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Report of the 7th International Student/Young Pugwash (ISYP) Conference

This report summarizes the proceedings and outcome of the 7th International Student/Young Pugwash (ISYP) conference, “*Conflict and Cooperation – The Global Impact of Regional Security Efforts*” held in Berlin, Germany, from June 29 to 30, 2011 at the Federation of German Scientists (VDW). The agenda was designed to allow two working groups to focus on regional and global security issues including nuclear energy and nonproliferation, regional and “Global Zero” efforts and the rising impact of civil societies with a special focus on the Middle East. 32 participants from 18 countries were divided into two working groups, participants in Working Group A presented papers on topics with a regional focus and participants in Working Group B presented papers on topics with a global focus. Some of the papers will be prepared for possible publication in the ISYP Journal at: www.scienceandworldaffairs.org.

The following is a summary of the themes and topics covered in the working groups.¹ ISYP is grateful for the opportunity to share our thoughts with the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. It is our hope that this report and the activities of ISYP will enrich the ideas and actions of the entire Pugwash community.

Conflict and Cooperation – The Global Impact of Regional Security Efforts

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2011 saw populations in the Middle East demand a structural change in autocratic regimes and implementation of economic and political reforms that ignited a transformation in the Arab world. The magnitude and scale of this transformation, however, cannot be understood without considering the turbulent history, the religious and ethnic mosaic, almost fanatical allegiance to identities and a variety of other political and economic differences that created latent fault lines. These fault lines, combined with rampant corruption, political strife, a growing middle class and the liberating effect of the Internet to start ‘the Arab Spring’. Despite the comparative differences among the content and context of transformation in individual countries, the resounding message for a democratic Middle East is shared across the region. It will not be an easy journey. Yet, we have every reason to be optimistic that the new era of democratic, secular and effective governance in the Middle East will reverse the fates of a region long characterized by conflict and bring peace, stability and prosperity to the Middle East.

Effective governance and permanent peace is requisite for security, stability and prosperity in the Middle East. The Arab Spring presents a historic opportunity but the challenges ahead require reforms, reconciliation and resolve. The Arab Spring has

¹This document is the report of the presentations and discussions from both working groups but its content is the responsibility of the rapporteur.

² The rapporteur wants to express his gratitude to the ISYP Executive Board for their helpful comments on earlier drafts and Ranieri Argentini and Benjamin Rusek for their support and camaraderie through the process.

demonstrated the potent role social media can play in the mobilization and empowerment of traditionally disenfranchised populations. The extreme lengths authoritarian states go to suppress the civil society is no coincidence. A robust civil society is a democratic check and balance on state authority and one of the most efficient ways of promoting effective governance, which is vital for a free and democratic future. Despite considerable reforms and achievements in the last decade, there continues to be a critical divergence between the textual and actual rights attested to civilian actors in the Middle East and sweeping reforms will be needed in all ranks of the society to form this bedrock of a democratic future.

Another critical step will be to reconcile longstanding conflicts among and within countries in the region. Although it is unclear what the long-term consequences of recent events in the Middle East will be, it is evident that the current security situation in the region is untenable and the international community has to engage more actively to promote security in the region. Iran's nuclear program and assertive posture, the emerging security competition between Iran and other regional powers like Israel and the GCC and the evolving security paradigm in Europe is escalating tensions that may have unforeseen consequences. Political uncertainty and Iran's posture is contributing to a security dilemma by prompting states in the region to adopt an increasingly aggressive posture in response and raising concerns about a resurgence of transnational terrorism, given the multitude of terrorist elements operating in the region.

Given the complex interplay among the various actors and factors driving Iran's nuclear policy, a constructive approach based on dialogue with Iran can still manage to find a common ground to reverse Iran's nuclear course. Worth mentioning in this context is the Obama administration's proposed phased adaptive missile defence policy which promises to remodel the security paradigm in Europe. Whether a ballistic missile defence system will have a positive effect on Europe's security and regional and global stability is an open question that needs to be thoroughly explored. Considering the limited range of Iranian missiles and the rudimentary state of the Iranian nuclear program, and the limited threat posed by the Iranian ballistic program to Europe; a missile defence system, even if the Obama administration's redesigned scheme is effective, runs the risk of deteriorating relations with Russia and driving a security competition with Iran.

The upcoming 2012 Conference on a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East presents the international community with an invaluable chance to defuse the tensions in the region. Many Arab countries who signed the NPT to be able to put a check on Israel's nuclear capabilities are suffering from a crisis of confidence that cannot be resolved in the absence of a regime that has a font of legitimacy and a forte of efficacy and includes clearly defined negative security assurances. If and when states commit not to pursue nuclear weapons, it is their right to be spared the risk of a nuclear attack. Regrettably, the international community continues its failure to rapidly and actively respond to the defects and deficiencies of the NPT. There is a pressing need for a move from the imbalance of power in the NPT to a more inclusive and fair balance of power through other nonproliferation mechanisms that can fully respond to modern challenges faced by the dual use of nuclear technology. As long as the hierarchical structure of power is preserved and the NWS fail to deliver their commitments to disarmament, the credibility and efficacy of the NPT regime will continue to erode.

Also vital for the future of the Middle East is how China will project its power in the region and how this projection will affect regional and global dynamics. The American military presence in East Asia, the emerging competition for global preponderance and China's territorial disputes with its neighbours presents a serious risk of regional confrontation that could have global repercussions and need to be carefully attended to. A positive Chinese posture is of paramount value not only for regional and global security but also to achieve a nuclear-weapons-free world. As the U.S. and Russia continue to reduce their nuclear arsenals, China's nuclear policy will significantly affect the prospect of future

multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. There are lessons to be drawn from China's history of and responses to nuclear crises that would illuminate China's nuclear strategy and existing approach toward global nuclear disarmament negotiations. Serious attention needs to be paid to these dynamics in order to effectively engage China in formal arms control discussions.

