Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East
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I. INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates of the General Assembly,

Throughout this debate you will discuss a crucial topic which deeply concerns the world: the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East. Taking into account the current instability within this region, you all carry a great responsibility which has to be taken seriously. Peace is a universal value that must be preserved, because of that we encourage you to be open-minded, to listen, learn and dialogue, in order to reach an agreeable resolution to solve this conflict. We are confident that you will all do an excellent job. With great enthusiasm to hear all your proposals, we thank you for your attendance.

Welcome to the Olinca Model United Nations (Olinmun) 2017.

Yours sincerely,

Dafne Leticia Olea Corral  
*Head of Committee of General Assembly*

Maria Paula Flores Espino  
*Chair of General Assembly*

José Miguel Saavedra Ruiz  
*Moderator of General Assembly*

Juan Pablo Sámano Ortega  
*Deputy Chair of General Assembly*

Adriana Herrera Varela  
*Intelligence Advisor of General Assembly*

NOTE: We highly recommend you to read thoroughly the following document, as well as the delegate handbook, which we hope will be useful in order to have a general view of the themes we will be debating.
II. OVERVIEW

The Middle East is one of the regions where Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) — meaning any device capable of causing extensive destruction intended to kill large numbers of people — have been developed and used. Although it is not verifiable, as states do not usually report their arsenals, it is suspected that several countries possess WMD like Israel.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 — adopted in 2004 — warns against the threat to international peace and security posed by WMD and their delivery systems. It obliges states to comply with laws which prevent their proliferation and illicit trafficking, as well as to refrain from supporting non-state actors from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using them.

The UN has founded Committee 1540, which constantly reinforces Resolution 1540, encouraging states to cooperate by multilateral treaties to prevent or abolish WMD. The danger and uncertainty represented by these weapons still remains, as a result of the inability to establish a WMD free zone (WMDFZ) in the Middle East. Furthermore, several countries have not ratified various treaties on the matter, such as Israel, which is the only Middle Eastern country reluctant to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

A) Committee’s Background

The first principal organ mentioned in the United Nations Charter is the General Assembly (GA), the main deliberative body of the United Nations. As the primary forum for international debate and cooperation, the GA is composed of representatives from all 193 United Nation’s member states and each one has a vote.

The GA has become the main diplomatic connection from many countries with the global community. All members of the assembly have the opportunity to voice their concerns, convey their opinions, and directly participate in global decision making. This body brings together the countries of the world for debate and
compromise with respect for national sovereignty - the right of each country to manage its own affairs without outside influence.

The General Assembly is empowered to consider any topic within the scope of the United Nations' work, except for peace and security questions that are being debated by the Security Council. The GA can initiate studies on international subjects and recommend actions from member states and UN bodies.

The General Assembly cannot force nations to take action nor can it impose sanctions or military responses. Actually, for approving recommendations, it is required a simple majority to pass, meaning two thirds of the committee must approve the resolutions.

III. Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East

A) Background

For this topic, it is crucial to understand what a WMDFZ is. A WMDFZ is an area recognized by the General Assembly in which a group of states, in the "free exercises of their sovereignty," establishes a zone completely absent of WMD, intended to complement and reinforce resolutions such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the NPT. WMDFZs are under an international verification system which guarantees that states comply with their assigned obligations.

The Middle East has experienced more conflict than any other geographical region since 1945. In fact, nearly half of the world’s armed conflicts have taken place in this region. As a result, these states remain extremely militarized in preparation for strikes and for defense. This militarization has led these countries to produce weapons and stockpile them. For years, this trend has concerned the international community, and has generated discussions for creating a nuclear-weapon-free-zone (NWFZ), the first step to determine a WMDFZ.

Historically, the first proposal of a WMDFZ —regarding nuclear weapons— in the Middle East occurred in 1974. In this year the General Assembly approved the
resolution “Establishment of a Nuclear-Free Zone in the Region of the Middle East,” which endorsed the goal of establishing a NWFZ. This was the first major resolution the UN produced on the subject and was originally proposed by Iran and later co-sponsored by Egypt. It called upon states to move towards the establishment of a NWFZ in the Middle East.

Other Non-Proliferation Efforts

After World War II, as a result of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union—the two nuclear weapon states at the time—engaged in an arms race. In 1986, the total number of nuclear weapons throughout the world reached approximately 70,000. Hence—acknowledging the social and political dangers presented by nuclear weaponry, as well as its prohibition benefits—former United States President, Ronald Reagan, and the Soviet Union’s last leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, met at the Reykjavik Summit and agreed to attempt to reduce their arsenal. Despite this diplomatic effort, both countries still distrusted each other, causing continuous arguments on the topic. Besides, they nonetheless posed massive threats to one another, due to their nuclear stockpiles. Throughout the late 1980s a thrust given to less hostile relations between the Soviet Union and the United States led to peaceful dialogue among the countries concerning nuclear disarmament.

