

Thank You, Mr. Facilitator! Honoring Amb. Jaakko Laajava in the Context of Finland's Contributions to Peace and Security

Bernd W. Kubbig, Lisa Weis, Sophia Wenzel, and Fionn Harnischfeger

This POLICY BRIEF crowns the ACADEMIC PEACE ORCHESTRA MIDDLE EAST's (APOME) whole publication series entirely devoted to Amb. Jaakko Laajava's work as the Facilitator appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in October 2011. At the same time, this issue echoes POLICY BRIEF No. 6 "Welcome, Mr. Facilitator!" of December 2011, written and endorsed by 20 players in the ORCHESTRA, the largest number of authors of the entire series. The leitmotif since then has been the statement of the Track II-community of experts: "Dear Ambassador Laajava, we strongly support your appointment!" (See Box No. 3).

The tremendous task of the former Finnish Under-Secretary was to help establish a Conference in Helsinki on a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their Delivery Vehicles (DVs). This Mandate was assigned to him by the international community in spring 2010 in the context of the Review Conference (RevCon) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The central diplomatic player was supported by his colleagues from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland; an Advisory Group was also established (see Graph No. 1).

Meanwhile, a great deal has been written about Amb. Laajava's credentials as an experienced diplomat and the astounding number of visits by him and his team, especially to the vital actors in the Middle East/Gulf (some 400!). These accounts included preliminary assessments of failures and accomplishments. No, the planned Helsinki Conference did not take place. Yes, thanks to Mr. Laajava's tireless efforts, almost all relevant state players from the conflict region met again for the first time in almost twenty years at a series

of five meetings in the Swiss cities of Glion and Geneva (see Graph No. 2). From today's perspective, this established communication and consultation process, which in principle can be revitalized at any time, probably remains his most important achievement.¹

While it is still too early to write the definitive analysis of the Laajava Communication and Consultation Process (as future historians may call the mechanism established by the former Finnish Under-Secretary), it is certainly the right time to honor the work of the Facilitator in this double issue of POLICY BRIEF Nos. 49/50 in an unprecedented way: This has to do with the fact that this double issue has to be seen in the context of Amb. Laajava's role as PRIF's First Honorary Diplomat Research Fellow. His role was the center of the project on "New Paths for Disarmament and Nonproliferation in the Middle East/Gulf." Mr. Laajava inspired APOME's Team as well as all participants in the two international expert conferences that took place in Frankfurt (December 8-9, 2015) and Berlin (May 3-4, 2016).

This POLICY BRIEF documents in a unique way the personal accounts and assessments of the Facilitator that have not previously been available in a coherent and comprehensive way. Living proof of this is Ambassador Laajava's opening statement at the Berlin Conference. The Ambassador looks back by analyzing the failure of the 2015 NPT RevCon and the fact that the Helsinki Conference did not take place, despite all Finnish efforts. As a professional diplomat he does so in a noble way by avoiding any finger pointing. His sober analysis allows him to look forward in a productive way by providing a number of ideas on how to overcome the current frustration and non-communication at government level (see Part I).

Abstract

This POLICY BRIEF reviews the efforts and experiences of the Finnish Facilitator, Amb. Jaakko Laajava, to achieve the goal of establishing a Conference in Helsinki on a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Vehicles. It draws on the expectations and hopes which were presented by APOME Players in POLICY BRIEF No. 6 "Welcome, Mr. Facilitator!" Even though the envisaged Helsinki Conference did not take place, thanks to Mr. Laajava's tireless efforts almost all relevant state players from the conflict region met again for the first time in almost twenty years at a series of five meetings in the Swiss cities of Glion and Geneva.

This POLICY BRIEF documents in a unique way the personal accounts and assessments of the Facilitator and his colleagues that have not previously been available in a coherent and comprehensive way. They have evolved from Jaakko Laajava's role as PRIF's First Honorary Diplomat Research Fellow. He was the center of the project on "New Paths for Disarmament and Nonproliferation in the Middle East/Gulf." Mr. Laajava inspired APOME's Team as well as all participants in the two international expert conferences that took place in Frankfurt (December 8-9, 2015) and Berlin (May 3-4, 2016) generously sponsored by our cooperation partners: the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Berne, the German Foundation for Peace Research, and the Ecumenical Center of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau and of Kurhessen-Waldeck in Frankfurt/Main. ■

**Box No. 1: List of Abbreviations**

ACRS	<i>Arms Control and Regional Security</i>
CBMs	<i>Confidence-building Measures</i>
CSCE	<i>Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe</i>
CTBT	<i>Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty</i>
CTBTO	<i>Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization</i>
DVs	<i>Delivery Vehicles</i>
IAEA	<i>International Atomic Energy Agency</i>
ISIL	<i>Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham</i>
JCPOA/Nuclear Accord	<i>Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action</i>
NGO(s)	<i>Non-Governmental Organization(s)</i>
NPT	<i>Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons</i>
RevCon	<i>Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons</i>
UNRWA	<i>United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East</i>
WMD	<i>Weapon(s) of Mass Destruction</i>

The Facilitator had regular meetings with a number of institutes/institutions aiming at providing a broad scale of advice to him and his colleagues. This relationship is summarized and assessed from the Track I-perspective by Davic Calic, while Bernd W. Kubbig gives a brief account from the Track II-point of view (see Part II). This brief description is just one example of the multifaceted activities of various other Track II-institutes/institutions (see Graph No. 1).

In addition, this POLICY BRIEF puts Amb. Laajava's efforts and those of his team into historical perspective – this involves Finland's earlier notable role in paving the way for the establishment of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). This is the first outstanding example of Finland's important contributions to peace and security in the 20th and 21st centuries. As Amb. Laajava's CV reveals (see Part I), he was closely involved in this process while serving as a young attaché with Finland's Permanent Mission to the UN Office at Geneva (see his response in Part III to questions in "The Former Facilitator Speaks Out," especially with respect to the CSCE).

Last but not least, on an admittedly selective basis (in part due to time constraints), leading players at the Track I-level, who have worked over several years with the Finnish top diplomat, express their gratitude and appreciation. Among them are Angela Kane, then the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Thomas Countryman from the U.S. Department of State; in our limited setting, the latter stands for the three Co-conveners of the planned

international gathering in Helsinki, i.e. the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom with Ambassadors Mikhail Ulyanov and Peter Jones as Thomas Countryman's counterparts – see Graph No. 1). They are joined by colleagues from PRIF representing the academic community on a global scale (see Part IV).

In fact, in his new role as PRIF's First Honorary Diplomat Research Fellow, Mr. Laajava inspired APOME's Team as well as all participants of the two conferences in Frankfurt and Berlin to fulfill the classical Track II-task: to step in when governments do not talk productively to one another, i.e. by orchestrating a new discourse. These structured discussions may consist of exploring old and new ideas in an appropriate (small) forum and by disseminating them in a concise publication series. The two-fold challenge is to create a new critical mass that does not repeat the old mistakes, which led to the failure of the 2015 RevCon, and to the fact that the Helsinki Conference did not take place. Of course the context of the NPT with its Preparatory Committees leading to the RevCon in 2020 remains relevant. But it needs to be seen as part of the Middle East/Gulf with its own dynamic, power constellations and new foreign priorities derived from new security concerns and opportunities.

Part I: Ambassador Laajava's Assessment of His Work as Facilitator

Amb. Jaakko Laajava has been closely involved in shaping Finnish foreign policy, most recently serving as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland until June 2015. In 2011, he was designated as the Facilitator for the Helsinki Conference by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Prior to this, he served as Finland's Ambassador to the United Kingdom and to the United States. Amb. Laajava was also the Head of the Arms Control Section at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and its Political Director. He was instrumental in negotiating Finland's accession to the European Union. In the more than four decades he spent with Finland's Foreign Service, Mr. Laajava held posts in Paris, France, as well as in Madrid, Spain, Belgrade, Serbia, and Warsaw, Poland, and served as Attaché with Finland's Mission to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Geneva, Switzerland.



Looking Back: A Glimpse at the History of the WMD Free Zone in the Middle East

By Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, PRIF, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

The idea of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East goes back several decades, to the time of the Cold War. Obviously, in the first half of the 1970s, it was a very different world. But a global awakening to the horrible risk of a nuclear war and to the dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction occurred then. One of the ways to face these challenges was the effort to strengthen the nonproliferation regime by creating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We all know that the world actually came a couple of times very close to a nuclear exchange. The Cuban missile crisis still remains fresh in our memory. And there were other close calls such as the so-called "Able Archer" incident of the early 1980s.

Against this backdrop of fear, the idea of extending the duration of the NPT indefinitely in 1995 met with general approval. It was viewed as a crucially important measure to address the dangers of nuclear proliferation also in the future.

In this context, the Arab countries maintained that it would not be fair if they, as members of the NPT, accepted unlimited constraint regarding nuclear weapons while a state in their region, not a member of the NPT, remained totally unconstrained.

At the NPT Review Conference of 1995 the three NPT depositary governments of the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States tabled a draft Resolution on the Middle East which "endorsed the aims and objectives of the Middle East peace process" and recognized that "efforts in this regard, as well as other efforts, contribute to, inter alia, a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction." It also called upon all states in the Middle East to take "practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards, inter alia, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems." It also called upon all NPT members and, in particular, the nuclear-weapon states, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts

with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of such a zone.

The Global and Regional Context of the 2010 Mandate and the Action Plan

The 2010 NPT Review Conference decided on a Final Document which further concretized the issue. It says that "the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution, in consultation with the states of the region, will convene a Conference in 2012, to be attended by all states of the Middle East, on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the states of the region, and with the full support and engagement of the nuclear-weapon States."²²

After consultations between the regional countries, the UN Secretary-General announced in October 2011 that the government of Finland would serve as the host government and that I was appointed as the Facilitator for that Conference. I immediately assembled a team of Finnish diplomats to conduct the necessary talks, accompanied by a team of senior experts on the various themes to be discussed at the Conference. My team started consulting the states of the region and beyond with a view to first learning about their respective ideas regarding the Conference. My office also started to work closely together with the Co-conveners. Thus we had the overall title for the Conference to be held in Helsinki, to be attended by all states of the Middle East.



Amb. Jaakko Laajava appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (UN Photo by Evan Schneider)



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Michael Bedke serves as Middle East Team Chief in the Office of Regional Affairs, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation of the United States at the U.S. Department of State. Previous to this appointment, Mr. Bedke held different positions, among them: Senior Iran Officer in the Office of Regional Affairs, Middle East Regional Manager for the Megaports Initiative, and Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine. Mr. Bedke graduated summa cum laude with honors from the University of Nebraska and earned a master's degree from the Monterey Institute of International Studies with a certificate in nonproliferation studies.



David Calic is the former Advisor to the Facilitator for a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East, the Finnish Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava. In that role he participated in a large number of multilateral and bilateral negotiations in the Middle East, Europe and the United States as well as in the IAEA and the UN. In his advisory as well as analytical role, he focuses not only on WMD, nonproliferation- and terrorism-related matters in the Middle East but also on regional dynamics, relevant domestic developments. In addition, Mr. Calic has closely followed the E3+3 negotiations with Iran.



Thomas Countryman has been serving as Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation at the U.S. Department of State since his nomination by President Obama in 2011. After beginning his State Department career in 1982 he held different offices in U.S. embassies in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, as well as in Cairo, Egypt, Rome, Italy, and Athens, Greece. His areas of specialization cover not only the Middle East and the Balkans, but also political-military affairs and nonproliferation.

to proceed to the creation of the zone was a question for the states concerned to freely determine.

The idea of a Middle East WMD Free Zone as such was accepted by all parties, including members and non-members of the NPT, in the relevant UN resolutions. In these, the zone was characterized as a longer-term goal and a part of a broader effort towards peace and stability in the region.

As expected, one of the broader questions in this connection was whether one would seek disarmament before making progress towards peace or whether one would need to have progress towards peace before one could embark upon disarmament. This is of course an understandable tactical and even psychological issue: It can be argued that arms control and disarmament in themselves improve conditions for peace or that it is the other way around – peaceful conditions will be needed in order to be able to agree on disarmament measures.

This dichotomy as to which comes first, peace or disarmament, has been at the heart of the debate over how to go forward with such talks in the Middle East for decades now, going back at least to the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) talks of the early 1990s.

However, for the purposes of starting negotiations hopefully leading just to a Conference in Helsinki, this was perhaps a somewhat artificial dichotomy, a false problem, at least for now. In reality, both aspects needed to be addressed jointly in some fashion in order for the process to continue.

