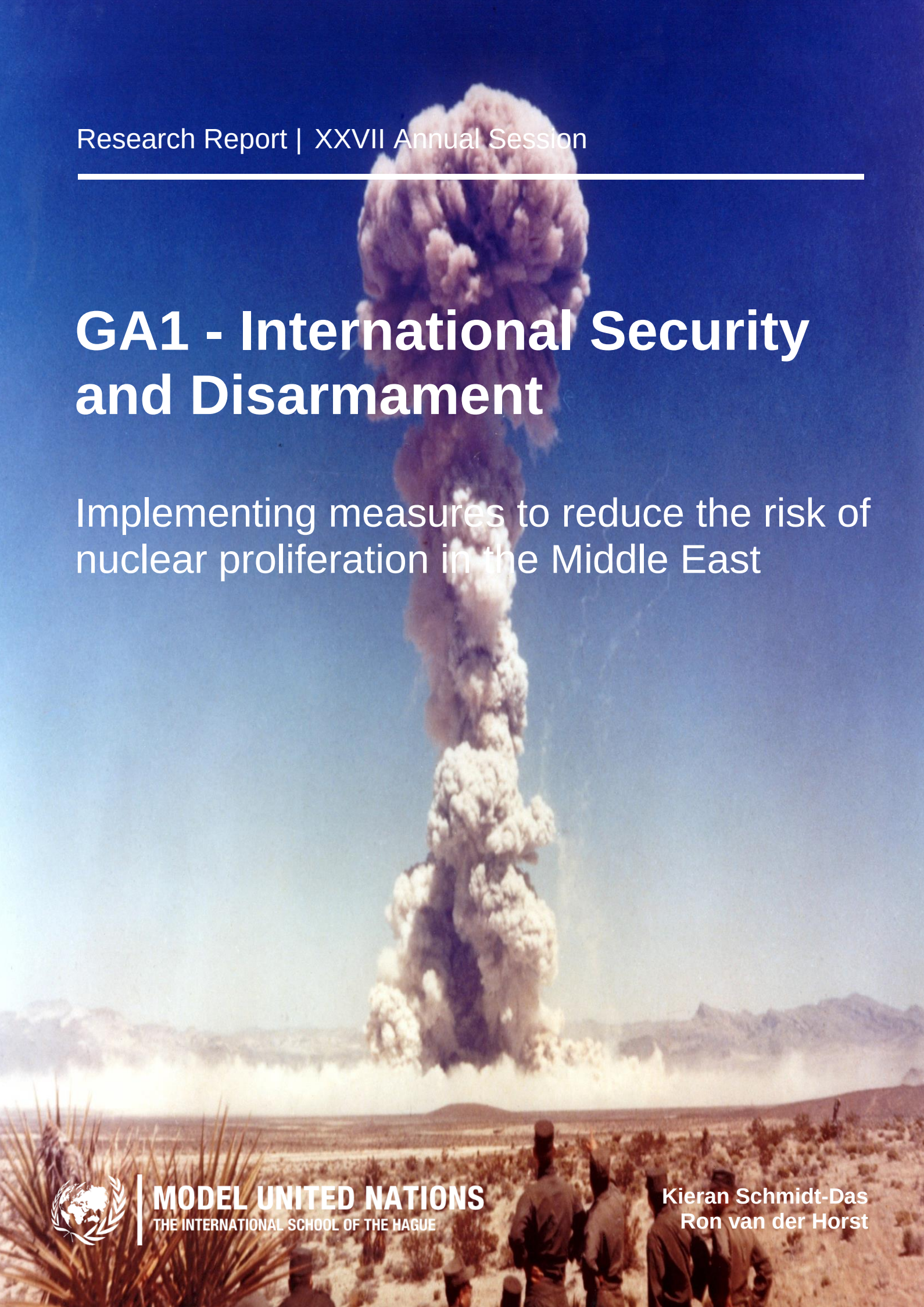
GA1 - International Security and Disarmament

Implementing measures to reduce the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East



MODEL UNITED NATIONS
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE HAGUE

