

Until the end of the Cold War, only two NWFZs were established in populated areas: the first being the Treaty of Tlatelolco establishing a NWFZ in Latin America and the Caribbean, joined much later by the Treaty of Rarotonga establishing a NWFZ in South Pacific. In general, the task of establishing NWFZs in populated areas was complicated by several factors. One of the major issues was defining the scope of restrictions under a NWFZ, such as the question of whether a NWFZ should exclude peaceful nuclear explosions, portions of the high seas, straits used for international navigation, international air space, rights of innocent passage through territorial waters, territories of extra-regional powers, military bases of extra-regional states, and transit of nuclear weapons of external powers through the zone. Other issues and questions that proved contentious included:

- (1) whether participation in a NWFZ was incompatible with membership in a security alliance involving a nuclear-weapon state;
- (2) the extent to which regional NWFZs complemented, or competed with the NPT;
- (3) whether a country might be allowed to include only part of its territory in a NWFZ;
- (4) whether a nuclear-weapon state had a right to reconsider its negative security assurances -- i.e., its commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a zonal state -- in the event of the latter participating in an act of aggression;
- (5) whether recognition by the UN General Assembly was a necessary or a sufficient condition for the establishment of a NWFZ;
- (6) whether verification arrangements should cover all nuclear activities, including those for peaceful purposes; and
- (7) whether standards of verification and compliance should be equal to or more stringent than those of the NPT.

Over the years, some of these problems have been overcome, but others continue to be relevant in negotiations on NWFZs.⁷

In general, one can discern some important lessons from the evolution of NWFZs. First, negotiating a NWFZ is often an long-term and intensely political process, the success of which depends on the overall global and regional political climate. Superpower rivalry may have complicated the prospects for serious negotiations for NWFZs throughout the Cold War period. Second, ongoing regional conflicts, whether linked to the Cold War or not, were a major impediment to NWFZs. Tensions in Southern Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Cambodia, and the Korean Peninsula negatively affected the prospects for NWFZs in these respective areas. Third, in most cases, success in negotiating a NWFZ depended on the strength and involvement of a relevant regional organization. For example, the roles of the Organization of African Unity, the South Pacific Forum, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have been particularly important in promoting NWFZs in their regions. A less well-developed or inclusive regional structure has constrained attempts at NWFZs in other regions, such as in the Middle East, South Asia (where the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation remains weak and has no direct security role), and the Korean Peninsula (which simply lacks any sub-regional security organization). Fourth, the attitudes