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BERNARD JENKIN MP has been in office since 1992 and was elected as Chairman of the Public Administration Committee in May 2010. During the last Parliament he served on the House of Commons Defence Select Committee. A former Shadow Defence Secretary (2001-03), he still writes extensively on defence matters. He is currently Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Homeland Security and also a member of the Executive of the 1922 Committee of Backbench Conservative MPs.

MICHAEL BINYON joined The Times in 1972, covered the 1973 Middle East War and became a foreign correspondent in 1975. He reopened The Times bureau in Moscow in 1977, moved to Washington (as Bureau Chief) in 1985 and then to Brussels in 1989. In 1991 he became the paper’s diplomatic editor, attending most international summits. A frequent broadcaster on the BBC and various overseas television networks, he speaks French, German, Russian and Arabic. He was awarded an OBE in 2000.

DAVID VARNEY has worked in Diplomatic Protection for 14 years and has been a protective security adviser for over five years specialising in crime prevention, designing out crime and counter terrorism. He’s been a Police Officer for over 28 years with previous experience in public order, surveillance, intelligence and armed protection.

CHARLIE WHEELER is an Envoy at the West India Committee. Having previously completed an MSc in International Development at the University of Bristol, Charlie is now managing the West India Committee’s research project on National Parks.
OLD FRIENDS

Many will recognise Sameh Aboulenein's face from his years as Deputy Head of Mission at the Egyptian Embassy in London. After numerous assignments in Egypt, he is now back in Europe, although this time in Switzerland. Since October, Mr Aboulenein has been the new Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG).

Prior to his appointment to Geneva, Mr Aboulenein was Egypt’s Assistant Foreign Minister for Disarmament, International Security and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. Before that, he served as the Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister.

In addition to his diplomatic service, Mr Aboulenein has been an Adjunct Professor for Disarmament, International and Regional Security at the American University in Cairo, and a visiting professor at the Universities of East Anglia and Stirling. In March 2015, he was awarded the 2014-2015 Outstanding Academic Recognition Award by the Political Science Department of the American University in Cairo. Mr Aboulenein has written and lectured widely in both English and Arabic on international and regional security, as well as conflict resolution and a Middle East Nuclear Free Zone.

CALL TO ACTION: THE PRINCE’S TRUST

I am a Chief Inspector with The Metropolitan Police in London, currently working with His Royal Highness Prince Charles for one of his charities, The Prince’s Trust.

At The Prince’s Trust we work with young people on the fringes of society who have had unimaginably difficult starts in life, facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles preventing them from getting their lives on track, such as abuse, homelessness, disabilities, poverty, etc. It is our aim to inspire and enable them to gain confidence and achieve their goals to realise a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

The 12-week programme provides disadvantaged 16-35 year olds – who are not in employment, education or training – with social skills, work experience, confidence building and leadership techniques. As a result, 77 per cent then move into education, employment or training, and of those who are young offenders, 84 per cent then do not go on to commit crime afterwards. Of course, in today’s climate of the risk of extremism to some of our young people, we recognise this as a powerful way to divert them from that path.

In the UK, funding for this programme is generally achieved via grants from governments or benefactors. I am looking to see what scope there is to deliver this programme by police forces in Canada, Australia, India and the Caribbean (Barbados in particular).

Not only does this programme change and indeed save the lives of the majority of young people it engages with, it changes the officers too. Officers learn how to motivate a team of people, without recourse to rules, regulations and hierarchy; they develop their own leadership techniques and improve confidence. Detectives, response officers and those who work directly with young people can all benefit from helping to lead one of these programmes.

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THE NUCLEAR FREE ZONE CHALLENGE

Professor Sameh Aboul-Enen asks how we can establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction

SINCE 1974, THERE HAVE been regular discussions and actions carried out at international and regional levels to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East. During the process we have seen the emergence of best practice guidelines for the development of nuclear-free zones, principally through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In November 2011, the IAEA convened a forum in Vienna, in which attendees presented several constructive proposals, drawing on the appropriate lessons learned from setting up and implementing the five NWFZs and other WMD-free zones, and discussing the Middle East region in this context.

The UN has established guidelines and principles that a NWFZ: should not prevent the use of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes; will strengthen the security of states in such zones and contribute to the overall objective of strengthening international peace and security; should reaffirm member states' commitment to honour legal obligations to other international nonproliferation and disarmament instruments to which they are parties.

There are already a number of successful examples of NWFZs, such as the Pelindapa Treaty. Signed in Cairo in 1996 by 47 of the 53 African states, the treaty established an NWFZ in Africa. It prohibits the research, development, manufacture, stockpiling, acquisition, testing, possession, control or stationing of nuclear explosive devices in the territory of signatory parties. The treaty also prohibits any attacks against nuclear installations in the zone by treaty parties and requires them to maintain the highest standards of protection of nuclear material, facilities and equipment (to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.)

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCON) serves as a compliance mechanism for the Treaty. AFCONE encourages African states to take responsibility for natural resources and, in particular, nuclear material, and protects against the dumping of toxic waste.

Important lessons for the Middle East can also be drawn from the experience of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). Euratom was initially created to coordinate research programmes for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to pool knowledge, infrastructure and funding. It ensures the security of atomic energy supply within the framework of a centralised monitoring system and acts in several areas connected with atomic energy, including research, safety standards, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This experience is worth investigating to see how it might be applied to the Middle East. Two further examples of successful NWFZs should be mentioned to make my case.

