

Workshop on Arms
Control and
Security in the Middle East II
Delphi, Greece, 3–7 January 1994

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Policy Paper # 7
April 1994

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*IGCC is grateful to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Center for Security and
Technology Studies and the US Department of Energy's Office of Nonproliferation
Policy for their support of the Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the
Middle East.*

CONTENTS

About the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation iii

Preface vi

 Disclaimer vi

Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East II: 1

Summary Report

Introduction 1

Five Areas of Consensus 2

Five Factors That Complicate the Peace Process..... 3

List of Participants 5

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE ON GLOBAL CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

The University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) was founded in 1983 as a multi-campus research unit serving the entire University of California (UC) system. The institute's purpose is to study the causes of international conflict and the opportunities to resolve it through international cooperation. During IGCC's first five years, research focused largely on the issue of averting nuclear war through arms control and confidence-building measures between the superpowers. Since then the research program has diversified to encompass several broad areas of inquiry: regional relations, international environmental policy, international relations theory, and most recently, the domestic sources of foreign policy.

IGCC serves as a liaison between the academic and policy communities, injecting fresh ideas into the policy process, establishing the intellectual foundations for effective policymaking in the post-Cold War environment, and providing opportunities and incentives for UC faculty and students to become involved in international policy debates. Scholars, researchers, government officials, and journalists from the United States and abroad participate in all IGCC projects, and IGCC's publications—books, policy papers, and a semiannual newsletter—are widely distributed to individuals and institutions around the world.

In addition to projects undertaken by the central office at UC San Diego, IGCC supports research, instructional programs, and public education throughout the UC system. The institute receives financial support from the Regents of the University of California and the state of California, and has been awarded grants by such foundations as Ford, MacArthur, Rockefeller, Sloan, W. Alton Jones, Ploughshares, the Carnegie Corporation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the United States Institute of Peace, and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Susan L. Shirk, a professor in UC San Diego's Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies and in the 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.

PREFACE

The Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East II, held in Delphi during January 1994, deepened discussions begun at the first workshop held in La Jolla, California during March-April, 1993. IGCC published a report of the La Jolla workshop as IGCC Policy Paper No. 4.

All discussions at the Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East were held off the record, to ensure open and direct conversation. Many of the participants were government officials, but all participants attended the workshop in an unofficial 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 that highlights the major themes and concerns expressed at the workshop.

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WORKSHOP ON ARMS CONTROL AND SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST II: SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction¹

The Middle East peace process is now moving more rapidly than ever before. Many actors in the region have displayed a newfound willingness to adopt innovative approaches to resolving persistent conflicts. Though many obstacles remain, the end of the Cold War, the accord signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in September 1993, and other recent hopeful developments in the bilateral and multilateral talks have opened the door to real progress in regional security and arms control. The door may quickly shut, however, if promising signs are not translated into concrete, practical, and verifiable agreements.

To complement the official negotiations and contribute to the progress of the Middle East peace process, the University of California's Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) and the Institute of International Relations of Panteion University, Athens, co-sponsored a Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East in Delphi, Greece, on January 3-7 1994. Funded by the Office of Nonproliferation Policy of the US Department of Energy, this conference was designed to build upon the success of IGCC's first workshop on Middle East arms control, which was held in La Jolla, California, in March 1993. Participants in the Delphi workshop were current and former government officials, veteran arms control negotiators, military officers, and leading non-governmental specialists on arms control and regional security issues from Arab states, Israel, the United States, Europe, and Russia (see the Participants List, page **XX**). To facilitate frank discussions and the free exchange of ideas, the conference was held in a private, informal setting, and all discussions at the meeting were off the record.

The workshop gave Arab and Israeli participants an opportunity to draw upon the expertise that American, European, and Russian experts have gained through research efforts and negotiations between and within governments on arms control issues. At the same time, Arab and Israeli experts voiced their ideas, perspectives, and concerns to each other and to the participants from outside the Middle East. This report summarizes the main points of agreement and the major areas of controversy that came to the fore at the Delphi conference.

¹This work was performed under the auspices of the .US. Department of Energy by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory under contract No. W-7405-Eng-48.

Five Areas of Consensus at the Workshop

1. It is important to keep the peace process on track because it remains the best long-term hope for peace and security in the Middle East.

Both Arab and Israeli participants in the peace process feel they have begun the multilateral talks under less than ideal conditions. The Israelis see as a major problem their starting the multilateral talks without participation by important players in the region - most notably Syria. Only one of the Arab states in the multilateral talks is formally at peace with Israel and others initially considered participation as a concession to Israel. Almost all participants originally viewed the prospects for substantial progress in the multilateral talks as being slim. Yet they recognize that even small steps to reduce the risk of war are important, and the talks continue because no one wants to be seen to be derailing the process. None of the parties see further conflict as the preferred future, and all want the process to lead to regional security and a just peace in the long run, however difficult the talks are at the moment. The peace process is the best hope for the future.

