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## The roots and problems of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East region. The issues of disaster management

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The security environment in the Middle East region is characterised as a permanently evolving system that has been influenced by the threat perception and the security dilemma of crucial regional actors. This region is currently the most militarised area in the world with weapons of mass destruction. There are issues for the security environment and for the disaster management too.

**Keywords:** security, disaster management, middle east, WMD, free zone

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### Introduction

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The security environment in the Middle East region is characterised as a permanently evolving system that has been influenced by the threat perception and the security dilemma of crucial regional actors. The process of security building and development and the regional conception of arms control have always been difficult as a consequence of the existence of a multi-polar power order, permanent rivalry among key regional actors, rapid changes of the security environment and significant conflicts influencing the stability of the Middle East region predominantly during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The region is currently the most militarised area in the world. It has drawn the international community's attention due to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their missiles. Their presence in the region was revealed through their use in particular past conflicts. From 1963 to 1967 chemical weapons, mustard gas and phosgene were used by Egypt in the armed conflict against Yemen, during the Iraqi-Iranian war from 1983 to 1988 mustard gas and nerve agents were used by both sides of the conflict and in 1987 Libya used chemical weapons against Chad. Furthermore, during the Iraqi-Iranian war ballistic missiles were used to demonstrate the potential to carry nuclear, chemical or biological warheads. (Russel, 2005) Later, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991 the WMD proliferation started to be a hot political issue in the Middle East region.

Due to security risks connected with the WMD proliferation, the most compelling security challenges at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for the region are the arsenals of regional actors based on the development and possession of WMD and the development and

innovation of their missiles. The WMD possession de facto means the possibility for an actor to become a regional power. As a consequence, programs for the production of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons are deployed through the whole region and at the same time they are kept as national secret. Furthermore, the regional actors are ignoring fundamental counter-proliferation international treaties<sup>1</sup>. As a consequence, the security environment remains unstable. In addition to that, several political conflicts are still unresolved, which increases the probability of the potential use of WMDs in future conflicts. Such a development would have devastating consequences for the whole region. (Kazanský, 2010)

One of the solutions for the unstable security environment poses a proposal for the implementation of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. The disarmament of the region has been discussed for more than 30 years. Since the first initiative and proposal to create a nuclear weapons free zone, little substantive progress has been made and the Middle East remains a dangerous region. The main obstacles for the initiative to be implemented are the divergent national interests of the key regional actors that they do not want to abandon. Hopes of the international community are placed into conferences which are scheduled to be held in the future. These may help to prevent more human-made disasters in this region.

The main aim of the paper is to analyse the impact of the WMD proliferation on the international security and stability of the Middle East region. The paper focuses on the analysis and comparison of arsenals of regional actors as the main instrument for the achievement of political objectives. After the assessment of the WMD proliferation issue in the region, the aim of the paper is to analyse and assess prospects for the Middle East WMD-free Zone in the context of the regional security environment. Consequently the paper identifies the setbacks in the process and predicts the development of a WMD-free zone in the context of current security situation in the Middle East region.

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## WMD Proliferation in the Middle East Region

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At present time it is difficult to assess for sure which states in the Middle East region are developing WMD programs or possess WMD, neither how sophisticated they are nor how large the arsenals are. Most of the analysts assume that WMD and their missiles are spread through the whole region in spite of the fact that none of the actors has openly declared the possession of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. (Al-Assad, 2009)

Motivations to acquire WMD can be different. The most common ones are to deter any potential rival or enemy, to compete and succeed in the arms races among neighbouring countries or to compensate insufficient and inadequate military arsenals and high

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<sup>1</sup> These are: The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) etc.

expenditures in case of sophisticated conventional weapons.

## Israel

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Israel traditionally possesses sophisticated conventional military arsenals. As far as WMDs are concerned, its authorities prefer to use the policy of ambiguity. Israel is considered to possess nuclear weapons although this fact has never been confirmed or denied publicly. As a result, many details about its nuclear program and missile system remain uncertain.