My Work and That of the Finnish Team (I): Initiating Bilateral Contacts

The first part of my team's work was to initiate bilateral contacts. We had many of them: We met government representatives, international organizations, groups of countries in the region and beyond, we participated in seminars and conferences, had frequent contacts with civil society, experts and members of academia, presented the zonal idea to parliaments and other institutions, and so on. All in all, during four years, my team had about 400 contacts of different types with that broad range of actors. The Co-conveners met regularly and had video-conferences or telephone conversations almost on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The written contributions of the international

But we also needed an agenda and modalities for the envisaged gathering.

The point of departure unfortunately was not particularly symmetrical. On the contrary, all members of the NPT, including the Arab States and Iran, had already accepted the convening of the Conference through their adoption of the 2010 Action Plan, but Israel had not made a commitment, as was made clear by the statement of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immediately following the RevCon of 2010.

From the perspective of Arab States, the issue was primarily getting Israel to attend the Helsinki Conference. To that end, they emphasized the role of the Co-conveners. Yet, all UN documents regarding the establishment of Zones Free of WMD stipulate that they must be based on arrangements freely arrived at by the states concerned; they cannot be imposed from outside. This of course applied to all countries, including Israel. Consequently, the question of how



organizations with which we cooperated were distributed to regional participants.

The Secretary-General of the UN wanted to be personally briefed on the process. I had the opportunity to see him at regular intervals, and I always received his full support for our actions.

In the region, most of our contacts, almost on a weekly basis, were between my team and the Arab League Secretariat or with Israel and Iran. However, we also frequently visited a number of regional capitals. While the bilateral contacts helped us to clarify the various positions, it was hard to achieve tangible results through bilateral consultations alone. It was only in a larger, multilateral context with all relevant actors present that we were able to make progress.

Unfortunately, arranging the necessary contacts took time. The end of the year 2012 came quite quickly and the three Co-conveners were not at all in a position to convene a Conference attended by all states in the Middle East. I gave my reports to all preparatory meetings of the NPT Review Conference as well as to the RevCon itself in May 2015. These reports contain the facts regarding my team's work.

*My Work and That of the Finnish Team (II):
Establishing Informal Multilateral Meetings*

The most productive phase of the process took place in Switzerland, first in Glion and later in Geneva, where we held five informal meetings during 2013-14 (see Graph No. 2). This was the first time since the 1990s that the states of the region had come together to talk about these crucially important security issues for the Middle East. The spirit in these meetings was very good and the exchanges were interesting. All regional state actors and the Co-conveners were invited. The meetings took place behind closed doors to help delegations talk freely and openly. Information about the content of the conversations was also kept to a minimum for these same reasons.

It seemed to me that progress regarding the modalities for the Conference including the rules of procedure, would be relatively easy to achieve. One of the important procedural aspects was the initial joint understanding that the rule of consensus would be applied to everything. On the other hand, the formulation of the agenda proved amazingly difficult. This no doubt reflected conceptual differences

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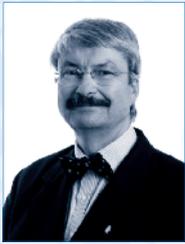


between the participants regarding how the Helsinki Conference should proceed, what matters and in what way subjects identified should be discussed there. Different priorities were expressed. Finally, and in spite of serious efforts to find a compromise (supported by mutual assurances of fairness), there was not enough mutual trust among the participants to be able to agree.

The latest of such meetings was held in Geneva on June 24-25, 2014. After that, the Arab League was no longer interested in a new gathering and wanted to focus on the upcoming Review Conference in New York in 2015. Since the informal meetings were based on the method of "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed," they did not produce tangible results which could have been reported to the RevCon. Here, the Arab League tabled a proposal for a new approach. However, it was not acceptable to all delegations, and the RevCon, unable to agree on the next steps regarding the Middle East, ended without a concluding document.



Ritva Koukku-Ronde, former Under-Secretary of State, serves as Finland's Ambassador to Germany. Prior to her appointment in September 2015 she was Finland's Ambassador to the United States for four years. Since 1985 she has held different positions within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland not only in Helsinki, Finland, but also in Bonn, Germany, as well as in The Hague, Netherlands, and Nairobi, Kenya. Ms. Koukku-Ronde had worked as a journalist before entering the foreign service. She holds a Master's degree in history from the University of Tampere, Finland.



Bernd W. Kubbig was Project Director at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt and Adjunct Professor at Goethe University, Frankfurt/Main, Germany, until June 30, 2016. Over several decades he directed the program on Missile Defense Research International and since 2006 he has coordinated the international expert group "Multilateral Study Group on the Establishment of a Missile Free Zone in the Middle East", and since 2011 the ACADEMIC PEACE ORCHESTRA MIDDLE EAST; he was also Editor of the POLICY BRIEF series. Mr. Kubbig has specialized in U.S. foreign and security policy, especially on the Middle East, as well as missile defense and space.



Harald Müller is a Member of the Executive Board of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt and Head of its Research Department International Security and World Order. The former Executive Director at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt is also Professor of International Relations at Goethe University in Frankfurt/Main, Germany. His academic career includes posts at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C., the Center for International Relations in Bologna, Italy, and the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels, Belgium. Harald Müller specializes in arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation, as well as nuclear weapons.



Jarmo Sareva was appointed Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research effective January 1, 2015. His United Nations career includes a number of positions, among them Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Director of the Geneva Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Mr. Sareva served as Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations in New York and Director of Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-proliferation at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Helsinki, Finland.

The Co-conveners announced that they remained ready to assist also in the future if the states of the Middle East so desired.

Assessing the Bilateral and Multilateral Activities

Since May last year there have been some Track II-activities and informal contacts among the countries concerned, but there does not seem to be any major appetite in the region for continuing. Obviously, not everyone was happy about the turn of events but, so far, there have been very few signs of a desire to revitalize the process.

As could be expected, there have been some expressions of criticism. I have never participated in any blame game and will not do so now either. I have the greatest respect for the positions of different governments regarding the issue. We are dealing here with extremely important national security issues and it is understandable that states want to maintain and defend their positions actively.

I would also like to give credit to the remarkable work done by different sides during a period of almost four years. I would in addition be prepared to look in the mirror and recognize that in spite of their best efforts everyone makes mistakes, including my team. Some things could perhaps have been done in a different way.

We could perhaps have benefited from more visible high-level attention and support by our political masters, emphasizing the importance of the process.

There is probably no single reason why the process failed to go forward. One factor had to do with the sheer complexity of the issues involved. Ambitions and realities did not really match. But another important factor also was the complexity of relationships in the region. This complexity contributed to the tremendous lack of mutual trust which, in my humble opinion, was perhaps the biggest obstacle for us to moving forward.

Learning from the CSCE Process for the Middle East: Parallels and Differences

I spent my younger professional years as a diplomat facing the conditions of the Cold War. People tend to belittle the difficulties we had in Europe during those years. Of course, everything seems so different today. But let me remind readers that the Cold War was a period of great division and confrontation on the European continent, not very much different from what we witness in parts of the Middle East today.

Virtually nothing moved across the Iron Curtain; there was no talk about cooperation, nor talk of human contacts nor free flow of information. Security was perceived as a zero-sum game, to be achieved only through military means. And there were a number of vital unresolved issues, most notably the fundamental question of the future of Germany. I am firmly of the opinion that what fits one region cannot automatically be transferred to another – situations, traditions, cultures differ too much.

Yet, the possibility of obtaining inspiration from somewhere else should not be excluded a priori. I was fortunate to be present at the very early stages when the concept of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe was developed. It was understood from the start that any such Conference would have to become a



longer-term endeavor, making only gradual and incremental progress, if any.

But for the Soviet Union it was seen as an opportunity to provide a quick fix for Europe, a substitute for a peace treaty, based on the existing dividing lines of Europe after World War II and cementing the status quo. In the West, there was a different perspective, because the Western states viewed security as much more than borders and armor. There had to be a cooperative and even a human dimension to it in order for the peace to be sustainable over the longer term.

In spite of these divisions, all countries wanted in any case to reduce the risk of war and move from confrontation to – if not cooperation – at least détente, a kind of modus vivendi, allowing tensions to cool down a little. The participants wanted, first of all, to have a better idea of what the other side was doing, they wanted more predictability of the behavior of the states on both sides of the Atlantic.

One way to obtain this was to begin work on agreeing on the rules and on a number of fundamental principles of conduct which would guide relations between participating countries. Most of the titles of these principles, ten in all, were already to be found within the relevant UN documents or were part of international law, but some were not.

More importantly, the participants wanted to stipulate in greater detail what every single principle meant in practice, how the principles should be understood, interpreted and implemented in their specific regional context. This process of agreeing on these issues was in itself an important step towards increased mutual trust. However, it was complemented by the commitment by the countries to establish mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes, one of the cornerstone principles guiding state-to-state relations. These principles also highlighted, for the first time, the importance of human rights, by making respect for them in a specific principle, number seven.

Furthermore, the predictability of state behavior was enhanced through the invention of confidence-building measures (CBMs), which in the beginning were only designed to alleviate concerns regarding normal peacetime military exercises and troop movements according to certain criteria; later on, these measures were further developed and their ambition level augmented.

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Uta Zapf is a retired member of the Deutsche Bundestag where she served as a Member from 1990 to 2013. She is an expert on arms control and disarmament and was the Chair of the Subcommittee on Arms Control, Disarmament and Nonproliferation from 1998 to 2013. She works with arms control organizations like Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, who appointed her as Special Coordinator for International Parliaments.



In order to make this new situation more sustainable, it was felt that it would benefit from mutually advantageous cooperation in a number of fields, starting from trade, science and technology all the way to humanitarian cooperation, access to information and cooperation in culture and education. The idea was to remove obstacles, which prevented cooperation, from extending across frontiers, to seek mutual benefits and to promote common interests. Finally, the project also recognized the importance of the individual and the role of people in order to strengthen the foundations for better mutual understanding and peace.

The Way Ahead: Concrete Suggestions for the Arms Control Area

Where do we go from here, after the failed 2015 NPT Review Conference, particularly in arms control?

As I understand it, the parties do respect their earlier commitments and want to maintain the

» I hope I am not wrong in my thinking that the region as a whole would in fact benefit from processes, even small steps, which could make that goal more achievable.«

» If the regional parties were able to take steps in this area, it would be a welcome development for the entire international community.«

goal of a WMD-free Middle East, as enshrined in the relevant international documents, even if the chances of it materializing at this time may seem remote. I hope I am not wrong in my thinking that the region as a whole would in fact benefit from processes, even small steps, which could make that goal more achievable. But that assessment must emanate from the region itself; there needs to be a will, an ownership in the region.

In the realm of arms control more generally, avenues for progress in the Middle East can be identified; new opportunities do exist:

- First, the removal of chemical weapons from Syria was a remarkable international success, a real example of what can be accomplished if various actors, including the United States and Russia, come together, while many others, including my own country Finland, are also contributing to it.
- The Syrian tragedy of course still continues, and while talks are under way, there is no immediate prospect for a solution. Yet, from the point of view of WMD proliferation, the fact that Syria now is part of the Chemical Weapons Convention is an important change for the better, both regionally and globally. Could this inspire other regional partners to act in order to reach a situation where there would no longer be even a theoretical risk of the use of chemical weapons in the Middle East?
- Another area where something positive could perhaps be accomplished would be the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban. While ratification of the Treaty by the regional states might seem a somewhat remote prospect when one of the original proponents itself has not ratified it, perhaps there could be steps in this direction in the Middle East, thereby opening some avenues for cooperation.
- Equally, states of the region would perhaps see it as in their common interest to be able to work together against terrorism, especially the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIL), which is the newest important actor in the despicable world of terror.
- And as was highlighted at the recent Washington summit, we would all like to make absolutely certain that non-state actors would not get their hands on nuclear and radioactive materials; per-

haps this would inspire the states in the Middle East to act together to reduce this terrible risk in the Middle East.

- In the Gulf sub-region, the majority of countries already have an important legacy and know-how about working together within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council. If the states of the region – or perhaps the sub-region – agree that it is indeed the lack of mutual trust, deriving from the complexity of their relations, which is the obstacle to any progress, there are proven ways of addressing this issue as well, but it is certainly a longer route.

Thus, there are things on the arms control track that could well be pursued even in the absence of the larger context of a WMD-free Middle East.

