

of countries who may have nuclear ambitions were a critical factor in negotiations for NWFZs.

Despite persisting barriers, at least six factors, at the global and regional levels, have improved the prospects for NWFZs. The first is the end of the Cold War, removing some of the political concerns behind objections to NWFZs. A second and closely related factor is the settlement of long-standing regional conflicts in the Third World. This improves the political climate for negotiating an NWFZ. For example, the end of the Cambodia conflict in Southeast Asia, and the settlement of the complex Southern African conflict involving the Apartheid regime in South Africa,⁸ each created a new climate for regional cooperation and paved the way for politically inclusive NWFZs that were not possible in the past.

A third contributing factor is the momentum caused by recent positive developments in nuclear non-proliferation efforts, including the indefinite extension of the NPT, nuclear agreements covering the former republics of the Soviet Union, the decision of Brazil and Argentina to give up their nuclear options, the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by the UN General Assembly, and further movement in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks process. International opinion against nuclear testing and weapons has never been stronger. Non-proliferation has emerged as a global norm, thereby creating a favourable political climate for NWFZs.

A fourth factor is the rise of global environmental consciousness, creating greater awareness of, and opposition to, the damaging ecological consequences of nuclear weapons programmes. This has clearly been a factor behind the South Pacific and African NWFZs.

A fifth factor contributing to NWFZs is the desire and efforts by regional organizations, with the cooperation of the UN, to seek a new relevance in the post-Cold War era by strengthening their role in peace and security. Several regional organizations, such as the OAU, ASEAN, and the OAS, have taken steps to strengthen their role in such areas as confidence-building, peacekeeping, preventive diplomacy, dispute-settlement and peacebuilding. Establishing a NWFZ has emerged as a key theme in this effort.

Last but not least, the recent interest in NWFZs could be attributed to the "demonstration effect" effect of such zones negotiated during the Cold War period. Thus, the Latin America and South Pacific Treaties have served as an inspiration as well as a practical model for more recently-established zones in Southeast Asia and Africa. The latter, in turn, have heightened interest in and attention to proposed NWFZs in the Middle East, South Asia, and the Korean Peninsula. What is noteworthy, the newer NWFZs appear to have made a conscious attempt not only to emulate, but also to move in some new directions.

Key Provisions of the Existing NWFZs: A Comparative Analysis

Existing NWFZ Treaties contain four general features which can serve as the basis for a comparative analysis. These include: basic obligations; zone of application; mechanisms