According to analysts, Israel was the first regional actor that began to develop its nuclear and missile program in the 1950s in cooperation with France and the USA<sup>2</sup>. (Terem, 2008) At present time it probably possesses a sophisticated nuclear program. According to intelligence services it has managed to produce enough fissile material for the production of 100 to 200 nuclear warheads that could be potentially used for Israeli ballistic missiles as well as for self-employed bombs for potential tactical use. (Israel Profile, 2010)

The prime objective of the Israeli nuclear program is probably to deter a potential security threat from its neighbouring Arab states and Iran and to balance the geopolitical asymmetry among conventional arsenals of regional actors. (Al-Assad, 2009) Israel has never ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), it signed but did not ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

In the area of chemical and biological weapons there is evidence that Israel was developing, producing and stockpiling these kinds of weapons at the time of the onset of its nuclear program. Chemical and biological weapons were produced to deter any potential enemy. The sophisticated chemical and biological programs were allegedly able to produce weapons in a very short period of time in the past. (Kort, 2010) Experts suppose that Israel does not have biological and chemical weapons stockpiles. On the other hand it probably continues in developing their more sophisticated forms. (Israel Profile, 2010) Israel signed, however, never ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and has never signed the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC).

The Israeli program for developing missile systems was first launched during 1960s with the backing of France. At present time Israel possesses ballistic missiles Jericho 1/2/3 and Shavit 1/2/3, cruise missiles, its own missile defence system, armed multi-purposed combat aircrafts and modern German submarines Dolphin. (Bučka, 2007) Israel is not a signatory of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

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<sup>2</sup> The basis for the Israeli nuclear program became a 24 MW reactor situated in a secret nuclear research complex Dimona, that was granted to Israel by France in 1956. According to intelligence services, Israel managed to develop its first nuclear weapon already in 1967. (Israel Profile, 2010)

## Iran

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Iran and its WMD program present a direct and open security threat for the whole unstable region. Most alarmingly, its nuclear program has been breaking the norms of international law. During the 1960s the Shah initiated a peaceful nuclear program with the support of the USA<sup>3</sup>. During the 1970s the German Federal Republic agreed to cooperate with Iran to build two blocs of the nuclear power plant in Busher. The construction continued until the Iranian revolution in 1979 when it was disrupted. In 1984 Ayatollah Khomeini ordered the restarting of the building process. The prime suppliers of nuclear technologies became China and the USSR. (Terem, 2008) In 1970 Iran ratified the NPT and in 1992 permitted International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections in Iranian nuclear facilities. The final IAEA report confirmed that the nuclear program was being developed with peaceful purposes.

In 2002 it was alleged that Iran's nuclear complex included two facilities for the enrichment of uranium that had been kept secret. After significant international pressure from the USA and the EU, Iran agreed to sign the Additional Protocol to the NPT in 2003 and to allow stricter and more thorough IAEA inspections. In 2004 the Iranian nuclear program was stopped due to an agreement mediated by Great Britain, France and Germany. Few months later Iran denounced its commitment to the agreement. Allegedly it was because the European partners denounced their obligations. As a result, Iran renewed its nuclear program; however, it openly declared that its nuclear facilities are used only for peaceful purposes.

In 2005 the IAEA inspectors found that the Iranian nuclear program did not comply with the NPT provisions. Since that year the international community has been trying to force Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions by sanctions and other peaceful diplomatic methods. In 2008 the IAEA published a report giving evidence to the fact that Iran was successful in producing enough enriched uranium to be used for a nuclear bomb. In addition to that, Iranian scientists have already installed more sophisticated centrifuges in the nuclear power plant for the uranium enrichment. (Iran Profile, 2010) In 2009 the USA, Great Britain, France and Israel detected the building of another facility for the production of highly enriched uranium for nuclear bombs. Moreover, through the whole country facilities for nuclear research are installed<sup>4</sup>. According to information of intelligence services, Iranian scientists are working on a nuclear warhead design. (Kort, 2010) The most probable motivations for the Iranian nuclear program are the efforts to deter potential enemy, anti-Israeli politics, US and NATO presence in the Middle East region, lack of job

<sup>3</sup> According to the original plan 20 nuclear reactors should have been built. (Terem, 2008)

<sup>4</sup> To Iranian nuclear research centres belong: reactor in Busher, facility for the uranium enrichment in Esfahan, facility for the enrichment in Natanz, facility for heavy water production and heavy water reactor in Arak. (Al-Assad, 2009)

opportunities for the inhabitants etc. (Al-Assad, 2009)

In the past Iran possessed a large chemical program. In the 1980s during the war with Iraq it had huge stockpiles of phosgene, mustard gas and during the 1990s stockpiles of nerve agents. (Russell, 2005) After the ratification of CWC and its open declaration of the chemical weapons program during the war with Iraq, Iran stopped its chemical program and opened its facilities to international inspectors. Despite this fact at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the USA accused Iran of maintaining an active chemical program with the aim to develop and produce chemical weapons. According to several experts, Iran still possesses sarin, mustard gas, phosgene and hydrogen cyanide. (Iran Profile, 2010)

