



Egyptian Approaches on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation 2014-5

Exploring effective strategies to achieve international change

25 March 2014, Cairo University

This conference aims to stimulate discussion about Egypt's role and strategy in the regional and global non-proliferation regime over the next crucial period leading up to the 2015 NPT Review Conference and beyond, in the interests of effective impact on the disarmament debate. While there clearly has been a lot less progress on the Middle East nuclear weapon and WMD Free Zone than we would have hoped, other regional developments have been shifting the ground, most notably:

- the on-going process of informal but limited consultation on the WMD Free Zone in meetings held in Glion, Montreux;
- the 23 November 2013 interim agreement between Iran and the E3+3 that curtails much of the nuclear programme temporarily whilst giving Iran hope of future sanctions relief; and
- Syria's decision to become a full member of the Chemical Weapon Convention and to completely dismantle its CW arsenal in a short space of time, and questions over their compliance with this commitment.

On the other hand, the recent events in Ukraine and Crimea significantly deepen the recent cooling of strategic relations between the United States and Russia that had already been deteriorating. As a direct result, the prospects for progress on nuclear disarmament commitments are dim, opening the questions for Egypt and the Non-aligned Movement, including two critical ones:

- How will the non-nuclear weapon states respond to the lack of progress on disarmament? How can they act effectively to encourage the nuclear weapon states to take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines in the current climate?
- How will the WMD Free Zone issue play in the forthcoming NPT meetings, and how can regional states ensure that attention remains focused upon it without this crowding out progress in other areas?

Egypt has long played an important role in the evolution of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime that dates back to the early negotiations prior to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). On the regional level, Egypt has played a leading role in proposing and advocating the establishment of a Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) in the Middle East. Egypt has over the years produced many different diplomatic initiatives in support of the establishment of such zone and continues to do so to this day. However despite these continued efforts progress has been slow.

As we approach the 2014 preparatory committee for the NPT review conference, the issue of establishing weapons of mass destruction free zone in the region will come to the forefront of Egyptian and international attention. Specifically, the Arab states will be looking to ensure that the regional consultations in Glion will lead to rapid conclusions and a move to a conference in Helsinki, before the 2014 Preparatory Committee in April 2014.

But this is not the only issue. Egypt's leadership on the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has received a high priority in the Egyptian government up until now, and has been felt across the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement and beyond. But there remains a big question as to how that leadership can adapt and achieve effective outcomes in the interests of regional and international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Reports to the Preparatory Committee on progress on the disarmament aspects of the 2010 NPT Action Plan are likely to be disappointing to many of the delegations attending, and the reaction from the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue will be critical. In the mix, there will be debate over the humanitarian dimensions strand, and the apparent attempt by some states to kick-start another strand within the NPT that drives complete nuclear disarmament. Will this emerge as a new standard within the NPT, and what are implications for the Action Plan? How do we go forward in relation to other strands within the non-proliferation agenda, such as the additional protocol, the proliferation security initiative and others? So far these issues are stacking up, but will there be an overall strategy pursued by Egypt and her allies, and what are the realistic hopes for achievement at the 2014 Preparatory Committee in advance of the 2015 NPT Review Conference?

Ideas are needed on how to chart a course that achieves the objectives of those working for disarmament, non-proliferation and regional security. Is it possible to reframe the debate into one involving a cooperative search for regional and international security without nuclear weapons and other WMD, and interdiction of illegal arms trading? How can states be encouraged to recognise that their security lies in reciprocal and non-discriminatory arrangements?

This Cairo conference will look to stimulate a discussion on these matters, encouraging Egyptian academics, researchers and experts to share and develop their perspectives and ideas. Involving mainly key Egyptian stakeholders identified in collaboration with our partners, there will also be some informed international opinion represented sympathetic to Egypt's expressed objectives on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The conference will be divided into two sections. The first includes open sessions involving a larger group of participants in a conventional conference style, with a panel of speakers to kick off the discussion, providing the context for the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and Egyptian approaches and policies toward a regional WMD free zone.

The second afternoon section will be organised in a closed roundtable environment where a select number of expert experienced participants can move toward an in depth and frank discussion on the pressures on the NPT and on the regional dialogue on a nuclear weapon and WMD free zone, with a view to seeing the opportunities for common ground and an agenda that strengthens security for all. Most importantly this session can address, how can we generate an effective agenda for international change?

Conference Agenda

10.00 am **Registration**

10.30 am **Session 1: Introduction**

Welcome: Dr Hala Elsaid (Dean, Faculty of Economics and Political Science in Cairo University)

Keynote: Ambassador Hisham Badr (Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister)

11.10 am **Session 2: The Road to 2015 - the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Action Plan**

Chair: Dr Mustaphi Elwi Seif

Dr Mahmoud Karem (BUE) "The global nuclear nonproliferation & disarmament regime"

Dr Jim Walsh (MIT) "Current status of NPT action Plan and Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East"

Heather Williams (Chatham House) "Nuclear Weapons States' perspectives on the NPT regime"

Dr Mahmoud Karem (BUE) "Non-Nuclear Weapons States' perspectives on the NPT regime"

Dr Hassan Elbahtimy (VERTIC/KCL) "Egypt's early involvement in the NPT regime: a historical perspective"

***The global nuclear diplomatic context...** How can states best cooperate to achieve progress in strengthening non-proliferation and facilitating disarmament in the NPT context? What would Egypt and the Arab League be looking for from the NWS to show progress on the disarmament ticket? What has been achieved so far on the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan, and where are the most promising areas for prioritising efforts? How can differences on the Additional Protocol and other measures that attempt to close gaps in the non-proliferation net be overcome? What about treaty hold-outs, including Pakistan, India and Israel?*

12.30 pm **Break**

12.50 pm **Session 3: A WMD-free zone in the Middle East: an Egyptian approach to the technical details**

Chair: Dr Abdel Moneim el-Mashaat

Dr Mohamed Shaker (ECFA) "Key elements for a WMD free zone in the Middle East"

Dr Mona El-kouedi (Cairo University) "WMD free zone in the Middle East from a regional security perspective"

Dr Ibrahim El-Osery (Nuclear consultant) "Implications of WMD free zone in the region on nuclear activities and plans in Egypt"

***The main parameters of the zone...** the scope of prohibitions, the geographical extent, and mechanisms for verification and compliance. Lessons from other regions with NWFZs and their suitability to the Middle East. Would a regional FMCT or some other limits to fuel cycle activities be a stage, and can such talks start sooner? What might the verification elements look like, and what lessons can be learned from the UK-Norway Initiative that can help in the Middle East? Could concepts of collective regional security be applied in the Middle East to arms control and verification processes? Is it time to be talking of a treaty, or better to build up the elements of a zone independently? What about the CWC, in the light of Syria's accession to the Convention? What are the opportunities for progress and for reputation to a strategy of step-by-step engagement?*

2.30 pm **Finish**