



**Statement of the Pugwash Executive Committee
on the Postponement of the Helsinki Conference on
the Establishment of a Middle East Weapons of Mass
Destruction Free Zone (MEWMDFZ)**

25 November 2012

"The Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs regrets very much the decision, announced unilaterally in the US State Department Press Release of November 23, 2012, to postpone the conference on a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (MEWMDFZ) envisaged in the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference Final Document. We commend the efforts of the Finnish facilitator and urge the three depositary states of the NPT together with the UN Secretary-General to reconsider this retrograde decision, and to use their good offices to ensure the meeting is convened as soon as possible.

The indefinite postponement of the Helsinki conference would be a very serious setback for all those who are hoping to create a better and more peaceful environment in the Middle East and a de facto reward for all those who have worked to undermine this laudable objective.

This unilateral announcement also represents a serious blow to the credibility of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) since the non-discriminatory objective of the conference was contained in the Resolution on the Middle East as an indispensable part of the conclusions of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference without which there would have been no indefinite extension of the NPT. Fifteen years later its inclusion in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference of 2010 revived the confidence of all the parties to the NPT on the relevance of this vital bulwark against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

The ominous message that comes across the ME region is that the possession of WMD is legitimate and even perhaps useful in the defense of certain states.

The future viability of the NPT and possible progress towards peace in the ME has been seriously jeopardized."

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