

CHAIR REPORT

Committee: Security Council

Topic: Preventing a Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East Following Iranian Proliferation

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Introduction

The possibility of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East has long been one of the most significant threats to international peace and security. The region is jeopardized by intense geopolitical rivalries, ongoing conflicts, and mutual distrust among states. Concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program have intensified over the past two decades, particularly following allegations that Iran has pursued capabilities that could potentially support the development of nuclear weapons.

Should Iran successfully acquire or be perceived to have acquired nuclear weapons, neighboring states may feel compelled to develop similar capabilities in order to maintain strategic balance and deter potential threats. Such a development could trigger a regional nuclear arms race, increasing the likelihood of military confrontation, accidental escalation, and the weakening of the global non-proliferation regime.

As the primary body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, the United Nations Security Council must address and act in response to the risks posed by nuclear proliferation while balancing the sovereign rights of states to pursue peaceful nuclear technology. Delegates must examine the causes of proliferation,

evaluate existing international mechanisms, and develop solutions that prevent further escalation while promoting regional stability.

Key Terms

Nuclear Proliferation

The spread of nuclear weapons, weaponry related technology, or fissile materials to states that do not already possess them.

Nuclear Arms Race

A competition between states to increase or improve their nuclear arsenals in response to perceived threats from rivals.

Nuclear Deterrence

A military strategy in which a state's possession of nuclear weapons is intended to discourage attacks by threatening devastating retaliation.

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

An international treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, promoting peaceful nuclear cooperation, and advancing nuclear disarmament.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The United Nations-affiliated organization responsible for monitoring nuclear activities and ensuring compliance with safeguards agreements.

Enrichment of Uranium

A process that increases the concentration of uranium-235 in uranium, which can be used for nuclear power generation or, at higher levels, nuclear weapons production.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)

Weapons capable of causing widespread destruction and loss of life, including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

Background Information

The Middle East has experienced persistent security challenges for decades, including interstate conflicts, civil wars, sectarian tensions, and foreign interventions. These conditions have contributed to a regional security environment in which states frequently prioritize military preparedness and strategic deterrence.

Iran's nuclear program began in the 1950s under the “Atoms for Peace” initiative. Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the program experienced interruptions but was later revived and expanded. Throughout the early 2000s, concerns emerged regarding undeclared nuclear facilities and activities, leading to investigations by the IAEA and increased international scrutiny.

Many states, particularly the United States and several regional powers, expressed concerns that Iran's nuclear activities could eventually provide the capability to produce nuclear weapons. Iran has consistently maintained that its nuclear program is intended solely for peaceful purposes, including energy production and scientific research.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed in 2015, sought to limit Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief. While the agreement initially reduced tensions and enhanced monitoring, subsequent political developments and disagreements regarding compliance weakened its effectiveness. The future of the agreement remains uncertain, contributing to renewed concerns regarding proliferation risks.

A nuclear-armed Iran, or even the perception of an imminent Iranian nuclear capability, could encourage other regional actors to pursue their own nuclear programs. Such developments could undermine decades of international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Major Countries and/or Organizations Involved

The United Nations

The United Nations has led diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict through mediation, humanitarian assistance, and Security Council resolutions. The UN also coordinates with international aid and supports negotiations between parties.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran argues that it has the right to develop peaceful nuclear technology under international law. It rejects allegations that it seeks nuclear weapons while emphasizing national sovereignty and security concerns.

United States of America

The United States has played a leading (but some would say reckless) role in diplomatic negotiations, sanctions implementation, military and economic efforts to limit Iran's nuclear capabilities. The conflict faces deep unpopularity within the United States. The US House of Representatives narrowly passed a resolution aimed at halting unauthorized military action in Iran.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Newly appointed British Prime Minister Andy Burnham re-committed to an existing agreement allowing the US military to host aircraft and conduct "defensive operations" from British territory. The British government maintains that its forces are not cooperating in offensive operations, intending to avoid being drawn deeper into a wider conflict.

State of Israel

Israel views a potential Iranian nuclear weapon as an existential threat and has consistently advocated strong measures to prevent Iranian weaponization.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has expressed concerns regarding Iran's regional influence and has indicated that it may seek comparable strategic capabilities if Iran acquires nuclear weapons.

Current Situation

Recent years have witnessed increased tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear activities. Reports from international monitoring agencies indicate that Iran has expanded its uranium enrichment capabilities and accumulated larger stockpiles of enriched uranium than permitted under previous agreements.

Iran says it has carried out drone strikes on US military facilities and bases across the Middle East in retaliation for American attacks on the country. US President Donald Trump said damages to ships and cargo in the Strait of Hormuz would be paid for by "Iranian Money that the United States has in its possession, and controls".

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi responded by saying that seizing another country's assets to "pay for unrelated future claims is an incendiary precedent... Ensuing chaos will not be pretty or peaceful," he added.

Tensions have been escalating between the US and Iran since the start of July.

The UK has allowed the US to launch "defensive" operations from British bases hosting American personnel and aircraft, while refusing to cooperate in offensive operations against Iran.

Iran's foreign ministry said the UK was an "accomplice" in the US war, while the powerful Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) military wing said any country which supports the US militarily "will be responsible for the consequences and repercussions".

At the same time, diplomatic efforts to restore or replace existing agreements have faced significant challenges. Disagreements among major powers, shifting regional alliances, and domestic political pressures have complicated negotiations.

Several Middle Eastern states have publicly expressed concerns regarding the strategic implications of Iran's nuclear advancements. Some analysts suggest that countries such as Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Egypt could consider expanding their own nuclear capabilities if they perceive a significant imbalance in regional security.

