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## **The Re-Emergence of Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zones in an Era of Heightened Conflict**

The strength of Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zones (NWFZs) is put to the test as global strategic stability falters from conflict between Nuclear Weapons States (NWS). Currently, five NWFZs are legitimized by treaties that span large regions including Africa and South America (Goldblat, 1997; Green, 2009). This prominence is explained by the historic utilization of NWFZs as a diplomatic tool for countries championing nuclear disarmament—for example, many Middle Eastern countries push for an NWFZ to pressure Israel to destroy its alleged nuclear arsenal (Bahgat, 2007). However, as tensions heighten between NWS in crises such as Ukraine and North Korea, a new conceptual framework for understanding the importance of NWFZs stems from the differentiation between “stationing” and “proliferating” nuclear weapons in Non-Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS). As norms surrounding stationing nuclear weapons within NNWS weaken, NWFZs will play a more prominent role in keeping certain areas of the world nuclear-free. Understanding this role could prove vital to both long-term disarmament and nonproliferation goals. The paper will explore the conceptual importance of NWFZs in an attempt to modernize relevant frameworks developed in the late-1990s and early-2000s. The paper considers the historical value of NWFZs and argues that a re-emergence of the diplomatic power of NWFZs will occur due to heightened and more direct conflict between NWS over the next decade.

### **What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?**

Politics and International Studies

### **If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?**

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

### **Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?**

Yes

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