There is little relevant information about Iranian possession of biological weapons. In 1973 Iran ratified the BTWC, however, there are still allegations of a possible biological program that includes the research of anthrax, mycotoxins, ricin and the smallpox virus. According to experts Iran was successful in producing the agents and in their transformation into weapons. (Iran Profile, 2010)

In the Iranian strategic military arsenal there are ballistic missiles as well. After the Iraqi-Iranian war, Iran purchased Russian short-range ballistic missiles Scud-B and Scud-C and missiles Shahab 1/2/3 that are a North Korean version of the intermediate-range ballistic missiles Nodong. In 2009 Iran successfully launched its satellite Omid into orbit using a modified Shahab 3 missile. This event shows Iran's technical and technological capacity to develop long-range ballistic missiles. (Kort, 2010)

## Iraq

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In the past, Iraq was active in developing WMD programs. During 1960s it had a peaceful nuclear program<sup>5</sup>. At the beginning of the 1970s vice-president Saddam Hussein ordered the initiation of a military nuclear program. Iraq managed to produce a nuclear arsenal composed of a complete non-tested nuclear weapon and several kilograms of highly enriched uranium that could have been potentially used for the production of weapons. (Russell, 2005) After the defeat suffered in the Gulf war in 1991 Iraq was forced to give up its nuclear ambitions. The IAEA launched a series of inspections in Iraqi nuclear complexes; the inspectors dismantled the nuclear facilities and closed the nuclear program<sup>6</sup>. The relics of the nuclear program were put under the administration of the Ministry for Science and Technology that worked on their elimination. (Al-Assad, 2009) Iraq is a signatory to the NPT since 1970 and the CTBT since 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Iran purchased the first nuclear reactor from the USSR in 1968 and subsequently in 1976 from France. (Iraq Profile, 2010)

<sup>6</sup> The definitive ending of Iraqi nuclear program in 1991 after the lost Gulf war was later confirmed also in the report of former UN inspector David Kay in 2004 who led the Iraqi research group after the military operation „Iraqi Freedom“. (Iraq Profile, 2010)

During the 1980s Iraq was developing chemical and biological programs and managed to produce extensive stockpiles of chemical weapons consisting of blister and nerve agents that were used during the Iraqi-Iranian war. In the past Iraq was successful in the production of biological weapons, as well. After the Gulf war the UN inspectors stopped both the chemical and the biological program and all stockpiles, ammunition and producing facilities were eliminated. In 2003 the USA attacked Iraq on the basis of suspicion that Iraq had been developing secret biological and chemical programs in order to produce weapons. Inspections after the invasion proved that there were no secret stockpiles of chemical or biological weapons. At present time, Iraq is a signatory to CWC and BTWC.

In the field of missile technology, Iraq possessed short-range Soviet Scud ballistic missiles in the past that were modified and used in the Iraqi-Iranian war and in the Gulf war. At the beginning of the 1990s most of them were dismantled by the UN inspectors. During the 1990s Iraqi scientists worked extensively on the development of intermediate-range ballistic missiles and cruise missiles. Iraq imported its missile technology primarily from North Korea. Before the invasion of Iraq, Iraq possessed intermediate-range ballistic missiles Samoud II and the Al-Fatah. (Iraq Profile, 2010) After the invasion in 2003 these were dismantled and destroyed by the UN inspectors.

## Libya

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In the past, Libya possessed extensive programs for the development and production of WMD and their missiles. Its nuclear ambitions can be traced back to the 1970s and are connected with the effort to create a counterbalance to Israel in the Middle East region. Although Libya was actively trying to develop a nuclear program, it failed in producing nuclear weapons due to insufficient technological infrastructure. In 1975 Libya ratified the NPT and signed the agreement with IAEA, which authorized the inspectors to control the nuclear facilities. In 2003 Libya willingly abandoned its nuclear program after secret negotiations with the USA and Great Britain, transferred all technical information, materials and weapon production facilities to the USA and permitted the IAEA to realize a complete inspection of its nuclear complex.