2. However, there is a long way to go in the peace process.

The relationships among Middle East states are not as mature as they were in the East-West case in the 1980s when notable progress was made on arms control. As one workshop participant mentioned, the absence of the equivalent to the Helsinki accords in the Middle East indicates that the political basis is not sufficiently developed for significant arms control measures.¹ A further complication is the fact that the region is not well-defined. If the region is defined narrowly, there are important extra-regional security threats, and with an expansively-defined region, the prospects diminish for both broad regional participation and agreement. It is a considerable achievement that the peace process has begun in spite of these complications.

Several workshop participants believed that significant East-West arms reductions would not have been possible without the paradigm shift that occurred with Gorbachev coming to power. What are the prospects for progress in the peace process unless there is a corresponding attitudinal transformation in the Middle East? Is a paradigm shift beginning to occur? The Helsinki Accords, which all European states (except Albania), the US, and Canada signed in 1975, contained provisions on military security, economic cooperation, and the observance of human rights. Events are happening in the re-

gion that would not have been thought possible even three years ago. There is room for optimism.

3. Although there are major differences between the two cases, much can be learned by Middle East parties from the East-West arms control negotiation experience.

“Have patience” is perhaps the most important lesson offered by veterans of East-West arms control negotiations. Including its precursor Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks, the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty took 20 years to negotiate; the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) 13 years; the agreement on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) 12 years; and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) took 9 years. Throughout the workshop, the point was made that arms control is a political process that is fundamentally adversarial but also to some extent collegial. The negotiations entail difficult bargaining on painstakingly complicated issues, and they can lead to a special sort of bonding between counterparts on opposite sides of the table who come to believe that they are working to both protect their country’s security interests and advance the cause of world peace.

The experienced arms control negotiators stressed other lessons as well. Although arms control is a political process, the military and other elements of the government responsible for national security must be involved from the outset. There must be close cooperation between the diplomats and the military, who will be responsible for providing security under the terms of the accords being negotiated. In addition, negotiations require excellent communication - both within and between governments and, at times, decisions taken by presidents or heads of government to deal with impasses. Finally, there will be a need to verify the agreement reached. However, as one former negotiator said, cheating is a political problem, not a technical problem which can be eliminated by an airtight verification regime.

4. With their focus on the future, the multilateral talks are a vital component of the peace process.

Many workshop participants viewed the multilateral talks as a forum for discussion about the future of the Middle East and the bilateral talks within the peace process as a forum for dealing with the present and the past. While this view ascribes a valuable future regional security role to the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) multilateral talks, ACRS must also address security issues of the present to support the bilateral talks, which is a primary mission of the multilaterals. Support of the bilateral talks requires a delicate balance. The multilaterals must not bog down and derail the bilaterals, and many parties are concerned that the multilaterals

could get too far ahead of political steps that states are willing to take on a bilateral basis or could become engaged in issues that necessitate the participation of presently absent parties.

At the workshop, the co-sponsors of the ACRS multilateral talks reaffirmed their desire to keep the multilateral forum open to all issues and frank discussions. This requires some prediscussion on issues that one side or the other considers particularly sensitive and frequent, timely communication among participants in the process to ensure effective preparation for meetings.

5. Additional interactions outside of the formal peace process among the political, military, and intellectual leaders of the Middle East region are to be encouraged.

This conference and prior IGCC Workshops on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East demonstrate that security experts (governmental, military, and academic) from the Middle East region can work together to discuss each other's security concerns and expand the limits of what seems presently possible in the peace process. It is not only the formal sessions at the workshops that are important, but also the opportunities for one-on-one informal dialogue between participants.

The IGCC workshops have provided a second unofficial track for discussion in which participants can initiate a dialogue on issues that will arise in future multilateral meetings. One session at the workshop was devoted to the issue of threat perceptions, and it provided an opportunity for frank discussions of the views of key participants in the peace process together with views from the Gulf and the Maghreb. Another session involved discussion of monitoring technologies to support regional confidence building measures.

More frequent, regular contacts and communications are to be encouraged. This could include more formal military to military interactions. Dialogue is an essential ingredient to building a lasting peace, and without it, progress toward that goal will be impeded.

Five Factors That Complicate the Peace Process

1. Negotiations require patience, while various factors in the Middle East create a sense of urgency for resolving regional security issues.