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Forum:	General Assembly 1
Issue:	Implementing measures to reduce the risks of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East
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Introduction

The Middle East, found between North East Africa, Eastern Europe and Western Asia, is one of the most unstable regions in the world. There are many long-term conflicts in the region, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict that arose after the end of World War 2, as well as many more recent conflicts such as the Arab Spring in 2010. This coupled with the rise of extremist groups in the Middle East, such as ISIS and Al Qaeda, makes security and continuity in this region a challenge. Therefore, whilst nuclear proliferation is a risk in many parts of the world, it is especially important to reduce the risks of it in the Middle East. Nuclear Proliferation brings about a lot of risks, mainly that the nuclear technology information falls into the wrong hands. The destructive capabilities of nuclear weapons is well documented and hence such a weapon in the wrong hands, would reap destruction across the world. A single nuclear weapons has the power to kill at least 4 million people (*Telegraph, August 2017*), depending on where it impacts. Furthermore, in the Middle East there are high tensions between many countries, such as between Saudi Arabia and Iran, access to nuclear weapons technology would greatly increase the fallout risk from any conflict, both for the two countries, but also globally.

Nuclear Weapons, Power and Technology were first thought of at the beginning of the 20th Century. This followed many experiments around the world, the most notable being the first artificial nuclear chain reaction taking on place in December 1942 in Chicago. This followed the testing of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear weapons at Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945. These bombings introduced the world into the Atomic Age which lasted until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, where it was thought atomic power would revolutionise the world industry. A significant hurdle to this, was the destructive capability of nuclear power. This was epitomised by the onset of the Cold War, in which there were

constant fears of mutually assured destruction due to nuclear weapons. To combat this, the world created the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which regulated nuclear weapons, power and technology. All countries apart from Israel have signed in the treaty in the Middle East, however a few countries, such as Iran and Iraq, are not believed to be adhering to its articles.

Historically, discussion about Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East have been centred around Israel, as they were the first and so far only country in the Middle East to obtain Nuclear Weapons, in 1986 (*Wikipedia, 2017*). However currently many more countries in the Middle East are trying to expand their nuclear knowledge. The most documented is Iran, which has been researching and using nuclear power since the early 1980's, since the early 2000's has been accused of attempting to build a nuclear weapon. However many other countries in the region have recently been attempting to expand their nuclear capability, with Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, UAE, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Syria, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman publicly stating that they wish to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Peaceful uses of nuclear technology can easily be turned into military nuclear technology, hence the need to regulate such expansions.

Definition of Key Terms

Nuclear proliferation

Consists of three parts. When nations who are not recognised as "Nuclear Weapon States" by the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) acquire either Nuclear Weapons, fissionable material, or weapons-applicable nuclear technology, nuclear proliferation is talked about.

Fissionable Material

Materials that are capable of undergoing nuclear fission, which is the splitting of an atom's nucleus into smaller parts creating a large amount of energy. Fission occurs when a neutron is absorbed into the nucleus of an atom.

Middle East

Is a transcontinental region centered on Western Asia, North Eastern Africa and East Europe. It consists of 17 countries: Bahrain,

Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, united Arab Emirates, Yemen, who speak roughly 60 languages (*Wikipedia, 2016*).

Centrifuges

Is a device that performs isotope separation of gases. It is important in the construction of nuclear weapons, as it produces enriched uranium 235. A zippe-centrifuge is the device that enriches uranium. This also means that the details in how it works are shrouded in nuclear secrecy (*Jewish Virtual Library, 2017*).

General overview

History of Nuclear Weapons

Atomic Age

The atomic age lasted from 1945 until 1991. It was the time during which nuclear power and nuclear weapons were at the forefront of technology, and were touted as the solution to most of the world's problems. Before the atomic age in 1901 Frederick Soddy and Ernest Rutherford discovered that radioactivity was the process in which one atom changed into another, and it involved the release of energy. They hypothesised that this energy could be harnessed in near unlimited quantity. This followed in 1938 the first discovery of nuclear fission by Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann and the first artificial nuclear chain reaction in 1942 under the leadership of Enrico Fermi. However the atomic age is only recognised to have started when the US tested the Trinity bomb in 1945, as this signalled the first real world use of atomic energy. During the 1950's the global population became fascinated by atomic energy, believing that it could be used to power everything. However as time went on, this fascination faded, as the many problems of the atomic energy were realised, such as the radioactive waste as well as the destructive capability of atomic weapons. The collapse of the Soviet Union, signalled the end of the atomic age.