During 1980s and 1990s Libyan scientists worked extensively on the development of chemical weapons in a research and production complex in the Sahara desert. According to disclosed information they allegedly managed to produce 25 tons of mustard gas, small amount of nerve agents and other chemical agents that could have been potentially used for the production of 3300 chemical weapons. (Libya Profile, 2010) In 1987 Libya even used a chemical weapon - mustard gas, in an armed conflict against Chad. It is estimated

that at the end of the 1990s the chemical program was already inactive. (Russell, 2005) In 2003 Libya willingly gave up its nuclear and primitive biological program, ratified the CWC and eliminated its arsenals of tactical ballistic missiles. At present time Libya possesses outdated short-range ballistic missiles Scud-B and Scud-C. (Libya Profile, 2010)

## Syria

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In the past Syria had ambitions to develop and produce WMD and their missiles, as well. In 1969 Syria ratified the NPT and in compliance with its obligations developed a peaceful nuclear program in cooperation with Argentina, China and Russian Federation. (Terem, 2008) Syria allowed the allocation of a secret nuclear reactor for the production of enriched uranium on its territory in cooperation with Iran and North Korea<sup>7</sup>. However, in 2007 the nuclear reactor was bombed and destroyed by the Israeli army. Nowadays Syria has a 30 kW research reactor that was built with the help of China. (Kort, 2010)

Syria possesses a sophisticated program for the development and production of chemical weapons. The production facilities are installed in several cities. According to analysts, its chemical program is the most advanced among the regional actors. (Syria Profile, 2010) The Syrian chemical arsenal includes hundreds of thousands of tons of nerve and blister agents as sarin, VX, mustard gas etc. Syria has never ratified CWC. In addition to that, the arsenal includes ballistic missiles capable of carrying chemical warheads for hundreds of kilometres, as well as bombs that could possibly be transported by aircraft. (Syria Profile, 2010) It is assumed that the Russian Federation, China, Egypt, Iran and several European states assisted Syria in developing its chemical program as the state has always depended on foreign resources. (Al-Assad, 2009)

Along with its chemical program, a missile development program was realised. However, Syria's own missile program has always failed. As a result, Syria had to rely on foreign suppliers. The core of the Syrian arsenal is composed of Soviet ballistic missiles Scud-B, Scud-C and SS-21 from the 1970s and 1980s. During 1990s Syria purchased missiles Scud-C from North Korea and missile technologies from China and Russia. (Al-Assad, 2009) Syria is not a MTCR member.

As for biological weapons it is estimated that Syria possesses the capacity for their production. Syria has anthrax, botulline, ricin, however, allegedly Syrian scientist were not able to transform them into weapons. (Syria Profile, 2010) Syria signed but did not ratify the BTWC.

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<sup>7</sup> Iran provided financial resources for the reactor building and North Korea provided technical know-how. (Kort, 2010)

## Algeria

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At present time Algeria possesses two research nuclear reactors that are explicitly used for non-military purposes. In the past, the Algerian nuclear program drew the attention of the USA that suspected Algeria of developing a military nuclear program in collaboration with China<sup>8</sup>. (Terem, 2008) The probable motivation was the effort to gain prestige in the region of northern Africa, as well as the effort to balance the power potential of Libya. These ambitions were the cause of international pressure. As a result, Algeria gave up its nuclear ambitions, ratified the NPT and agreement with IAEA.

There is no evidence of the possession or deployment of chemical and biological weapons. Algeria is a signatory to CWC and BTWC. Its military arsenals consist of ballistic missiles Scud-B. (Algeria Profile, 2010)

## Egypt

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The beginnings of a peaceful nuclear program in Egypt can be traced back to the 1950s. Allegedly, the Nasser administration made huge efforts to develop a military nuclear program. However, in the aftermath of the conflict with Israel the administration gave up the plans. Egypt is a signatory to NPT from 1981. At present time there are two research nuclear reactors in the country used only for peaceful purposes.

Egypt was the first regional actor that acquired and used chemical weapons, mustard gas and phosgene, in the armed conflict against Yemen in the 1960s. During 1970s and 1980s Egypt supplied Syria and Iraq with chemical weapons and chemical technologies. (Russell, 2005) The present Egyptian military arsenal is composed of vast stockpiles of nerve agents. Egypt did not sign the CWC.

There is little relevant information about Egyptian possession of biological weapons. Egypt signed the BTWC in 1982. According to analysts, Egypt was successful in producing biological weapons in the past and it is probable that there are still stockpiles of them in the Egyptian military arsenal.

In the past Egypt tried to develop its own missiles, as well. However, the ballistic missile program failed at the beginning of the 1990s. At present time Egypt possesses ballistic missiles Scud-B and Scud-C and is not a signatory to the MTCR.

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<sup>8</sup> The suspicion was connected with the information acquired by intelligence services about a secret agreement between Algeria, China and Argentina about the production of highly enriched plutonium for nuclear weapons. Algeria was even collaborating with Niger and Iran. (Terem, 2008)



## The Initiative of the WMD-Free Zone

The creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East was first proposed by Egypt in 1974 strongly backed by Iran at the UN Disarmament and International Security Committee during the UN General Assembly session. The main motivation for the proposal was the alleged Israeli monopoly in possessing nuclear weapons. The proposal called regional actors for the abandonment of the production, the possession and efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and called states to ratify the NPT. Even at the beginning of the 80s the proposal was supported by Israel under the condition of peaceful settlement of disputes among neighbouring countries. Since that time, the UN General Assembly has adopted more than thirty resolutions supporting the project without any significant progress. (Hamel-Green, 2005) No progress has been made with the proposals and as a result they are still in the pre-negotiation phase.

In 1990 the efforts to create the zone were renewed. Egypt along with Arab countries submitted a proposal for the creation of a zone without WMD and their missiles in the Middle East region<sup>9</sup>. The main reason for the proposed disarmament was the fact that Arab states along with Iran were unable to develop nuclear weapons, and they were maintaining their chemical and biological arsenals as a counterbalance to Israeli nuclear weapons. The proposal was officially supported by the UN Security Council resolution in 1991. The Arab states, Israel and Iran came to terms about the specific aspects of the zone, such as: geographic borders, the need of security guarantees, international verification and control mechanism to monitor compliance etc. (Al-Assad, 2009) However, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the continued Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israeli requests for the peaceful settlement of disputes among all regional Arab and Islamic states and the absence of a regional organisation that would convene all concerned actors and would provide platform for an open dialogue for the regional arms control issue were the main obstacles that impeded the implementation of the initiative<sup>10</sup>.

In 1994 the Ministerial Council of the Arab League adopted a resolution whose aim was to call states for the support of the WMD-free zone initiative by the treaty proposal. The treaty was meant to demonstrate to the international community that the Arab states are willing to create the zone. During the NPT Review Conference in 1995 a resolution concerning the Middle East region was adopted. It de jure confirmed that the peace process in the region contributed to the creation of the zone without WMD in the Middle East, called all the regional actors to ratify the NPT and subsequently to conclude an

<sup>9</sup> The Initiative was supported by the UN Security Council resolution in 1991 in the aftermath of the Gulf war. According to the resolution, the elimination of Iraqi WMD programs presented explicit step towards the creation of a WMD-free in the Middle East. (Hamel-Green, 2005)

<sup>10</sup> During this time The Arab League was a regional organisation with the broadest membership. However, neither Israel nor Iran was its members. In 1991 in Madrid a Working group for arms control and regional security was established that could provide a forum for the interstate dialogue on regional level.

agreement with IAEA. Furthermore, it called states in the Middle East to also become signatories of the NPT and join the effort to create the area without nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. (Hamel-Green, 2005)

The next NPT Review Conference in 2000 confirmed the provisions of the resolution adopted by the former conference. In the next decade no substantial progress was made in the implementation of the resolution and as a consequence a no-implementation mechanism was created. The next Conference failed as well in its fundamental aim. Participating states were not able to come to terms on crucial issues concerning the WMD-free zone and they were not even able to adopt a final document. No new agreement on the regional disarmament and arms control issue was achieved.

The NPT review Conference held in 2010 according to several analysts was not an exception as it did not lead to any significant change in the issue. Its prime objective was to discuss crucial problems concerning nuclear security. One of its priorities was also the issue of the implementation of the 1995 resolution concerning the creation of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. However, only the conference's final document can be considered as a positive development due to the fact that it calls the regional actors for a convention in the future whose main aim will be to discuss the issue of the creation of an area without nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in the Middle East region and to realise all the practical steps towards the implementation of the provisions of the resolution adopted in 1995. The success was achieved through the determination of a concrete timetable for the creation of the zone.

In this region the security level of the civil population is lower, because of the presence of WMD weapons. In the states of the region and further too, disaster management and civil protection face large scale challenges coming from this situation. (Kolonic- Kóródi, 2013] Peaceful steps need conventional and new opportunities to help in the crisis. (Restás-Dudás, 2013) (Restás, 2013)

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## Main Obstacles for the WMD-free zone Implementation

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Although great hopes are placed into the next conference, no significant changes in the issue can be expected. The fact is that all regional actors perceive the importance of the project as individual and collective interest that would strengthen the security and stability of the region. The importance of the WMD-free zone was confirmed through repeated discussions and negotiations by concerned actors as well as by the international community on the highest political level and through official documents that anchored provisions concerning the issue.

The main obstacles that hinder any progress in the issue of disarmament and arms



Picture 1: UAV for rescue, [www.secretprojects.co.uk](http://www.secretprojects.co.uk)

control in the Middle East region are divergent interests, approaches and priorities of key regional players – the Arab states and Iran on the one side and Israel on the other side. According to Arab states the zone can be created only through a complex approach to the WMD proliferation issue. In practice it concerns the consistent realisation of measurements in order to support the building of mutual trust among key actors that will gradually lead towards the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and will become the basis for the creation of the WMD-free zone. (Al-Assad, 2009) From the Arab perspective, mutual trust can be achieved only when Israel is willing to give up its nuclear arsenals and join the NPT international regime. This is the first and main condition in order to achieve mutual trust and a peaceful settlement of Arab-Israeli conflict, to lay the foundations of the WMD-free zone and to progress towards a stable security environment in the Middle East region. According to experts, the conference will be an opportunity for Arab states to pressure Israel to give up its undeclared nuclear arsenals.

On the other hand, Israeli position is very problematic. It is the only nuclear power in the region. Israeli nuclear capacity is the ultimate guarantee of its security and at the same time its instrument for balancing the geopolitical asymmetry among the Arab states. In principle, Israel is not refusing the idea of the creation of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East region. According to its authorities, Israel is ready to start negotiations on the issue under the condition of reaching a peace agreement with all regional actors prior to disarmament of the region. This Israeli position means a compelling challenge for the whole

international NPT regime. Its main concept is de facto underestimated by Israel, which refuses to give up its approach towards achieving security through the possession of nuclear arsenals until its most important rivals, Iran, and Arab states give up their WMD arsenals.

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## Conclusion

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Over the past four decades negotiations have been held on the possibility of building a coherent process of disarmament in the Middle East region. WMD proliferation is considered as one of the main factors influencing the stability of the regional security environment as WMDs are considered to pose threat to peace and security in the area. In order to achieve stability in the Middle East, the creation of the WMD-free zone in the region has been the supreme goal of the international community.

However, divergent interests of key regional powers are the main obstacles for the creation of the WMD-free zone. Accordingly, from a short-term perspective it is clear that the disarmament and the arms control issue in the Middle East region will remain unsolved. It is probable that the steps taken in the near future will not lead to any significant change in the issue. Until now, there is no agreement on which states should attend or on a date and venue for a local conference to solve problems. Furthermore, no progress can be expected due to upheavals spread across the Middle East region in core regional states that are expected to attend the conference. Upheavals have caused concerns over diplomatic negotiations as it is probable that in case of continuing unrests, the issue of the regional disarmament will be postponed until the political situation in the states is stabilised again.

Disaster management and civil protection has a very difficult situation in a WMD crisis and the solving of such a problem needs the involvement of other states too.

From the long-term perspective, the regional security environment needs a realistic perspective and completely new approaches to the WMD proliferation issue. The power rivalry of regional actors shows political instability at the core and therefore it is inevitable to approach the solution of the issue objectively. That means to bring both sides of the conflict to the table to discuss security and disarmament issues through a dialogue about controversial Iranian and at the same time about alleged Israeli proliferation ambitions. Another important condition for any progress in the demilitarisation of the Middle East region is the ratification of international arms control treaties by key regional actors with the aim to support the political influence of their international regime and the mutual trust of regional actors as a basis for mutual cooperation for the common interest – the disarmament of key actors and the subsequent stability of the whole Middle East region.

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## **A tömegpusztító fegyverektől mentes övezet problémája és eredete a közel-keleti régióban, különös tekintettel a katasztrófavédelmi vonatkozásokra**

DAŠA ADAŠKOVÁ – RASTISLAV KAZANSKÝ – PÁNTYA PÉTER

A közel-keleti régió biztonsági környezete úgy is meghatározható, mint egy folyamatosan változó rendszer, mely függ a régió kulcsszereplőinek veszélyérzékelésétől és biztonságérzetétől. Ez a régió jelenleg az egyik leginkább fegyverrel ellátott, militarizált terület a világon, amibe beletartoznak a tömegpusztító fegyverek is. Az adott régióban a biztonsági környezet és a katasztrófavédelem számára is adódnak kérdések.

**Kulcsszavak:** biztonság, katasztrófavédelem, Közel-Kelet, tömegpusztító fegyverek, biztonsági zóna