By 1996, the five nuclear_weapon states (NWS) had ended all nuclear testing, and France had nearly dismantled its entire nuclear program by the end of the 1990s. Yet the trend of suspending nuclear activity was disrupted in 1998 when Pakistan and India broke the moratorium and conducted nuclear tests.
The sanctions fomented a global decrease in nuclear testing and convinced both nations to immediately suspend their nuclear programs.

**The Unguarded Nuclear Facilities’ Question**

This committee should also consider the security implications of unsupervised nuclear facilities within this region and what work can be done to enact change while respecting national sovereignty.

To the Middle East region and the international community, Israel’s indirectness on the subject has long been a concern. Without the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) safeguards, there is no way of knowing whether or not Israel is developing nuclear weaponry. Furthermore, these unprotected facilities have contributed to ongoing unsympathetic relations with regional states like Iran.

**IV. RECENT SOLUTIONS**

During the 2010 Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, the State Parties to the NPT agreed to hold a Middle East Conference in 2012 addressing the establishment of a WMD free zone in the region, under the NPT Depositary States —the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom— and the UN Secretary-General’s supervision. On November 23, 2012, the United States postponed indefinitely the 2012 Conference, scheduled for December, due to the prevailing conditions in the area and the participating nations’ unwillingness to work together—as shown by Iran’s refusal to cooperate with Israel—or even to attend the meeting, as in the case of Israel. The following day, despite the Arab League and Iran’s disapproval, Russia announced the forum should take place before the NPT Preparatory Committee Meeting in April 2013.

However, on April 29, the deadline arrived, thus leading Egypt to abandon the summit in protest and, later on, Saudi Arabia to reject its seat in the Security Council. Therefore, from October 2013 to June 2014, the conference organizers arranged several reunions—in which the Arab
League, except Iran, and Israel were constantly present—in order to set the agenda. During the 2015 NPT Review Conference, Egypt encouraged the Arab League to present a new proposal to the forum facilitator, as well as to Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, which recognized the UN Secretary-General’s faculty to summon the meeting 180 days after the 2015 NPT Review Conference’s ending. It also suggested the creation of two working groups: Working Group I, focused on determining the WMDFZ geographic extent, range of action, interim measures and prohibitions, and Working Group II, centered on guaranteeing its implementation and verification.

A draft final document, based on Egypt’s request, was put forth urging the UN Secretary General to convene an encounter by March 1, 2016, built on continuous negotiation, aimed to reach a treaty regulating the founding of a WMDFZ. Furthermore, it called for the UN Secretary-General to designate a mediator who collaborates with the latter—along with Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom—to consult the Middle Eastern countries on the agenda. Moreover, it mentioned that, if an agreement in such matter was accomplished before the deadline, then the summit would occur within 45 days after. Nevertheless, this paper was rejected by the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, due to its language referring the WMDFZ; the former stated it opposed “consensus and equality”, asked for “unworkable conditions” and defined “arbitrary deadlines”.

ANNEX I: LIST OF COUNTRIES

1. Canada
2. China
3. Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea)
4. Egypt
5. France
6. Germany
7. India
8. Iran
9. Iraq
10. Israel
11. Libya
12. Netherlands
13. Norway
14. Pakistan
15. Russian Federation
16. Saudi Arabia
17. Palestine
18. Republic of the Sudan
19. Syria
20. Turkey
21. United Kingdom
22. United States of America
ANNEX II: INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRIES

China:

The People's Republic of China has developed and possessed all WMD. China is one of the five Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) recognized by the NPT for possessing nuclear weapons. China carried out nuclear weapon tests from 1964 to 1996, when it signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Additionally, it first tested a hydrogen bomb in 1967. China adhered to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in 1984 and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1997.

China's nuclear warheads quantity is unknown, as it is a state secret. However, the Federation of American Scientists estimates it owns about 260 total warheads as of 2015, arguably being the second smallest NWS acknowledged by the NPT.

China signed the CWC on January 13, 1993, whereas it ratified it on April 25, 1997. According to an official declaration submitted to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), China owned a small arsenal of chemical weapons, which was later destroyed, before ratifying the CWC. Besides, it has also recognized the existence of three former chemical production facilities suspected for having produced mustard gas, phosgene and Lewisite.

China is currently a signatory to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Even though China has stated its biological activities have never been intended for military purposes, it was reported to have had an active biological weapons program during the 1980s.

Iran:

Historically speaking, Iran's changing position on WMD has long being considered one significant obstacle in establishing a WMDFZ in the Middle East. Originally,
Iran’s support for a NWFZ in the 1970s was largely encouraged by the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who sought to enhance his country’s role in the region. However, during the 1979 Iranian Revolution, not only did the government shifted from a monarchy to a republic, but it also adopted a different stance towards WMD, especially favoring nuclear weapons’ production.