Cold War

The Cold War lasted from 1947 until 1991, it was between the Western Powers led by the United States and the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union. It was a cold war, because there was no actual fighting between the two sides, they only fought through proxy wars in other states. The Cold War had a profound effect on Nuclear Proliferation, as both sides pursued a strategy of building up their stockpiles of nuclear weapons, to deter the other side from attacking. This was a strategy called Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). This also had the effect of making the spread of nuclear weapons very imbalanced, currently the USA and Russia have 88% of all nuclear weapons in the world (*Telegraph, 2017*). Many countries, especially countries in the Middle East such as Israel and Iran, have felt that this

spread of nuclear weapons is unfair and imbalanced and have hence pursued nuclear proliferation.

Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty

All the countries in the Middle East apart from Israel have signed on to this treaty, as well as 174 other countries, which means that more countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement. The treaty, which came into force in 1970 after being finalised in 1968 was an extension of the 1963 Treaty banning Nuclear Weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater. It aims to prevent the spread of Nuclear Weapons and weapons technology, through safeguards conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (*see section previous attempts to resolve the situation*). In addition it has classified countries into two categories, Non-Nuclear Weapon States and Nuclear Weapon States. States that had conducted Nuclear Weapons tests before the 1st of January 1967, are considered Nuclear Weapons States by the NPT, and hence are allowed to possess Nuclear Weapons and nuclear weapon technology. The States that conducted Nuclear Weapons tests before this date, are the United States of America, United Kingdom, Russia, France and China. Non-Nuclear Weapon States are not allowed to acquire Nuclear Weapons or nuclear weapon technology. Only four UN member states have not accepted the NPT, of which three are believed to possess Nuclear Weapons; India, Israel and Pakistan, whilst South Sudan has not joined the treaty as it was only founded in 2011. Furthermore, North Korea is also believed to possess Nuclear Weapons technology.

Scientific Background to Nuclear Proliferation

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear Proliferation includes the acquisition of Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Weapons Technology or Fissionable Material. Nuclear Weapons are bombs that derive their destructive force from nuclear reactions of either fission or a mixture of fission and fusion, which release large quantities of energy. Nuclear weapon works due to neutrons being fired at fissile material leading to a nuclear reaction.

Enrichment of Fissionable and Fissile Material

The difference between fissionable material and fissile material, is that high amounts of energy is needed for fissionable material to create a nuclear reaction, however fissile material also creates a nuclear reaction at low energies. Uranium 235 and Plutonium 239 are

a rare example of fissile material. It is very difficult to obtain them as they are rarely found naturally, however Iran is said to have a high reserve of uranium. However to obtain uranium 235, uranium ore needs to be turned into metal. For every 25,000 tonnes of uranium ore, only 50 tonnes of metal are produced (*FactSheets, 2016*). Then the uranium is reacted with fluorine and heated until it becomes a gas, and led through a zippe-centrifuge, which separates the heavy uranium 235 called enriched uranium, and depleted uranium. A nuclear reactor needs 20% enriched uranium to function, however a nuclear weapon needs around 50kg of 80-90% enrichment for it to cause an explosion. This is why in the Iran deal, the iranian centrifuged were limited to enriching uranium to 20%. Alternatively, plutonium can also be used in nuclear weapons, which is produced as a by-product in nuclear reactors, and only 10kg of plutonium is needed to create a nuclear reaction, which takes an average nuclear reactor around 1 year to produce. Whilst many countries have the capabilities to produce reactor grade uranium or plutonium, which is enriched to roughly 20%, very few countries in the Middle East, apart from Israel have the capabilities to enrich uranium or plutonium to 90% which is needed for military grade applications.