President Obama's speeches in Cairo and Prague, the ratification of the New START treaty which will reduce the American and Russian nuclear arsenals to their lowest level in decades, the vocal support of leading statesmen from all over the world for the objective of a world free of nuclear weapons and the invaluable role advocacy organizations like Global Zero are playing in building a robust network of young leaders for a safe and secure future illustrates that Pugwash's commitment to bridging political divides and providing a cooperative setting for a global dialogue on nuclear dangers is shared by a broad community worldwide and raises our hope that we are closer than ever to our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. This, however, should not be taken to mean that we can afford complacency. Although nonproliferation efforts have achieved much progress over the last decade, because of the magnitude and complexity of the threats being faced, the international community has a moral responsibility for greater cooperation and resolve to preserve and build on these hard-earned accomplishments. The New START treaty is an important step that creates room for future cooperation and collaboration but it has also clarified how difficult it will be to take the many steps to achieve nuclear disarmament worldwide. A critical step along this path is entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The inability of CTBT to enter into force until the hold outs ratify the treaty perfectly illustrates the interconnected nature and difficulty of global denuclearization. As one of the world's two leading nuclear weapon states, the onus is on the United States to lead the way to ratification. It has been over a decade since the U.S Senate refused to give advice and consent on ratification of the Treaty. A robust and resolute campaign by the Obama Administration to communicate to American legislators that the treaty serves as a link to their post Cold War bipartisan nonproliferation initiatives has the potential to build the support to bring America in and the regime into force. American ratification may create a domino effect that paves the way for other nuclear states to join the CTBT regime but other paths to entry into force should be explored.

CTBT is a difficult challenge but it is not the only one. These problems are the end-product of a complex process that starts with the nuclear fuel cycle and ends with managing stockpiles. Each and every step in this process deserves direct attention and deliberation. The valid concerns about reducing nuclear arsenals and countering the threat from new proliferators have diverted attention from other less visible but equally important problems. Uranium enrichment on the front end and reprocessing of spent fuel on the back end of the fuel cycle are two issues that have not attracted the attention they deserve from the international community. Iranian and DPRK activities perfectly illustrate the critical significance of safeguarding and internationalizing the enrichment and reprocessing processes. With new countries like Brazil, South Africa and South Korea indigenizing more aspects of the nuclear fuel cycles illustrates the need to devote attention to these questions. Although the IAEA additional protocol safeguards these processes, the withdrawal of the DPRK from the NPT and Iran's non-compliance demonstrates pitfalls with a voluntary regime. Complementary means like the International Nuclear Information System (INIS) database to track sensitive nuclear technology can help reinforce international control over nuclear fuel cycles and ensure that nuclear capacities remain used solely for peaceful purposes.

The same caveat applies for managing fissile material stockpiles and export control regimes. Today, around two thousand metric tons of plutonium exists in worldwide stockpiles, 25% of which is readily available for weaponization. Work towards the reduction

of plutonium stockpiles is an important part in global disarmament efforts. Likewise, given the limited availability of the advanced technology and knowledge needed to build nuclear weapons, it is vital to ensure that sensitive nuclear technology does not end up in the wrong hands. Export control regimes are an important measure to delay, if not halt, nuclear proliferation. As recognized by the NPT, all signatories have a right to nuclear technology for civil purposes but limiting sensitive nuclear technology and material being used for proliferation is as valid a concern. Export control systems must value the right on nonnuclear states under the NPT and build an inclusive regime that would commend the trust, support and cooperation of the entire international community. Since the advanced know-how required for building nuclear weapons is possessed only by a limited number of countries, cooperating with and controlling commercial nuclear suppliers can play a larger and more active role in preventing the proliferation of technology for the production of nuclear weapons. Bilateral agreements between companies and countries that stipulate conditions regulating the transfer of specific sensitive materials can be tapped to complement multilateral systems that regulate nuclear technology and material transfers.

The metamorphosis of the Middle East should not divert attention from other pressing international challenges. From resource security to climate change, we have to understand that security solutions cannot be abstracted from the very lives they seek to protect. Resource security was, is and will continue to be key drivers of international conflict in the future. It is important to work to prevent water from becoming the next resource to drive conflict worldwide. The Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) regime is an example that could be applied to other contexts and serve as a model to solve other cross border international security problems. The urgent threat posed by climate change can be a stimulus for broader cooperation. Renewable energies will slow down carbon emissions, mitigate the negative effects of climate change, initiate a gradual transition towards a more feasible and sustainable energy supply and hence, promote peace and prosperity around the world.

In many parts of the world, human lives and livelihoods continue to be jeopardized by the utilization of depleted uranium, white phosphorus and other weapons and regrettably, these tragedies can be overshadowed by our broader security agenda. The responsibility rests on the international community and the global civil society to promote human safety and security everywhere and move beyond arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament efforts to construct a comprehensive system that mitigates all of the security threats and challenges in the world. As a part of the Pugwash community, ISYP is committed to the Pugwash movement's strong belief in the value of international and comprehensive dialogue to address the challenges our world is facing. Students and young people are an integral part of the multifaceted discussion necessary to create a more stable, secure and peaceful world.

Finally, the International Student/Young Pugwash community extends our hope and solidarity to the victims of the Japanese earthquake and the Fukushima nuclear tragedy. It is our sincere hope that the international community will use the Fukushima incident as an opportunity to rethink our perceptions of the risks associated with nuclear technology and realize that the consequences are too great for us to fail.