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Middle East denuclearization? Lessons from Latin America's Southern Cone

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Abstract. International Relations theory has recently turned its attention to the study of comparative regionalism in economics and security. As part of this new research agenda, this article explores what we might learn from the Southern Cone's experience with denuclearization that might be applicable to the Middle East. The two regions differ with respect to security dilemmas, military capabilities and doctrines, and the prior availability of a cooperative regional institutional infrastructure. Yet two aspects of the Southern Cone process seem potentially relevant to other regions. The first relates to improving our understanding of the appropriate domestic political conditions that underpin denuclearization. In particular, the nature of domestic coalitions and of their respective approaches to the global economy and political institutions deserve far more serious consideration than they have gained thus far. The second relates to the nature of the regional denuclearization regime initially fashioned in the Southern Cone, which set an international precedent. A regionally-based system of mutual inspections could help remove some of the most intractable barriers to a future Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.

Throughout the last decade we have witnessed radical variations in the way in which different regions of the world have dealt with nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan crossed the nuclear threshold unambiguously, joining the nuclear weapons states. Instead, Argentina and Brazil joined the nonproliferation regime after decades of rejecting it. North Korea meandered in its denuclearizing commitments in the 1990s but a historical summit between leaders of North and South Korea in June 2000 has heightened the probability of a denuclearized Korean peninsula. The Middle East remains most intractable in this domain, particularly after the unravelling of the Oslo process. How can the turn in international relations theory toward the study of comparative regionalism be fruitfully applied to deepen our understanding of converging and diverging paths to regional security regimes?[1]

This article explores what we might distil from the Southern Cone's experience with the establishment of a nuclear weapons-free zone (NWFZ). In particular, this experience has triggered academic and policy discussions on its applicability to the Middle East, somewhat ironically given the sharp distinctions between the two

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[1] On regionalism see, *inter alia*, Andrew Hurrell, `Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics', *Review of International Studies*, 21:4 (1995), pp. 331–58; and Muthiah Alagappa, 'Regionalism and Conflict Management', *Review of International Studies*, 21:4 (1995), pp. 359–88.

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regions.[2] Indeed, the two amount to 'most different systems'[3] characterized by contrasting degrees of security dilemmas, varying polarity (number of key actors), military capabilities and doctrines, and a dramatic difference in the extant regional institutional infrastructure that might be entrusted with translating agreements into action. Along each of these criteria the Middle East is undoubtedly a far more difficult case and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Nontheless, two aspects of the Southern Cone process seem potentially relevant to other regions, including the Middle East. The first involves the domestic political conditions that underpinned a historical rapprochement, including denuclearization. The second relates to the modalities of inspection and verification initially adopted by Argentina and Brazil.

I begin with a general discussion of domestic political conditions most suitable to the achievement of regional cooperation and denuclearization, conditions that appear to cut across most regions with latent proliferation potential. The subsequent section explores how the analysis of such conditions provides a powerful insight into the process that led the Southern Cone to landmark nuclear agreements in the early 1990s. I also examine the value-added and limits of this analysis to understanding other regions, particularly the Middle East. Next, an overview of inspection and verification modalities introduced in the Southern Cone highlight—in line with the preceding analysis—the centrality of the domestic political climate to the acceptance and implementation of such modalities.

Grand political–economic strategies and nuclear postures

What are the domestic political conditions that appear to best support the development of regional cooperation generally, and nuclear cooperation in particular? A preliminary overview of four regions—the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, and the Southern Cone—suggested that the nature of ruling political coalitions had a noticeable impact on the choice between denuclearization and maintaining an ambiguous nuclear status.[4] Although far from an infallible rule—no fool-proof theory of nuclear proliferation is available—the association between coalitional type and nuclear policy warrants further attention. More specifically, two ideal-typical coalitions—backed by different political constituencies—have been frequently found to vie for domestic political control in the industrializing world; we might label them 'internationalizing' and 'backlash' respectively.[5] Internationalizing coalitions aim at reducing state control over markets and barriers to trade, expanding private economic activities and foreign investment, contracting military expenditures, maintaining macroeconomic stability, seeking integration into the global political

[2] John R. Redick, 'Evolution of the Argentine-Brazilian *Rapprochement*', Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), 2:11 (1997).

[3] Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger, 1982).

[4] Etel Solingen, 'The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint', *International Security*, 19:2 (1994); and *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[5] Notice the suffix, as internationaliz*ing* indicates a process, a path, an empirical approximation but never quite the ideal-type.

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economy, and abiding by its associated political regimes. These synergistic policies are more viable under a cooperative regional context. Different internationalizing coalitions vary in the sequence and emphasis placed on those policies; none approach the ideal type. Backlash coalitions, in turn, oppose economic liberalization, challenge global economic and political regimes, and coalesce a variety of inward-looking, nationalist, populist, and—in some contexts—radical confessional groups. Not all these groups are invariably represented in backlash coalitions, but where they are, they tend to subsume other differences to mount a common resistance to internationalization.

The two ideal-typical coalitions also usually hold contrasting perspectives regarding the domestic and international consequences of alternative nuclear paths, as explained below. Accordingly, internationalizing coalitions advance denuclearization, while backlash coalitions that control nascent nuclear capabilities, resist it. The following observations provide considerable support for these expectations:

1. Of all states (beyond the original five) that have been suspected of considering a nuclear option in the last three decades, not one endorsed denuclearization—fully and effectively—under a ruling backlash coalition.[6] Indeed, more defiant nuclear courses were frequently taken in tandem with backlash policies, from North Korea to Iran, Iraq, Libya, India and Pakistan.
2. Only internationalizing coalitions in power undertook effective commitments to denuclearize. Where these coalitions had the upper hand, nuclear policy shifted towards more cooperative nuclear postures (at a minimum) and effective denuclearization, as in Taiwan, South Korea, Egypt, South Africa, Brazil and Argentina. In all these cases their nuclear decisions were nested in a broader shift towards a more internationalized strategy in economics and security, a strategy in tune with the requirements of pertinent global regimes and institutions.
3. Where the domestic interests of internationalizing coalitions became most concentrated and coherent, and less challenged domestically, as in South Korea and Taiwan over time, the shift in nuclear policy was relatively swift. The stronger these coalitions grew, the more clear-cut the departure from nuclear ambiguity was (even where the security context deteriorated, as in the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Straits at different points in time). This is illustrated by Argentina's commitment to a full-scope safeguards regime in the early 1990s, following the ascent of President Carlos S. Menem in 1989, backed by an unprecedented political consensus in the direction of internationalization. It is also clear from South Africa's acceptance of the NPT in 1991, even as it disclosed past attempts to produce a nuclear bomb. In yet another example, Spain endorsed the NPT when an internationalizing coalition eager to join the European Community was able to put the inward-looking, nationalist, 'self-sufficient' policies of the Franco era behind it.
4. The weaker internationalizing coalitions were domestically—as has been the case historically in India, Israel, and Argentina until the early 1990s—the more politically constrained they were in curbing their nuclear programmes. Weak

[6] A full formal commitment to the global nonproliferation regime, such as ratifying the nonproliferation treaty (NPT), is different from an *effective* commitment to such membership; in other words, Iraq is no Costa Rica.