Events in the Middle East affecting Nuclear Proliferation

Israel-Palestine Conflict

The biggest event in the Middle East affecting Nuclear Proliferation is the Israel-Palestine conflict. This is a complex issue that has been going on for many years. In short in the early 20th century zionist jews believed that the land of palestine belonged to them, and spurred by the discrimination they were facing in europe moved to palestine largely ignoring the arab population that was living there. In the Balfour Declaration Palestine was granted to Britain who gave part of it to the Zionist Jews. After the holocaust the UN partitioned the land into Arab and Jewish states, which caused a war, won by the Jews. This has been followed by wars in 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982, as well as many terror raids from both sides. It is important to note that this is a very shortened version of the history, and both sides feel the conflict is the fault of the other. Currently, there is sporadic violence from both sides against each other. This conflict is especially difficult as Israel is in possession of Nuclear Weapons, which whilst they would most likely not use, it increases tensions between the two nations. This is amplified by the fact many countries in the Middle East support Palestine, which further increases tensions. It also means that many countries in the Middle East do not feel safe, when one of their enemies has nuclear weapons and they do not.

Iran-Saudi Arabia

Iran and Saudi Arabia are the two biggest powers in the Middle East and they do not have any diplomatic relations. This is due to their differing interpretation of Islam, with Saudi Arabia being Sunni Islamic and Iran being Shia Islamic, as well as their different diplomatic ties, with Saudi Arabia having close ties with the United States, the United Kingdom and France, whereas Iran has close ties with Russia and China. Furthermore they are both major oil and gas exporters and have clashed over energy policy. As Iran is a major enemy of Saudi Arabia and Iran has advanced nuclear capability, Saudi Arabia has been interested in obtaining nuclear power as well. This might lead to a knock on effect in the Middle East, where all States feel like they need nuclear capability to protect themselves from other countries. This is especially relevant due to Saudi Arabia and Iran supporting different sides in the Syrian Civil War, with Iran supporting Bashar Al-Asad's regime and Saudi Arabia supporting rebel groups, meaning that an unfortunate incident involving these two sides could lead to nuclear war between them.

Iraq War

The Iraq war was fought between iraqi forces loyal to Saddam Hussein's government, and the US and its coalition. It took place from 2003 until 2011, although the Hussein government was toppled in 2004. The rest of the fighting was against insurgency groups that tried to take advantage of the power vacuum at the time. The reason for the US and the coalition forces invading Iraq, was due to the belief at the time that there were Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), including nuclear weapons, in Iraq at the time. However, many reports both during and after the invasion question the existence of these weapons. This war does show the threat many countries feel, when another country acquires nuclear weapons.

Iran Deal

This agreement was signed on the 12th of July, 2015 by six world powers and Iran on the nuclear activity in Iran. The deal comes down to five key areas, the first being the lifting of sanctions by the EU and US, that had been in place since the early 2000's as a means to protest the continued nuclear activity in Iran. The second part is about uranium enrichment, and it limits Iran to operate 5060 generation centrifuges which are only allowed to enrich uranium to 3.67%, which is well below that required to make an atomic weapon (*National Interest, 2017*). The construction of new more powerful centrifuges is limited under a time frame, as well as being subject to continuous IAEA monitoring. Thirdly, Iran agreed to

reconfigure its heavy water reactor in Arak, which produced large quantities of plutonium as a byproduct of power generation. Whilst Iran does not have the capabilities to enrich plutonium to weapons grade levels, the sheer quantities of plutonium produced were deemed dangerous. Fourthly, Iran has agreed to their complete nuclear process being monitored by the IAEA. Lastly, Iran agreed to the IAEA looking into whether Iran hat been involved in possibly militarising their nuclear activities.