Observations for the Future

I have talked at length about arms control in the Middle East and particularly about the process towards a region free of WMD. If the regional parties were able to take steps in this area, it would be a welcome development for the entire international community. But if that avenue proves very difficult because of the complexity of relationships and the lack of trust in the region, perhaps thought should be given to how to find ways to address these more fundamental issues. I have touched upon the early phases of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe as a possible source for inspiration. To maintain a proper perspective, let me emphasize that when the CSCE Process started it took almost three years to achieve its first common product, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975.

The CSCE was complemented by negotiations on conventional armed forces and armaments in Europe, the so-called Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks in Vienna, which eventually gave way to the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe talks then leading to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Meanwhile the process has turned into an institution, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Other agreements have been reached to contribute to security in the region, such as the Open Skies Treaty.

It is also significant that each of these agreements created a process of follow-up, a set of Review Conferences to assess the progress achieved and to agree on further steps. In



other words, Europe, too, had a very difficult starting point: deep divisions, high tensions, security viewed as a matter of military might only, no cooperation, no contacts, a great deal of uncertainty, mutual suspicion and generally a sense of insecurity prevailing everywhere.

I know that ideas such as these have already been floated in the Middle East region; many would dismiss them as too cumbersome, too time-consuming and too alien. It is true that in the Middle East today there are many tensions, many violent conflicts and a great deal of insecurity, many unresolved issues and uncertainties, deep divisions and hostilities often resulting in human losses and misery – and the prospects for the future do not look very good either.

I am asking myself whether the countries in this region would not have at least some common interests beyond the one already mentioned, i.e. that they would like to see a better, a more efficient way of ridding the Middle East/Gulf of the scourge of terrorism. The region is, I believe, also very concerned about the risk of radicalization of the millions of young men having no promise of a better future, no perspectives for normal employment and family life. At the same time, the longer-term future of fossil fuels seems uncertain in the world, and this no doubt will have economic implications for the region.

Many things thus speak in favor of ensuring the region's economic future by promoting a greater variety of business opportunities, including commercial exchanges within the Middle East/Gulf where many obstacles to free trade and investment remain; perhaps the business community could provide some ideas.

These things come to mind when I think about the Middle East and particularly the Gulf area right now, when one important actor, namely Iran, having concluded the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA or Nuclear Accord), engages with its neighbors, after many years of a sanctions regime constraining its activities. I am fully aware of the amount of worry accompanying the new situation and the JCPOA's potential implications for global and regional security. But would it not merit considering ways of achieving greater clarity of the intentions and better predictability of the behavior of the actors in the region precisely in view of this new situation? A dialogue about these things, both risks and new opportunities, might seem appropriate (see POLICY BRIEF No. 48).

As to the question of confidence building, I would also like to reiterate that after the Madrid Conference many states of the Middle East/Gulf did engage, in the early 1990s, in a multilateral process to consider measures for promoting arms control, building confidence and strengthening regional security. While the ACRS talks collapsed and no agreements were reached, the ideas and proposals as well as the initial results of the work accomplished could of course be revisited, and perhaps even reconsidered in the light of today's circumstances.

Finally, let me conclude my remarks with some observations about diplomacy in the Middle East and beyond. When I commenced my Facilitator task, some veteran colleagues, having worked for decades in the region, told me that in the Middle East, diplomacy is not the art of the possible but the art of the impossible.

It may well be. But let us not be deterred by that. At least I was not.

Nevertheless, there are many things, reflecting of course the very complex nature and difficult history of the region, where traditional diplomatic tools such as linkages, preconditions, and reservations enormously complicate and often block even mutually beneficial efforts to achieve something new. Skilled diplomats certainly know how to achieve progress but also how to prevent it from happening. I do not underestimate the importance of the fundamental reasons for this, but sometimes these traditional diplomatic tools, often accompanied by deep-seated suspicions of foul play and hidden agendas, create real impediments to progress. In other words, by sticking exclusively to old habits and methods, the region, or parts of it, may perhaps unnecessarily underperform, while far better outcomes would be within reach.

Of course I understand that this is a question of the political will and that there is no quick fix to any of this. But the world has indeed changed. Globalization means that we are more dependent on each other. We are stakeholders now in issues which earlier did not concern us at all. We all share greater responsibilities. It is more important than in the past that, at least when it comes to fundamental issues of security, we do our part in serving the greater good, in seeing the bigger picture instead of the world of tactical victories or zero-sum games, in other words, being able to see the forest for the trees.

»Europe, too, had a very difficult starting point: deep divisions, high tensions, security viewed as a matter of military might only, no cooperation, no contacts, a great deal of uncertainty, mutual suspicion and generally a sense of insecurity prevailing everywhere. «

»I am asking myself whether the countries in this region would not have at least some common interests beyond the one already mentioned, i.e. that they would like to see a better, a more efficient way of ridding the Middle East/Gulf of the scourge of terrorism. «

Box No. 2: The CTBT as a Building Block for the WMD/DVs Free Zone**Welcome to Lassina Zerbo, CTBTO's Executive-Secretary, to APOME's Berlin Conference on May 3, 2016**

By Susanne Baumann, Deputy Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Berlin, Germany

Mr. Executive-Secretary, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The time is ripe.

The time is ripe for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force.

An effective Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty – in short: CTBT – constitutes an essential pillar of the global disarmament and nonproliferation architecture.

Against this backdrop, it is with great pleasure that I can present to you tonight CTBTO Executive-Secretary Dr. Lassina Zerbo as our keynote speaker.

We are all the more glad that you are here with us, Dr. Zerbo, as we know that you are working particularly tirelessly these days towards making the best possible use of the CTBT anniversary – for promoting entry into force and for raising international awareness of the unceasing importance of the CTBT as an effective treaty with an effective organization.

Already as the Director of the International Data Centre of the CTBTO, you contributed considerably to the detection of the tests conducted illegally by North Korea in 2006, 2009, and 2013.

In addition to ensuring that no nuclear test on our globe goes undetected, this unique monitoring system produces tremendous collateral benefits for civilian purposes such as valuable data for research or Tsunami warnings.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon aptly observed: "Even before entering into force, the CTBT is saving lives." This quote says it all. Signing the CTBT should be an obvious step – for several reasons.

Doing so would send a strong signal to the international community and, without doubt, produce ample goodwill worldwide. Signing and ratifying the CTBT also serves as an important confidence-building measure. It can help defuse tensions in regions such as South or East Asia and the Middle East. In times of crises and conflicts, it is of paramount importance to be able to count on regulatory frameworks.

But there is more: We are convinced that any country would benefit from engaging with the International Monitoring System from an early stage. Becoming a part of this global network of scientists, data and research would have a positive impact on many countries' research landscapes. We are firmly convinced that an early entry into force of the CTBT would be a milestone on the path leading us towards a world without nuclear weapons – a world safer for all nations and all of humanity.

I have sketched some of the benefits of an entry into force of the CTBT. Tonight we will focus on what a CTBT could mean for regional security. This is, in our assessment, an until now underestimated potential benefit of the Treaty. In your speech, Mr. Executive-Secretary, you will ask new and intriguing questions about whether a Test-free Zone in the Middle East might give a boost to the almost, it seems today, intractable project of a Zone in the Middle East Free of WMD and their Delivery Vehicles.

Germany believes that the project of a zone remains an important long-term goal.

After the last NPT RevCon, questions abound how we can come closer to the goal.

While there is often profound disagreement on the next steps, there is consensus that we need new ideas to make headway. This workshop organized by the ACADEMIC PEACE ORCHESTRA, which I had the honor of addressing this morning, is offering much needed space for reflection and for testing new concepts. After a day of intense discussions, we are now looking forward to hearing more about the promise of a Nuclear Test-free Zone in the Middle East for stability and cooperation. I am convinced that this speech will open new perspectives on two challenges of the greatest importance, the CTBT and the zone. To conclude with a quote from T.S. Eliot: "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

Thank you again, Mr. Executive-Secretary, for joining us tonight.



Lassina Zerbo speaking at the APOME Conference in Berlin

After all, there is always the option of engaging reverse gear if things go badly wrong.

To conclude, perhaps there could be a place for considering whether something like what I have tried to suggest could be worth further study and consideration. Maybe initial contacts could proceed without too much publicity to test the ground first.

Not everything needs to be done at once – let us think in terms of gradual progress, incremental steps and longer-term outcomes.

I know that right at this moment, when the situation in Syria and many other places is what it is and the fight against the ISIL continues, any proposal for peaceful negotiation seems far-fetched. I do not want to promote wishful thinking nor unrealistic goals. And I also know



that even the smallest of baby steps in these matters in the Middle East require enormous amount of courage and political will.

But could this not actually be the right time to begin thinking about such steps, however difficult?

Part II: The Finnish Facilitator and His Team – Their Relationship to the Track II-World

The Experience and Interactions of the Facilitator's Team with the Think Tank Community and Civil Society

By David Calic, Advisor, Vienna, Austria

Upon his appointment in October 2011 as Facilitator for the Helsinki Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction as well as their Delivery Vehicles, Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava together with his team swiftly began his work.

In addition to embarking on a myriad of official visits to the Middle East and beyond, the Facilitator and his team concurrently reached out to the think tank community and civil society.

There have been a good number of think tanks, institutes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and individual experts who have not only closely followed the vision of a Middle East Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction, but have also written extensively about this multifaceted issue and the possible ways of realizing it. The Facilitator and his team set out to utilize the wide spectrum of capabilities and knowledge offered by civil society. For instance, the strengths of some entities lay in their impressive academic work done in areas such as verification or confidence-building measures while others had a comparative advantage in their ability to arrange high-level meetings.

Without intending to give an exhaustive list of all the think tanks, NGOs and civil society members that had been helpful during our endeavor, I wish to highlight some that were particularly noteworthy (in no specific order): The EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, of which the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt is a leading partner, Wilton Park, Chatham House, BASIC and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace proved invaluable in convening their international

conferences as well as seminars. The respective platforms allowed the Facilitator and his team to benefit from having the majority of the leading experts and institutions, as well as an impressive number of high-level government representatives, in one place and focusing on very specific and pertinent topics.

The ability to muster experts and governmental representatives in Track II- and Track I.5-events was very useful. The Geneva Centre for Security Policy was of particular help in assisting, with generous support from the Swiss government, in the organization of the five informal consultations in Glion and subsequently Geneva. At the same time, in terms of academic research on past efforts and mapping out possible ways forward, the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, the Arms Control Association, SIPRI and last but not least PRIF/APOME played important roles. Others, such as the PIR Center in Moscow or the INSS in Tel Aviv provided a good opportunity to 'take the pulse' of the region.

All in all, the Facilitator and his team benefited considerably from the knowledge, expertise, research as well as the convening power of the community of think tanks, NGOs and civil society groups. They did indeed positively influence our efforts, not only by amplifying our understanding of some of the technical aspects of the diverse issues at hand, but also from past lessons learned (for instance from the ACRS working group). At the same time, while genuinely appreciating all the above-mentioned support and assistance, most of the challenges we faced during our deliberations and negotiations were influenced by issues of a political nature and to some extent by developments in the region. Nevertheless, I am convinced that in any renewed attempt to restart negotiations towards the establishment of a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East the substantive academic work available will undoubtedly have an impact, especially after the necessary political decisions by the stakeholders in the region have been made.

Track II-Perspective: What Did Track II-Initiatives Do, What Did They Achieve, and How Can They Be Better Coordinated? The Case of APOME

By Bernd W. Kubbig, APOME Project Group, PRIF, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

The ACADEMIC PEACE ORCHESTRA MIDDLE EAST is probably the only Track II-initiative

» Not everything needs to be done at once – let us think in terms of gradual progress, incremental steps and longer-term outcomes. «

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on a global scale which devoted all of its time and energy to providing ideas, concepts, and background information to the Finnish Facilitator and his team (see our website <http://academicpeaceorchestra.com/>). It did so through its series of POLICY BRIEFS for the Middle East Conference on a WMD/DVs Free Zone immediately after Amb. Laajava was selected by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in October 2011. These publications in turn were the outcome of the background papers provided by the participants (many of them from the conflict region) and discussed in a conference cycle also entirely devoted to the zonal issue from 2011 until 2016.

These activities at such an early date would have not been possible without the precursor project which since 2007 was devoted to the establishment of a Missile Free Zone in the Middle East/Gulf following the same organizational approach. The main outcome was the Routledge study (2012) “Arms Control and Missile Proliferation in the Middle East.”

