

Forum: Disarmament Committee

Issue: Reevaluating confidence building measures in the Middle East

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Introduction

Confidence building measures (CBMs), or Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs), have become a primary mediator for numerous international diplomatic and military conflicts since the post-Cold War era. Although the terms will be defined more elaborately in the subsequent section of the report, the primary aim of CBMs and CSBMs is examining a conflict through dividing it into different sub-sections (e.g. naval, political etc.), and formulating both restrictions and new measures in order to reach a mutual conclusion. The aforementioned restrictions may range from troop deployment to air force monitoring and can be on any area within the conflict.

The fundamental reason that sparked the rise of CBMs was their success within Europe, especially in regards to its divide between east and west as a remnant of the Cold War. The severe divide was overcome with the use of CBMs, and in its current state, Europe is one of the most developed and prosperous regions in the world. Although this prosperity is partly because Europe has been a central region of development for centuries, such a drastic shift from a region of war to a continent of development was a noteworthy model for conflicted regions.

Although the method was successful for Europe, it might not be applicable to the entire world. The Middle East has been a central location for the evolution of humanity and civilization. However, after the Second World War, the Middle East became a zone of proxy warfare. With the establishment of the State of Israel, Arab nations managed to unite with one sole aim: the termination of the Israeli State. On the other hand, Iran has been facing numerous internal struggles, including multiple coups, political and financial foreign interventions, which has in turn led to constant political instability, hindering any form of development. The Islamic Revolution ended Iran's continuous period of government change, resulting with the establishment of what is currently the world's largest Shia state. This, alongside the discovery of oil, made Saudi Arabia and Iran into rival nations for dominance over the Middle East. The two nations have since yielded numerous proxy wars within every sub-conflict of the region. Although Saudi Arabia and Iran are the primary figures within the region, the United States and Russian Federation, formerly USSR, have been heavily involved through incorporation of their intelligence agencies and military support to their allies, forming an international war zone. Since

then, despite numerous attempts at peace talks, the Middle East has remained a turbulent region with nations fighting both diplomatically and militarily to maintain their interests and financial gains. As a result, while Confidence Building Measures might have been effective in resolving short term goals, use of harsher means have shown more effectiveness in the Middle East when it comes to accomplishing more long-term peace.

Confidence Building Measures directly pertain to this year's theme of "Political Innovation: Strengthening Diplomacy in and Evolving World". CSBMs are mechanism of diplomacy and have been prevalent for the past 70 years; hence, their promotion would be a significant contribution towards the objective stated within the theme.

Definition of Key Terms

Middle East: Considering the presence of border conflicts within Middle East, such as the one in regards to Jerusalem, Syria Israel border, etc. the report will not acknowledge any certain border formulation and thus, the map on the right will be used.

Confidence and security building measures (CMSMs): As mentioned in the previous section, these are measures to maintain stability and peace within a region, reducing fear of conflict. In a thesis paper present by Jill Junnola, the following is incorporated into the definition: he measures have grown over time, varying from post war peace agreements to full disengagement treaties. Such treaties may limit troop deployment and may increase measures for monitoring some regions.

Multi Basket Approach: This is an approach that enables a conflict to be divided into its substantially different sub-conflicts, such as financial and political conflicts, or into conflicts that occur in different sub-regions. The method has shown success in past attempts, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Nuclear Asymmetry: Nuclear asymmetry is a situation where two conflicted states have substantially different nuclear capabilities. This is a concern specifically raised by Arab states, as many are conflicted with the State of Israel and lack nuclear forces.

Maritime Confidence Building: While further details on past events involving maritime insecurity will be given in subsequent sections, the term is a crucial one for the conflict at hand as the region contains the Arab Peninsula, covered by seas on three sides. Such CBMs aim to



regulate the deployment of naval forces and their armament.

Prenotification: This term refers to a mean of communication among nations, which regards notifying each other prior to deployment of any military forces to a certain region, in order to maintain transparency and have a mutual agreement prior to military operations.