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internationalizing coalitions are often less able to defend themselves from nationalist accusations of 'selling out'; they face an inherent problem of legitimacy, and strive to avoid the appearance of foreign subordination. They are thus likely to become more hybrid than the ideal-type. This seems an important part of the story behind the hesitation of India's Rao government to make any commitments in the direction of denuclearization as well as behind Brazil's Itamar Franco's coalition and its initial wariness in implementing the nuclear agreements signed with Argentina in the early 1990s.

5. The policies of internationalizing coalitions can also be impaired by the existence of strong backlash neighbours in the region. Israel's coalition under Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres (1992–96) faced this dilemma, posed mainly by Iran, Iraq, and other backlash regimes in the region. Even so, a Labour-led coalition revived the concept of an eventual NWFZ to follow a comprehensive peace settlement, with Prime Minister Peres making unprecedented statements in that direction.

What might be the logic behind this empirical pattern? Understanding the grand strategies (domestic, regional, global) embraced by these coalitions goes a long way towards illuminating their behaviour. A grand strategy determines a coalition's approach to the internal allocation of resources among groups and institutions as well as to the regional and global political economy.[7] As argued, the interests of internationalizing coalitions require access to global markets and institutions supportive of their domestic agendas.[8] They are thus more receptive to economic restructuring, macroeconomic and political stability, while avoiding confrontations with the international financial and investing community. In tandem with their internationalizing, integrative orientation, these coalitions are more receptive to restraining nuclear postures that facilitate access to international markets and economic regimes, and gain them political support from major powers and important international institutions. Related domestic considerations reinforce these coalitions' opposition to large-scale, ambiguous and unbounded nuclear programmes. Such programmes often contribute to the ailments afflicting their countries' domestic political economy, at least from the perspective of these coalitions. Such ailments include the expansion of state power, the maintenance of unproductive and inflation-inducing military investments, and the perpetuation of economic rents to state and private actors opposed to internationalization.

In sum, internationalizing coalitions do not—as their opponents argue—trade the right to have 'the bomb' for the right to seek wealth. These coalitions bring together (or 'logroll' in democratic contexts) political forces that perceive little benefit from a policy of nuclear ambiguity, both for domestic and international reasons. Groups that might otherwise pay little attention to their country's nuclear posture become more attentive to the elements of the international nuclear bargain, and to the

[7] On grand strategy as an economic, political, and military means-ends chain designed to achieve security see Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (eds.), *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press). On links between security and trade strategies, see Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State* (New York: Basic Books).

[8] The pillars of these coalitions are liquid-asset holders and export-oriented firms including their highly-skilled labour force and various public and private managerial, technical, scientific, educational, information, and service-oriented professional groups.

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implications for their own access to domestic and external resources. Denuclearization is more compatible with an agenda of liberalizing the economy and reining in backlash political forces at home, notably the military-industrial complex. A restrained and transparent nuclear policy also helps secure certain international economic, financial, and political benefits. These benefits—such as debt relief, export markets, technology transfer, food, foreign aid and investments—are useful to broaden domestic political support and to strengthen the domestic institutional framework favouring internationalization. Cooperative regional regimes in the economic and security realms are mutually reinforcing; they spell transparency, predictability, a good reputation and the blessing of the international community. This argument about the behaviour of internationalizing coalitions differs from classical interdependence approaches and does not asssume that *mutual* economic interdependence between regional actors underpins their drive to cooperate. Global integration provides enough of an incentive for avoiding an unstable regional context.

In contrast, backlash coalitions gather economic and political interests adversely affected by international openness including, in some cases, radical ethno-confessional movements. Their opposition to global markets and international regimes and to the settlement of regional conflicts is their common denominator, and nuclear weapons offer a rallying political tool. These coalitions often reject economic restructuring, particularly as advocated by international financial institutions, and favour a more expansionist course that benefits their key constituents. The latter include military-industrial enterprises, state bureaucracies, firms supplying the state and domestic markets that are unable to compete internationally, the underemployed intelligentsia and segments of the scientific community highly dependent on state subsidies and military procurement.[9] Civic and ethno-nationalist groups often gravitate towards this political cluster. These inward-looking, populist, nationalist coalitions rely heavily on 'mythmaking' and legitimating symbols—economic self-reliance, sovereignty, geographical and territorial integrity, confessional purity—to sustain themselves politically.[10] Nuclear weapons are ideal technological allies of these coalitions for three main reasons:

1. They enable the construction of a dense scientific, technological, industrial, and bureaucratic complex that frequently dwarfs other economic endeavours, state and private;
2. This complex is often beyond formal budgetary oversight, sometimes even under democratic rule, and
3. The actual or imaginary output of this large-scale provider of rents *itself* becomes a powerful source of myths. Not surprisingly, these coalitions have historically been at the vanguard of nuclearizing their regions and have

[9] Valeriana Kallab and Richard E. Feinberg (eds.), *Fragile Coalitions: The Politics of Economic Adjustment* (New Brunswick: Transaction); Robert R. Kaufman, 'Domestic Determinants of Stabilization and Adjustment Choices', in Bruce M. Russett, Harvey Starr and Richard Stoll (eds.), *Choices in World Politics: Sovereignty and Interdependence* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1989), pp. 261–82.

[10] Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 17. On chauvinist mythmaking as a hallmark of nationalism, see Stephen Van Evera, 'Hypotheses on Nationalism and War', *International Security*, 18:4 (1994), pp. 5–39.

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exacerbated regional threats to avoid joining or complying with the global nonproliferation regime, or with any regional alternative to it. Doing away with nuclear ambiguity often implies greater transparency in budgetary allocations leading to leaner nuclear bureaucracies and industrial complexes. This complex has come to symbolize the excesses of state expansion among many states with nuclear ambitions. Multi-billion nuclear and ancillary industrial investments undertaken by Argentina and Brazil in the 1970s became primary casualties of the contraction of state activities in the 1990s.

The argument sketched out above depicts ideal-typical coalitions. As Max Weber[11] noted, ideal types are conceptual constructs, not a historical or 'true' reality. They are a *limiting* concept with which real situations are compared.[12] In the real world, coalitions can be hybrid in their composition, aggregating constituencies across the spectrum. Clearly, hybrids tend to straddle the grand strategies of their purer types, domestically, regionally, and internationally. Two conditions affect the degree to which coalitions and their respective grand strategies are more pristine or diluted versions of the ideal-type. The first is the strength of coalitions relative to their domestic opponents: coalitions can range from nearly hegemonic to quite feeble, depending on the power of their challengers at home. The second is the strength of coalitions throughout the region, namely, the extent to which their own kind is dominant, rare, or in rough parity in a given region. The regional coalitional context is an important intervening condition explaining a particular coalition's behaviour. Hence, a regional cluster of strong internationalist coalitions is expected to create far better conditions for denuclearization than a cluster of strong backlash coalitions. Hybrid coalitions, diluted strategies, and a regional cluster where alternative coalitions have reached rough parity do not offer propitious conditions for denuclearization either.

This account of the historical development of nuclear complexes does not posit that nuclear programmes in every region have exactly the same political origins, although a significant proportion do. Nor does this article's focus on coalitional profiles suggest that classical security considerations are irrelevant to nuclear postures. Indeed, such considerations are important inputs into the domestic political competition between the two coalitions, which interpret regional security issues through the prisms of their respective grand strategies.

