

## ***First Committee Monitor***

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/>

### ***reporting on***

## ***United Nations First Committee on Disarmament and Security***

**Final Edition**  
**November 2, 2010**

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/1com/FCM10/week4.html#NWFZ>

#### **EXCERPT**

### **Nuclear weapon free zones**

Sean Kelly and Georgie Bright | NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security

On 26 October, First Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.1/65/L.1](#), “Establishment of a Nuclear Free Weapon Zone in the Region of the Middle East,” without vote, as in previous years. The resolution, introduced by Egypt, invites all concerned member states to declare their support for establishing a nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) in the region of the Middle East.

[Israel](#) and [Iran](#) both offered explanations of vote on this resolution. Israel’s representative stated that the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East “remains a long term vision that Israel subscribes to and aspires for [and] in light of this fundamental approach, Israel has supported the draft resolution.” However, the Israeli delegation added that “it has done so notwithstanding substantive reservations regarding certain elements contained therein, including the absence of references to grave cases of non-compliance to nuclear non-proliferation obligations and violations of UNSC resolutions by states in the Middle East.”

Conversely, Iran’s delegation argued that Israel, “with its clandestine nuclear weapon program and its secret nuclear facilities, remains the only impediment in realizing such a zone in the Middle East.” Iran’s representative added that “by pursuing counterproductive policies, certain nuclear-weapon States are actively hindering any meaningful action in international fora to address the real threat posed by the Israeli nuclear arsenals.”

Draft resolution [A/C.1/65/L.10](#), “Agreement on a nuclear weapon free zone in Central Asia,” was adopted by a [vote](#) of 131-3-33. The explanation of vote (EOV) given by the United Kingdom, United States, and France, the three delegations that voted against the resolution, expressed particular concern with article XII of the Treaty, “which indicates that existing treaty obligations of the States Party would not be affected by this Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty.” They expressed hope, however, that all remaining concerns could be mitigated through consultations in the near future. A joint EOV delivered by Japan on behalf of Austria, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malta, New Zealand, Sweden, and Switzerland encouraged these consultations to take place without delay and for all remaining issues to be resolved as soon as possible.

Also garnering widespread support was draft resolution [A/C.1/65/L.24](#), “Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas,” which was adopted by a [vote](#) of 158-3-4. Consistent with resolution [A/RES/64/42](#), adopted last year by the General Assembly on the same topic, the

source of the three “no” votes came from the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. In a joint EOV, these three nuclear weapon states [argued](#) that it is “contradictory to propose simultaneously the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone that would be composed largely of the high seas and yet to say that it would be fully consistent with applicable principles and rules of international law relating to the freedom of the high seas.” India’s delegation voted against operative paragraph 5 and abstained from the resolution as a whole. Its opposition to operative paragraph 5 was due to the specific reference to establishing a NWFZ in South Asia, which India believes runs contrary to the principle that any NWFZ must be established by agreements of freely acting states of the particular region.

Draft resolutions [A/C.1/65/L.41](#), “Mongolia’s international security and nuclear-weapon-free status” and [A/C.1/65/L.51](#), “Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco),” were adopted without votes or comments.

First Committee also adopted draft resolution [A/C.1/65/L.54](#), “African-Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty,” without a vote, though several delegations took the floor to give general statements or EOVs. In a general statement, Spain’s delegation noted that it supports the Pelindaba Treaty, but will not sign it, since the Treaty does not contain any provisions that Spain has not already implemented on its whole territory. The joint EOV offered by France, the United Kingdom, and the United States noted that the UK and France have already ratified the necessary protocols associated with the treaty. Furthermore, the recent announcement by the United States to pursue ratification was described as a promising gesture. The Israeli delegation [asserted](#) that it was “regrettable that Egypt, one of the most vocal supporters in the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East, refrains from ratifying the African NWFZ Treaty.”

The 2010 meetings of the First Committee continued to highlight NWFZs as an essential element of the nuclear disarmament regime. The momentum behind establishing NWFZs, resulting from the recently established zones in Africa and Central Asia, and the Second Conference of NWFZ treaties states party was palpable in First Committee. The meeting set for 2012 regarding the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East was often cited in First Committee as a reason for optimism for the future spread of such zones to new regions. Nonetheless, equally as palpable in First Committee were the challenges associated with outstanding issues on already established zones and the impediments to establishing future zones. Delegations often cited robust and legally-binding negative security assurances from nuclear weapon states as necessary for established NWFZs to be effective. In regards to the spread of NWFZs to new areas, delegations spoke of the need for intra-regional confidence, trust, stability, and transparency. The statements given by various delegations from the Middle East make it clear that much progress will be needed in this regard if the conference scheduled for 2012 is to have a substantive outcome.