

Steps to promote the achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in the Middle East and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East

Report submitted by Japan

1. Lack of progress in the establishment of a weapons-of-mass- destruction-free zone in the Middle East poses a serious concern for the credibility of the NPT. Japan supported, and continues to fully support, the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which calls for the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems. In this regard, Japan has joined consensus adoption of resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, which has been submitted to the UN General Assembly since 1974.

2. The establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East will ultimately require the adherence by all states in the region to the NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by all states in the region would also be a substantial practical step towards this end. Japan has been actively taking part in international efforts to encourage universal adherence to these multilateral legally binding instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As a part of such endeavors, Japan has urged the Israeli Government at the ministerial level to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State, as well as to adhere to the other WMD related treaties as soon as possible. Japan also has urged, at the ministerial level, Governments of Syria, Egypt, and Iran to adhere to the WMD related treaties at the earliest date.

3. It is no less important that compliance with these legal instruments should be fully assured. Japan also considers it crucial that the future Government of Iraq adhere to all relevant non-proliferation agreements in order to prove its willingness to behave as a responsible member of the international community.

In this context, Japan stresses the necessity of strengthening the IAEA safeguards system, which plays a vital role in underpinning the NPT. Japan strongly believes that the conclusion of the IAEA safeguards agreements and additional protocols by all states in the region is essential for the establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

4. Japan recognizes the importance of the fact that Iran has voluntarily continued and extended its suspension of all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. At the same time, Japan reaffirms its strong concern that Iran's policy of concealment up to October 2003 has resulted in many breaches of Iran's obligations to comply with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Japan believes that, in order to dispel the serious concerns of the international community, it is essential for Iran to sincerely implement all the requirements of the relevant IAEA resolutions. Japan expects the current negotiation process between EU3/EU and Iran to result in a success. In particular, Japan has urged Iran at every opportunity to agree, through its negotiations with the EU3/EU, to provide sufficient "objective guarantees" that its nuclear program is exclusively for peaceful purposes.

5. Japan welcomes Libya's decision announced in December 2003 to abandon all of its weapons of mass destruction programs, while expressing concern over Libya's past failures to meet the requirements of its safeguards agreement, which constituted non-compliance. Japan is ready to assist Libya's on-going efforts to comply with the international legal instruments and frameworks on disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan held a bilateral Consultation on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation with Libya for the first time in June 2004.

6. Japan is firmly committed to supporting the Middle East peace process, a key to achieving regional stability. Such stability is a vital factor in establishing conditions for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Japan will intensify political consultation with the Israelis and the Palestinians in order to encourage their peace efforts and will assist the Palestinians to help them establish an independent state according to the Road Map.