Coalitional strategies and denuclearization in Argentina and Brazil

Argentina's General Juan D. Perón launched a statist, nationalist, populist strategy that remained largely in place for half a century. The strategy was backed by small

[11] Max Weber, '"Objectivity" in Social Science and Social Policy', in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, translated and edited by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949).

[12] As John Ruggie suggests, Weberian ideal types are 'selective and deliberately one-sided abstractions from social reality, and their methodological role is to serve as "heuristic" devices in the "imputation" of causality—for example, by helping to pinpoint differences between the logic of the ideal type and patterns of outcomes on the ground'. John G. Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 31–2.

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and medium-sized national firms involved in import-substitution, state firms producing infrastructural inputs, and popular sectors represented in the Peronist-controlled trade union organization (the General Labor Confederation). The external expressions of national populism were a resistance to free trade, the unpredictability of international markets, foreign investment and borrowing, membership of the IMF and the World Bank, and other institutions perceived as instruments of US power. Perón enhanced the popular appeal of self-reliance principles by actively pursuing nuclear capabilities in the early 1950s. In 1953 he announced, on the basis of a false claim by expatriate Austrian physicist Ronald Richter who managed Argentina's nuclear programme at the time, that Argentina had mastered fusion technology. The origins of a well-funded nuclear programme in Argentina are thus deeply rooted in the inward-looking national-populism of Perón's grand strategy.

After the military coup of 1955 that deposed Perón, a tripartite division of state industrial assets among Argentina's armed services allowed the navy to shelter the nuclear programme during an unstable succession of (mostly) military and civilian regimes.[13] This succession was notable for alternating stop-go economic and industrial policy cycles, reflecting the inability of any coalition to prevail politically for a sustained period of time. Attempts at liberalization, as with President Arturo Frondizi's acceptance of an IMF-stabilization plan and endorsement of foreign exploitation of Argentina's oil reserves, coincided with attempts in the 1960s to curtail the nuclear programme and reduce its autonomy. The military administration of Videla in 1976, strongly influenced by Economic Minister Martínez de Hoz and his orthodox economic policies, initially challenged the costly nationalist self-reliant orientation of the nuclear programme, the bloated and inefficient state sector, and non-competitive national private industry. However, backlash constituencies were politically resilient overall and, among them, the navy was able to defend the nuclear programme from budgetary threats for nearly four decades. No truly internationalizing coalition emerged until the early 1990s.

Getulio Vargas organized Brazil's backlash and populist coalition in the early 1950s. Restrictions on foreign investment fuelled a refusal by the World Bank to finance Vargas's programmes or those of his successors, until 1964. In the nuclear realm this policy was expressed in attempts to develop independent nuclear capabilities as early as the 1950s. In 1952 Vargas adopted a policy of 'specific compensations' aimed at obtaining nuclear know-how in exchange for uranium or thorium sales to the United States. Admiral Alvaro Alberto, director of the National Research Council (CNPq), attempted to purchase uranium-enrichment ultra-centrifuge technology from Bonn in 1954. Incoming President Café Filho dismissed Alberto and his nuclear projects and allowed a US monopoly over uranium research and extraction for a period of two years, all this in the context of a coalitional shift that emphasized the need to attract foreign investments. Filho's brief interlude ended with the return of the old pro-Vargas coalition in 1955, now backing Juscelino Kubitschek, who opened selected sectors to foreign investment but also resisted IMF stabilization programmes and appointed a parliamentary commission to investigate

[13] On the political economy of Argentina's nuclear programmes, see Etel Solingen, *Industrial Policy, Technology, and International Bargaining: Designing Nuclear Industries in Argentina and Brazil* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

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alleged 'improper' US influences on Café Filho. The commission urged Brazil's pursuit of independent nuclear capabilities and the creation of a National Atomic Energy Commission (CNEN) directly answerable to Brazil's president. A new national-populist team took over in 1961, with President Jânio Quadros reaffirming a 'self-reliant' nuclear policy based on natural uranium that would grant Brazil fuel independence. The new programme was in tune with the broader strategy of inward-looking self-reliant industrialization maintained by Quadros' successor João Goulart until his ousting in 1964 by a military coup.

The military regimes that took over in Brazil and Argentina in the 1960s and 1970s were coalitional hybrids, attempting to revert a few of their predecessors' strategies, intermittently seeking greater reliance on foreign direct investment, industrial exports, and indebted industrialization but essentially maintaining statism, nationalism, and the military-industrial complex. These regimes were naturally vulnerable to constituencies—civilian and military—favouring an expansive and independent nuclear programme. Against this background, ambiguous nuclear policies remained in place, in the form of a rejection of the NPT as a discriminatory tool and a resistance to applying the regional Tlatelolco NWFZ. While investing in nuclear fuel-cycle technologies usable in nuclear weapons, both states refrained from developing such weapons, so far as is publicly known, and laid the foundations for moderate nuclear cooperation in the late 1970s, with Generals Jorge R. Videla (Argentina) and João B. Figueiredo (Brazil) reaching nuclear agreements—but far from denuclearization—in Foz do Iguaçu in 1980.[14]

The demise of military rule led to new democratic regimes in the mid-1980s, but hybrid grand strategies lingered throughout the 1980s. Brazil's President José Sarney implemented a populist mixture of domestic economic heterodoxy and anti-IMF policy that eventually led to Brazil's 1987 debt moratorium. In an attempt to maintain both business and popular support, Argentina's President Raul Alfonsín adopted heterodox adjustment policies—leaning on neither the old radical Peronist populism nor economic orthodoxy—while maintaining cooperation with international creditors. Both internationalization and nuclear cooperation proceeded at a moderate pace but led to no real breakthrough during those years. These civilian and democratic administrations used cooperative rhetoric but never converged on the effective establishment of joint or international inspections over their nuclear programmes. Alfonsín was under pressure to maintain Argentina's long-standing independent nuclear policy, despite (in exchange for?) his administration's attempts to assert civilian control over the nuclear energy programme. Sectors of Brazil's military even expanded their 'parallel program' (with potential weapons applications), resisting any attempts to place all nuclear activities under democratic control. Exchanging presidential visits to sensitive facilities may have had some symbolic value, and built some confidence in the nuclear area, but unsafeguarded nuclear facilities with military potential remained in place.[15]

By the late 1980s, pressures for IMF-style orthodox stabilization packages to reassure banking and industrial constituencies were mounting. Presidents Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil and Menem of Argentina launched economic programmes

[14] Daniel Poneman, 'Nuclear Proliferation Prospects for Argentina', *Orbis*, 27:4 (1984), pp. 853–80. The evidence behind presumed nuclear testing holes in Cachimbo (Brazil) is ambiguous.

[15] John R. Redick et al., 'Nuclear Rapprochement: Argentina, Brazil and the Non-Proliferation Regime', *The Washington Quarterly*, 18:1 (1994), pp. 107–22.

