

The Amman Security Colloquium 2016

November 2016

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Event: Workshop
Date, Place: 16 November 2016 in Amman (Jordan University)
Organisers: Arab Institute for Security Studies, KAS Jordan Office

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The Amman Security Colloquium is an annual meeting with international security experts. This year's colloquium was conducted on 16 November 2016 and co-organised by KAS Jordan Office and the Arab Institute for Security Studies. The workshop concentrated on security challenges in the Middle East with a special focus on missile technology development and the implementation of the Hague Code of Conduct (HOC). Promoting dialogue and seeking the resolution of conflicts and global issues, the annual conference aims at fostering peace and stability regionally and internationally.

The first Panel "The Zone, Nuclear Testing and Beyond" focused on the relevance and opportunities of a nuclear free zone in the Middle East. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an international agreement that aims at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, and promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and achieving nuclear disarmament. At issue is the failure to make any tangible progress toward establishing a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. Nevertheless, Adam Scheinman, the Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation (US) emphasized the relevance of the NPT, currently providing an irreplaceable policy in the struggle against proliferation. The Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Lassina Zerbo equally highlighted the necessity of a nuclear free zone, but criticizes NPT for the conceptual gap of the different participating states. Instead, he presented the CTBTO, providing a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) that bans all nuclear explosions, for both civilian and military purposes, in all environments. Since unification of countries is a key holder for non-proliferation, he considers the CTBT as an alternative treaty that also involves states that are not part of the NPT and can contribute to the establishment of a WMD Zone.

The second Panel "Analyzing Conflicts in the Arab World" outlined an overview on the current challenges in the Middle East. The Vice President of Iraq, Iyad Allawi focused on the growing tensions between Shia and Sunni as well as the strength of radical Islamic movements in the region. He called for the respect of sovereignty of Iraq and the development and addressing of the concept of citizenship due to the weaknesses of national identity in the region. Princess Sumaya bint Al-Hussein called for unified actions to address current challenges, such as poverty, lack of water, lack of opportunities, radicalization and inequality. Moreover, she considers education to be a key holder for the empowerment of the region that should be paid attention to. The Former President of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, added that the Palestinian cause is currently neglected and strategic cooperation is a necessary condition for disarmament.

The third Panel "WMD in the Middle East, Perspectives and Expectations" outlined the problems of the NPT treaty. According to the Iranian Expert Ali Asghar Soltanieh the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction was

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linked to an indefinite extension of the NPT. However, after many discussions no progress is visible. Therefore, a deadline, visibility and confidence building are necessary conditions for the zone. Fadi Achaia of the League of the Arab States addressed current challenges, such as the new Trump administration, the rise of populism in the European Union as well as in the USA, the lack of political engagement as well as the spillovers of the Arab Spring and the disinterest of Israel in the zone, making the implementation of the treaty even more difficult. Mahmoud Karem of the British University of Egypt abandoned the idea of confidence building as a key to the creation of the free zone. Instead, he called for further studies and research on the issue.

In the fourth Panel "Briefing on the Arab Consortium on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Activities" Fabi Adi Allam of the Permanent Peace Movement of Lebanon concluded that there are no convincing reasons for nuclear weapons, because they harm the environment and civilians. Therefore, proliferation has to be stopped, negotiations and collective work is needed, research should be developed for the identification of risks and a pressure on governments is needed. In addition, Mohamad Shaker as well as Mounir Zahran of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs emphasized the significance of involving the Arab States in meetings on nuclear power usage.

Altogether, the forum was characterized by the attendance of high-ranking national and international security experts. Having provided a platform for experts to address current security challenges, KAS Jordan Office contributed to the further development of ideas to tackle them.