Non-state actor: Non-state actors are groups within the Middle East that are not recognized as nations or states, but are organized, and possess power and territory. The term has a vast range of definitions, as the mentioned group can be as small as a pirate group or as large as the Kurdish Regional government.

General Overview

Applicability of Confidence Building Measures

As mentioned in the introductory section, CBMs emerged in Europe during the post Cold War era. At the time, there were two main superpowers in the world: United States and the Soviet Union. When the states reached a balance of terror due to their mutual possession of unstoppable weapons of mass destruction such as Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, CBMs were the only measure that would be capable of defending both sides' interest while maintaining civilian prosperity. Hence, they became a common measure for peace and international transparency on limiting the use of the equipped military capabilities Member States have.

However, the same conditions do not exist within the Middle East. Firstly, there is a major disequilibrium in terms of the weaponry. While Israel is equipped with nuclear forces, its main opposition Palestine is almost a impoverished state. On the other hand, while Turkey has one of the largest militaries in the region, its opposition, the Kurdish forces to its southeast, are incapable of defending their claimed territories without support.

Secondly, Europe's territorial status quo was mostly finalized after the 1970s. As a result, such means of confidence building measures were quite applicable for Europe. However, the Middle East is quite different, as the region contains numerous non-state actors that are continuously struggling for their territorial sovereignty. Additionally, some states continue to refuse peace talks with others, while some refuse to recognize other states (eg. Iran and Israel). Therefore, implementation of such transparency and confidence building measures are quite inapplicable.

To conclude, some conflicts have feasible conditions for applying CBMs, which are generally conflicts without radical issues, while other conflicts are quite unresolvable through CBMs as some states maintain persistent policies that require the termination of the opposition. Therefore, would CBMs be a feasible solution for Middle East, will nations be able to adapt them during peace dialogues?

Proxy Wars of the Middle East

The Middle East contains two main regional powers, Iran and Saudi Arabia. The former is the largest Shia state in the Middle East, while the latter is the largest Sunni state. Both countries are mainly ruled by Islamic laws; however, Saudi Arabia has been more inclined towards modernising the society over the past couple of years, with the rise of its crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman. It is also important to note that Iran used to have nuclear capabilities, which might have a cause of weaponry disequilibrium, its program was dismantled following the Iran Nuclear Crisis. However, Iran is still receiving arms from the Russian Federation, thus becoming a primary belligerent in numerous conflicts, such as the Syrian Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has been receiving arms from the United States since the discovery of oil beneath their territory, and similar consequences are observed for Saudi Arabia as well.

Examining the conflict at a larger scale, Iran and Saudi Arabia are, respectively, proxies of the Russian Federation and the United States. As a result of this situation, countries are incapable of making their own national decisions. Such conclusions are observed in numerous conflicts: Syrian Civil war depends on the arms provided to Syria by the Russian Federation, as well as the presence of the US-led coalition in the region. Although proxies bring the state of arms to an equilibrium, they force nations to make their policies dependent on their relations with the superpowers, which limits their decision-making and prevents internal development.

Conflicts within Middle East and their Brief Explanations

While all the conflicts below cannot be limited with brief explanation, the text below will address the main points, yet the delegates should conduct further research for a more detailed knowledge on respective conflicts.

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Establishment of Israel in 1948 was a watershed in the Middle East. Even the state's existence was a conflict for many Muslim States. Since its establishment, there have been multiple wars, none of which have been concluded to achieve long-term peace. Currently, one of the main issues within the conflict is settlements in West Bank, which, according to many, violate the sovereignty of Palestine. On the other hand, many call Hamas a non-state actor and classify it as a terror organization that is both harmful to the unity of Israel and Palestine. Yes, Hamas, from a supporter perspective, is the political party ruling the Gaza Strip region. The conflict at hand is an unresolvable one, with both sides periodically refusing to conduct peace talks and compromise by any means.