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unambiguously committed to economic liberalization and structural adjustment. Menem's internationalizing political revolution reduced a Weimar-style inflation level to single digits, balanced the budget, privatized many public services, and attracted sizeable foreign investment. The external dimension of these policies included not only an unprecedented embrace of liberal trade rules but also the abandonment of Argentina's historical nationalist foreign policy.[16] By the early 1990s it had joined international regimes it had previously challenged, severed its membership in the Nonaligned Movement, and even sent a naval contingent to join the US-led multilateral force in the Gulf war (as well troops to Haiti and the former Yugoslavia). Brazil's President Collor was equally committed to internationalization, a policy that won him an unprecedently high approval rating at the time of his election.

The Collor-Menem internationalizing period ushered in an explicit agreement effectively and unprecedently renouncing nuclear weapons and establishing mutual verification and inspection procedures (Declaration on the Common Nuclear Policy of Brazil and Argentina, 1990). A Common Accounting and Control System signed in July 1991 was followed by an agreement on the Exclusively Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy (Guadalajara, 1991), which created an Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC, *Agência Brasileiro-Argentina de Contabilidade e Controle de Materiais Nucleares*). Joint declarations committed both countries to put into effect an updated version of the regional NWPZ Tlatelolco Treaty. Collor shut down Brazil's presumed nuclear weapons test sites in Cachimbo and negotiated a Quadripartite Agreement with Argentina and the IAEA, applying full-scope safeguards to all nuclear facilities in both countries.[17] Menem deepened the privatization of nuclear activities and ended four decades of unassailed navy control over the nuclear programme, a chronic budgetary black hole. Finance ministers and business interests were very supportive of Argentina's nuclear turnabout.[18] He also neutralized sensitive nuclear facilities and ratified the NPT unilaterally (without a reciprocal Brazilian commitment) in 1994, a move that forced many an analyst of Argentine nuclear policies to pinch themselves for a reality check.

Argentina's new credentials also became evident in its caution and deference to nuclear export guidelines (it joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 1994) and to the political sensitivities of the international community with respect to nuclear exports to so-called 'rogue' states. Among other transactions in the 1980s, when nuclear exports were part of the nationalist diplomatic kit, Argentina had supplied low-enriched uranium fuel and nuclear-related services to Iran. By 1995, Chancellor Guido Di Tella readily cancelled the (internationally legal) sale of an experimental nuclear reactor to Syria, with an uncharacteristic flexibility that revealed the revitalized role of the Foreign Ministry in nuclear policy, now unshackled from the influence of the Navy and CNEA.

Brazil's stalling on bilateral nuclear agreements came with the demise of Collor in December 1992 over a corruption scandal, and the return of hybrid and inward-

[16] Roberto Russell (ed.), *La Política Exterior Argentina en el Nuevo Order Mundial* (Buenos Aires: Facultad Latinamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 1992).

[17] Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Worldwide Report: Nuclear Development and Proliferation (Washington, DC: National Technical Information Service, 21 August 1991), p. 5; Redick et al., 'Nuclear Rapprochement'.

[18] Redick 'Evolution of the Argentine-Brazilian *Rapprochement*'.

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looking policies under Itamar Franco, who courted nationalist and military constituencies, attacked international financial institutions and their domestic 'allies', and endorsed statements on Brazil's sovereignty in nuclear matters. Brazil's House of Deputies, under heavy pressure from the Foreign and Economic Ministries, approved the mutual inspection agreements signed with Argentina in late 1993. Opposition to NPT ratification remained, as a side-payment to nationalist and military constituencies. Only in 1994 did a more forceful internationalizing strategy emerge under Fernando H. Cardoso. Brazil had already assumed more comprehensive safeguard commitments but by 1998 it had also joined the NPT, removing the last of Brazil's challenges to the nonproliferation regime.[19]

What broader analytical lessons might be distilled from the politics of denuclearization in the Southern Cone, of potential significance for an eventual Middle East NWFZ?

Analytical implications and trans-regional applications

As argued at the outset, the limits of comparing the two regions are evident in the dramatic differences in threat perceptions, the physical survivability of contending states, and the consequent nature, depth, and scope of enduring rivalries. It is precisely these differences that lead one to puzzle over the fact that contrasting security contexts—as in these two regions—could once produce comparable nuclear behaviour. In both cases regional powers embraced ambiguous nuclear postures and resisted safeguarded denuclearization for nearly four decades. The reality of a far less fragile security context in the Southern Cone did not preclude at least some sectors in Argentina and Brazil from nurturing weapons capabilities. Moreover, the presumed correspondence between depth of security dilemmas and nuclear policy outcomes does not appear to hold for other regions either, as suggested by the following observations:

- Existential threats to South Korea and Taiwan have not precluded these two states from abiding reasonably strictly to their nonproliferation commitments for nearly three decades.
- Existential concerns have been more or less constant for South Korea, Israel, and Taiwan since their creation in the late 1940s, yet nuclear postures in each case have shifted over time, suggesting that *responses* to security dilemmas change across space and time, even as geo-strategic *configurations* remain largely the same.
- The activities of nuclear 'pioneers' in most regions did not invariably lead to matching capabilities by adversaries. In some cases opponents responded with 'catch up' policies, but in other cases they stepped down from nuclear races.
- US protection may arguably have played a role in swaying South Korea and Taiwan away from a nuclear race with their respective adversaries.[20] Nonetheless,

[19] Paulo S. Wrobel, 'Brazil and the NPT: Resistance to Change?', *Security Dialogue* 27:3 (1996), pp. 337–47.

[20] See, for instance, Lewis A. Dunn, *Controlling the Bomb* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982). The US commitment to Taiwan, said to have convinced it not to go nuclear, became questionable following the normalization of relations with China and the abrogation of the Washington-Taipei mutual security Treaty.

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relying on hegemonic protection to explain nuclear postures must account for too many anomalies. First, superpower commitments (Soviet or American) were insufficient to persuade North Korea, Iraq, Pakistan, or Israel to effectively abandon alleged nuclear weapons programmes. Second, such commitments played no role in the decisions of Egypt, Argentina, Brazil, or South Africa to reverse ambiguous nuclear stances.

Clearly, the standard assumptions of nuclear proliferation studies that have leaned on neorealist thinking, are, at best, incomplete in explaining either the drive to denuclearize or its timing.[21] Neither geography nor technology *per se* determine military doctrine[22]; in many cases grand political-economic strategies do. The analytical picture of regions one gets from focusing on relative power capabilities is too blurred. There is, for instance, rampant disagreement regarding actual or perceived 'levels of vulnerability', even though vulnerability is a commonly used explanation for nuclear postures in the neorealist tradition. Such disagreements create problems of validity and reliability, and can hardly enable us to identify at what levels of (reduced) security dilemmas receptivity to denuclearization occurs. A related problem lies in the fact that many neorealist studies cast their arguments in nonfalsifiable terms.

The grand strategies—domestic, regional, global—of ruling coalitions matter a great deal. As the previous section suggests, a coalitional focus provides a powerful insight into the behaviour of states operating in different regional security contexts, with different associations with hegemonic powers, and under alternating successions of coalition-types. The internationalizing/backlash cleavage also helps explain differences in receptivity to international persuasion or coercion. Developments in North Korea in the 1990s shed light on the process by which incipient economic opening, coalition survival, and nuclear postures become entangled.[23] The same political forces staunchly opposed to an economic opening appear to have used the nuclear issue to uphold the *ancien regime*.[24] The South African nuclear turnabout can be understood in the context of a reversal of ethnic coalitional politics and of related international priorities. Indo-Pakistani relations, including the 1998 tests, are clearly embedded in the broader matrix of domestic coalitional struggles between internationalizing and backlash-confessional forces at home, with interactive effects across borders.