Our collaboration efforts were vital at all possible levels: In conceptual terms it was the core of all our conference activities leading to the Routledge study with its Cooperative Security Concept which needed to be tailored to the much more complex and demanding issue of a WMD/DVs Free Zone. In organizational terms cooperation was the defining feature of our Project Group at PRIF, but also with respect to our dealings with our colleagues in preparing the conferences, encouraging them to write background papers and turning these into the Routledge book with its almost 40 authors. Our relations with our generous sponsors were also important and carried on in a cooperative manner as well. All in all, through these activities we have created an increasingly close-knit network among many academic and policy-relevant institutions and their representatives. Invitations to the workshops and activities of other institutions in the region (Arab Institute for Security Studies, Amman), in Europe (EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, Brussels) and in the United States (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C.) have made this network even more closely knit.

Output in terms of the above-mentioned workshops/conferences amounts to more than ten workshops and includes 50 issues of the POLICY BRIEF series with an electronic distribution network of more than 1,100 recipients. This series was in turn condensed in the study “A WMD/DVs Free Zone:

Taking Stock, Moving Forward Towards Cooperative Security” presented at a UN side-event in the context of the NPT RevCon on May 4, 2015.

Assessing APOME’s impact on the former Facilitator and his team as well as on decision-makers in the region cannot be accurate, and therefore has to be done with caution.

Nevertheless, all in all the impact we had was very limited. At the highest level our input did not lead to the paramount goal of convening the Helsinki Conference. In spite of the praise we received from decision-makers in the region for our (publication) activities, there are no indicators that reveal any influence exerted in terms of making their previous position more compromise-oriented. But my overall assessment is that our efforts and those of Amb. Laajava and his team occurred in different worlds, if not on different planets.

The work of the Track I-actors was down-to-earth and focused on the practical concerns of the conflicting parties over format and procedural questions which, from the point of view of the outside world of non-diplomats, looks at least at first glance like a waste of time and a waste of taxpayers’ money. But admittedly, from this on-the-ground Track I-perspective, our Track II-efforts must have looked similarly absurd: If you fight over the presence of the UN flag, the appropriate building, the language and meticulous wording of invitation letters you are not well positioned for long-term ideas and their visionary character. This is certainly even more the case if, month after month, year after year, you receive POLICY BRIEFS which not only deal with the weapons in question, but according to our conceptual framework make the issue even more complex, because those weapons were being considered in the regional context.

As a diplomat, the Facilitator had to act according to the rules of the Track I-world. At the same time, Amb. Laajava proved to be a highly experienced government-oriented actor. Occasionally I had the feeling that Track II-actors and activities stood in his way and distracted him from his work – although he increasingly seemed to recognize that the Track II-academics were doing useful work. It was probably not incidental that at the latest from early 2015 on he had time to reflect on the potential value of such activities. In our case this finally led to Amb. Laajava being named PRIF’s First Honorary Diplomat



Research Fellow as the crowning event of our work.

Looking ahead amounts to describing areas and ways of better coordination at the Track II- and I-levels as well as outlining old and new ways and ideas for overcoming the current stalemate after the failed NPT RevCon. This was the topic of the discussions at the Berlin Conference and included a number of proposals by the APOME Project Group.

Part III: Ambassador Laajava's Activities – an Outstanding Example of Finland's Historical Contributions to Peace and Security

“The Former Facilitator Speaks Out”

Interview with Amb. Jaakko Laajava by Bernd W. Kubbig and APOME Project Group, PRIF, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

Initial Impressions and Experiences

Q: *What were your first thoughts when UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced in October 2011 that Finland had been chosen as the host government for the 2012 Conference on the Establishment of a WMD/DVs Free Zone, and that you had been appointed as the Facilitator? It was known that there were other candidates from Canada and the Netherlands. Why Finland and why you?*

A: The selection of the Facilitator was a consultative process involving the Co-conveners, the states of the Middle East/Gulf and the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. It was not a competition as such. Of course, I do not know in detail what happened in these consultations and what preferences various parties perhaps had. I am convinced that my colleagues from the two other countries you mentioned would have been excellent choices as well. As to Finland, my government felt that this might be a good way to demonstrate our willingness to help the region and be available if needed. And I probably was of the right seniority for this kind of task.

No doubt I was excited about the appointment but at the same time I did realize that this was not going to be a nice picnic in a sunny garden but a very difficult and cumbersome undertaking, a big personal challenge.

Q: *How about your team? How did you work?*

A: The Finnish government invested quite a lot in this project. Immediately after my appointment I assembled a team from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland professionals and also an advisory group from outside, mainly from the Nordic countries. I was very fortunate to be able to establish a dream team consisting of both senior Ambassadors and mid-level career diplomats. Also the expert group was first class.

We engaged in tremendously active consultation with almost all countries in the conflict region and beyond, first listening carefully to everybody and later conducting informal meetings with most of the future participants in the planned Helsinki Conference. Everybody was invited. We also took part in numerous conferences and other activities of civil society.

Q: *Your background was primarily in East-West and transatlantic issues, not so much in the Middle East. How did you find working with the countries of the region? Any surprises?*

A: True, I had not worked with the Middle East affairs but I had some experience with arms control and disarmament. I tried to compensate for this by inviting regional experts into my team. Yes, I must humbly say that not everything was easy for me, coming from the culture of Northern Europe where everything is supposed to happen in a super-rational, timely and almost clinically pragmatic way. In the Middle East, I learned soon to take a slightly different approach and build first relationships with my interlocutors. I learned a lot, and all in all, it became a very enriching experience for me personally.

Q: *The text of the Mandate from the 2010 Action Plan was pretty clear and concrete and the Conference was to be already held in 2012. Was there anything left to negotiate?*

A: The Action Plan provided the framework for us, that was clear. In fact, during our many consultations, no one proposed changing the text of the Mandate. But we had to find an agenda and modalities for the Conference to be held in Helsinki, which was to be attended by all states of the region. In addition, according to the UN studies, all WMD Free Zones should

be based on arrangements freely arrived at by the states concerned. Consequently, we needed an agreement on how to approach the theme, an agreement on the formulation of the agenda. And if the international community, in the context of the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, decides to appoint a Facilitator, the expectation is that there may be different points of view and in order to get to an agreement, some negotiation is needed, helped where necessary by the Facilitator.

Q: *Was the available time frame sufficient? Was it realistic? The Conference was to be held very soon after your appointment, already in 2012.*

A: Every diplomat knows that if there is no time pressure at all, usually only very little can be achieved. It was unfortunately a reality that, in 2012, we were still very far from an agreement. Only when we were able to meet as a group, first in Glion and then in Geneva, did real progress become possible. Some items such as the organizational aspects as well as the rules of procedure seemed relatively easy to solve. The difficult point was the agenda. Actually, the real reason why we were unable to get to Helsinki had most to do, in my mind, with the lack of mutual trust by the various sides. It seemed really difficult for the participants to develop mutual confidence in each other's declared intentions. Had there been greater mutual trust it might have been possible to envisage a process which would have been seen as balanced, satisfying different needs and priorities.

Q: *What kept you motivated during all these months and years? The region itself experienced major and dramatic changes, a burgeoning transformation. There were violent conflicts in the region and the Helsinki Conference seemed to become a distant dream. Did you worry about this?*

A: Yes, the circumstances were not very good for constructive initiatives such as this. My team and I nevertheless took an optimistic view. We did not want to talk about failure as an option, we did not want to add to the negative atmosphere already prevailing. We thought that even if our efforts did not yield immediate results, this type of broad preparatory dialogue, increased mutual contacts and improved communication, while the goals of the Mandate remained intact,

Box No. 3: Our Repeated Encouragement as Track II-Experts

APOME Project Group: Lisa Weis, Bernd W. Kubbig, Sophia Wenzel, and Fionn Harnischfeger

“Dear Ambassador Laajava, we strongly support your appointment! Due to the neutrality of your country and your personal optimism and accomplishments on the way towards peace we have high expectations for you and believe that you are the right person for this difficult task. We explicitly encourage you to take an active and impartial role during the process that we hope will lead to the establishment of a WMD/DVs Free Zone in the Middle East. We encourage you to remain determined when lack of progress or impediments stand before you and the fulfillment of your important, indeed historic, mission. We would like to conclude with a thought expressed by one of us which we all share: “Please understand the status quo and its related problems, but please highlight the fact that we all want a safer Middle East.”

Source: Bernd W. Kubbig et al. (2011) Welcome, Mr. Facilitator! The Track II Community Endorses Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, POLICY BRIEF No. 6, Frankfurt/Main: PRIF, p. 8, in Cooperation with Walid Abu-Dalbouh, Ahmed Al-Wahishi, Ioannis Anastasakis, S. Gülden Ayman, Gawdat Bahgat, István Balogh, Anwar Eshki, Mohamed Noman Galal, Nursin Atesoglu Güney, Nasser Hadian, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Ayman Khalil, Judith Palmer Harik, Riccardo Redaelli, Nasser Saghafi-Ameri, Mahmood Sarioghalam, and Mohammad K. Shiyab.

Plan Mandate, the Helsinki Conference was to be “attended by all States of the region.” How did the smaller countries, including Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, and Somalia feel about the Conference? How did you reach out to them?

A: I must say that the cooperation among the group of Co-conveners remained excellent throughout the process. Of course, all of us realized full well that there would be some difference in nuances and preferences, but the overwhelming common desire was to assist and support the states of the Middle East/Gulf to make progress in this vitally important area of WMD nonproliferation and disarmament in the Middle East. Improved security in that region would be in the interest of the entire international community.

Certainly, there were moments when the Co-conveners had divergent views. One of the difficult points was the situation at the end of 2012, which the Action Plan mentioned as the year of the Conference. At the same time, the Mandate emphasized that the Conference should be “attended by all States of the region.” And we were not able to envisage that because of the lack of agreement regarding what the Conference’s agenda and arrangements would be.

As to the more distant members, we tried to reach out to everybody, at least within the context of various international conferences and the like. But we also traveled to many capitals to seek their views and consult them. And we also participated in multilateral meetings, for instance with the Arab League, where all their members were invited.

Let me also add that we also reached out to countries outside the Middle East region, particularly to those which had shown special interest in our project.

Q: *The task of the Facilitator of course was to act as a neutral actor in the process. How did you accomplish that in view of the fact that the world view of the West was certainly more familiar to you, coming from an EU member state? What about Moscow? And were there any state actors from the Middle East, for instance Israel, closer to your own thinking?*

A: Unfortunately, the point of departure for my activities was not exactly symmetrical. As NPT members, all Arab States

would in themselves be a small but important contribution to prospects for improved security in the Middle East. In any case, I believe that the WMD-related issues in the region will need further consideration and deliberations in the future, too.

Q: *With the benefit of hindsight, what would you do differently today if you had the chance?*

A: There is no question that this was of course a new experience for me and for everybody. Mistakes were certainly made. My team and I tried to do everything in our power to make progress. But this was not a one-man show, not at all. I am a little concerned that you seem to focus very much on my person as the Facilitator. This was a collective effort by the states of the region, the Co-conveners and the Facilitator. The issues we dealt with had to do with serious national security interests of the participating

countries. They had to have ownership of the process; they had to be in the driver’s seat. Facilitation only works if there is something to facilitate, a willingness by the parties to come together. No amount of facilitation can make a project succeed if the parties do not have the will to agree. It all boils down ultimately to questions of political will and mutual trust.

The Co-conveners and the States of the Region

Q: *How would you characterize your relationship with the group of Co-conveners, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Secretary-General of the United Nations? Did you feel that there was a kind of asymmetry? Obviously, the bilateral U.S.-Russia relationship was not in good shape. How about their cooperation with regard to Syria’s chemical weapons? How did that affect your work?*

And what about the broader membership of the Arab League? According to the Action



and Iran had already, at least in principle, committed themselves to the decision to have a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction as well as their Delivery Vehicles, as contained in the 2010 Action Plan. Israel did not have that commitment – that was clearly stated publicly by the Israeli Prime Minister immediately after the adoption of the Action Plan of 2010. But my task was to try to facilitate the convening of such a Conference. Its convening was the task of the four Co-conveners.

As to the world view, no one can claim indifference as to where he or she comes from. But I think the overriding task of a Facilitator is to try to act in a fair manner. My team and I certainly tried our very best to do just that. A Facilitator in any negotiation process always tries to bring the parties together and facilitate their discussion with the aim to arriving at an agreement acceptable to all. This was not always easy because of the fundamental asymmetry that I referred to above.

