGCC

## **SPEAKERS**

**Dr. Jawad ANANI**  
Jawad Anani Ctr. for  
Economic and Technical  
Studies, Amman

**Mr. Zeev A. SCHIFF**  
Defense Editor, *Ha'aretz  
Daily*, Tel Aviv

**Dr. Michael NACHT**  
Asst. Dir. for Strategic and  
Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Arms  
Control and Disarmament  
Agency, Washington, D.C.

**Amb. Mohamed Ibrahim  
SHAKER**  
Emb. of the Arab Republic of  
Egypt, London

## **PANELS**

### *Defining the Middle East*

**BG Shlomo BROM**  
Head, Strategic Planning  
Div. (AGAT), Israeli  
Defense Forces, Tel Aviv

**Mr. Abbas KELIDAR**  
School of Oriental and  
African Stud., London U.

**Mr. Valery I. KOUZMIN**  
Dep. Dir., Dept. for the Near  
East and North Africa, Min.  
of Foreign Affairs, Moscow

**Dr. Yezid J. SAYIGH**  
Asst. Dir., Centre for Int'l  
Stud., Cambridge U.  
Security Implications of  
Economic And Social  
Problems

**Dr. Munther J.  
HADDADIN**  
Dir. and Partner,  
Consolidated Consultants,  
Amman

**Ms. Mary MORRIS**  
Assoc. Dir., Greater Middle  
East Stud. Ctr., RAND Corp.,  
Santa Monica, CA

**Prof. Alan RICHARDS**  
Board of Stud. in Economics,  
UC Santa Cruz

**Prof. Emanuel SIVAN**  
Dep. Dir., Israel Science  
Foundation, Hebrew U.,  
Jerusalem

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**Prof. Anthony H.  
CORDESMAN**  
Sr. Fellow and Co-Dir.,  
Middle East Stud. Program,  
Ctr. for Strategic and Int'l

Stud. (CSIS), Washington,  
D.C.

**Dr. Ariel LEVITE**  
Dep. Dir. and Head of Arms  
Control, Dir. of Foreign  
Affairs, Min. of Defense, Tel  
Aviv

**Prof. Janice STEIN**  
Harrowston Prof. of Conflict  
Management, Dept. of  
Political Science, U. of  
Toronto, Canada

**Dr. Sergey ROGOV**  
Dir., Inst. of USA and  
Canada Stud., Russian  
Academy of Sciences,  
Moscow

**Dr. Abdullah TOUKAN**  
Science Advisor to His  
Majesty King Hussein I,  
Amman

### *Toward a New Security Order in the Middle East*

**Mr. Shahram CHUBIN**  
Graduate Inst. of Int'l  
Studies., Geneva

**Dr. Shai FELDMAN**  
Jaffee Ctr. for Strategic  
Studies., Tel Aviv U.

**Dr. Bruce W. JENTLESON**  
Dir., UC Davis Washington  
Ctr., Washington, D.C.

**Dr. Abdullah TOUKAN**

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**Dr. Arian L. PREGENZER**  
Mgr., Verification &  
Monitoring Analysis Dept.,  
Sandia Nat'l Laboratories,  
Albuquerque, NM

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**Dr. Vipin GUPTA**  
Ctr. for Security and  
Technology Stud., Lawrence

## 20 ¥ PARTICIPANT LIST

Livermore Nat'l Laboratory,  
CA

**Ms. Jennifer POURNELLE**  
Managing Editor, IGCC

**Dr. Fred WEHLING**  
Coordinator of Policy  
Research, IGCC



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Susan L. Shirk, a professor in UC San Diego's Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies and in the UCSD Department of Political Science, was appointed director of IGCC in June 1992 after serving for a year as acting director. Former directors of the institute include John Gerard Ruggie (1989–1991), and Herbert F. York (1983–1989), who now serves as director emeritus.





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Jennifer R. Pournelle, Managing Editor  
Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation  
University of California, San Diego  
9500 Gilman Drive  
La Jolla, CA 92093-0518

phone (619) 534-1979 or (619) 534-3352  
Fax (619) 534-7655

email: [jpournelle@ucsd.edu](mailto:jpournelle@ucsd.edu) or [ph13@sdcc12.ucsd.edu](mailto:ph13@sdcc12.ucsd.edu)  
URL: <http://www-igcc.ucsd.edu/igcc/igccmenu.html>  
gopher: [irpserv26.ucsd.edu](gopher://irpserv26.ucsd.edu)

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