A similar array of coalitional rivals have competed for control of the state in Middle Eastern countries. Internationalizing coalitions of varying political strength have attempted to redefine their state's relations *vis-à-vis* the region and the domestic and global political economy. It is revealing that an early precursor of this strategy, President Sadat of Egypt, launched *infitah* (economic liberalization or the 'economic crossing') in 1974, the same year that Egypt proposed, for the first time, a NWFZ. Sadat confronted Nasserite political opponents both on economic strategy and on

[21] For classical neorealist statements, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better*, Adelphi Paper 171; and John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War', *International Security*, 15 (1991), pp. 5–56.

[22] Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*.

[23] Paul Bracken, 'Nuclear Weapons and State Survival in North Korea', *Survival* (Autumn 1992), pp. 137–53.

[24] James Cotton, 'North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions', in *Asia's International Role in the Post-Cold War Era*, Adelphi Paper 275, Part 1, pp. 94–106.

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their alleged support for nuclear weapons.[25] Egypt's new ruling coalition had tied its grand strategy of industrialization to internationalizing instruments. The main political challenge to this coalition evolved around an unlikely alliance of Islamist movements with some support from now-weakened nationalist parties thriving on popular resentment over adjustment policies, over openness to foreign investment, and over 'Western' principles and norms embodied in most international regimes.[26] The very existence of Egypt's diplomatic relations with Israel, and the latter's alleged nuclear capabilities, provided a lightning rod for Egypt's opposition, exhorting the ruling coalition to heed such pressures, as on the eve of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and throughout negotiations in the 1991–96 Middle East multilateral peace process.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Iran and Iraq have represented the most resilient versions of backlash-confessional coalitions, unwilling to participate in any negotiations stemming from the Oslo process. UNSCOM uncovered Iraq's extensive efforts to produce nuclear weapons—despite NPT membership—and a decade after the Gulf war Iraq still resists denuclearization. Mohammed Reza Pahlavi initiated a large-scale nuclear energy programme in Iran but he also pioneered a Middle East NWFZ at the United Nations. In 1979 Iran discontinued its efforts regarding a NWFZ when a radical Islamist regime seized the revolution, developed bloated state industries, decimated private entrepreneurship, and challenged 'Western' regimes and institutions. Reformist, 'economy first', or 'pragmatic' currents favouring mild economic liberalization (*Baz-Sazi*, rebuilding) and reduced tension with international institutions were significantly weakened.[27] The continued struggle between these two camps explains Iran's schizoid foreign policy and nuclear postures in the last two decades. Former President Rafsanjani forcefully denied nuclear weapon efforts while state agencies controlled by radicals actively sought them, according to public sources.[28] The results of the February 2000 elections backing president Khatemi's reforms provided some signals of a potential future coalitional reversal. At the same time, fears of a clerical backlash have precluded radical departures, particularly in foreign policy.

[25] Paul Jabber, *Not by War Alone: Security and Arms Control in the Middle East* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), and 'A Nuclear Middle East Infrastructure, Likely Military Postures and Prospects for Strategic Stability', Working Paper no. 6 (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Los Angeles Center for International and Strategic Affairs, 1977). For the views of M. Hasnayn Heikal, an advisor to Nasser, editor of Egypt's influential *Al-Ahram* and an ardent supporter of an Egyptian nuclear deterrent, see his article in *Al-Ahram* 23 November 1973, reported on *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (Nonproliferation), 26 November 1973: G1,G2. Other pro-Soviet proponents of such weapons reportedly included Ali Sabri, General Sadek, Science Minister Salah Hedayat, and arguably Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy, who resigned to protest against Sadat's peace initiative – Jabber, 'A Nuclear Middle East'. For a comprehensive analysis of Sadat's strategy, see Ibrahim A. Karawan, 'Monarchs, Mullahs and Marshals: Islamic Regimes?' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences (AAPSS)*, 524 (1992), pp. 103–19.

[26] Timor Kuran, 'Fundamentalisms and the Economy', in Marty and R Scott Appleby (eds.), Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies and Militance (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 289–301; Emile Sahliveh, *Religious Resurgence and Politics in the Contemporary World* (NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).

[27] Karawan, 'Monarchs, Mullahs and Marshals'; Mahmond Karen, *A Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East: Problems and Prospects* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

[28] Yazid Sayigh, Middle Eastern Stability, *Eye on Supply* (Winter 1993), pp. 9–16; *Frontline* (PBS 13 April 1993); *The Programme for Promoting Nuclear Non-Proliferation (PPNN): Newsbrief* (Winter 1992), p.15; David Albright 'An Iranian Bomb? The US case against Iran', *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (July/August 1995), pp. 20–26; Shahram Chubin, 'Does Iran Want Nuclear Weapons?',

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Israel in particular, but not uniquely, has cited Iran and Iraq as severe obstacles to regional denuclearization. Unprovoked Iraqi missile attacks during the Gulf War helped sharpen a sense of strategic vulnerability across political quarters. While elements of Israel's strategic thinking have remained largely constant over time, even there can one discern a certain coalitional dynamic. Competing practical and political agendas and related visions of Israel's place in the region and in the global political economy led to different interpretations of its security dilemma. While nuclear policy may not have followed party cleavages invariably, there was an affinity with NWFZ concepts early on across the Labour bloc, from Mapam and Ahdut Ha'avoda to many within Mapai.[29] The political centre of gravity throughout the region, however, remained heavily backlash—Sadat's initiative notwithstanding—frequently submerging differences within the Israeli camp. As argued earlier, regional coalitional balances affect the ability of any single coalition to pursue its preferred strategy wholly or partially.

The Oslo process (1993) made the domestic, regional, and international requirements of an internationalizing grand strategy more evident. Israeli-Palestinian negotiations over territorial compromise and normalization intruded—indirectly—into the sanctum of nuclear policy, insofar as bilateral progress in the former was often linked to progress in multilateral negotiations dealing with arms control (Arms Control and Regional Security or ACRES). In an attempt to keep multilateral negotiations on track and to meet Egypt's vocal protests regarding Israel's nuclear capabilities, former Prime Minister Shimon Peres stated on Israeli TV: "Give me peace, and we will give up the atom. That's the whole story. If we achieve regional peace, I think we can make the Middle East free of any nuclear threat."[30] This statement cost Mr. Peres political headaches at home and was readily used by his political opponents, who wielded the outstanding threats in the non-conventional arena cited earlier. To a large extent, Peres personified the coalitional and grand-strategic shift stemming from related changes in the domestic context and international 'world-time'. Peres, once at the heart of the military-industrial, nuclear, and statist complex, was now a key member of the brains trust of Israel's internationalizing camp.

