

YUNMUN XXX

Disarmament and International Security Committee

Topic 1: Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East

On September 7th, 2019 Iran announced that it had many advanced centrifuges and that they had the ability to enrich uranium to weapon-grade levels. As Iran continues to enrich uranium, they break barrier after barrier put before them by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Under the deal, Iran was limited to using only IR-1 centrifuges; Iran is now using IR-6 and IR-4 centrifuges, which can produce uranium up to ten times as fast as an IR-1. According to an article in AP News “Iran has already increased its enrichment up to 4.5%, above the 3.67% allowed under the deal, as well as gone beyond its 300-kilogram limit for low-enriched uranium.¹” Behrouz Kamalvandi, a member of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said that “the Islamic Republic is not after the bomb”, however, it is clear that if they want it, they have the means to obtain it given the current circumstances.²

These facts make other countries in the Middle East nervous. While there are no official statements confirming Israel has a nuclear bomb, it is commonly well known that they do. A Washington Post article from 2013 asks “Is there something hypocritical about the world tolerating Israel’s nuclear arsenal, which the country does not officially acknowledge but has been publically known for decades, and yet punishing Iran with severe economic sanctions just for its suspected steps towards a weapons program?³” While the innocence in this article about Iran’s ambitions is amusing, it clearly shows the common knowledge of Israel’s nuclear program. Saudi Arabia has clearly stated that if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon, they will match their abilities and obtain their own nuclear weapons.⁴ A representative to the UN said in a meeting of DISEC that “there is a gravely-alarming arms race taking place in the region and Member States cannot sit idly with their hands tied.⁵”

¹ <https://www.apnews.com/7e896f8a1b0c40769b54ed4f98a0f5e6>

² <https://www.apnews.com/7e896f8a1b0c40769b54ed4f98a0f5e6>

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/12/02/why-is-the-u-s-okay-with-israel-having-nuclear-weapons-but-not-iran/>

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/07/12/irans-nuclear-weapons-program-seems-be-accelerating-will-saudi-arabia-take-similar-path/?noredirect=on>

⁵ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gadis3615.doc.htm>

An arms race cannot be allowed to happen in the Middle East. As a region which is full of conflict and instability, this additional factor could prove to be devastating. On November 1, 2018 several resolutions passed DISEC calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. While these resolutions provided several suggestions, no clear steps of action were set.

The challenge for this committee is to discuss the tense situation building in the Middle East and to propose a plan of action.

The following issues should be researched and considered while thinking about the topic:

1. What would happen to countries who already possess nuclear weapons? What about the capability to create nuclear weapons? Could there be a divide between countries which already possess nuclear weapons and those who are striving for that capability? What if a country wants to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes?
2. What assurances and incentives can be given to countries who agree to denuclearize? What about to those who don't?
3. Should the Middle East become a nuclear-weapon-free zone? Does this set precedent for other regions to become nuclear-weapon-free? Is this a process which needs to be focused on in the Middle East, or is the general goal for the world to be nuclear free?
4. Do countries have a fundamental right to protect themselves in a way they see fit? Is the concept of deterrence important for the Middle East?

As always, do not limit your research to the questions above, these will be the starting points of our discussion. It is important to remain truthful to your country. Do not promise incentives beyond your countries means, or agree to ban all nuclear weapons if you are not a signatory on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Additionally, do not work with countries with which your country would not partner with in the UN. Multiple resolutions can be passed on this topic, however, you cannot be a signatory on conflicting resolutions. Expect that the chair and junior staff has both an in depth knowledge of the history of the treaties of nuclear weapons as well as your specific countries position on the topic.

I urge you to research this topic, this historical background, and your countries in depth so you can be prepared for the complex discussions we will be having. Be aware of your countries history with nuclear weapons and what previous resolutions they have signed. Please be sure to present your country's position and be familiar with the guidelines listed in the YUMUN Student Handbook, especially those regarding plagiarism, as each paper will be checked for plagiarism through Turnitin.

Best of luck,

Reena Wasserstein

Chair, DISEC