Q: *On that point we have heard for instance some Arab countries criticizing you for not respecting equidistance and saying that you understood the point of view of Israel better. And there has also been criticism regarding the role of the United Nations. What would you say about this kind of criticism?*

A: I have never participated in a blame game and will not do so now either. I am ready to look into the mirror. Perhaps some things could have been done better. I do understand that this is a very complex and complicated project touching upon very important national security interests of the regional state actors. I want to respect everyone's position even if the positions are miles apart from each other. My effort has always been to try to build common ground but in trying to do so, different parties can interpret my activities as favoring one or another side, particularly in view of the asymmetric points of departure of the entire process. I must emphasize, however, that the teams of the Middle East/Gulf countries and my team – and indeed also the team of the Co-conveners – enjoyed very good working relationships during the entire effort, in spite of often divergent views. I hold everyone's contribution in high regard.

As to the United Nations I cannot but praise the Secretary-General's personal interest in what we tried to accomplish. I met him quite frequently as he wanted to be fully informed. He also always gave us his full support. I greatly enjoyed working with Ms. Angela Kane, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. We were in constant contact, if not daily, at least weekly or bi-weekly. The same applied to my distinguished colleagues from the three depositary states, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We really worked together seamlessly.

Q: *Do you think that this kind of structure with four Co-conveners with the UN being one among them was the right way to try to do this? Was the idea to appoint a Facilitator to act between the different groups a good one if any effort by a Facilitator would in any case be viewed as one-sided?*

A: I think I might not be the right person to answer that. The whole construction was agreed upon before I became involved at all. In any case, I think that the role of the depositaries – and even more broadly the cooperative role envisaged for the five permanent members of the UN Security Council in the context of any WMD Free Zone – must be taken into account.

Lessons Learned

Q: *As to the future, what kind of thoughts do you have? Obviously, against the backdrop of the NPT Review Conference of 2015 and its failure to agree on any concluding document, the process of the Middle East WMD Free Zone has come to a halt, at least for now. The Arab side made a proposal for a different Middle East process focused on the role of the United Nations, which was not approved by the RevCon. So, what next? Do you anticipate a direct continuation of the dynamics of the Glion/Geneva process any time soon, or perhaps some other way of proceeding? At PRIF we have talked about alternative approaches and focused, inter alia, on the fact that there is now a new situation with regard to Iran, which accepted the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in July 2015. This may have important repercussions with regard to the entire Middle East and particularly the Gulf sub-region. At the same time the tragedy of Syria and the terrorist activities of the ISIL continue. The entire Middle East is going through a volatile transformation. Do you see any new possibilities emerging in all of this?*

A: Part of me is a deep pessimist, part of me an incurable optimist. Of course, nobody can ignore the tremendous challenges the Middle East region is facing today. We need to be realistic in our endeavors. Yet, it is always a good idea to try to see the forest for the trees. While talking about a WMD-free Middle East we are in fact talking about the entire security horizon of the region. The reason why we were not able to make progress with the Helsinki Conference right now may not be just a simple technical failure or a result of a tactical-political zero-sum game. I can see full well that we could have accomplished something more. Possibly, the Helsinki Conference could even have started – in fact, we were not all that far from an agreement regarding the agenda and the modalities for Helsinki. But I can only repeat that we clearly lacked the mutual confidence which would have enabled us to begin a meaningful joint effort in Helsinki.

What increases my optimism is that we now have Iran with the deal regarding its nuclear program and the lifting of sanctions and that we also have witnessed the chemical disarmament in Syria. I can also point to the fact that many countries in the region are working together with the interim CTBTO – perhaps there may be some common interests with respect to a Nuclear Test-free Zone in the Middle East/Gulf (see Box No. 2).

Q: *How do you see the impact of the JCPOA with Iran? It is of course known that this Agreement is viewed in other parts of the Middle East with considerable suspicion. What do you think about the regional role of Iran and its allies including the role of Hezbollah and others? What about the ISIL? You have sometimes mentioned the role of the CSCE – the early phase of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe – which later became the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. What is your view on these issues?*

A: Of course, only time will tell, but as to the implementation so far of the JCPOA, my impression is that Iran is doing what it is committed to do within the nuclear file. I personally think that the Nuclear Accord was a welcome thing, an excellent achievement, but of course much depends on Iran's domestic developments, on the country's future role in its neighborhood and also on how the neighbors perceive it.

In the present circumstances it may seem totally unrealistic to talk about the emergence of common interests in the region, or at least in the sub-region of the Gulf. Yet, the broad outlook is that the governments must be able to combat the scourge of terrorism in order to gain the trust of their respective populations. Insecurity sows the seeds of instability. The region's governments would find it easier to combat terrorism more efficiently if they engaged in solid cooperation across various borders. Furthermore, future global energy needs will increasingly be satisfied with more renewables and less oil. At the same time, millions of young men in the region are without positive perspectives for their future. Radicalization of societies is a serious risk. Increase of economic opportunities both regionally and in the global marketplace would be most welcome for everybody in the Middle East.

Q: *So you think that arms control and disarmament alone are not the answer?*

A: Obviously, progress in arms control and disarmament would be most welcome, because they can contribute to improved stability and peace. A Middle East WMD Free Zone should in any case remain the goal. But there are other important opportunities to which I already have alluded. Let me also mention the work that was carried out within the multilateral track after the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, the so-called Arms Control and Regional Security talks. I know that they did not yield any final results and many view them in a negative light. Nevertheless, these talks showed that if there is political will, countries of the region can find ways to increase confidence through the adoption of measures of greater military transparency and better exchange of information. That political will was not there earlier, but perhaps the situation would be different today.

I will also mention that a number of countries in the Middle East region will build their nuclear energy capacity during the next few years and decades. This also calls for better international cooperation in order to guarantee the best possible safety and security of the relevant installations.

But I have also referred to the big question of the lack of mutual trust. Without it, it will be very difficult to engage in sustainable cooperative solutions. It is of course understandable why this is so. Fundamentally important issues in the region remain unresolved, and conflicts abound.

Q: *Are you suggesting more confidence-building measures?*

A: They may provide a good starting point but probably even they cannot solve the deeper issue of distrust.

I know that one should not try and transfer anything from one geographical region to another. In any case, everything should be adjusted to the prevailing regional circumstances. And I want to emphasize that everything should be based on the wishes and initiatives coming from the region itself. These things cannot and should not be imposed by anyone else but promoted by the regional actors themselves.

There are various methods by which the necessary trust could be generated. The region itself is the best judge for finding solutions that are appropriate to the Middle East.

Q: *Again, the CSCE Process comes to mind.*

A: The European experience could serve as a source for inspiration, I was very much involved in the early CSCE Process, the Helsinki Process, already in the early 1970s. Europe then was a quite dark place with an Iron Curtain separating it into two parts, a division that made any communication and cooperation between countries on different sides virtually impossible. The Cold War was overwhelming and all-encompassing, tensions were high. There were many unresolved issues, starting with the divided Germany and its future.

The first idea was that we needed some degree of predictability as well as common fundamental rules of state behavior. This was done by agreeing on a set of principles guiding relations between the participating countries – and not just the titles, but also details of how these principles had to be interpreted. Second, we had to agree on the peaceful settlement of disputes and

methods to be applied there. Third, we needed measures in the military field to reduce the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation of normal military activities.

All of this was supported by detailed programs to foster cooperation in trade, economy, and science and finally complemented by a humanitarian dimension, freer flow of persons, ideas and information as well as exchanges in the field of culture and education.

It took about two years to agree on the detailed program of action, the so-called Helsinki Final Act. It was adopted at the highest level in Helsinki in the summer of 1975. And the process continued with a variety of follow-up seminars and conferences.

This certainly looks like pie in the sky in the Middle East circumstances. Yet, something like this might actually be needed to address the root causes of the many intractable problems today in the Middle East.

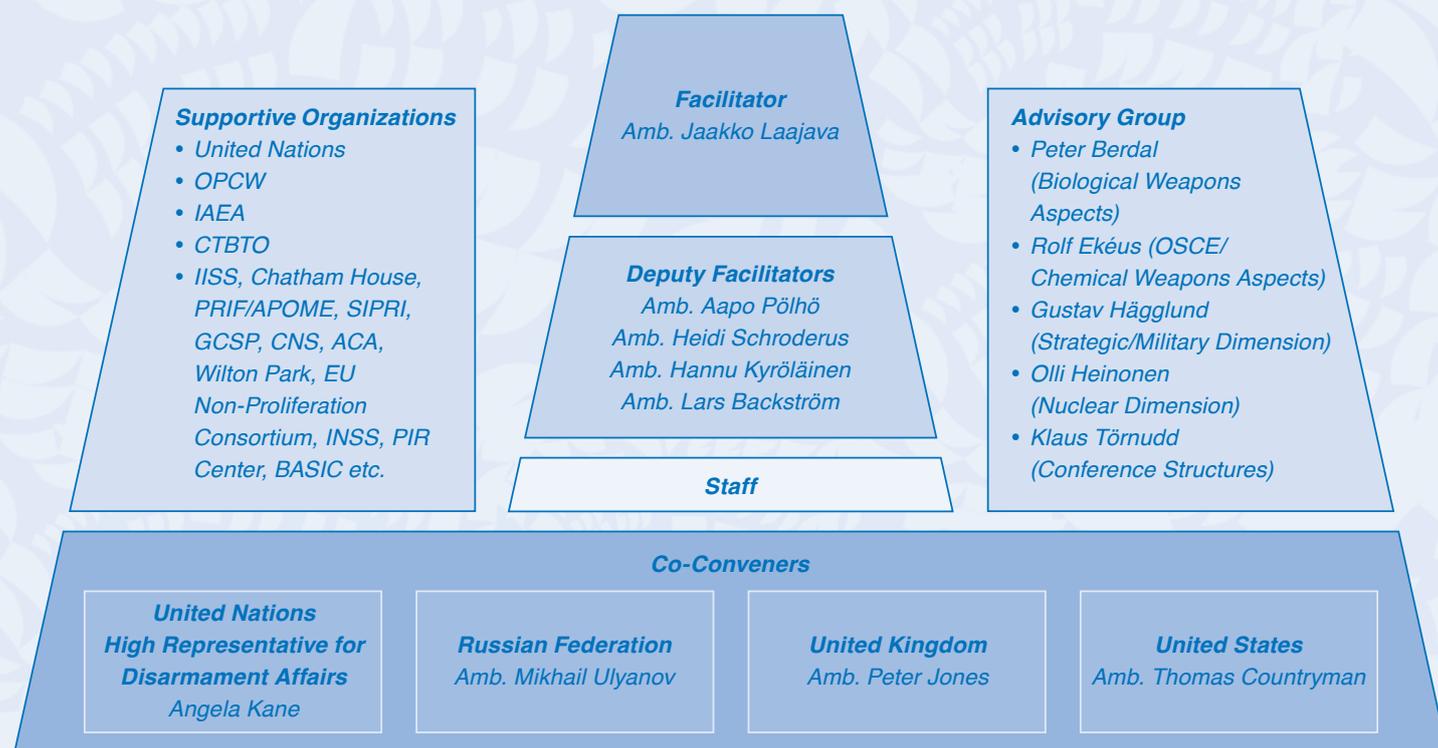
Q: *One of the more problematic relationships today is between Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. And certainly, we all are worried about the ISIL. What is your view?*

A: With the ISIL, the terror caliphate which beheads and murders innocent people, there can be no negotiation. Most countries of the world seem to agree on that point. But in many other instances, groups engaged in radicalism may change their ways of operation, renounce the use of violence and become parts of a political process. As to the bilateral relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Iran, much depends on how Tehran sees its regional ambitions after the sanctions. Is Iran going to continue its revolutionary opposition to Western positions, or will it seek a different path towards a much more responsible future? This is what the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif seem to envisage. Whether such a change would be seen as a positive step in the Saudi government, that remains to be seen. I certainly hope for a mutual process of positive measures.

I believe that if the governments of the region and particularly of the sub-region of the Gulf would sit together to find



Graph No. 1: The Facilitator's Supportive Environment



out whether they in fact have a number of common interests, this would indeed amount to such a mutual process of positive measures. Combating terrorism, reducing the risk of radicalization, seeking economic revitalization through better and freer trade flows, both regional and beyond, being able to count on better predictability of the behavior of state actors and increasing contacts in all fields would be a formidable list of candidates for such interests.