Iran is not currently known to possess any WMD. It has also signed the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the CWC and the NTP. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran, published a fatwa—a public religious decree—objecting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons, which was supported by some relatively minor clerics. A subsequent modified version prohibited their employment, but it did not refer to their fabrication. Iran has affirmed its uranium enrichment program is meant for peaceful purposes.

Iran experienced over 100,000 civilian and military casualties provoked by chemical warfare attacks during the 1980s Iran-Iraq war. As a result, Iran has confirmed its public stance against their use, often criticizing Iraq for resorting to it. Iran is not known to have responded Iraq through the same mean during their confrontation, despite—in consonance with the then-existing treaties on the matter—being entitled to proceed equally.

**Iraq:**

The fifth president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, was internationally condemned for his use of chemical weapons during the 1980s against Iranian and Kurdish civilians during and after the Iran–Iraq War. In the 1980s, Saddam pursued an extensive biological weapons program and a nuclear weapons program, though no nuclear bomb was built.

Well before Operation Desert Storm or the U.N. inspections that followed it, Iraq had already begun to build chemical weapons. After launching a research effort in the 1970s, Iraq was able to use chemical weapons in its war against Iran and to kill
large numbers of its own Kurdish population in the 1980s. During the first Gulf War, there were fears that Iraq would launch chemical-tipped missiles at its neighbors, particularly Israel, but Iraq refrained for fear of U.S. retaliation. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, coalition troops again feared they might be hit with chemical weapons, though this did not come to pass.

**Russian Federation:**

According to the Federation of American Scientists—an organization that assesses nuclear weapon stockpiles—as of 2016, as a NWS, Russia possesses 7,300 total nuclear warheads, of which 1,790 are strategically operational. This is in large part due to the special bomber counting rules allowed by the treaty which counts each strategic nuclear bomber as one warhead irrespective of the number of warheads, gravity bombs and/or cruise missiles carried by the aircraft. The figures are, by necessity, only estimates because "the exact number of nuclear weapons in each country's possession is a closely held national secret." In addition to nuclear weapons, Russia declared an arsenal of 39,967 tons of chemical weapons in 1997, of which 57% have been destroyed. The Soviet Union ratified the Geneva Protocol on April 5, 1928 with reservations. The reservations were later dropped on January 18, 2001. Russia is also party to the BWC and the CWC. The Soviet Union had a peak stockpile of 45,000 nuclear warheads in 1988. It is estimated that from 1949 to 1991 the Soviet Union produced approximately 55,000 nuclear warheads.

The Federation of American Scientists estimates that Russia possesses 4,490 nuclear warheads, while the U.S. has 4,500; Russia has 1,790 active strategic nuclear warheads, compared with the U.S. having 1,750. According to 2016 data from the New START Treaty Aggregate Numbers of Strategic Offensive Arms facts sheet, the United States has fewer operationally deployed strategic warheads than Russia. On the other hand, Russia is estimated to have roughly 1,500 tactical nuclear weapons, all of which are declared to be in central storage.

Soviet program of biological weapons was initially developed by the Ministry of
Defense of the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1973. The Soviet Union signed the BWC on April 10, 1972 and ratified the treaty on March 26, 1975. However, it subsequently augmented its bio warfare programs. After 1975, the program of biological weapons was run primarily by a civilian agency, although it also included numerous facilities run by the Soviet Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Chemical Industry, Ministry of Health, and Soviet Academy of Sciences.


United States of America:
The United States has signed, yet not ratified, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Furthermore, during World War II, it dropped two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, hence being the only country which has used them during an armed conflict.

The United States first created hydrogen bombs, essential for the latter development of nuclear fusion. It was the world's pioneer nuclear power—as well as the only one—for four years. As a result of the Cold War, the United States directed an extensive nuclear testing program—until 1992 when it conducted its last nuclear test—in order to compete with the Soviet Union, which has gradually become nowadays' most important nuclear power. Nevertheless, as a NWS, the United States has the second largest nuclear weapons' program.

President Franklin Roosevelt promoted the generation of biological weapons in 1941. During World War II, due to the contamination caused by some agents contained in biological weapons, no progress was made in this matter. Nonetheless, an advanced production facility was built in Pine Bluff, Arkansas in 1954. Throughout this period, the United States manufactured cluster bombs, aerosol spray canisters, rocket warheads, grenades, and aerial spray tanks.
ANNEX III: REFERENCES

http://www.nti.org/
https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/mewmdfz
https://www.hg.org/weapons-mass-destruction.html
http://www.acronym.org.uk/old/core-work/middle-east-wmd-free-zone