The possibility of miscalculation remains a major concern. Military strikes against nuclear facilities, proxy conflicts, cyberattacks, and regional crises could rapidly

escalate into broader confrontations. The Security Council must therefore consider both immediate measures to reduce tensions and long-term mechanisms to strengthen regional security.

Timeline of Events

1957 – Iran begins nuclear cooperation with the United States under the Atoms for Peace program.

1968 – Iran signs the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

1970 – Iran ratifies the NPT.

2002 – Previously undisclosed nuclear facilities at Natanz and Arak become public.

2006 – The UN Security Council adopts sanctions related to Iran's nuclear activities.

2015 – The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is signed.

2018 – The United States withdraws from the JCPOA and reimposes sanctions.

2019–2024 – Iran progressively reduces compliance with several JCPOA limitations while continuing enrichment activities.

2025–2026 – Continued international concern regarding the future of nuclear diplomacy and regional security.

- June 13–24, 2025 (Twelve-Day War): A brief war erupted featuring Israeli airstrikes on Iranian nuclear and military facilities, followed by Iranian ballistic missile and drone retaliations and U.S. intervention before a June 24 ceasefire.
- February 28, 2026 (Operation Epic Fury): The U.S. and Israel launched roughly 900 initial air strikes hitting Iranian command and leadership, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, while a devastating strike hit a girls' school in Minab.
- March 11 – May 2026: Heavy naval and air engagements focused on the Strait of Hormuz and energy infrastructure, including U.S. strikes on Kharg Island, causing global shipping and oil market disruptions. Days into the US-Israel led

war, permission was given to the US for it to use British bases to target Iranian military infrastructure used to attack Gulf countries and vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.

- June 15, 2026 (Preliminary Truce): Following 108 days of heavy conflict, a preliminary agreement brokered by Pakistan was announced to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and suspend active multi-front hostilities.
- July 6–7, 2026 (Ceasefire Collapse): The truce collapsed after Iranian forces attacked commercial shipping vessels in the Strait of Hormuz to assert regional waterway control, prompting renewed U.S. military strikes and President Donald Trump declaring the truce over on July 7.
- July 23, 2026: US Central Command said it had completed its 13th Consecutive Night of strikes against Iran. Iran's foreign ministry said the UK was an “accomplice” in the US war, while the powerful Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) military wing said any country which supports the US militarily “will be responsible for the consequences and repercussions”.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- ***Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 1968:*** Established the global framework to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and encourage nuclear disarmament among member states.
- ***Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements administered by the IAEA:*** Require states to declare their nuclear materials and facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency, allowing inspections and monitoring to ensure nuclear programs remain exclusively peaceful.
- ***United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015):*** Endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), terminated previous UN sanctions on Iran under specific conditions, and established mechanisms for monitoring compliance with the agreement.
- ***Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), 2015:*** An agreement between Iran and the P5+1 countries that limited Iran's nuclear activities, reduced its enriched uranium stockpile, and increased international inspections in exchange for sanctions relief.
- ***Various IAEA Board of Governors resolutions concerning Iranian nuclear activities:*** Addressed concerns regarding Iran's compliance with its safeguards obligations, called for greater cooperation with inspectors, and requested clarification of unresolved nuclear issues.
- ***United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929 (2010):*** Imposed additional sanctions on Iran over concerns regarding its nuclear program, expanded restrictions on arms transfers and financial activities, and called upon Iran to comply fully with its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and IAEA requirements.
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Previous Attempts to solve the issue

Numerous diplomatic initiatives have sought to address concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program. These include direct negotiations, multilateral talks, economic sanctions, confidence-building measures, and enhanced inspection mechanisms.

Through negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 (the US, UK, France, Germany, Russia, and China), the JCPOA represented the most comprehensive attempt to balance Iran's peaceful nuclear rights with international concerns regarding proliferation. Although the agreement initially achieved significant reductions in enrichment activities and increased transparency, political disagreements and changes in policy among participating states weakened its long-term effectiveness.

Regional proposals for a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone have also been discussed for decades. Under the mandate of UN-Resolution, the initiative is heavily focused by regional states like Egypt and Iran via 1974 UN General Assembly resolutions. Upon continuous diplomacy it has pushed to aim for the establishment within the Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction. However, disagreements regarding verification, security guarantees, and regional conflicts have prevented substantial progress.

Later on, the Coercive Deterrence and Strategic "Plan C" Frameworks were introduced due to the international community's frequent reliance upon multi-tiered economic sanctions, cyber sabotage, and targeted military interventions aimed at physically degrading Iranian nuclear architecture. The U.S. and Western have attempted to deter neighboring rival states (such as Saudi Arabia) from pursuing indigenous enrichment by offering formal defense partnerships, advanced conventional arms packages, or explicit regional security guarantees.

Possible Solutions

1. Strengthen international monitoring and verification mechanisms through expanded IAEA access and transparency measures.
2. Revive diplomatic negotiations aimed at establishing verifiable limits on enrichment activities and stockpile levels.
3. Create a regional security dialogue involving all major Middle Eastern stakeholders to address broader security concerns.
4. Promote the establishment of a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone through phased confidence-building measures.

5. Develop international security guarantees that reduce incentives for states to pursue independent nuclear deterrents.
6. Encourage peaceful nuclear cooperation under strict international safeguards.
7. Establish crisis communication channels among regional powers to reduce the risk of accidental escalation or miscalculation.

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