The opposition to Israel's internationalizing revolution of 1992–96 was led by Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu, who brought together nationalist and confessional groups, including extremist West Bank settlers.[31] In spite of a fairly secular history, Likud had begun relying on confessional themes instrumentally in the 1970s. Moreover, although spearheading free enterprise in an earlier era, Likud progressively came to play the populist card in order to retain constituencies and coalitional partners (such as Shas) opposed to economic liberalization and, no less

Survival, 37:1 (1995); Pervez Hoodbhoy, 'Myth-Building: The Islamic Bomb', *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (June 1993); R. Jeffrey Smith, 'Officials Say Iran is Seeking Nuclear Weapons Capability', *Washington Post*, 30 October 1991, p.A1; Leonard S. Spector with Jacqueline R. Smith, *Nuclear Ambitions: The Spread of Nuclear Weapons, 1989–1990* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990).

[29] Etel Solingen, 'The Domestic Sources of Regional Regimes: The Evolution of Nuclear Ambiguity in the Middle East', *International Studies Quarterly*, 38 (June 1994).

[30] Israel TV, Channel 1, 22 December 1995.

[31] On the anti-Western element among some religious fundamentalist groups in Israel, see Joel Greenberg, 'Settlement Vows Fight on Peace Plan', *New York Times*, 21 February 1994, p. A4.

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importantly, to the economic consequences of peace with Arab neighbours.[32] Both in rhetoric and performance, opposition to compromise with the Palestinians remained Netanyahu's coalition's most valued preference, even when it involved a slowdown in foreign investment and global economic and diplomatic access. Several influential Likud ministers and coalitional partners were well known for opposing a NWFZ or any multilateral arrangement that might encroach on Israeli nuclear prerogatives even minimally.[33] At the same time, even an internationalizing coalition subject to fierce attacks over its legitimacy and its alleged abdication of national interests is likely to avoid arrangements that are not perceived to be robust, regionally-based, comprehensive (not narrowly nuclear), and regionally-inclusive. The Oslo process holdouts—particularly Iran and Iraq—remain key to an eventual fulfilment of this criteria, a point leading directly into the potential evolution of a future Middle East regime and the lessons from the Southern Cone.

Modalities for verification: Southern Cone precedents

Despite coalitional variations and discontinuities in grand strategy reviewed earlier, virtually any Israeli coalition negotiating a NWFZ in the future is likely to seek assurances against failures and deficiencies in NPT rules and praxis. In particular, a regionally-based system of inspections is thought to be better suited to address regional threats. This explains a growing interest in some Israeli quarters in some of the modalities introduced by the Southern Cone regime in the early 1990s.[34] The Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) emerged first as a bilateral institution to overview the joint accounting and inspection regime. Headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, 60 ABACC inspectors (30 from each country) began reporting to the ABACC secretariat. Inspectors were entrusted to verify that nuclear materials were not diverted to nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices and both governments were expected to supply inventories of all nuclear material and tehnical information on the design of all nuclear facilities. A Quadripartite Agreement for the Application of Safeguards, signed in December 1991 by the International Atomic Energy Agency, ABACC, Argentina, and Brazil, applied full-scope safeguards to all nuclear facilities in both countries. The Quadripartite agreement entered into effect in March 1994 and in 1995 efforts were directed at coordinating activities with the IAEA. A document approved in 1995 (Guidelines for the Coordination of Routine and Ad-Hoc Inspections) was designed to avoid unnecessary duplication of activities 'based on the principle that ABACC and the IAEA should draw independent conclusions'.[35]

[32] Privatization was initially largely limited to eliminating old Labour fiefdoms, such as the Egged bus cooperative and the Israel Broadcasting Authority, whose TV Channel 1 had disclosed an incriminating (Bar On) affair against Netanyahu in 1997.

[33] Opponents of a NWFZ include Ariel Sharon, Yuval Ne'eman, and Rafael Eitan. See Yoram Nimrod, 'Arms Control or Arms Race?', *New Outlook*, September/October 1991, pp. 15–18. Asher Arian dissents with respect to Ne'eman: see 'Israeli Public Opinion on Nuclear Weapons', *Strategic Assessment*, 1: 3 (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 1998), pp. 8–11.

[34] ISIS (Institute for Science and International Security, 1997).

[35] *ABACC Annual Report* 1997 (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), p. 41.

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This experience established a global precedent. Most importantly, the fact that dramatically lower security threats in the Southern Cone still required mutual inspections, at least initially, strengthened the Israeli position regarding the need for such inspections in the Middle East, particularly given the mature nature of nuclear programmes in the Middle East. With lower levels of threat in the Southern Cone, one might have expected greater reliance on international means of inspection and verification at the outset. Yet, given the nature of Brazil's ruling coalition at the time, a regionally-based agreement appeared far more palatable. If international organizations provided a supportive but nonetheless secondary role even in the new (internationalizing) Southern Cone, the turn toward international instruments in a reassuring capacity is likely to be far less swift and perhaps far more qualified in the Middle East for two reasons. First, this would be a logical result of the depth of historical rivalries and, most importantly, of more recent failures of the IAEA and the global nonproliferation regime.[36] Despite UNSCOM's remarkable initial achievements (and eventual failure) in Iraq, the reality of dangerous loopholes in the global regime remains. Second, the Middle East has lagged considerably—relative to the Southern Cone and most other regions—in economic reform efforts. Internationalizing coalitions have been far weaker and the resilience of backlash nationalist sectors—industrial and military—more formidable. As argued earlier, coalitions (of either kind) facing significant challenges at home and throughout a region are often compelled to water down their grand strategies.

The prospect of mutual inspections was central in helping smooth the way towards denuclearization in the Southern Cone. In addition, the joint willingness to rid the region from other weapons outlawed by the international community affected this process favourably. Both Brazil and Argentina, as well as Chile, joined in regional and international agreements to ban chemical and biological weapons, thus creating a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The infamous linkages to other such weapons, and recurring issues of conditionality and timing ('I shall abide by this if, and when, you abide by that') have so far exacerbated mutual mistrust in the Middle East. A number of Arab countries—including those involved in the Multilateral Arms Control Negotiations—have refused to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention, although Israel, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Morocco, and Tunisia have done so. Moreover, UN experts have confirmed that Iraq had biological warheads attached to Scud missiles during the Gulf War and that these might have been—and could still be—used against Israel. Whether or not Israel's presumed nonconventional weapons help account for the fact that Iraq did not use its own, many continue to impute a deterrent effect to Israel's alleged arsenal.[37] Such views reproduce a belief in nuclear deterrence among segments of the Israeli public, even among some otherwise supportive of extensive territorial and political compromises. Direct Iraqi threats to Israel (firing Scud missiles in 1991, expelling UNSCOM officials in 1998) have often translated into a rise in support for developing nuclear weapons as a last resort, in response to nonconventional attacks. At other times, however, an impressive 72 per cent of Israelis supported the proposition that Israel

[36] For a supportive view, calling for more stringent bilateral mutual inspections in the Middle East, see Efraim Karsh and Yezid Sayigh, 'A Cooperative Approach to Arab-Israeli Security', *Survival*, 36:1 (Spring 1994), pp. 114–26.

[37] *The Jerusalem Report*, 21 September 1995, p. 8.

