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ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE  
IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 9 June 1981 from the Permanent Representative of Israel  
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the draft resolution (A/C.1/35/L.8) submitted by Israel during the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly which called upon all States of the Middle East and non-nuclear-weapon States adjacent to the region "to convene at the earliest possible date a conference with a view to negotiating a multilateral treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East". The full text of that draft resolution is attached.

On 12 December 1980, the General Assembly, at its 94th plenary meeting, adopted resolution 35/147, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East". In the light of Israel's participation in the consensus in favour of that resolution, I am instructed by my Government to reaffirm Israel's support for the establishment of such a zone.

Israel now formally and urgently turns to all States of the Middle East, and to States adjacent to the region, and requests that they each indicate in the course of 1981 their consent to the holding of a preparatory conference to discuss the modalities of such a conference of States of the Middle East with a view to negotiating a multilateral treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

In the view of the Government of Israel, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a specific geographic region depends, as reflected in the language of paragraph 61 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly on disarmament (A/S-10/4), "on the characteristics of each region".

The Middle East is a region characterized by conflict and tension. Besides the Arab-Israeli dispute, there are several serious conflicts in the area, such as

\* A/36/50.

the current war between Iraq and Iran. In such a volatile area, a nuclear-weapon-free zone can only be established if each State is contractually assured of compliance with the commitment by all the other States in the region to abstain from introducing nuclear weapons into the region. As long as the resort to war is not ruled out, little faith can be placed either in unilateral declarations amounting to no more than self-denial ordinances in the nuclear sphere, or in the strict and unbroken compliance with such pledges. Adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons cannot be presented as a credible alternative to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a given region. This has been clearly recognized in paragraph 67 of the above-mentioned Final Document. Indeed, in Latin America - the only inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone in existence - not all parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Israel is fully cognizant of the many political differences between the States of the Middle East. However, without prejudice to any political or legal claim, it behoves all the States of the region, for the sake of their common future, to take concrete steps towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and to respond affirmatively to this initiative being taken by Israel.

In the meantime, the Government of Israel has taken careful note of the contents of the letter to Your Excellency from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations, dated 20 April 1981 (A/36/220), in which the preparation of a study on the modalities for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is suggested. The Government of Israel welcomes this idea and, for its part, proposes that the study be undertaken by qualified experts from Middle East States, including Israel, as recommended in paragraph 248 of the Secretary-General's report of 8 October 1980 (A/35/416). There is no need to wait until all Governments in the Middle East see their way to endorsing such a study: undertaking it in the manner proposed by Israel would, by itself, constitute a valuable step in the direction of building much needed confidence between the States of the region prior to the holding of the preparatory conference proposed above.

I should be grateful if this letter and its attachment could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 46 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Israel  
to the United Nations

ANNEX

Draft resolution concerning the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East submitted by Israel to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming paragraph 60 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, which reads as follows: "The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned constitutes an important disarmament measure",

Aware of the urgent need to establish such a zone in the Middle East, in view of conflict situations which threaten the peace of that region,

Convinced that the effective way to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East is through negotiations leading to the establishment of a system of mutually-binding obligations which would provide each State in the region with a contractual assurance of others' compliance with the commitment to abstain from introducing nuclear weapons into the region,

Recalling its resolution 31/70 on the comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects, particularly paragraph 3, which reiterates the conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones can contribute to the security of members of such zones, to the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons and to the goals of general and complete disarmament,

Recalling further its resolution 33/91 B of 16 December 1979 on confidence-building measures and convinced that the adherence of all Member States of the Middle East region to a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would in itself serve to reduce tensions and pave the way for the introduction of further confidence-building measures,

1. Calls upon all States of the Middle East and non-nuclear-weapon States adjacent to the region, which are not signatories to any treaty providing for a nuclear-weapon-free zone, to convene at the earliest possible date a conference with a view to negotiating a multilateral treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East;
2. Urges all States of the region to state by 1 May 1981 their willingness to participate in the conference;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the necessary facilities for the convening of such a conference.