Universality & Nonproliferation: The Case of the Middle East
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Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

We are grateful for your kind presence at this session to exchange views on matters of special concern to all of us. Among the many acute issues you will deal with is the question of nuclear weapons proliferation and the necessity of ensuring the universality of the NPT to prevent such proliferation. Allow us to discuss this issue in relation to the Middle East region.

Mr. President,

In the twenty-first century new types of nuclear weapons free zones (NWFZ) will need to be established different from those established in the twentieth century. Instead of NWFZs established in regions already free from nuclear weapons to ensure non-proliferation, these nuclear weapons free zones will be established in regions where states which possess nuclear weapons are located. Their aim will be nuclear disarmament as well as nuclear non-proliferation. The Middle East is one region where a NWFZ of this kind will be needed.

However, a unique characteristic of the Middle East is the fact that nuclear weapons are possessed by only one party in the region, Israel. As a consequence, a deadly threat is posed to the security of other countries in the region and to their people. Under these conditions, it is impossible to establish durable peace and sustainable security in the region. Moreover, the other countries are asking themselves what leverage they have to induce Israel to join negotiations in good faith for a middle East Free from nuclear weapons? These circumstances result in the continued danger that a race to acquire weapons of mass destruction could eventually escalate in the region if Israel’s nuclear weapons are not eliminated.

Mr. President,

There is no region in the world similar to the Middle East where the lack of universality of the NPT, due to the presence of a single nuclear weapons state that is not party to the NPT, is so tightly interconnected to the potential for further proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In the Middle East, a commitment by Israel to eliminate its nuclear weapons, to abide by all provisions of the NPT, and thus to accept the principle of its universality are essential to the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Israel already has acquired an arsenal of nuclear weapons almost equal to that possessed by a big power, the United Kingdom. Therefore, halting further production of Israeli nuclear weapons will not be enough to ensure nonproliferation unless such a step will be part of a legally binding commitment to finally eliminate these weapons.

Aware of this critical situation countries of the region have sought alternatives to reduce these dangers. Since 1974, the U.N. General Assembly annually has adopted resolutions, proposed by Egypt, on the dangers of nuclear proliferation and on the need for a NWFZ in the Middle East. When information about the production of chemical weapons by some Middle East states became public, Egypt called in 1990 for a Middle East free from both nuclear weapons and any other weapons of mass destruction. In
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this manner, the process of nuclear disarmament and the broader process of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction would be combined to achieve peace and security for all. Israel has refused to implement any of these resolutions.

Mr. President,

The dangers have been further augmented of late. The U.S. has declared its strategy of counter-proliferation to prevent non-nuclear weapons states hostile to its policies from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems by using military force combined with nuclear deterrence. The U.S. has threatened to implement this strategy against several countries while Israel’s nuclear arsenal remains intact. With the exception of North Korea, all countries threatened by the new U.S. policy are located in the Middle East. This policy already has resulted in military action by the United States, including the U.S. raid on a factory in Sudan, on the basis of little if any evidence, and the Desert Fox attacks on Iraq, both conducted in 1998 without the assent of the international community.

Only political, not military solutions can lead to a secure future for all parties concerned, and a route to a political solution is available. A key step on this path is to make all parties accountable within the NPT regime, a framework which Israel today remains outside. The main elements of this political solution have been incorporated into the Resolution on the Middle East adopted by the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995. Your responsibility at this 2000 NPT review conference is to seek practical steps leading to its implementation.

Mr. President,

The Resolution on the Middle East together with the decisions on the Principles and Objectives and on the strengthening of the review process are part of the bargain which led to the extension of the Treaty. Without the implementation of this resolution and these decisions in good faith, the bargain will be undermined and the entire edifice of the nonproliferation regime could collapse. This possible course of events should be prevented.

The Resolution on the Middle East stresses in one package the universality of the Treaty together with nuclear disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation.

It urges all states without exception to accede to the Treaty and to place all nuclear facilities under the full scope of the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

It stresses the necessity to free the Middle East from all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and for all parties to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective. It calls upon states party to the Treaty to exert their utmost efforts to transform the Middle East into a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

To achieve these goals we propose that the subsidiary body established by the Conference evaluate the causes for lack of implementation of the Middle East Resolution and seek ways to ensure its implementation in the future. We ask the subsidiary body:

A. To recommend measures to encourage Israel, the only Middle East state that has refused to join the NPT, to accede as soon as possible to the Treaty and to accept IAEA full scope safeguards.

B. To urge States party to the Treaty, particularly the nuclear weapons states and above all the United States, to refrain, in compliance with NPT Article I, from transferring, directly or indirectly or by any
means, any material, instrument, or technology which can be used to produce nuclear weapons or their
delivery systems, to any country which does not accede to the NPT and abide by its provisions.

Due to the lack of progress on implementation of the Resolution on the Middle from the 1995 NPT
Review and Extension Conference, it is essential that an ongoing mechanism be established to monitor
future compliance with the Resolution.

Distinguished Delegates,

We wish you every success in your work.

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