Q: *It all sounds too good to be true. Aren't you frustrated by the fact that the WMD-related process did not accomplish what it was supposed to do, i.e., the launch of the Helsinki Conference? Haven't the last four to five years convinced you that, in the Middle East, even the best efforts ultimately fail?*

A: The region no doubt is famous in this regard, that is true. My last posting abroad was London and I became interested in the way Churchill conducted the war effort. One of the major points he always repeated was: Never give in! Never, never, never give in! I certainly want to avoid being delusional and I understand full well the deep reasons why things are so difficult in the Middle East. You have to believe, however, in what you do – a Facilitator should not radiate disbelief and defeatism but

rather point to the opportunities. Yet to seize such opportunities, that is the responsibility of the states of the region. Outsiders can perhaps help and assist, but the leadership must emanate from the region itself in order for the results to be sustainable in the longer term.

Finland's Unnoticed Early Role for Establishing the CSCE Process and the Current Situation in the Middle East/Gulf after the Failed RevCon 2015: Surprising Similarities

By Bernd W. Kubbig, APOME Project Group, PRIF, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

Introductory Remarks

In view of the current stalemate it is imperative to explore various ways of overcoming the predominant atmosphere of disappointment and recrimination among governments by drawing attention to constructive experiences of the past. This includes the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe as a creative point of reference for communication, consultation, and conference processes in the Middle East.¹ The following two aspects relevant for such an endeavor come to mind:

First, the focus on Finland's unnoticed creative and innovative early role in the

late 1960s/early 1970s shows how informal and uncertain the processes were – thus, the usual contrast of the highly formalized and institutionalized European developments with the unstructured ones in the Middle East pales in significance. Of course, the inter-regional differences cannot be ignored. Second, this contrast is meant to be an encouragement by showing that even the CSCE Process had its different and difficult phases – it is a success story only with hindsight. This implies a new look at the CSCE literature.

Helsinki's Overlooked Early Informal Preparatory Activities

For most of the studies consulted (see Box No. 4 and Further Reading) on this extremely well covered Conference, including the official role of Finland, start this way: The Helsinki Process began on November 22, 1972 with formal multilateral preparatory talks taking place in Dipoli, the hall of a technical institute on the outskirts of the Finnish capital. These talks were “in many ways the key to the entire subsequent negotiation, since they set the agenda and the procedures that guided the Conference throughout its existence. The issues dealt with at the preparatory talks ranged from fundamental questions of substance, such as the titles of the ten principles whose texts were to be negotiated, to minor but important points of details, such as the seating arrangements.”² The Final Recommendations of the Helsinki Consultations became after six months of preparatory talks the “sole guidebook” for the subsequent negotiations starting with the opening of the CSCE in Helsinki in July 1973.³

With the exception of the solid and detailed account by Markku Reimaa (2008),⁴ the earlier activities are only mentioned in passing (including in our previous work) usually by going back to a date no earlier than September 1972: In the guise of a tea party at the level of Ambassadors, informal talks had taken place in the Finnish capital between September and November 1972, to be followed by the multilateral consultations convened on November 22 of that year.⁵

None of the studies consulted involves a coherent, empirically adequate academic piece of work on those informal activities of the Finnish government, not to mention possible Track II-efforts. Already at an early stage the government, cautious as it was, acted

as a political risk taker and in procedural terms as an innovative initiator. The major actors revealed their diplomatic skillfulness at its best in exploring ways that aimed at improving security in Europe in a cooperative setting with a conference process at its center. At the diplomatic level, the Finnish government had interpreted the attitude of the NATO countries as indicating that in the spring of 1969 the West was prepared in principle to join a security conference. On May 5, 1969 the government of Prime Minister Ahti Karjalainen commenced its role as an initiator by sending diplomatic notes to all European governments, offering to act as host for preparatory talks and for the Conference itself, “thus giving the idea of a conference its first fixed element: the site.”⁶ The Conference idea goes back to the first Soviet proposal by Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov in 1954. The time of this idea, it seemed, had finally come.

In view of the strongly positive responses, Helsinki stepped up its efforts in exploring the possibility of the conference idea in greater detail at the bilateral level, when Ralph Enckell was named Special Envoy on February 23, 1970.⁷ Enckell and his team began their so-called explorations in summer 1970 in a way that can in principle be compared to the much more modest ‘paving-the-way’ character of our Laajava-centered project at the Track II-level: Over a considerable time span the Finns collected information on the security concerns of the prospective members of an international gathering. The results led to the Finnish aide-mémoire of November 24, 1970, which took the preparatory activities a big step further by asking all interested states to instruct their chiefs of mission posted in Helsinki or other representatives to start discussions with the Finnish government. They began in spring of 1972, to be followed by the Dipoli talks already mentioned that would start on November 22, 1972. For these talks the aide-mémoire “a notable piece of Finnish diplomacy,”⁸ constituted the agreed-upon basis. Here, the famous baskets were born. In January 1973, Switzerland grouped the proposals developed at the Dipoli talks into the basket categories.⁹

Why does it make sense to elaborate on the motivations as well as on domestic, regional and international conditions for the “considerable exploring and catalyst work”¹⁰ of the Finnish initiators of what later became the Helsinki Conference Process?

- First of all, to study those developments would enrich the CSCE-related policy field, and it would certainly be a way of doing justice to Finland’s overlooked policy activities in those years. This would especially be the case if the author(s) had access to the relevant official Finnish documents. An analysis of those early informal preparatory activities could also enrich and modify an observation in the CSCE literature, namely that the official CSCE Process was the multilateral result and not the beginning of détente.¹¹
- Second, such a study would compare, and in fact contrast the nearly 60 trips in 1970/71 that Ralph Enckell and his team made and the approximately 400 trips made four decades later by Jaakko Laajava and his colleagues between 2011 and 2015. To be sure, Enckell’s trip were part of a successful diplomacy leading conceptually to the famous baskets and organizationally to the Helsinki Conference Process. But comparing these two world-class Finnish diplomats would also mean elaborating on the highly different contexts. And yet, such a comparison would honor both diplomats in that it is likely to reveal that Amb. Laajava followed in many respects his predecessor’s way. The first screening of the historic documents indicates striking parallels when it comes to working behind the scenes, opting for a sequencing of bilateral and multilateral talks, and opposing the requirement that states interested in informal talks would have to participate in formal ones.
- Third, as mentioned at the beginning, an empirically sound account would correct the notion that all those activities, well prepared as they were on the part of the Finnish government, would have automatically led to the hoped-for conference. Therefore, the view that the “idea” of a conference process – not just one meeting – “was in the air” indeed implied that the Finnish activities had proven to be cumbersome albeit promising.¹² In retrospect, Jaakko Laajava recalled in his email on August 26, 2015 to the APOME Project Group, how insecure the perspectives for a conference were: “Indeed, for many months; the consultations were in fact only about the question of a Conference, not about the arrangements for the Conference itself.”



Graph No. 2: Core Dates Regarding Amb. Laajava's Activities



A New Look at the CSCE Literature

We are well aware of the manifold barriers to any attempts at transferring the CSCE-related principles, procedures, and structures from the East-West context to a different region such as the Middle East/Gulf. The skepticism widely expressed in the rich literature assessing the transfer potential cannot be ignored. The specifics of the fragmented Middle East/Gulf with its partly overlapping conflict formations and permanently changing alliances can hardly be compared with the confrontational setting including their respective hegemon USA and USSR, the mostly settled border issues, and the agreement on major principles. This is why we regard the CSCE Process with its manifold experiences, forums, formats, and mechanisms as an inspiring point of reference, and not as a model. Nevertheless, in a number of respects the often contrasted perspective on Europe versus the Middle East is simplistic. The CSCE-related literature consulted often conveys not only the impression that the pre-Conference activities followed a detailed script, but that the Final Act (contrary to the situation in the Middle East/Gulf) was the result of negotiations mainly between two antagonistic 'blocks' – when in fact it was “the product of a long process of bargaining between five categories of actors,” and even this scheme is regarded as a “simplified categorization” of the actors in the Helsinki Conference Process.¹³

Similarly, early overly pessimistic predictions on the transfer potential of CSCE-related aspects and achievements for instance on the grouping of issues into baskets have been overtaken by history – the five working groups established in the first half of the 1990s as part of the Madrid

Peace Process have clearly shown this. It is surprising that the literature consulted has at times ignored not only the ACRS talks but also the additional Track II-initiative in the mid-2000s on creating a Gulf WMD Free Zone. With respect to the geographical scope of a zone (sub-regional or all-encompassing), for instance, this has led to an either-or setting. But this has meanwhile become obsolete, since both approaches have been conceptualized in the literature as complementary. Sometimes, early achievements in the CSCE area need to be specified – with the result that the gap between the regions narrows:

- The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 is not legally binding, but only of a voluntary nature.
- Confidence-building measures were dealt with in a small section only and were “initially included to justify the word ‘security’ in the title of the conference, rather than to promote significant dialogue. [...] With hindsight it can be said that the Helsinki CBMs were extremely modest.”¹⁴ The ACRS talks, after all, produced four results, which were, however, not realized.
- In the same vein, the Final Act establishes four methods for promoting confidence and security. The wording “usual diplomatic channels” possibly reflects “the lack of institutions in the early CSCE.” Also the Final Act is weak in that it “only offers a rhetorical argument for disarmament.”¹⁵

This new look at the CSCE and the literature is not meant to belittle the achievements or justified inter-regional contrasts – but it may

**Box No. 4: CSCE Literature Consulted
(in Addition to Studies Cited in
Endnotes and Further Reading)**

Ljubivoje Acimovic (1981) *Problems of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Alphen aan den Rijn: Sijthoff & Noordhoff International Publishers.*

John Borawski (1992) *Security for a New Europe: The Vienna Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures 1989-90, and Beyond, London: Brassey's.*

Ulrike Borchardt (1991) 'Veränderliche Geometrie der Festung Europa: Zu einer Konferenz für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit im Mittelmeerraum', *Mediatus* (11:7-8), 5-9.

Willy Brandt (1991) 'Eine Friedensordnung für den Nahen Osten', *Europa-Archiv* (45:5), 137-142.

Wilfried von Bredow (1992) *Der KSZE-Prozeß: Von der Zählung zur Auflösung des Ost-West-Konflikts, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.*

'Das jordanische Konzept einer KSZNO' (1991) *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift, No. 6, 508-511.*

Manfred Efinger (1989) 'Vertrauens- und sicherheitsbildende Maßnahmen in und für Europa: Ein Schritt auf dem Wege zur Verregelung der Ost-West-Beziehungen?', in Beate Kohler-Koch (ed.) *Regime in den internationalen Beziehungen, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 343-384.*

Mir A. Ferdowsi (1992) 'Die KSZE als Modell? Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Anwendung in der Dritten Welt', *Europa-Archiv* (46:3), 76-84.

Dalia Dassa Kaye (2001) *Beyond the Handshake: Multilateral Cooperation in the Arab-Israeli Peace Process, 1991-1996, New York, NY: Columbia University Press.*

Christian Koch and Christian-Peter Hanelt (2015) *A Gulf Conference for Security and Cooperation Could Bring Peace and Greater Security to the Middle East, Dubai: Gulf Research Center (GRC Gulf Papers).*

Michael Zielinski (1985) *Vertrauen und Vertrauensbildende Maßnahmen: Ein sicherheitspolitisches Instrument und seine Anwendung in Europa, Frankfurt/Main and New York: Campus Verlag.*

be helpful to highlight the obvious: Successes need a positive environment. Despite fundamental differences, some basic experiences can and should be transferred to the Middle East/Gulf in terms of encouragement: The literature emphasizes the difficulties – sometimes close to breaking point – which were part of an often time-consuming and cumbersome development in this area. Therefore, patience is a must – there were hardly any quick fixes. The CSCE Process as a success story only with the wisdom of hindsight showed: Communication and cooperation is, in principle, possible among adversaries who may come to realize that the avoidance of (nuclear) war can constitute common interests. The CSCE Process also showed that conflict formations, paramount as they are, are not carved in stone – they are human made and can be changed accordingly. And: Specific challenges within and beyond the security realm, such as water and the environment, can only be constructively tackled cooperatively.

