



ISRAEL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

51 Address by Foreign Minister Peres at the Signing Ceremony of the Chemical Weapons Convention Treaty- Paris- 13 January 1993

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51. Address by Foreign Minister Peres at the Signing Ceremony of the Chemical Weapons Convention Treaty, Paris, 13 January 1993.

Mr. Peres used the occasion of this ceremony to reiterate Israel's policy on nonconventional weapons. He suggested to all states in the Middle East that they consider, in addition to a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the region, a mutually verifiable zone, free of all missiles, chemical and biological weapons. He outlined confidence-building measures required to achieve this goal. Text:

His Excellency, the President of France, Francois Mitterrand, His Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ghali, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Mayor, His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Germany, Mr. Kinkel, the Secretary-General of the Conference of Disarmament, Mr. Berasategui, Distinguished Foreign Ministers, dear Delegates,

I would like to thank and praise the framers and organizers of this convention for a year of dedication and hard work, and to thank-France for hosting this noble event.

In spite of all the difficulties, the peace process in our region is continuing and will continue. No party can or should escape it.

We seek to resolve the disputes of the past over frontiers and respond to the call of new horizons of our age. Our vision is a new Middle East, where the skies will be free from missiles, the land free from desert, the waters free from salt, its people free from violence and its children free from ignorance.

There is no weapon against non-conventional weapons. There are only policies to prevent their use and preferably their production. We would like to adopt a Helsinki-type approach, where human rights will replace human menaces -a Middle East with a common market and collective security. No nation in the region will enjoy genuine security unless all nations feel secure.

Accordingly, we have formulated our policy on regional security and arms control, once peace has been attained.

We seek to live in a region in which full and lasting peace prevails, based on reconciliation, good neighborliness, open borders, trust and respect among nations.

In the spirit of the global pursuit of general and complete disarmament, and the establishment of regional and global arms control regimes, Israel suggests to all the countries of the region that a mutually verifiable zone, free of surface-to-surface missiles and of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons be constructed.

In order to establish regional security it is necessary:

- To curtail the arms race and prevent the proliferation of destabilizing weapons; - To build and nurture mutual confidence between states;
- To diminish the levels of suspicion, hostility and conflagration;
- To reduce the incentives and capabilities for launching surprise attacks; - To enhance crisis management and stability;
- To install mutual challenge inspections once peace has been established and endured the test of time.

In the course of the multilateral regional security and arms control process, we will deal with various types of threats and capabilities and intentions, in relation to: - military and para-military activities;

- military and security forces deployment;

- defense expenditures, conventional hardware and weapons systems; - ballistic missiles, chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Arms control negotiations and arrangements should be mutually agreed upon and include all the states of the region. Implementation and verification mechanisms, the establishment of comprehensive and durable peace, should be region-wide in their application. 'Priority in this process ought to be assigned to systems whose destabilizing potential and effects have been proven through their use in wars and have inflicted mass casualties.

The Chemical Weapons Convention must refer itself to our region, and the region at large must adhere to its principles and comply with its provisions. To reduce the conventional arms race and military buildup and prevent non-conventional proliferation, the suppliers and exporters should cease their counterproductive policies of indiscriminate arms sales.

We propose to our neighbors to jointly formulate appropriate mechanisms for inspection. We have adhered to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and expect the CWC to constitute a further step forward. We cherish the principles of universality and equality among nations.

Naturally, we expect equal rights of geographic membership in the institutions established by the Convention.

We hope that peace and arms control will lead to democratization of the region, which will strengthen the commitment to peace and bring

about openness and greater transparency between states. We believe in the biblical vision that "nations will not lift up a sword against other nations, nor shall they learn war any more." Isaiah was not just a great prophet, he was also a profound educator.

I call upon our Arab-neighbors to establish a broad arms control dialogue with us, and I call upon all parties to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention, and build a new Middle East free of the horrors of war.

One thousand years ago, in Spain, Jewish-Arab cohabitation and symbiosis contributed to the formation and shaping of world culture for generations. A present-day Jewish-Arab symbiosis may contribute to the cultural formation of the next millennia.