Syrian Civil War: The conflict arose when people of the Republic of Syria were discontent with

their government, leading to uprisings that were part of the Arab Spring. As a result, country was divided. The Free Syrian Army rivaled the national. Meanwhile, due to lack of authority within the nation, the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant, better known as ISIS, emerged, managing to expand its territory and spread its extremist ideology rapidly. Alongside ISIS' infamy as a terrorist organization, Assad has also used his forces brutally, and has been criticized for conducting a war crime. International response to conflict was initiated by the United States with the aims of defeating ISIS and maintaining order within Syria. Concurrently, the Russian Federation provided military support to the Assad regime, which made the conflict a massive mess.

Yemeni Civil War: The conflict emerged as Houthi Rebels in Yemen overthrew the elected government lead by Mansur Hadi. The country was lead into a mass conflict where numerous people ended up either dead or displaced. Currently, the United Nations' humanitarian teams are striving to save as many as they can within Yemen. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has been accused of war crimes for multiple times due to their frequent airstrikes in the region. The United States has not claimed any responsibility for providing the weaponry utilized in the Saudi airstrikes.

There are numerous conflicts within the Middle East, the ones above are ones with vast international involvement, but delegates are strongly encourages to examine and make further research on **Kurds in Northern Iraq** and **status of Qatar within the region**.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States of America: Although the United States is not located in the Middle East, it plays the most impactful role in the region. US involvement within the Middle East commenced with the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia. Following the discovery, the US established extensive trade relationships with Saudis, including arms trade. The United States was also a major influence on another Middle Eastern superpower, Iran. Iran's current government system was formed after the Islamic revolution of 1979, which was a direct outburst against the former installed by the United States, aiming to promote "democracy" within the region. Additionally, the United States has been heavily involved with the arms trade within Middle East, primarily in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A more recent and prevalent example is within the Syrian Civil War, in which the US has been the leading the international military coalition by supplying a vast amount of arms, in order to both defend the civilians and defeat the Islamic State. Finally, on the military aspect, the US has been in engagement with non-state actors as well, primarily the Kurdish forces in Northern Iraq. The US' military involvement aside, their role as a mediator has also been immensely impactful, as it initiated the peace process between Israel and Palestine with Camp David Accords I, and commenced peace talks among the belligerents of the Syrian Civil War.

Russian Federation: Russia was very inactive in the Middle East during Mikhail Gorbachev's

presidency and returned to the region as Putin cultivated power over the years. The Russian Federation has been the primary opposition against the United States within the Middle East. Russia's main ally in the region is Iran. Russia's military support was crucial in enabling Iran to become a belligerent of the Syrian Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War, as well as making Iran into one of the two main superpowers of the region. Furthermore, the Russian Federation has been supporting the Assad regime in Syria both diplomatically through its support in the United Nations Security Council as a permanent member, and in terms of military aid. Additionally, Russian Federation has been a primary mediator in numerous conflicts, such as the Syrian Civil War and in dialogues for ameliorating economic relations. Hence, it is rapidly developing trade relations with Iraq, Egypt, Israel, and other wealthy Gulf states. Finally, Russia's involvement in Middle East is due to its opposition to Islamist extremism. As such groups arose in Northern Caucasus, Russia's sovereignty and territorial uniformity was threatened; hence, Russia began using its military forces to minimize ISIS territory and prevent the rise of an ideological threat to its power.