Major East-West arms control negotiations during the Cold War typically required a decade or more to complete. Patience was required, as was Presidential leadership at critical junctures in the negotiations. In some key respects, Middle East regional security issues are less tractable than East-West issues were during the Cold War. Even more patience may be required by Middle East negotiators. However, patience conflicts with a widely-perceived sense of urgency. There are several

explosive factors in the Middle East with short fuses: the prospect of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the continuing conventional arms race among states, demographic pressures, and a need to deal with urgent economic and resource management issues. For the Middle East, patience may be an unaffordable luxury.

2. Regional security in the Middle East requires a comprehensive solution, while progress may be possible only on a step-by-step basis.

Most of the participants in the workshop stated that a comprehensive solution would be needed to assure regional peace and security. Comprehensive means that the solution must consider various types of weapons (both conventional and weapons of mass destruction) and deal with security concerns that stem from parties not presently participating in the negotiations. Each state must consider its own perceptions of the durability of peace, evaluate the risks of war in the absence of progress in the peace process, and balance requirements for deterrence with the arms control it is willing to negotiate.

However, the East-West experience is that the security problems must be partitioned to make progress and that agreement comes in stages on well-defined pieces of the problem. The challenge in the peace process will be the identification of meaningful, discrete steps that can worked either in parallel or sequentially. In addition, to enable serious consideration of arms control measures, there must be progress toward a political settlement and reconciliation.

The regional participants in the peace process must identify some concrete first steps. It is encouraging that the ACRS multilateral talks have been split into two working groups: one to address political/legal issues and the other to focus on military/technical issues. This two-basket approach may allow for progress to be made.

3. The nuclear issue is a major complication.

The demand by some Arab states to deal now with nuclear issues in the multilateral talks was considered by many Israelis at the workshop to be unreasonable so early in the political process. Israeli workshop participants represented the nuclear program as a defensive necessity under present circumstances for a country with a lack of strategic depth and limited resources. As one Israeli noted, some states may not be hesitant to use chemical weapons against Israel's population. Although Israel has agreed to the ultimate goal of a nuclear-free Middle East, a nuclear capability provides Israel with security in a region without friends against threats no longer confined to bordering states.

One Egyptian at the workshop said that he did not expect Israel to get rid of nuclear weapons overnight but maintained that the nuclear issue is the most important arms control issue because, in his view, nuclear weapons make conventional weapons obsolete. He expressed particular concern about the complete absence of transpar-

ency in the Israeli nuclear program and the purpose of the large number of weapons the Israelis are alleged to possess if the capability is defensive only.

Moreover, widely different views were expressed by workshop participants on many nuclear matters. One particularly important contentious issue was the appropriate pace and scope of discussion of nuclear issues in the formal peace process and linkage (or lack of it) to other issues. The introductory discussions of nuclear issues at the ACRS multilateral talks focused on carefully selected nuclear topics related to verification and required considerable advanced preparation because of the sensitivity of the nuclear issue to at least one participating state. The dialogue at the workshop both augmented and complemented the discussions held at the ACRS talks.

4. When do enemies become adversaries and adversaries become neighbors?

One prominent Egyptian at the workshop described his country's relationship with Israel as a transformation from an enemy to an adversary to a neighbor. An Israeli workshop participant questioned whether the peace with Egypt presently is an elite peace between governments or a peace between peoples. It is reconciliation—a peace among peoples—that provides the soundest basis for lasting peace in the region. This is a particularly acute issue for many Israelis, who need to be assured that Arabs accept the existence of a Jewish state in the region before they are willing to make difficult arms control concessions.

When will various bordering Middle East states become neighbors rather than adversaries or enemies, and

how is the associated reconciliation process tied to formal steps towards regional security arrangements? Clearly, becoming neighbors and achieving regional peace and security go hand-in-hand, and both are step-by-step processes that will take time.

5. Should the political process demonstrate progress before instituting confidence-building measures (CBMs), or should CBMs be considered now to facilitate movement in the political process?

Interest in the pursuit of CBMs varies among participants in the peace process. According to one workshop attendee from the region, the ACRS cosponsors (the US and Russia) favor early consideration of CBMs/ in part, as a way of fostering dialogue between the two sides on the expectation that this would positively affect discussion of political matters. By comparison, progress on political issues was the foremost concern of most workshop regional participants at the workshop. They tended to see some movement on political issues as a necessary precursor to CBMs.

In any case, technical representatives from the US pointed out at the workshop that it is important to consider in advance which monitoring systems and technologies would be useful complements to agreements or CBMs that might be devised to improve regional security. Workshop participants generally saw value in US efforts to educate regional players about CBMs and arms control monitoring technologies to provide the region with the technical basis needed to enable future agreements.

Workshop on Arms Control and Security in the Middle East

Delphi, 3–7 January 1994

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