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should sign the NPT and that all states in the region should prohibit WMD,[38] suggesting that, given appropriate regional conditions, denuclearization could gain popular ratification.[39]

A third element in the movement towards denuclearization in the Southern Cone provides an important precedent for other regions. Neither Brazil nor Argentina was an effective party to the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created a NWFZ in Latin America. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Cuba remained outside Tlatelolco. Brazil and Chile signed and ratified the treaty but did not waive the conditions required for the treaty to enter into force on their territories.[40] Argentina later signed it but failed to ratify it, and Cuba took no action. In 1992—under the internationalizing administrations of Presidents Menem, Collor, and Chile's Aylwin— Brazil, Chile, and Argentina agreed on a series of amendments designed to facilitate their adherence to the Tlatelolco Treaty. Cuba signed it in 1995 but witheld ratification, preventing Tlatelolco from becoming truly comprehensive regionally. This modality of witholding the coming into force of an international agreement until it includes all pertinent partners in a region, would go a long way towards easing some of the most serious Israeli dilemmas involving recalcitrant neighbours, some of which have proven—as Iraq with its Scud missiles—that their intentions and capabilities do match their rhetoric.[41]

The three dimensions discussed so far—the need for mutual inspections, comprehensiveness (all WMD), and regional inclusiveness—highlight the fact that the absence of a comprehensive peace burdens the denuclearization of the region in significant ways. Above all, it is difficult to imagine that the bilateral (and subsequent multilateral) nuclear commitments in the Southern Cone could have been so relatively easily negotiated and implemented in the absence of the domestic political conditions outlined in an earlier section. Only the appropriate domestic political environment can create regional conditions compatible with a comprehensive peace. As experts on the Southern Cone regime have argued, 'the Argentine-Brazilian decision to discard long-held policies and enter the nuclear nonproliferation regime was primarily a result of an indigenous bilateral process, rather than a direct response to external pressure … External pressure exerted by nuclear supplier states and the IAEA influenced the process, but only at the margins: it was never the determining factor'.[42]

The situation differed in the Middle East, as evident from multilateral negotiations on Arms Control and Regional Security. Initial steps appeared promising,

[38] Asher Arian, 'Israeli Public Opinion on Nuclear Weapons', *Strategic Assessment*, 1:3 (Tel Aviv University, Jaffer Center for Strategic Studies, 1998), pp. 8–11; and 'Israeli Public Opinion on National Security', Memorandum 53 (Tel Aviv: Jaffer Center, 1999).

[39] No comparable public opinion data is available for Arab states regarding their respective nuclear policies.

[40] According to Article 28 certain conditions must be met for the treaty to enter into force, including ratification by all Latin American states, by countries with possessions in Latin America, and by all nuclear weapons states. Most Latin American signatories of Tlatelolco had chosen to waive these requirements when ratifying the treaty.

[41] On Israel's longstanding preference for a regional arrangement that includes all states in the region and adjacent to it, see Ran Marom, 'Israel's Position on Nonproliferation', *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 8:4 (1986), pp. 118–23. On a common Arab-Israeli proposal for a regional framework, see Karsh and Sayigh 'A Cooperative Approach to Arab-Israeli Security', p. 122.

[42] Redick et al., 'Nuclear Rapprochement', p. 118. For a supportive view, see Tom Zamora Collina and Fernando de Souza Barros, 'Transplanting Brazil and Argentina's Success', *ISIS Report*, February 1995 (Washington DC: Institute for Science and International Affairs).

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particularly plenary meetings in 1992 and 1993 and several workshops on verification (Egypt), maritime confidence-building (Nova Scotia), exchange of military information (Turkey), observation of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), on-site inspections, and declaratory confidence-building measures (Vienna).[43] The 1993 Oslo agreements accelerated the pace of cooperation. At the Fourth plenary in Moscow (November 1993) the parties created an operational and a conceptual grouping. The operational group worked on the need to enhance communications, joint procedures for avoiding incidents at sea (INCSEA) and for conducting search-and-rescue (SAR) operations, advanced notification of military exercises, and exchanges of some military data. The conceptual group discussed long-term security objectives, consensual principles and declaratory measures, and the region's security boundaries. The conceptual basket met for the first time in Cairo (February 1994), yielding a first draft of a 'Declaration of Principles' in the area of regional peace and security. A meeting in Doha (May 1994), the first plenary held in an Arab country, cemented some of these preliminary achievements. At the time it appeared that the security working group was in many respects ahead of other working groups on economic development, water, refugee, and environmental issues.

At the Plenary Session in Tunis (December 1994) participants approved a Statement on Arms Control and Regional Security that revealed alternative versions of a future weapons-of-mass-destruction-free-zone (WMDFZ). The Israeli version excluded any reference to the NPT while endorsing a regional alternative.[44] The gap between Egypt and Israel widened even further, as Egypt insisted on Israel's *a priori* commitment to the NPT, prior to any negotiations over a regionally-based WMDFZ. Whereas Egypt demanded that non-conventional weapons be discussed at the outset, Israel demanded that those should be discussed last, at the end of the process. In the words of an Israeli official:

> Israel welcomed the establishment of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) … an essential pillar to support the peace process as a whole and an integral part of it. In this respect, the Middle East could certainly learn from the experiences of other regions—Europe, Latin America, Africa and the Pacific—where genuine efforts on the regional level have created mutually beneficial regional security frameworks … Progress should be sought wherever and whenever possible—and its pace should be determined by conditions prevailing in the region. After peaceful relations and reconciliation are established among all states in the region, Israel will endeavour to establish in the Middle East—through direct negotiations among all its members—a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear

[43] This section builds on extensive anonymous interviews with participants in the multilateral ACRES process from within and outside the region. See also Etel Solingen, 'The Multilateral Arab-Israeli Negotiations: Genesis, Institutionalization, Pause, Future', *Journal of Peace Research*, 37:2 (Oslo); Bruce Jentleson, 'The Middle East Arms Control and Security Talks: Progress, Problems and Prospects', Policy Paper #2 (San Diego, CA: University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, September 1996); Abdulhay Sayed, 'The Future of the Israeli Nuclear Force and the Middle East Peace Process', *Security Dialogue*, 28:1 (March 1997), pp 31–48; Bruce Jentleson and Dalia Kaye, 'Security Status: Explaining Regional Security Cooperation and Its Limits in the Middle East', *Security Studies*, 8:1 (Autumn 1998). Also <http://www-igcc.ucsd.edu/igcc2/memulti/ArmsControl.html> and Israel's Foreign Ministry <gopher://israel-info.gov.il:70/11/mad>.

[44] See Appendix B in Shai Feldman and Abdullah Toukan, *Bridging the Gap: A Future Security Architecture for the Middle East* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), pp. 103–8.