Islamic Republic of Iran: Iran, as mentioned in the section above, is one of the leading nations in the region and represents Shia Muslims. Iran has nuclear capabilities, yet has faced numerous controversies against them and was requested to dismantle the production process. It is one of the primary belligerents of the Syrian Civil war and has allegedly been supporting the Houthis in the Yemen conflict. Furthermore, Iran is a significant opposition to Israel, whom Iran does not recognize, which is significant because it has been the cause of tension between two states with well equipped military forces and long-distance weapons. Finally, due to Iran's past conflict with western nations, primarily United States and the United Kingdom, it is strongly inclined towards forming a coalition with the Russian Federation in every possible means.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Saudi Arabia is the other superpower of the region, and the Kingdom is primarily ruled by Islamic laws and Wahhabism, which is allegedly supportive of the Islamic State. Kingdom is a representative of the Sunni Muslim population. The kingdom has been recently criticized for its heavy use of arms and for targeting civilians in the Yemeni Civil War. Saudi Arabia has been one of main opposers of Hezbollah, a controversial political party in Jordan, and has been establishing trade relations with Israel, while simultaneously revoking its military support from defending the Palestinian state. To sum up, the Kingdom is receiving heavy support from the United States and is slowly embracing more modernized social measures, while concurrently aiming to maintain religious order and represent the Sunni sect.

The State of Israel: Israel is probably the most detested nation in the entire globe. The state is facing military threats from surrounding nations every day, primarily because it is a Jewish state amid Arab neighbors that threatens the Palestinian State. In response, Israel has been using heavy military forces and weapons. For Israel, support from the United States is its primary assurance for maintaining its existence within the region, and the alliance between the two countries has been prevalent both politically and militarily since 1948. Confidence building for Israel and its opposition is probably the most conflicted case. As there is no mutual recognition,

states refuse to interact with each other, yielding an unsolvable conflict.

Non-state actors of the region: Non-state actors have always been a point of conflict within international affairs. In Middle East, such conflicts have been quite prevalent, main instances being US aid to Kurdish forces, Iranian aid to the Houthis and to Hamas. As such non-state actors are not recognized by many states, it is unfeasible to conduct peace dialogue with them, which merely raises the tension in the region.

Timeline of Events

1934	First Saudi-Yemeni War
1935	Persia Officially becomes Iran
1937	Dersim Rebellion, largest Kurdish rebellion in Turkey
1961	First Iraqi Kurdish War erupts
Year of 1973	Yom Kippur War
1974	Palestinian Liberation Organization started representing the people of Palestine in the United Nations
1974-75	Second Iraqi Kurdish War
1978	First Camp David Accords
1987-1990	First Intifada
1980-1989	Iran-Iraq war
October 30, 1991 - November 1, 1991	Madrid Conference of 1991
1993-95	Oslo Accords
2010	Syrian Civil War begins
2014	Islamic State of Iraq and Levant emerges

UN Involvement

Although the United Nations is a well-equipped mediator for many conflicts, the UN's most powerful organ, the Security Council, has been acting as the UN's responsible body for the region. There have been a few peacekeeping operations, which are all geared towards either supervision or monitoring, which will be further discussed below. In short, the UN as an organization has not been deeply involved with the region, but its members are already taking actions through the Security Council.

On the other hand, the United Nations Secretariat has been serving as peace mediators in the region, examples including the Syrian Peace Process in Geneva since 2011, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 1994. Such mediations are coordinated by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process, which has been representing the Secretary-General of the United Nations since 1994, just after the commencement of the Oslo Accords.

The following table will have the name of UN peacekeeping operation and their missions, as stated on their official websites:

First United Nations Emergency Force	It was established to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities, including the withdrawal of French, Israeli and British armed forces from Egyptian territory, and to serve as a buffer between the Egyptian and Israeli forces afterwards.
Second United Nations Emergency Force	It was established in October 1973 to supervise the ceasefire between Egyptian and Israeli forces, as well as the redeployment of Egyptian and Israeli forces following the conclusion of the agreements of 18 January 1974 and 4 September 1975. Its responsibilities also included manning and controlling the buffer zones established under those agreements.
UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group	It was established in August 1988 to verify, confirm and supervise the ceasefire and the withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries, pending a comprehensive settlement. UNIIMOG was terminated in February 1991, after Iran and Iraq had fully withdrawn their forces to the internationally recognized boundaries.
United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission	It was established in April 1991 following the forced withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Its task was to monitor the demilitarized zone along the Iraq-Kuwait border, deter border violations and report any hostile action. The mandate of the Mission was completed on 6 October 2003.
United Nations	It was established to ensure that there was no illegal infiltration of