Threats faced by Nuclear Proliferation

Nuclear Proliferation is extremely dangerous, if it leads to many States having the capability to produce Nuclear Weapons. This is because the more States that possess Nuclear Weapons, the more likely it is for conflicts to arise where Nuclear Weapons are used. A report by the journal Earth's Future found that a regional conflict where 100 nuclear detonations took place would result in 5 teragrams of black soot (5,000,000,000kg) rising up into the atmosphere destroying most of our ozone layer and blocking sunlight.

One can look at the previous uses of nuclear weapons to realise the scale of the danger. In the first four months after the US dropped two nuclear weapons at Nagasaki and Hiroshima in the Second World War, they killed between 120,000 and 200,000 people (*AtomicArchive, 2017*). However this death toll risen in the long term, as the effects of radiation poisoning take a while to take effect. It is clear from these events, that any conflict involving nuclear weapons, however many, would have drastic consequences.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
16 July 1945	US conducts first ever nuclear weapon test. The bomb "trinity" has the power of 20,000 tonnes of TNT. (*Wikipedia, 2017*)
1945	Atomic Age begins

6th August 1945	US drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima, killing more than 140,000 people, with many more dying from radiation-related illnesses.
24th January 1946	In its first resolution the UN General Assembly calls for elimination of atomic weapons.
1947	Common year when the Cold War started
5th August 1963	Partial Test Ban Treaty, bans nuclear testing in the atmosphere, outer space and underwater opens for signatures.
1st July 1968	Non-Proliferation Treaty is signed, where non-nuclear weapon states agree to never acquire nuclear weapons.
30th September 1986	The Sunday Times publishes information from Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu, where Israel's nuclear programme is revealed, leading many experts to conclude that Israel may have up to 200 nuclear weapons.
1991	Fall of the Soviet Union, signals the end of the Cold War and the Atomic Age
8th July 1996	International Court of Justice finds that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to international law.
24th September 1996	The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty opens for signature, which China, France, UK, Russia and the US all sign.
20th March 2003 - 2011	Iraq War
2015	Iran nuclear deal framework negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 reached an agreement.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UN has drawn up many resolutions regarding Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Most of these have been in regards to banning the testing of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the further development of Nuclear Weapons. Apart from resolutions on these two issues, there are also resolutions on the setting up of the IAEA (see below for explanation) and resolutions on the reduction of Nuclear Weapons.

- UN Resolution 1, 24 January 1946 (1)
- Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1 July 1968
- Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Underwater, 5 August 1963
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 24 September 1996
- General Assembly Resolution, 16 November 2015, (A/70/10)

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Israel

Israel is the only country in the Middle East with known Nuclear Weapons. The number of Nuclear Weapons is unclear, however is estimated at 200. They have active nuclear programs. They are supported by the United States of America who provide a lot of financial and military backing. From 2006 to 2016, the US provided $38 billion in aid to Israel. Israel has consistently not acknowledge the existence of their nuclear program, to ensure good relations with the United States and Europe. They have also never shown any intention of denuclearizing their country, which is shown by their failure to sign the NPT.

Iran

Iran has advanced nuclear capabilities, however so far is believed to not have produced nuclear weapons. In the Iran deal (*see section previous attempts to resolve the situation*) they showed their willingness to denuclearized, however they have not fully followed through on that. They have also stated their belief that it is not fair that only a small number of States have nuclear weapons. Furthermore, some critics questions if Iran is fulfilling the terms of the NPT which they are signatories to.

United States of America

They have the largest stockpile of Nuclear Weapons in the world, at approximately 4000 Nuclear Warheads. They wield large influence in the Middle East, as shown before they fund Israel. A common criticism directed at the United States of America, is that they prevent other nations from acquiring nuclear weapons, whilst not reducing their stockpiles. This can be seen by their invasion of Iraq, based on the belief that Iraq was in possession of Nuclear weapons.

Iraq

They are currently not in possession of any nuclear weapons, however have previously stated their desire to acquire them. Some critics question if Iraq is fulfilling the terms of the NPt which they are signatories to. Iraq has also been invaded by the US due to the belief that they were building nuclear weapons.