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weapons, as well as ballistic missiles, based on mutual and effective verification. No other fora … can bring about meaningful progress in realizing such an ambitious arms control agenda.[45]

Sayed suggests that this policy hides Israel's intention to retain a nuclear capability even at the end of the negotiating process, while seeking the elimination of Arab non-conventional threats.[46] According to this view, NPT accession must precede any regional agreements. Egypt adopted this position, linking progress in the other multilateral working groups to Israel's NPT commitment within ACRS. In time, this conditionality froze most multilateral activities. In early 1995 Egypt transferred the ACRS debate onto the international arena during the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Negotiations. Egypt was more forceful on the nuclear issue than any other Arab state represented at the multilateral talks,[47] asserting that Israel's refusal to discuss its alleged nuclear option threatens all states in the region and provides a justification to others for their continuing non-conventional programmes.[48] Jones questioned this logic, asserting that Arab-Arab and Arab-Iranian disputes have been at least as great a motivating force for their efforts in nonconventional capabilities as any difference with Israel. Many have therefore traced Egypt's position to two other mutually reinforcing objectives: the need to satisfy backlash domestic constituencies and to retain the trappings of leadership in the Arab world.[49]

In a responsive gesture to Egypt's position, Peres made the compromising statement cited earlier, at a time when his own domestic coalition was severely weakened, largely due to terrorist attacks on civilians within Israel. A few months later, election results replaced the Labour-Meretz coalition with the far more intractable one led by Benjamin Netanyahu. Although the multilateral process had come to a standstill even prior to this domestic coalitional shift in Israel, now the overall tenor of negotiations even in the conventional arena returned the region to an earlier era of confrontation.

[45] Statement at the Conference on Disarmament, Israel's Approach to Regional Security, Arms Control, and Disarmament, Geneva, 4 September 1997 <http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/speeches/disarm.html>. Minister Chaim Ramon reiterated this position in an unprecedented parliamentary meeting: Israel supports the creation of a region free of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles once there is a proven peace over a sustained period of time. Deborah Sontag, 'Israeli Lawmakers Hold Quick Debate on Nuclear Arms', *New York Times*, 3 February, 2000:A3.

[46] Abdulhay Sayed, 'The Future of the Israeli Nuclear Force and the Middle East Peace Process', *Security Dialogue*, 28:1 (1997), pp. 31–48.

[47] Peter Jones, 'Arms Control in the Middle East: Some Reflections on ACRS', *Security Dialogue*, 28:1 (1997), p. 60.

[48] A more accommodating Jordanian position that retains the need for a WMDFZ is clear from Article 4(7)(b) of the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty (*Journal of Palestine Studies*, 24:2 (Winter 1995), p. 128). The response of fellow Arab states to Egypt's 1995 NPT Review Conference initiatives against Israel was lukewarm at best.

[49] Jones, 'Arms Control', pp. 59–60. See also statements in 'Panel Discussion on Nuclear Threat from Israel', reported by *Al-Musawwar*, 13 January, 1995, pp. 54–58 (translated in FBIS Near East and South Asia, November 18, 1995), particularly statements by Ambassador Mahmud Murtada, deputy assistant Foreign Minister: 'From now until the [NPT] treaty review conference in April, we must try to mobilize public opinion, including organizations, unions, parties, governmental and nongovernmental figures, to exert pressure and support this Arab and Egyptian position', (that is, making Egyptian approval of the NPT extension contingent on Israel's accession to NPT).

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Conclusions

A new coalition came to power in Israel in 1999, raising expectations that the old Labour-Meretz grand strategy would resurface. However, the inclusion of parties lukewarm or opposed to the Oslo agreements made any progress difficult, including efforts to breath new life into the multilateral process. Later, once freed from coalitional commitments but still shackled by a parliamentary majority, Ehud Barak's maverick concessions in Camp David were rebuked by Yasir Arafat, unleashing a sequence of events that culminated into a new *intifada* and the election of Ariel Sharon as Israel's Prime Minister. The prospects of progress on any front looked rather dim by early 2001, as the *intifada* decimated the coalition that had led to Oslo, at least in the short term.

The future of a WMDFZ will be also contingent on other coalitional developments throughout the region, particularly on the nature of domestic transformations in Syria and Iran, neither of which was party to multilateral arms control negotiations, even under the most favourable conditions of the mid-1990s. On the one hand, the passing of Hafiz Assad in Syria and the electoral triumph of reformers in Iran could eventually lower some of the barriers that foiled earlier cooperative efforts. On the other hand, the domestic weakness of internationalizing (and democratizing) impulses makes this transformation difficult and open-ended. Reformers face the task of phasing out state agencies captured by backlash opponents, including those actively seeking weapons of mass destruction. Iraq is well beyond this horizon for now, given that the prospects for either domestic change or for dismantling its nonconventional weapons are as elusive as ever.[50]

The experience of internationalizing coalitions in Argentina and Brazil raise useful considerations for the future of Middle East denuclearization. First, political leaders largely avoided bilateral (mutual) pressures on the nuclear issue in ways that might weaken the domestic position of partners in negotiations. Backed by a stronger coalition at the time, Argentina went ahead unilaterally with NPT accession, for instance, regardless of what Brazil was prepared to do at the time. The Argentine leadership understood the requirements of an internationalizing strategy—on both sides—increasing its confidence in Brazil's future accession to the NPT, once domestic political conditions in that country allowed this. Foreign Ministries in Argentina and Brazil were central bureaucratic actors with a clear conception of the organic links between an internationalizing grand political-economic strategy and nuclear postures. In contrast, Egyptian officials turned multilateral negotiations into an arena for imposing NPT adherence at the outset, applying pressure on an already weakened Labour-Meretz coalition. President Mubarak himself, acknowledging coalitional differences in Israel, expressed that Egypt would not hesitate to acquire nuclear weapons if needed, adding that 'When we talked with Israel about this issue before the present government took over, their view was to open all the books. But Binyamin Netanyahu is not a man who has fought and does not know what war means'.[51]

[50] Anthony H. Cordesman, 'No Choice But To Strike'. *New York Times*, 17 February 2001, p. A31.
[51] *Proliferation News*, 3–6 October 1998.

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A second observation relates to the nature of domestic institutions. Democratic polities throughout a region certainly may provide built-in (political) early-warning systems that narrow the range of political uncertainty and undermine the viability of 'rogue' state agencies not accountable to democratic institutions. To some extent, the Southern Cone bears that assumption. Yet, democracy *per se* does not seem to be a necessary condition for the emergence of regional cooperation, nuclear or otherwise. Indeed, the process of nuclear cooperation in the Southern Cone began under military dictatorships, albeit at much lower levels than the more substantive agreements reached by their successors. The crowning achievements of this process had to await the accession of political coalitions representing a particular conception of domestic, regional, and global requirements at the dawn of the new millenium. Even after commitments had been made, and agreements signed, it was up to the political leadership in Argentina and Brazil to implement them. The cornerstone of any international commitment is in the domestic political arrangements that underpin it. The stronger these arrangements are, the more they can invest such commitments with enough credibility to build faith in progressive cooperative denuclearization. Despite serious difficulties inherent in the Southern Cone's internationalizing turn, the robustness of domestic political-economic transformations in that part of the world is evident from the decimated influence of military and related state agencies erstwhile accustomed to budgetary privileges. Herein lies one of the most intractable barriers to stable peace (and stable denuclearization) in the Middle East: internationalizing coalitions have been mired under powerful backlash and confessional assaults, in the Arab world, Iran, and Israel alike.

In sum, differences in security dilemmas, military capabilities, and doctrines clearly limit the lessons that might be transferred from the Southern Cone to the Middle East. The distance states must travel to undo nuclearization (the depth of potential rollback) is significantly different as well. And yet, nuclear policies are not reducible to any single theoretical understanding of international politics, neorealist or otherwise. The nature of domestic ruling coalitions may not be the only genetic marker for nuclear policies but certainly warrants more attention in any effort to explore the prospects for a stable Middle East.

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