South Africa was the first country to voluntarily abandon a fully developed nuclear weapons programme and should serve as a standard model for relevant disarmament and dismantling strategies. Despite taking 16 years to construct its six-weapon nuclear arsenal, South Africa terminated and fully dismantled its programme in less than 14 months. This involved:

- dismantling six completed gun-type devices at Armaments Corporation of South Africa Ltd. (ARMSCOR) under controlled and secure conditions;
- melting and recasting the highly-enriched uranium from six devices, and returning it to the Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC) for safe-keeping;
- fully decontaminating ARMSCOR facilities and returning severely contaminated equipment to the AEC;
- converting the ARMSCOR facilities to conventional weapon and non-weapon commercial activities, and destroying all hardware components of the devices, technical design and manufacturing information;
- joining the NPT, and signing the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, and submitting a full and complete national initial inventory of nuclear material and facilities as required by the Safeguards Agreement.

Kazakhstan also renounced all nuclear weapons that it inherited from the USSR, and completed the dismantling of the nuclear-testing infrastructure at Semipalatinsk in 2000.

The Low-Enriched-Uranium Bank between Kazakhstan and the IAEA is an example of proactive diplomacy that works at encouraging states to pursue nuclear projects for peaceful purposes. It also allows Kazakhstan to make use of its abundant uranium deposits.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES TO THE ZONE PROCESS

What can governments do to establish a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone? In advance of any such zone being established in the Middle East, there is a need for substantial
agreement between states on such issues as the geographic scope of the zone and the inclusion of items such as verification and compliance. Key questions remain:

1. Which institutions will be entrusted with the responsibility of the zone?
2. What are the implications of non-compliance? (The Euratom treaty may be a useful example here as there is a process to deal with violations.)
3. How can security guarantees be given to reinforce the process of the zone’s establishment?
4. What role will the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as well as nuclear safety and security, play in future zone discussions?

Aside from these questions, a number of other issues need to be resolved and actions implemented:

1. Dismantling and destroying existing or remaining nuclear weapons capabilities, facilities and devices under international verification mechanisms.
2. Renouncing nuclear weapons through refraining from conducting indigenous development and activities related to nuclear weapons.
3. Prohibiting the transit or stationing of any nuclear explosive devices in the zone.
4. Prohibiting nuclear explosive testing in the zone and the role of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBT).
5. Using nuclear materials and facilities for peaceful purposes only.
6. Placing all nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.
7. Establishing the necessary relevant institutions and mechanisms or entities to uphold a zone, free of nuclear and other WMDs.

In terms of the issue of verification, identifying the role of the IAEA and other relevant organisations such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and CTBTO is a key priority.

Addressing the scientific and technical dimensions of the WMDFZ proposal – including institutional and legal issues – can help break the current stalemate in diplomatic negotiations and make substantial progress toward the end-goals. To facilitate the process, all relevant international nonproliferation treaties and organisations should be called upon to begin a collective awareness and outreach programme for the relevant cadres of the region.

Given the need to create regional discussions on diplomatic, political and technical issues, we need to use the resources of academic experts and think tanks (regional and elsewhere) devoted to security and disarmament issues. Experts, academics and officials also have a role to play in inspiring responsible public coverage of the zone across the region that extends beyond pure politics.

At present, discussions on the zone are largely the preserve of diplomats, bureaucrats and politicians. This may be appropriate to navigating the political context, but limits the technical breadth and depth of discussions over frameworks and institutions. Therefore, layers of technical expertise will be required both to write and establish the zone, and to run, manage, maintain and protect it once it is in place.

In order to make progress towards such a zone in the Middle East, the UN should engage Israel, Iran and the Arab states in substantive and procedural preparations to launch a negotiating zonal cycle. Progress towards this goal requires the contribution of international organisations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the CTBTO or the OPCW.

The proposal to build the zone is an initiative that has potential, but undoubtedly one with several challenges. However, the zone will definitely enhance international security, peace and stability, and promote regional security and cooperation. Moreover, it will facilitate regional cooperation on issues of common interest, including emerging security challenges.

**TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES SINCE 1974:**

1974 The UN General Assembly (UNGA) approves resolution endorsing the goal of establishing a NWFWZ in the Middle East following a proposal by Iran and Egypt.

1980 Israel joins international consensus allowing the General Assembly to pass a resolution supporting the goal of NWFWZ without a vote.

1990 The Egyptian proposal to establish an expanded WMDFZ in the Middle East is submitted before the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

1991 The IAEA General Conference passes resolution on "the Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East." This resolution has since been passed annually without objections.

1995 The NPT Review Conference adopts a resolution on the Middle East calling on states to take practical steps to make progress in the establishment of WMDFZ in the region. Member agreement on resolution was seen as key to securing the indefinite extension of the NPT.

2000 The NPT Review conference renews its goal of 1995 Middle East Resolution and says that the resolution remains "valid until its goals and objectives are achieved."

2010 The NPT Review Conference endorses five practical steps towards establishing a WMDFZ in the Middle East. Action steps adopted include convening a regional conference to discuss the issue in 2012 and appointing a WMDFZ facilitator.

2012 The Convening States and the Facilitator declare the postponement of the 2012 Conference.

2013 During the 68th session of the UNGA, Egypt announces an Initiative to free the Middle East from nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction.