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THE ACRS EXPERIENCE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE WMDFZ CONFERENCE

Emily B. Landau

This article examines the arms control logic that was applied to the only regional arms control talks that have taken place in the Middle East to date: the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) working group that was part of the multilateral track of the Madrid peace process in the early 1990s. It highlights both the successes and major constraints of the ACRS talks in an effort to assess what might be relevant to the weapons of mass destruction-free zone conference proposed for later this year. In addition to the basic arms control dilemmas that will continue to challenge this conference—as they did ACRS—the article suggests that current conditions in the Middle East are even less conducive to regional dialogue than they were in the earlier period, due to the internal upheavals in several key Arab states, and the specific challenge of Iran’s move to develop a military nuclear capability.

KEYWORDS: Middle East; arms control; weapons of mass destruction-free zone

The Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) working group was one of the five working groups that together comprised the multilateral track of the Madrid peace process of the early 1990s. These talks—conducted from early 1992 to late 1995—were the first (and to date only) experience of debating arms control issues in a regional framework in the Middle East.¹ Therefore, in considering the prospects for convening a conference on a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free-Zone (WMDFZ) in 2012, ACRS is the primary and most pertinent point of reference. An appraisal of the underlying logic, setup, proceedings, and lessons of these four years of unique multilateral arms control dialogue is a crucial step in any effort to restart arms control discussions in the Middle East—which is what the WMDFZ conference idea will necessarily entail.²

The purpose of this article is first to look back on this historical case study: to assess the concept of arms control that was applied, and to recall some of the prominent features of the talks as they unfolded. Specifically, the idea is to highlight the outstanding strengths and vulnerabilities of the ACRS regional dialogue—where it met with success and the factors that contributed to its ultimate demise—in an effort to gain some understanding of the lessons that might be relevant for renewed regional arms control talks.

The article will also discuss the current situation ahead of the proposed 2012 WMDFZ conference. It will consider the prospects for getting an ACRS-like process off the ground today, especially in light of two new developments: the internal turmoil affecting a number of states in the Middle East since early 2011, when events in Tunisia sparked regionwide upheavals; and the new and pressing proliferation challenges that have emerged since the

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ACRS talks—most significantly in Iran, and, to a lesser degree, in Syria. The upheaval in Libya also carried a specific message for arms control efforts: the leader who agreed to give up his country's WMD programs in 2003 was the only one to be subjected to attack by NATO forces. The implicit message that holding on to WMD capabilities might have deterred the West from taking military action was certainly not lost on Iran.

WMD proliferation in the Middle East is already occurring in a highly conflict-prone region characterized by a complex matrix of threats, threat perceptions, hostility, rivalries over leadership and hegemony, splits between moderates and radicals, and political divisions in all directions. The domestic uprisings that have swept the region of late have created significant uncertainty and confusion at the domestic level, increasing interstate tensions, including between Iran and Saudi Arabia over Bahrain, between Turkey and Syria, Turkey and Iran, and Egypt and Israel. They have also impacted the existing and evolving rivalries over regional leadership in the Middle East among the key contenders for this role: Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. In addition to the bilateral relations between the dyads mentioned above, these strains are affecting the region in a multidimensional manner, with overlapping tensions and sources of conflict.

Applying Arms Control to the Middle East

Before assessing the achievements and failures of ACRS, it is important to consider the conceptual roots and rationale for applying arms control to the Middle East. Before the ACRS talks, there was, significantly, only limited application of this idea to the region, and it was primarily in the sense of either curtailing the sale of (mainly conventional) arms from external parties to states in the region, or decisions on the part of individual regional states to join international treaties that ban the development and use of different categories of WMD, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).³

Therefore, when the ACRS talks began, there was scant knowledge, experience with, or understanding of the broader concept of arms control or its relevance to the Middle East region and/or the Arab-Israeli conflict. For most states in the region, there were very few experts on the topic, either in government or academia. The states with the most knowledge of arms control were Israel, Egypt, and Jordan, and even in these three states there was not extensive expertise at the time. In recognition of this, the "gavel-holders" of the talks—the United States and Russia—devoted the initial plenary sessions to seminar-like discussions of US-Soviet and European experiences with arms control during the Cold War years. Drawing on these Cold War arms control processes enabled the United States in particular to highlight the importance of reducing tensions and building confidence among states in bilateral or regional arms control discussions as an indispensable precursor to more concrete arms reductions. US officials explicitly defined the agenda of ACRS along these lines.⁴

But when the Middle East talks began, it became evident that not all states were taking their cue from these Cold War experiences. Egypt in particular came to the talks with a relatively developed arms control perspective which it sought to apply, based on the logic of the global disarmament treaties (such as the NPT and CWC), with their focus

on getting rid of the weapons. Moreover, Egypt was adamant about focusing its attention almost exclusively on Israel and its presumed military nuclear capability.

Competing Arms Control Rationales

Egypt's choice underscored that, at the conceptual level, there are indeed two competing rationales for pursuing nuclear arms control. The first—drawing on the disarmament tradition—contends that it is the weapons that constitute the threat, and therefore the weapons must be at the forefront of the regional arms control dialogue, and directly targeted in the initial stage. The competing logic is that weapons cannot be detached from the relevant context of interstate relations. States strive to acquire WMD in order to deal with threats that they face, or otherwise advance their regional goals and interests—as such, efforts to do away with these weapons must address these same threat perceptions and interests.

The latter perspective also allows for the fact that states are not identical entities—that they have different aims and behavior in the WMD realm which cannot realistically be left outside the equation. Indeed, some states are noticeably defense-oriented in the WMD realm while others seek to directly threaten and intimidate others.⁵ These differences are not simply a matter of perspective, but can be empirically assessed. In light of the complex matrix of regional relations and differential threats, the first step in a regional discussion is to try to create space for win-win proposals that aim to ease tensions and help to build confidence. Over time—but only if states have an interest in doing so—interstate relations can possibly be improved through a process of gradual, step-by-step progress in the direction of enhanced regional security.

In short, the first arms control rationale is all about weapons reductions, while the second demands an improved regional security environment, as a necessary precursor to weapons reductions. ACRS adopted the latter perspective, and was able to make considerable progress in this regard because almost all the regional parties accepted the logic. However, the rival disarmament rationale presented a major constraint to moving forward.⁶

The “weapons versus context” debate is of course not unique to regional arms control dialogue or to ACRS. It is implicit in many attempts to advance nuclear disarmament. With regard to the current US disarmament agenda, for example, when President Barack Obama implies that the United States will be last, not first, to complete the disarmament process, he is underscoring that the US arsenal cannot be entirely eliminated as long as the United States is confronted by other nuclear states.⁷ Even though Obama presents his agenda as a disarmament agenda, it is firmly grounded in the context of interstate relations and possible ongoing threats to US security.

Preconditions for Dialogue

A related issue is the question of the necessary preconditions for pursuing regional arms control agreements in the Middle East, and especially for getting states to begin to engage

seriously on these issues. Some view this in terms of the balance between progress in bilateral peace negotiations between Israel and its neighbors versus progress in multilateral regional discussions. This mode of thinking prevailed at the time of ACRS, not least because of the very structure of the Madrid peace process, which mandated bilateral and multilateral tracks to be pursued in parallel. At the time, the common knowledge was that the five designated multilateral working groups—focused on water, environmental issues, economic issues, refugees, and arms control—should best remain one step behind the bilateral talks, which attempted to forge peace between Israel and Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians. The sense was that success in the multilaterals was dependent on progress in the bilaterals; in turn, if the bilateral talks faltered, this would adversely affect the multilaterals as well. Indeed, some analysts emphasize the role that problems experienced in the bilateral talks played in the demise of ACRS in late 1995.⁸

But if peace negotiations between Israel and Syria, and Israel and the Palestinians are currently not on the agenda, does that mean that a new round of regional arms control talks is not feasible? Most likely this is not the case. However, although peace talks between Israel and its neighbors are not a necessary prerequisite for discussing arms control, a common interest in improving security relations most certainly is. Indeed, the most important precondition for regional talks is the presence of a common interest among the relevant parties that they all feel could be fruitfully addressed and advanced by the talks. Absent this common interest, there is little basis for holding regional talks. Finding and articulating the common interest—even if initially minimal in scope—is thus an indispensable starting point for arms control dialogue, and will present the key challenge for the organizers of the WMDFZ 2012 conference.

The ACRS Experience

Beyond the conceptual rationale of the arms control talks, there is the question of the actual record of ACRS: its strengths and weaknesses, where it succeeded and the constraints it faced, and the causes of its ultimate demise in late 1995. Not surprisingly, there is no one authoritative account of ACRS, and all of these topics are open to political interpretation—especially the reasons for the breakdown. The following section focuses on what transpired in the talks, and the explanation for the breakdown draws primarily on the author's previous in-depth analysis of the complex regional dynamics that impacted the arms control talks.⁹

Confidence- and Security-Building Measures

As noted above, the ACRS working group adopted the arms control rationale that places WMD in the context of interstate relations and dynamics; this was clearly expressed and developed through its emphasis on promoting confidence-building measures (CSBMs) as a quintessential win-win proposition for the participating states. Accordingly, from 1993 to 1995, four categories of CSBMs were discussed in the operational basket of ACRS, and significant progress was achieved:¹⁰

1. *On maritime issues*: two documents were endorsed on search-and-rescue and incidents at sea, and Tunisia agreed in principle to host an additional exercise at sea as well as a meeting of senior naval officers from the region.
2. *Regarding prenotification and military exchange*: an agreement on prior notification of military exercises was concluded, and the parties agreed to exchange information regarding military personnel, unclassified military documents, and military training and education.
3. *On creating a regional communications network*: six parties (Israel, Jordan, the Palestinians, Tunisia, Oman, and Egypt) agreed in principle to participate in a temporary network set up in the Hague, and Egypt also offered to later host the permanent hub in Cairo.
4. *On the establishment of three Regional Security Centers*: a decision was taken to set up a primary center in Jordan, with secondary ones in Qatar and Tunisia. Their objective was defined as crisis prevention, management, and resolution.¹¹

As testimony to the appropriateness of the arms control approach that was taken, it is these four categories of CSBMs discussed in ACRS that constitute the major success of the talks. Although the lack of a plenary meeting in 1995 (due to mounting tensions with Egypt) meant that the measures agreed upon in the operational intersessional meetings were never officially endorsed and adopted by the participating states, the level of agreement that was achieved was nevertheless unprecedented. It was quite amazing when one considers not only the lack of prior experience with interstate dialogue, but the fact that some of the participating parties did not even officially recognize some of the others.

Why the Talks Broke Down

Dalia Dassa Kaye of the RAND Corporation has highlighted the constraints on the ACRS working group that stemmed from asymmetries of power and classic security dilemmas. She emphasizes that asymmetric capabilities make arms control discussions difficult because different states will want to focus on different categories of weapons, based on to their relative strengths.¹² Stated differently, this is an example of the lack of common interest among the participants in the ACRS process to pursue discussions that focused on the weapons capabilities themselves due to the nature of interstate relations. This dilemma further underscored the imperative of identifying common ground to begin a process, which was the logic behind the choice to focus first on CSBMs.

But while the CSBM negotiations were a clear indication of initial success of ACRS, Egypt maintained its own arms control perspective and its focus on Israel first and foremost in the nuclear realm. Egypt wanted the nuclear discussion to take place sooner rather than later, and to include concrete steps on the part of Israel. From Israel's point of view, and as a function of its arms control rationale as well as its nuclear policy, Egypt's position was unacceptable. This gradually led to an entrenched zero-sum equation that complicated the prospect of continuing in a win-win mode, and created a significant amount of friction between the two states. Ultimately, the United States concluded that

there was no choice but to declare that the talks would be put on hold indefinitely as of December 1995. The US concern was primarily not to continue a process that might have significant, long-term negative implications for broader Egyptian-Israeli relations.

Egypt's position was fueled more by regional leadership considerations than by any threat it faced in the nuclear realm. And the win-win CSBMs that resulted from—and in turn encouraged further region-wide dialogue that included Israel—were precisely what troubled Egypt. In fact, Egypt was more concerned about its relations with the other Arab participants in the talks than it was with Israel, and its concern centered on its ability to influence the positions of these states and gain their support for the Egyptian arms control perspective.¹³ When these other Arab states had instead begun to engage with Israel directly in discussions over concrete CSBMs, new avenues of regional dialogue, over which Egypt did not have full control, were opening up. This new reality—which found expression in additional regional forums that were initiated in the same period—translated into an Egyptian fear that it was losing ground in terms of its regional leadership role.

Understanding the primacy of Egypt's regional leadership concerns helps explain why the talks lasted as long as they did even though Egypt did not accept the CSBM model. Egypt was hoping that in the context of the talks, its disarmament approach would prove to be the dominant approach, with the active support of the other Arab states. By demonstrating that its arms control approach came out on top, Egypt hoped to enhance its leadership role in the Middle East. The very different reality—whereby Arab states were engaging Israel on CSBMs—emerged incrementally, and it took time before Egypt realized the adverse implications for its leadership role and took steps to terminate the talks.

The Regional Context and a Strong External Facilitator

Egypt's concerns underscore the significance of the regional context when pursuing regional arms control dialogue. They highlight the need to pay attention to regional dynamics, even when these are not obviously connected to the arms control agenda, as was the case with political leadership concerns in ACRS. Beyond the factors that have been raised regarding threat perceptions and conflicts, additional regional political issues became part and parcel of the ACRS debate. And Egypt's leadership interest vis-à-vis the other Arab states proved to be the most important issue that hastened the demise of the talks.

An additional factor that limited the potential effectiveness of the arms control talks from the start was that not all relevant states took part. Syria was invited, but rejected the logic of conducting multilateral arms control talks before Israel relinquished territory.¹⁴ Iraq and Iran—the designated rogue states at the time—were not invited to participate; neither was Libya.

Finally, the role of the United States as the primary facilitator of the ACRS talks was crucial to the understandings that were forged. Some have criticized the United States for not being committed enough throughout the process, but in the initial stage in particular, its strong commitment and involvement were critical in bringing the parties to the table, setting the agenda, and getting dialogue started. The regional parties would clearly have

been unable to achieve this without the pushing, cajoling, and strong inducements offered by this strong external power.

The Road Ahead

What insights should the prospective WMDFZ regional discussion in 2012 draw from the experience of ACRS in the early 1990s? The previous analysis has already raised important points for consideration. The following discussion will focus on the key challenges ahead.

Old and New Dilemmas

At the conceptual level, the basic dilemmas of conducting regional arms control talks today are similar to those faced during the ACRS years. The polar positions of Israel and Egypt on the weapons versus context rationale of arms control will no doubt continue, creating a zero-sum set-up that will constrain win-win thinking, and pose a serious impediment to future progress. Moreover, a new round of regional arms control talks would take place against the backdrop of the suspension of ACRS and an overall deterioration in the regional atmosphere. The novelty of ACRS generated a considerable degree of excitement that had helped keep the talks going; this excitement is today replaced by a more cynical approach on the part of many states regarding the possibility of overcoming the formidable obstacles to regional dialogue.

At the end of the day, whether it is called "ACRS" or "conference on WMDFZ," the arms control challenge is the same: how to negotiate the dismantlement of WMD that can exacerbate instability and insecurity, even as some states believe these very weapons enhance their security (and in Israel's case, via nuclear deterrence) actually ensure their long-term survival. Different capabilities create differential security dilemmas among the various states, and each state wants to address the weapons that make it feel insecure. As such, discussions must go beyond the weapons to the root causes of insecurity, which are grounded in the quality of interstate relations. If poor relations are the problem, improving them is the starting point for a possible solution. States that feel acutely insecure need to be reassured about the intentions of others. And the key challenge is to create the space for win-win propositions that can gradually be built upon and enhanced in a step-by-step confidence building process.

The above description hinges on the assumption that states do have a common interest in reducing threats and increasing their mutual security. But the current situation in the Middle East introduces a new complication. Iran's quest for nuclear weapons—which was not yet on the agenda at the time of ACRS—drives home that the difficulties today are not only about the different states' differential quests for security. Indeed, Iran does not project a primarily defensive/security-oriented agenda; on the contrary, it is leading a campaign to directly, intentionally, and very harshly threaten others, especially Israel. Iran wants to establish itself as a regional hegemon, and according to all available evidence, it will be an even more dangerous source of hostility and instability in the region when armed with nuclear weapons.¹⁵

As it pursues WMD for the primary purpose of intimidation and advancing its regional hegemonic interests, Iran will most likely not be interested in engaging in discussion that is geared to improving regional security relations, especially with Israel. Indeed, while employing hostile and hateful rhetoric, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad proudly asserts that Iran is willing to pursue dialogue with any state, save the “Zionist regime,” while simultaneously negating the very existence of Israel through his claims that there is no place for it in the Middle East.¹⁶ The case of Iran underscores that there are vast and significant differences among states that have WMD programs—in terms of their regional behavior toward others, their respect for their international commitments, and their aims in pursuing WMD capabilities.

Regional Complications

Another factor that complicates the current situation goes to regional dynamics. With its focus on CSBMs, ACRS demonstrated that win-win solutions can be devised and negotiated, but the talks also underscored the power of regional political dynamics to derail progress. The Middle East today is considerably less conducive to regional arms control talks than it was in the early 1990s, due to the continuing domestic upheavals in some key Arab states, especially Egypt and Syria.

Syria has chemical weapons and—at least until 2007—had a nuclear program.¹⁷ Both Hafez Assad and current embattled President Bashar Assad have hinted at chemical weapons providing a balance and/or deterrent for Israel’s conventional force and presumed nuclear capability.¹⁸ But what can be expected in a new and unstable Syria? This is anyone’s guess, and the lack of clear direction is very unsettling.¹⁹ (Moreover, in a serious development in July 2012, Syrian officials threatened to actually use chemical weapons against external forces that attempted to intervene in Syria.²⁰) The same goes for Syria’s nuclear facilities, which the Syrians have not allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect since the summer of 2008. As for Egypt, new tensions that the post-Mubarak government has created with Israel could harden Egypt’s arms control stance even further. Further, the August 2011 terror attack in southern Israel—when Palestinian terrorists crossed into Israel from the Sinai—the ensuing attack on the Israeli embassy in Cairo, and Egyptian statements to the effect that the peace treaty with Israel should be reviewed, have clarified to Israel that the long-term peace and stability with Egypt could falter, even though Egypt also has an interest in maintaining stability. The situation exacerbates Israel’s already acute sense of insecurity in the region.

Are the Organizers Prepared?

As the preceding analysis makes clear, there is a tremendous amount of background work to be done in order to get a WMDFZ discussion in the Middle East on track. Unfortunately, the most serious questions regarding political leadership and the very agenda for the WMDFZ 2012 conference have yet to be determined, especially as far as the arms control rationale that will be adopted. The issues are being debated at track-two levels, but only in

late 2011, with the appointment of the Finnish facilitator for WMDFZ 2012, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, did they begin to be considered seriously in official circles. Will the conference adopt the logic of ACRS, or will the organizers succumb to demands to pursue the rationale of disarmament out of context? While the appointed facilitator has been conducting discussions in earnest, it is still too early to determine whether he and his team will be able to navigate between these polar positions, or have the necessary political leadership and clout to take on a role similar to the one that the United States played in ACRS in the early 1990s.

The final word goes back to Iran. The question of Iran's inclusion in regional arms control talks presents a serious dilemma, not least because the international community is currently engaged in a process of confronting the military dimensions and implications of Iran's nuclear program, which have been and are being pursued in violation of the country's commitment to remain non-nuclear according to the NPT.²¹ The WMDFZ conference idea must not be allowed to replace these international efforts. The organizers of the conference must be aware of the possibility that Iran will try to manipulate the WMDFZ platform in its favor, by joining Egypt in an Israel-focused campaign in the nuclear realm, while deflecting attention from itself and the international pressure it currently faces. Iran could easily go through the motions of regional dialogue with no intention of actually improving security relations with Israel, and gain valuable pressure-free time to push its program forward to the finish line. That Iran might attempt this kind of tactic should come as no surprise—it is how Iran has been playing the nuclear game with the international negotiators who have attempted to craft a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian nuclear crisis for nearly ten years.²²

In preparing for a WMDFZ regional discussion in the Middle East, the unique and important experience of ACRS needs to be studied and learned—both for its successes as well as the problems that were encountered. Unfortunately, however, this will not be sufficient to ensure success this time. The time that has passed since the ACRS talks were active has only engendered more severe regional challenges, and the road ahead looks much more difficult than the situation in the early 1990s. Finding the right path—which critically hinges on the ability to identify some common interest for region-wide cooperation—will be a tremendous, and hopefully not insurmountable, challenge for the conference facilitator and the organizers.

NOTES

1. See Bruce Jentleson, "The Middle East Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) Talks: Progress, Problems and Prospects," IGCC Policy Paper, No. 26 (University of California Berkeley: Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, 1996); Bruce Jentleson and Dalia Dassa Kaye, "Security Status: Explaining Regional Security Cooperation and Its Limits in the Middle East," *Security Studies* 8 (1998) pp. 204–38; Shai Feldman, *Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Center for Science and International Affairs, 1997); Peter Jones, "Negotiating Regional Security and Arms Control in the Middle East: The ACRS Experience and Beyond," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25 (2003), pp. 137–54; Emily B. Landau, *Arms Control in the Middle East: Cooperative Security Dialogue and Regional Constraints* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press and JCSS, 2006); Emily B. Landau, "ACRS: What worked, what didn't, and what could be relevant for the region today," *Disarmament Forum* 2 (2008), pp. 13–20, <<http://unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2727.pdf>>; and Emily B. Landau and Dalia Dassa

- Kaye, "Disarmament Efforts in the Region: Lessons from the Arms Control and Regional Security Talks," in Bernd Kubbig and Sven-Eric Fikenscher, eds., *Arms Control and Missile Proliferation in the Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 27–38.
2. The only realistic interpretation of the WMDFZ conference proposal is as some type of ongoing regional arms control discussion. Any other interpretation would be detached from the reality of how WMD figure in the Middle East and what it means to deal with them in a regional context.
 3. See Gerald M. Steinberg, "The History of Arms Control in the Middle East," in Avi Becker, ed., *Arms Control without Glasnost: Building Confidence in the Middle East* (Jerusalem: Israel Council on Foreign Relations, 1993), pp. 7–27.
 4. The concept of Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) was first explicitly formulated in the European context, in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1975, but these measures were also prevalent in the US-Soviet bilateral arms control experience, beginning with the "Hot Line" established in 1963. In 1992, then-US Secretary of State James Baker introduced the confidence-building imperative in his initial remarks on the ACRS working group. He determined that the agenda of the talks would be to consider "a set of modest confidence-building or transparency measures covering notifications of selected military-related activities and crisis-prevention communications. The purpose would be to lessen the prospects for incidents and miscalculations that could lead to heightened competition or even conflict." See Remarks of Secretary of State James A. Baker III before the Organizational Meeting for Multilateral Negotiations on the Middle East, January 28, 1992, US Department of State, Office of the Assistant Secretary/Spokesman (Moscow, Russia).
 5. See Emily B. Landau, "Placing WMD in Context," *Arms Control Today*, September 2011, <www.armscontrol.org/2011_09/Placing_WMD_in_Context%20%20%20%20>.
 6. It should be noted that Syria also embraced the Egyptian disarmament focus; indeed, Syria was much more inflexible on this issue, to the point that it refused even to take part in the ACRS talks.
 7. Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Barack Obama," Prague, April 5, 2009, <www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered>.
 8. Peter Jones, "Arms Control in the Middle East: Is it Time to Renew ACRS?," *Disarmament Forum* 2 (2005) pp. 55–62, <<http://unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2278.pdf>>.
 9. The history included here—which draws heavily on the author's previous research into this question, and incorporates some points from a June 2011 presentation at the Washington, DC conference "Moving Toward a Region Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East: Challenges for 2012"—will be brief and related in broad-strokes. For more detailed accounts, see Landau, *Arms Control in the Middle East*, and Landau, "ACRS: What worked, what didn't, and what could be relevant for the region today."
 10. The ACRS talks proceeded in plenary gatherings as well as in what were called "intersessional" meetings, which comprised a host of smaller meetings and seminars, including visits to arms control-related facilities, with the aim of enabling the parties to further discuss the issues in smaller and more informal settings. The intersessional meetings were divided into two baskets: conceptual and operational. The conceptual basket focused on formulating the long-term objectives for the talks, while the operational basket focused on specific CSBMs.
 11. Landau, *Arms Control in the Middle East*, pp. 42–47. This summary of the CSBMs also appears in Landau and Kaye, "Disarmament Efforts in the Region," pp. 28–30.
 12. See Dalia Dassa Kaye, "The Middle East WMDFZ Conference: A Reset for Regional Arms Control?," *Nonproliferation Review* 19 (November 2012), pp. 413–28.
 13. See Landau, *Arms Control in the Middle East*, Chapters 5, 6, and 7, pp. 90–159.
 14. Thomas L. Friedman, "Syria to Attend Most Phases of Middle East Talks," *New York Times*, October 17, 1991, <www.nytimes.com/1991/10/17/world/syria-to-attend-most-phases-of-middle-east-talks.html>.
 15. Iran's regional hegemonic interests would be enhanced by the immunity to counterattack that Iran would enjoy as a nuclear state, in scenarios that fall short of actual use of nuclear weapons by Iran. Once it acquires nuclear weapons, Iran will have a free hand to stir up major trouble in the region. Iran is threatening to a number of states in the region, and many have expressed fear of its nuclear ambitions, especially in the Gulf. Analysts who argue that nuclear weapons will engender stability are basing their conclusions on examples from outside the Middle East, primarily the US-Soviet bilateral relationship during the Cold War. However, as reflected in a recent analysis favoring nuclear stability, making predictions about the effect of nuclear weapons in the Middle East without analyzing the