Against this background, détente, which came to be accepted in the phase of the early informal pre-CSCE talks, forbade the use of force to eliminate the adversaries. This common understanding made a concept possible, which was to balance different interests in the form of baskets, allowing for a 'tit-for-tat' approach to negotiations: the acceptance of human rights demanded by the West in exchange for recognition of the existing borders in Europe and access to Western technology on the Soviet/Eastern European side.¹⁶ This possibility of negotiating interest-driven cross-basket package deals has so far not been transferable. An enlarged concept, which explicitly adds the basket of economic cooperation for instance, would make a difference. Within the security area isles of quid pro quo and of mutual restraint can easily be identified, e.g. joint anti-ISIL activities even in the context of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry.

Part IV: Statements Honoring Ambassador Laajava's Work

The starting point for the intense cooperation efforts of Amb. Laajava and the APOME Team was an international conference organized by the APOME Project Group on December 8-9, 2015, in Frankfurt, sponsored by the German Foundation for Peace Research and the Ecumenical Center of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau and of Kurhessen-Waldeck, represented by its Director Detlev Knoche. Thank you for your support!

important kick-off meeting for future discussions and conferences. During the two-day workshop, more than thirty experts from eleven countries discussed promising ideas and organizational matters to overcome the current stalemate on the governmental level. To cope with the regional challenges, experts from Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey took part in the Frankfurt Conference. It was on this occasion, specifically arranged to highlight Amb. Laajava's role as the former Facilitator, that colleagues from the Track I- and II-areas honored his activities between 2011 and 2015.

Welcome to PRIF, Amb. Laajava!

By Klaus Dieter Wolf, Member of the Executive Board and Head of Research Department, PRIF, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

It is a great honor for me to welcome Ambassador Laajava on behalf of the PRIF Executive Board to this Conference series on "Creating New Momentum for Non-proliferation and Disarmament in the Middle East." Let me take the opportunity to express my sincere thanks to my colleague Dr. Bernd W. Kubbig, who directs the PEACE ORCHESTRA's Project Group at PRIF and who has been able to attract Ambassador Laajava to Frankfurt as PRIF's First Honorary Diplomat Research Fellow. To preserve this appointment for posterity, PRIF spared neither expense nor effort, and I am proud to hand over this unique table nameplate to Ambassador Laajava (see foto on p. 22).

Dr. Kubbig has also succeeded in bringing together a unique group of experts for this workshop. After the NPT Review Conference failed earlier this year, this is an important initiative which will hopefully develop innovative ideas for creating new momentum.

Let me express PRIF's thanks to two institutions which generously contributed to funding this workshop: the German Foundation for Peace Research, represented by its Director, Dr. Thomas Held, and the Ecumenical Center of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau and of Kurhessen-Waldeck, represented by its Director Detlev Knoche. Thank you for your support!

I wish the conferences here in Frankfurt and in Berlin in spring 2016, as well as the overall background project every success. Welcome again and thank you for participating!



APOME's International Conference in Berlin May 3-4, 2016

The Role of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau as Part of Civil Society in Supporting the Facilitator

By Detlev Knoche, Director, Ecumenical Center of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau and of Kurhessen-Waldeck, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

It is a great pleasure for me to cordially welcome Ambassador Laajava here in Frankfurt in his new capacity as PRIF's First Honorary Diplomat Research Fellow.

I represent an institution – the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau – that has a long tradition when it comes to supporting peace initiatives. The most famous name is of course Martin Niemöller, the first President of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau after World War II, who stands for innovative peace initiatives. Not all of them were welcomed at the beginning. In my view, the life of our First Church President after 1945 is symbolic, especially in one respect which can also be transferred to the Middle East: It regards the relevance of mental change. Martin Niemöller started as a submarine commander in World War I and later became a pastor of the protestant church in resistance to the Nazi Regime and struggling for peace and reconciliation after World War II.

In my view, a similar kind of mental change is needed among decision-makers in the Middle East: to learn that the prevailing strategies of solving security problems by unilateral measures (most of them involving arms build-ups) can be better resolved by cooperative initiatives.

Ambassador Laajava's activities, as the former Facilitator, stand for one more

important principle: Conference processes are a vital element of any regional peace strategy. To be sure, we all deplore that the international gathering envisaged in the capital of your country did not take place to discuss the substance of a Zone Free of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons as well as their Delivery Vehicles. But thanks to his efforts and to those of his team, he managed to bring all the vital Middle East/Gulf players together in Switzerland on five occasions. They all sat together at one table! That is quite an achievement! Thus, he created a communication process which is so badly needed in that conflict region.

I understand that Ambassador Laajava, with his colleagues inside and outside PRIF, is now looking ahead not only to learning from past failures but also to building on successes, as limited as they may have been. This Conference series is another attempt at exploring new ideas for nonproliferation and disarmament which the Middle East/Gulf needs so badly. For the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, it is another opportunity to financially support an important activity of the Peace Research Institute, this time together with the German Foundation for Peace Research in Osnabrück. It has been a pleasure to be among those actors in civil society who have supported Amb. Laajava's diplomatic efforts and that of his team as a cooperation partner and co-sponsor of the ORCHESTRA's conferences and its output: the POLICY BRIEF series edited by the APOME Project Group of PRIF.

I congratulate Amb. Laajava on his new position here at this Frankfurt-based institute, and I wish him a productive conference as the starting point for cooperative efforts until summer next year.

» In my view, a similar kind of mental change is needed among decision-makers in the Middle East: to learn that the prevailing strategies of solving security problems by unilateral measures (most of them involving arms build-ups) can be better resolved by cooperative initiatives. «

Building on Experiences: Reviewing the Facilitator's Efforts

By Angela Kane, Former United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, New York, NY, United States

The aim of the current APOME Conference series is to jointly explore ideas together with my good friend Ambassador Jaakko Laajava on how to overcome the current stalemate in the so-called “Middle East Resolution” to create a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Vehicles. This Resolution was agreed upon over twenty years ago, in 1995, and the subsequent commitment in 2010 to hold a Conference to advance the issue were essential elements of first, agreement to indefinitely extend the NPT and, second, to successful conclusion of the 2010 NPT Review Conference after the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

Following his appointment as Facilitator in October 2011, Ambassador Laajava was untiring in his efforts to achieve progress on a complex and difficult task. He consulted widely in the region, he held numerous meetings between the Co-conveners – the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom,

the United States, and the United Nations – and he organized amongst us many video- and teleconferences to exchange views and ideas on how to make progress. He met repeatedly with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to brief him on his efforts and to consult on the way forward. Each time, the Secretary-General expressed high appreciation for his activities and encouraged him to persevere in getting the Co-conveners and the states of the region together.

Let us not underestimate the sheer logistical difficulties of getting the parties around a table: in addition to the Facilitator, the members of the League of Arab States, the Co-conveners, the UN – all had to be aligned on dates and in one location. Holidays, religious observances, other official commitments: All would need to be taken into account, and thinking about the many discussions on dates, in retrospect I find it amazing that we managed to meet at all.

And we did meet: Five informal meetings took place with the Facilitator, the Co-conveners and the states of the region. Five meetings that were painstakingly prepared, preceded by intensive consultations – five meetings that were accompanied by high hopes, and yes there were times with glimmers of hope that the shared interests of the states of the region would propel them to finding a common way forward. Proposals were put on the table, expectations stated; in short, a discussion had started that showed both sides willing to engage.

Ultimately, however, despite all good intentions, expectations diverged too widely and longstanding mistrust raised its ugly head. Israel wanted to include on the agenda the issue of regional security; the Arab States only wanted to discuss the Conference itself and no related security issues. I think all of us who participated in the process regret that it was not possible to further probe the concerns and find ways to address them through discussions.

After five meetings, disappointment had set in with the lack of concrete achievement. The postponement of the date of the Conference from 2012 without a commitment to set a new date was seen by the Arab States as a breach of a firm agreement. This was followed by a change in the Egyptian leadership – much less supportive of the effort – and this further contributed to a sense of futility.

For the Facilitator and the Co-conveners, it was a constant effort to rally the states,



Klaus Dieter Wolf welcomes PRIF's First Honorary Diplomat Research Fellow, Amb. Jaakko Laajava and hands over the table nameplate of the former Facilitator



to encourage their engagement, but the folk saying “you can lead a horse to water but you cannot force it to drink” proved to be true. The Facilitator could assist, nudge, propose – but he could not substitute for the states themselves who needed to muster the collective political will to take appropriate action.

And finally, some of the optics did not help: The League of Arab States wanted the meetings to take place under the auspices of the United Nations – even though the decision to hold the Conference was taken in the context of the NPT – not a UN body, and one that Israel is not part of – because some of their members cannot meet with Israel unless it is under the UN umbrella. By contrast, Israel strongly objected to any suggestion or symbol that the UN would be the organizer or initiator.

As we all know, no consensus on the way forward on the Conference could be reached, and this ultimately prevented the adoption of a Final Document at the NPT Review Conference in May 2015. The Conference is now “shelved”, for lack of a better word. The Facilitator’s mandate expired, the consultations and discussions have ceased – and it will take new initiatives and political commitment to revert to this important matter.

Convening a Conference on a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Vehicles is very clearly an issue where state parties agree with the overarching principle – but they have failed to find the common ground in making it a reality. There is frustration with the lack of implementation of the commitments to this zone and this deep frustration is felt not just in the region but by many members to the NPT.

Let us hope that creative thinking, new approaches, and the political will can be mustered to overcome the current stalemate.

Personal Greetings from Thomas Countryman, Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation, U. S. State Department

By Thomas Countryman, Conveyed by Michael Bedke, Foreign Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., United States

I would like to extend my thanks to Professor Bernd W. Kubbig for organizing this session in honor of Ambassador Jaakko Laajava’s tireless

efforts towards convening a Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Vehicles in the Middle East. I am deeply honored for this opportunity to commend Amb. Laajava, as well as his staff and the Government of Finland, for their efforts.

We have all seen the intense preparation that went into the five rounds of consultations that took place in Geneva and Glion, and that alone deserves our thanks. What was less visible, but no less important, was the countless hours spent in laying the diplomatic foundation that made those consultations in Switzerland possible. I have spent days in meetings, on the phone, and in videoconferences with Amb. Laajava since our journey began in 2012, alone and with the other Co-conveners, the regional states, and other interested parties. His dedication and commitment made the consultations possible, and his strategic vision created a structure allowing for truly substantive consultations. His consummate skill as a diplomat ensured that the consultations were able to make real, substantive progress towards the ultimate goal of convening the Conference.

On that note, I want to underscore what Jaakko’s diplomatic skill achieved: For the first time since the 1990s, he and the Co-conveners brought Israelis and Arabs together for face-to-face meetings to substantively discuss regional arms control and nonproliferation issues, which made tangible progress in narrowing the gap among the regional states. This was real progress, and I can think of no better way to honor Amb. Laajava’s work than by building on the foundation he laid and working in good faith towards convening the Conference that he put so much time, effort, and skill into. I hope that, in reflecting on his good works today, the regional parties will show the political will to resume the process of building a zone through consensus, direct dialogue, and a broad-based agenda.

Successful diplomats bring to their work optimism, persistence and strategic vision. In all of these categories, Jaakko qualifies among the very best. As a result, the states of the Middle East now have the opportunity to guide themselves towards a more peaceful region.

Amb. Laajava, thank you for being a great partner over the years. When the zone does finally happen, you’ll know that it wouldn’t have happened without you. For that, you have my heartfelt appreciation.

»Let us hope that creative thinking, new approaches, and the political will can be mustered to overcome the current stalemate. «

»Successful diplomats bring to their work optimism, persistence and strategic vision. In all of these categories, Jaakko qualifies among the very best. «

Ambassador Laajava as the Personified Contribution of Finland to Peace and Security in the 20th and 21st Century

By Amb. Ritva Koukku-Ronde, Conveyed by Jarmo Sareva, Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva, Switzerland

Let me express my sincere appreciation for organizing this very valuable workshop series about a theme in the Middle East which, in view of current global security status, has great importance.

As the Ambassador of Finland in Berlin, I am very proud that the contribution of my country to the nonproliferation and disarmament processes in the Middle East and Gulf region is one of the key themes of the discussions today and tomorrow.

Finland will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2017. Before becoming independent in 1917, Finland was for over 700 years part of Sweden and for about 100 years part of Russia.

During the Cold War, Finland pursued a policy of neutrality. The CSCE Conference in Helsinki in July 1975 was a good example of Finland's contributions to reaching consensus on security architecture and stability in Europe. It also demonstrated that Finland was highly appreciated as a mediator between the East and the West.