Previous attempts to resolve the situation

Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

A success of this treaty, is that it involves most UN member states. However critics of this treaty argue, that the date set that cuts off member states from owning Nuclear Weapons is arbitrary and favours the established superpowers, who use it to limit other states from owning Nuclear Weapons. Furthermore, the treaty has little in the way of repercussion to prevent States from obtaining Nuclear Weapons.

1995 Resolution on the Middle East

In 1995 there was a NPT Review Conference, where as part of many other decisions included the indefinite extension of the treaty, it was called for “the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological and their delivery systems”, which has been referred to the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East and it was verified by all regional states. It was included after the United Nations General Assembly (UNAG) endorsed calls for the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone, proposed by Iran and Egypt in 1974. Whilsts there have been many resolutions on this issue, in practise there has been very little progress on the denuclearisation of the Middle East. This has been due to various disputes between States

in the region on the sequence of steps leading to the establishment of the zone, as well as other issues such as Israel linking discussion on the establishment of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Zone (WMDZ) with the existence of durable peace, whereas other States have stated that no such linkage should exist and that a WMDZ would lead to durable peace. There have been various conferences since 1995, to try and implement this resolution in practise, however no consensus has been reached between all of the parties.

Iran Nuclear Deal

Whilst this deal was groundbreaking, in that it took years to negotiate and in theory it would completely limit Iran's nuclear production, there were some issues. Firstly, the IAEA complained that it did not have access to the key Parchin military site, which might house undeclared nuclear capabilities, Furthermore, there have been tensions between the US and Iran, with the US imposing new sanctions on Iran after they tested ballistic missiles, as well as Iran briefly detaining 10 US navy officers after they entered iranian waters. Furthermore the current US president has previously expressed his desire to renegotiate the treaty with Iran, which has caused uncertainty.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The IAEA is an organization within the United Nations family, which focuses on the cooperation in the nuclear field. It promotes the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies. It was established in 1957, as an autonomous organisation, however was included in the United Nations as part of the IAEA Statute. As part of preventing nuclear proliferation, it goes into countries to inspect their nuclear programmes, and to work with countries when they are setting up nuclear programmes (*IAEA, 2017*). It has helped Kuwait set up a nuclear reactor in the mid 2000's. Whilst not a singular attempt at solving the solution of Nuclear Proliferation, any process that involved reducing the risks of Nuclear Proliferation, would include a mention to the IAEA and how they would be involved.

Possible solutions

When looking at possible solutions to reducing the risks of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, the reasons for Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East need to be examined. The most important issue is the prevention of States in the Middle East from obtaining

Nuclear Weapons, as the dangers of having a nuclear powered unstable Middle East are great. Here are a few issues that need to be addressed in any resolution.

Most Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East, has come in the form of States adopting Nuclear Reactors as a source of power. The main problem that arises from this, is that nuclear material could be stolen by criminal groups, due to the unstable nature of many of the countries. Therefore, it is important that security at Nuclear Sites is a key priority to any resolution. Note however that corruption is also rife in these countries, hence bringing outside security could be an option. The security can also be funded by international organisations. It is also important to note that State's sovereignty is not impeached when protecting key nuclear sites. Furthermore, it also important that these Nuclear Reactors are not turned into military enrichment facilities leading to Nuclear Weapons. A solution to preventing this, would be through frequent inspections from the IAEA. However, many countries in the Middle East have so far been opposed to the IAEA coming in and inspecting their Nuclear capabilities. Cooperation from these countries through incentives, such as funding for Nuclear Reactors, or through embargoes is necessary to ensure that nuclear military uses are not obtained.

One very important step to solving Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East, is through international and regional cooperation on the issue. There are many disagreements throughout the region and solving these is key to preventing risks of Nuclear Proliferation, especially conflicts such as the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. This is much easier said than done, however implementing clauses that encourage future dialogue between countries in the Middle East is also key to solving this issue. It is important to note for delegates that when producing resolutions they consider the challenges of international cooperation to the feasibility and reality of implementing any ideas they come up with.

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Appendices

- NPT - https://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/infcircs/treaty-non-proliferation-nuclear-weapons