political realities in this region is a grave mistake that can lead to very problematic, even dangerous, conclusions. See Kenneth N. Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb," *Foreign Affairs* 90 (July/August 2012), pp. 2–5; for a critique of Waltz that highlights the complexity of regional politics and actual motivations in the nuclear realm in the Middle East, see Emily B. Landau, "When Neorealism meets the Middle East: Putting Iran's Pursuit of Nuclear Weapons in (Regional) Context," *Strategic Assessment* 15 (forthcoming 2012).

16. See Nasser Karimi, "Iran's Ahmadinejad: No place for Israel in region," Associated Press, August 26, 2011. In February 2011, Ahmadinejad said, "We will soon see a new Middle East materializing without America and the Zionist regime. . . ." Agence France-Presse, "'Beware friendly US,' Ahmadinejad warns Egyptians," *Al Arabiya News*, February 11, 2011, <www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/02/11/137223.html>.
17. On chemical weapons, see Dany Shoham, "Poisoned Missiles: Syria's Doomsday Deterrent," *Middle East Quarterly* 9 (Fall 2002), pp. 13–20, and Michael Eisenstadt, "Dealing with Syria's Chemical Weapons: Military Options." Policywatch 1964, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 17, 2012. On the nuclear program, see "Background Briefing with Senior U.S. Officials on Syria's Covert Nuclear Reactor and North Korea's Involvement," April 24, 2008, <www.fas.org/irp/news/2008/04/odni042408.pdf>.
18. This was evident in the context of discussions on the CWC. In January 1993, President Hafez Assad said, "Possession [of] chemical weapons by the Arabs constitutes minimal deterrence against Israel's nuclear weapons and allows them a partial strategic balance." See Eitan Barak, "Getting the Middle East Holdouts to Join the CWC," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 66 (January 2010), pp. 57–62. See also quote from Bruce Reidel, in "What comes after Assad in Syria?," *The Daily Beast*, July 20, 2012: "After Syria was defeated by Israel in 1982, Hafez [Assad] ordered the development of chemical weapons as a deterrent against his Israeli enemy."
19. See Leonard Spector, "Assad's Chemical Romance," *Foreign Policy*, August 23, 2011, <www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/23/assads_chemical_romance>.
20. See Neil MacFarquhar and Eric Schmitt, "Syria Threatens Chemical Attack on Foreign Force," *New York Times*, July 23, 2012, <www.nytimes.com/2012/07/24/world/middleeast/chemical-weapons-wont-be-used-in-rebellion-syria-says.html>.
21. In 2008, IAEA Deputy Director General for Safeguards Olli Heinonen convened a special closed meeting of the Board of Directors to discuss material on Iran, and was quoted in the media as saying that some of the evidence the IAEA has with regard to Iran's activities was inconsistent with any application other than research into the development of a nuclear warhead. See Joby Warrick and Colum Lynch, "UN Says Iran May Not Have Come Clean on Nuclear Past," *Washington Post*, March 2, 2008, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/01/AR2008030101722.html>. For much of 2012, Iran has repeatedly denied requests for the IAEA to inspect a facility at Parchin where Iran is strongly suspected of conducting experiments related to detonators for nuclear weapons. See Associated Press, "New image reportedly depicts Iran's military nuclear testing site," *Haaretz*, May 13, 2012. See also David Albright and Andrea Stricker, "Time for Action on Iran at IAEA Board of Governors Meeting," Institute for Science and International Security, ISIS Report, September 11, 2012.
22. For Iran's tactical use of the negotiations with the EU-3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) and the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States) over its nuclear program as a means of playing for time see Emily B. Landau, *Decade of Diplomacy: Negotiations with Iran and North Korea and the Future of Nuclear Nonproliferation*, INSS Memorandum No. 115, March 2012, pp. 53–58.