Observation Group in Lebanon	personnel, or supply of arms or other material across the Lebanese borders. After the conflict was settled, tensions eased and UNOGIL was withdrawn.
UN Yemen Observation Mission	The mission was established in July 1963 to observe and certify the implementation of the disengagement agreement between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Republic. The mandate of UNYOM ended on 4 September 1964, and its personnel and equipment were withdrawn
UN Supervision Mission in Syria	Established with UN Security Council Resolution 2043, the mission is responsible for monitoring a cessation of armed violence in all its forms.

Relevant UN Documents

- 22 November 1967, S/242, Urges Israel to remove any forces from occupied territories (Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, West Bank, Gaza Strip)
- 10 November 1975, A/3379, Calls for the elimination of any racially discriminating policy in the Middle East, which are especially significant for any displaced individuals
- 2 September 2004, S/1559, demands the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon
- 11 August 2006, S/1701, Aids Lebanon in re-gaining its territory from Hezbollah
- 20 July 1987, S/598, Calls for Iraq-Iran war to have a ceasefire
- 2 August 1990, S/660, Urges Iraq troops' withdrawal from Kuwait
- 5 April 1991, S/688, condemns the oppressive regime in Iraq and the maltreatment of Kurdish refugees in the Turkish border
- 8 November 2002, S/1441, makes the final notification to Iraq for urging their cooperation with UN inspectors
- 31 July 2006, S/1696, Requests Iran to dismantle its uranium program until the end of August 2006
- December 23 2006, S/1737, imposes sanctions on any nation that imports or exports nuclear material in and out of Iran
- 20 July 2013, S/2118, Elimination of chemical weapons in Syria
- 18 December 2015, S/2254, declaration of ceasefire within the Syrian Civil War

Treaties and Events

The Madrid Conference of 1991

The conference was hosted in Madrid, Spain and was sponsored by both United States and the Soviet Union. The primary aim was creating dialogue between Israel and the Arab states, namely Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Certain successful meetings were followed by bilateral

dialogues between states.

The Geneva Peace Talks

Bringing the belligerents of the Syrian Civil War together, the Geneva Peace Talks are sponsored by the United States, the Russian Federation, and the United Nations.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

The treaty aims to denuclearize all Member States in possession of nuclear weaponry and promotes dismantling any future productions. However, it enables nuclear production for peaceful and scientific purposes.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

The ATT is an international treaty that aims to regulate weapon transactions among nations. It also aims to regulate weapon supplies to umbrella countries for maintaining the weaponry equilibrium within the conflicts they are involved. By now, one hundred states have ratified the treaty and an additional 39 countries signed, but did not ratify.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

As mentioned in the previous sections, there have been a few persistent obstacles towards the establishment of confidence building measures in the Middle East. Firstly, without mutual recognition or a willingness to compromise between states, it is impossible to carry out peace talks or sign treaties. Furthermore, many of the decisions in Middle East are not made independently by the countries within the region, and are heavily influenced by the superpowers that command the proxy states. This results in a vicious cycle that revolves around interests rather than mutual agreement.

Possible Solutions

While there is no one single solution to the conflict, delegates should consider creating specific arms trade regulations for Middle East, which should operate based on transparency.

Moreover, although a former UN Security Council resolution clearly prohibited any form of segregation/discrimination in foreign policy, formulation of a body to ensure that all Member States abide by this rule would be useful.

Another suggestion would regard the improvement of regional trade. Historically, trade has been one of the top stimuli for improving bilateral and multilateral relations. Thus, removal of certain trade sanctions and creation of tax incentives and other means of economic expansion would

yield a pathway towards better relations within the Middle East.

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