Finland has also laid great emphasis on multilateral cooperation. When Finland joined the United Nations in 1955, one area which became essential for us was peacekeeping activities. The first Finnish peacekeepers left for Suez in 1956. Our EU membership also has great political significance. Finland wants to develop the Union as a credible actor in the field of foreign and security policy.

Peace mediation is a vital element of international crisis management – creating a better world through mediation, negotiations, and trust building between parties to a conflict. The Finnish tradition of mediation goes back many years and has been very successful. Possibly the most remarkable proof of this is the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to President Martti Ahtisaari in recognition of his achievements.

The NPT Review Conference in 2010 decided to convene a Conference in 2012 on

the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free from Weapons of Mass Destruction. Moreover, it was agreed to appoint a Facilitator to conduct consultations with the states of the region and to undertake preparations for the convening of the 2012 Conference.

The UN Secretary-General and the Co-sponsors of the 1995 NPT Resolution nominated Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Laajava for this challenging task. Amb. Laajava has had a long and highly acknowledged diplomatic career and his reputation as a Facilitator of negotiation processes is outstanding. I am a close personal acquaintance of Jaakko Laajava and we worked closely together back in the 1990s. It is not an overstatement to say that, although the Conference has not yet taken place because there was no agreement on its agenda and modalities, Mr. Laajava created a remarkable and constructive consultation process. It was the first time that all parties were brought together to discuss this issue. I can assure you that there is nobody else who could have reached a better outcome from this negotiation process, which lasted several years.

Mr. Laajava emphasized throughout his activities the importance of continuous efforts even if they were difficult. One encouraging achievement that supports his attitude is the Nuclear Accord with Iran. It is my understanding that the discussions in Frankfurt and Berlin are focused on conditions and factors that could bring the negotiation process on a WMD Free Zone in Middle East back on track. I hope that many new constructive initiatives are on the table at the end of the conferences and a way forward can be found.

The EU Proudly Supported the Facilitator and His Constructive Efforts

By Amb. John Gatt-Rutter, European External Action Service, Brussels, Belgium

The European Union supports the universalization of the NPT and has consistently called upon state non-parties, including Israel, India and Pakistan, to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon states.

The EU reaffirms its support for the Resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and recalls the affirmation of its goals and objectives by the 2000 and the 2010

»[...] Mr. Laajava created a remarkable and constructive consultation process. It was the first time that all parties were brought together to discuss this issue. «

»It is my understanding that the discussions in Frankfurt and Berlin are focused on conditions and factors that could bring the negotiation process on a WMD Free Zone in Middle East back on track. I hope that many new constructive initiatives are on the table at the end of the conferences and a way forward can be found. «



Review Conferences. We consider the 1995 Resolution valid until its goals and objectives have been achieved.

The EU deeply regrets that the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems has not been convened. We maintain the view that dialogue and building confidence among all stakeholders is the only sustainable way to agree upon arrangements for a meaningful Conference, to be attended by all states of the Middle East on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them as decided by the 2010 Review Conference.

We have the highest appreciation for Ambassador Jaakko Laajava for his hard work and relentless efforts as the Facilitator. The informal meetings he organized in Switzerland, known as the Glion/Geneva Process, contributed to better understanding of the positions and concerns of the countries of the region. It is a pity that his last invitations, issued in the second half of 2014 and in early 2015, were not acted upon. This strong appreciation was reaffirmed by Deputy Secretary-General Helga Schmid of the European External Action Service at the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference held in Brussels on November 11, 2015.

The EU assisted the process by organizing two major international seminars on the zone in Brussels in 2011 and 2012 as well as a capacity-building workshop in 2014 to share European experience in confidence- and security-building measures and arms control negotiations. We are glad that a number of states of the region attended, including Egypt, Israel, and the Secretariat of the League of Arab States.

We are ready to facilitate similar Track II- or Track I.5-dialogues in the future if this is deemed useful by the states of the region.

My Good Memories of the Facilitator's Important Appearance before the Deutsche Bundestag

By Uta Zapf, Former Member of the Deutsche Bundestag, Berlin, Germany

The first time I met Ambassador Laajava was on Tuesday April 10, 2012. I met him at the Nordic Embassy in Berlin, at 2 p.m. The weather was warm and nice with sunshine, very appropriate for the meeting that awaited



Amb. Jaakko Laajava, Bernd W. Kubbig, and former Prime Minister of the State of Hesse, Roland Koch, at the Frankfurt Conference

me. I had been urging my Foreign Office to give my Subcommittee on Arms Control, Disarmament and Nonproliferation the opportunity to invite the newly appointed Facilitator for the Conference on a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East. Ambassador Laajava's appointment had taken place on October 14, 2011, but it was extremely difficult to get hold of him, as he was immediately in the middle of consultations. Because I was so insistent, the German Foreign Office facilitated a personal meeting with Ambassador Jaakko Laajava outside a sitting week. So I flew to Berlin with curiosity and high expectations.

I had the idea that a Finnish diplomat would be the right choice for such an extremely difficult mission. Finland, with the reputation of a neutral country sharing European values and, in my mind, the cradle of the Helsinki Final Act of the OSCE – who else could be more appropriate as the home country of the Facilitator? The spirit of the Helsinki Final Act was immediately present to me when listening to Ambassador Laajava. He was very modest. He explained his mission and what he had done since October up to our meeting. He mentioned the 70-something meetings with partners, NGOs, and think tanks. And he mentioned the impressive team of experts



Bernd W. Kubbig and Amb. Jaakko Laajava at PRIF celebrating the successful Berlin Conference

Amb. Laajava was very much aware of the risks and obstacles of the Arab Spring as well as of the unsolved problem of the Palestine-Israeli Peace Process. He pleaded for perceiving Iran's security concerns and for refraining from sanctions. He stressed (in 2013!) that Iran had no intention of weaponizing as shown by the Pentagon's documents. The International Atomic Energy Agency Report confirmed these findings recently. The headline of an interview dated June 20, 2012, that Amb. Laajava gave to the UN Association of UK read: "Ambassador Laajava confident there can be progress on Middle East WMD-free zone."

I hope, Ambassador, your hallmark is still optimism!

Welcome, Ambassador of Peace!

By Harald Müller, Member of the Executive Board and Head of Research Department, PRIF, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

My successor Klaus Dieter Wolf has expressed our welcome to Jaakko Laajava, and I cannot do better. So let me try to give you the reasons why we are so happy to welcome him.

I will be brief. Rather than giving a sober analysis of his record, let me express from the depth of my heart how I prayed for his success, not truly believing in its possibility, and how I rejoiced when I watched him coming much closer than I could ever have believed possible.

Amb. Laajava is a man of peace. He agreed to devote his last few years in office to an issue that was close to hopeless from the beginning, as all knowledgeable people knew when he started.

And let me remind you that he took on this more than full-time job not as a substitute for his solemn service as a high-level Ministry for Foreign Affairs official, but as an additional job.

As quite a few people in the lower strata of society have to do two jobs instead of one to make a living, Amb. Laajava took on two jobs – not to make a living, as the second one was unpaid – but to continue to ensure the high quality of Finnish foreign policy and to help the struggling people of the Middle East to take a huge leap towards peace.

he had gathered. He was very optimistic. He believed in the final goal. He explained it in a very convincing way by citing what he would tell the stakeholders: "Listen, it's about you! Engage yourself!" There it was again, the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act!

Whenever I think of this meeting, the impression of his optimism is most present to me. He mentioned the helpful support he expected from academia (not yet an orchestra, I presume) and he mentioned Mr. Kubbig. It seemed to me that until this time the German government had handled the issue as top secret and had not publicized any ideas or actions. But obviously it had supported Amb. Laajava, who mentioned Germany as "very helpful." This first impression was confirmed when Amb. Laajava came to the Subcommittee on Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-proliferation in March 2013. In a very lucid way he described the goal, the problems, the necessities, and the risks of the process that could lead to a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East. Amb. Laajava made it clear that it would not be a one-event gathering but a process that could eventually lead to a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Middle East. There it was again – the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act.



Blessed Are Those Trying to Make Peace, Even If They Do Not Succeed

It was an uphill battle from the start. We know the level of distrust among the regional parties. We know the dreadful impact of domestic politics on the rationality of foreign policy behavior. We know the regional and national fragmentations that are now haunting the whole region.

Amb. Laajava knew that all from the beginning and throughout. But he tried and tried and tried. I imagine that more than once he looked to heaven and sang the famous song of the Scorpions: Send me an angel – right now!

But angels were in scarce supply in the region in those days. None appeared to help Amb. Laajava in his labors. He was left to his own devices, and he made the best possible use of them, which is rather an understatement.

For, given the adverse circumstances in the region, it is an even greater miracle how close he come to success in those consultations in Glion and Geneva.

It reveals the extraordinary diplomatic and persuasive skills of the man, his empathy for the people he was working with, his ability to keep up the morale of his splendid staff, and,

above all, his unbounded dedication to the good cause he was pursuing.

Welcome again

What I said about Jaakko Laajava, the diplomat of peace, I would like to be able to say about us, PRIF's staff, the researchers for peace.

I would wish the same degree of dedication, the same perseverance and stubbornness in pursuing the noble but lofty objective, the same energy in crawling through piles and piles of relevant materials, and the same courage to continue when success seems once more just around the corner, but 'once more' is 'not quite there'.

Thus Jaakko Laajava is not just an exemplary diplomat. He is also a template for peace researchers. And he is not only here – as far as I am concerned – to report quietly on what he did and what we should learn from this record. He is also here as a beacon for our colleagues, notably the young ones.

Dear Jaakko – if I may take the liberty, being about your peer in age if in nothing else – we are glad and proud and overjoyed to have you at PRIF as our cherished colleague. Please enjoy your stay with us – we will enjoy our work with you!

Endnotes

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The Former Facilitator Responds

By Amb. Jaakko Laajava, PRIF, Frankfurt/Main, Germany

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for your extremely kind statements and expressions of support and gratitude. I must say I cannot find words – I am really overwhelmed. Thank you for the compliments but these kinds of efforts are never just one-person shows – they are typically group endeavors. I am deeply grateful to my very good colleagues Ambassador Angela Kane, Ambassador Mikhail Ulyanov and Ambassador Peter Jones, their duty was to convene the Conference. Nevertheless, we worked together in a seamless way, day and night, seven days a week, for months and years.

Needless to say, I was also very proud of my own team from Helsinki.

And I am particularly grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Ban Ki-moon several times. He always supported me and my team and encouraged us to continue in spite of significant difficulties.

I was also very fortunate to receive the support, ideas and encouragement of civil society actors, think tanks, universities, various organizations, research institutions, and individuals. I also received the full support of the international governmental organizations including the UN, the IAEA, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the CTBTO.

A special thank you goes to the Government of Switzerland for their kind support as hosts in Glion and Geneva, as well as to the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their financial help to my government.

Last but not least, I would like to pay tribute to all our colleagues in the Middle East who participated in various meetings and events. Important preparatory work was carried out in many regional capitals. Yes, there were differences of opinion and emphasis and we could not always agree, but I shall never forget the excellent spirit of our joint efforts.

And many thanks to you all for joining us in Frankfurt today, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Dr. Bernd W. Kubbig and PRIF. I am also grateful to Professor Klaus Dieter Wolf and the Executive Board of PRIF for its support. Thank you all for your interest in finding ways to continue. ■

About the ACADEMIC PEACE ORCHESTRA MIDDLE EAST (APOME)

The ORCHESTRA is the follow-up project of the “Multilateral Study Group on the Establishment of a Missile Free Zone in the Middle East”. The ACADEMIC PEACE ORCHESTRA MIDDLE EAST is a classical Track II-initiative: it consists of some 150 experts – mainly from the Middle East/Gulf, one of the most conflict-ridden areas of the world. The ORCHESTRA is meeting regularly in working groups (CHAMBER ORCHESTRA UNITS) on specific topics in the context of a workshop cycle from 2011-2016. The main goal of this initiative was to shape the prospective Middle East Conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles agreed upon by the international community in May 2010. For this reason, these experts have developed ideas, concepts, and background information in a series of POLICY BRIEFS which are the results of intense discussions within the CHAMBER ORCHESTRA UNITS. In this framework, the broader normative Cooperative Security Concept will be further developed, embedded, and institutionalized in the region. At the same time, the ORCHESTRA meetings serve as venues for confidence building among the experts. The networking activities of PRIF’s Project Group are documented by the ATLAS on Track II-research activities in or about the Middle East/Gulf region.

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