Meeting with Amr Moussa on the occasion of the release of his book "Kitabiah" and of current developments in the region and the world

On 16th of January 2018, the Council welcomed Mr. Amr Moussa, former Foreign Minister and former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, to meet with the members of the Council and to highlight several important points in his new book, Ktabiah, and to shed light on many current developments in the region and the world. It was attended by the Chair of the council, Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahranas well as Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, the Director and many other members of the council Ambassadors, specialists, academics and businessmen.

Mr. Amr Moussa stressed that the purpose of writing his memoirs is to review dates and issues, in light of the persistent attempts by certain forces to push Egyptian history towards trends that serve particular interests and avoid dealing with important and dangerous developments in modern Egyptian history. By discussing what happened in May 1967, its causes and the motives of decisions and the reasons for the unfortunate defeat in the 1967 war in order to avoid repeating them. Furthermore addressing the causes and events does not mean to diminish the extent of one of the shedding light on an important stage in Egyptian history, especially as Egypt as a developing country, how did it bear the entry into two wars in 34 years (meaning the military involvement in Yemen and the war with Israel) Egypt bears the consequences of those wars, and whether there was an estimate of the Egyptian military efficiency at that time. He pointed out that these questions will be asked sooner or later, especially as they represent a serious of negative signs in the Egyptian history, and a negative turning point that led to subsequent developments, leading to the revolution of January 25, 2011, confirming that he was supporter of late President Gamal Abdel Nasser until 5 June 1967, and witnessed the date of conflicting reports that included the confirmation by the Egyptian radio to drop Israeli fighter jets, while foreign newspapers and news agencies broadcast the success of Israeli forces approaching the Suez Canal – which proved to be right later. He also stressed that his book dealt with the impact of regional issues on the course of Egyptian diplomacy, especially the Palestinian cause, which was the first priority in Egyptian foreign policy, and the Egyptian interest and Gamal Abdel Nasser's interest in it to occupy a distinguished position in the world. Egyptian diplomacy, which opened the door to the rivalry of all Arab and regional diplomats as well as developing countries, and to occupy a prominent position in the agendas of these countries. He stressed on the point, that the Middle Eastern region is experiencing a vacuum similar to the vacuum of the fifties caused by the withdrawal of colonial powers from Africa; This vacuum is trying to force Iran, Turkey and Israel to fill it, which is needed to move the Arab forces led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia to confront those forces, calling for work to re-discuss the previous presentation at the Arab Summit in 2010 in Sirte, Libya of the first two initiatives is "Arab Neighbourhood League" 40 to 45 countries from the Sahelo-Saharan States, the Horn of Africa, the Mediterranean countries, the three Asian countries, Turkey, Iran and Israel, and the suspension of Israel's domination of the Palestinian issue and the opening of dialogue with Iran on the outstanding issues. These are related to their environment any association expanded to include 22 to 24 countries. The other initiative is based on the establishment of a Middle East Security and Cooperation Organization to deal with the issues of security, terrorism and development, which will initially include 56 countries and then expand it to other countries including the Maghreb, the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia, the Arabian Gulf and the Arab heart. He stressed that there are many centers talking about the need for a new regional system in the Middle East.
Editorial

Seminar on Amr Moussa's Book ‘Ketabiah’

Meeting with Amr Moussa on the occasion of the release of his book "Kitabiah" and of current developments in the region and the world

Perhaps one of the most important angles in which Mr. Amr Moussa talked about, in his new work ‘Ketabiah’, which was the theme of his meeting with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA). He explained this regarding the June 1967 war. He considered it, as a turning point in our modern history. Some have dealt with this period, tried either to bypass it and not to stop in front of it, or to provide a vision that does not reflect deep into the event. The aftermath of the 1967 war, created for Egyptians an inheritance, of bitterness for many years later.

What the author has mentioned in his book, and what he discussed in the Seminar, was only a reading of history. But to draw lessons and even to repeat what happened again. This is not a challenge to Nasser's history and his role in the leadership of Egypt; he was facing global and regional challenges, learning in mind his social policies which were biased towards ordinary Egyptians.

What happened in 1967 was not an ordinary event. It was a setback as described, and the other countries or even the least influential of the other countries, do not allow it to go through in depth studies until these reasons are revealed to them as they suffered from shortcomings or mistakes, so that they can fill these gaps, prevent their recurrence, and prepare the State itself to face future challenges in a stronger position.

The book is full of information that dealt with many events related to Egyptian diplomacy. Egypt's role in the Palestinian question, and policies and ambitions of regional countries such as Iran, Turkey and Israel in the Mediterranean, the Horn of Africa and the Arab world in particular.

Our focus today in this article, from the point of view of what happened in 1967, may have been due to the reactions of the writers to this issue. Anyways the book and the description added ECFA's seminar deserve to be given the full attention and consideration.

The Editor
On 7th of February 2018, the Council organized a closed round table entitled "Developments in Syria in connection with the Turkish military operation in the Afrin region and its repercussions on the overall situation in the country", in the presence of Ambassadors Dr. Mohamed El Badry, assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs, Dr. Mounir Zahran Chair of the Council, Dr. Ezzat Saad Executive Director, and a number of board members. The following were emphasized:

-The Russian intervention played a major role in changing the situation on the ground after exhausting the Syrian army in the battle of Damascus in February 2012, to take care of Russian interests on the one hand and to ease international pressure on them because of the Ukrainian crisis; and that the meetings of Astana contributed to the creation of safe areas, but the Sochi Conference wanted the West to appear as a culmination of international efforts, and only once to appear not as an alternative to Geneva, and the document issued by Washington on the Syrian crisis prepared by (America, France, Britain, Saudi Arabia and Jordan) is a clear violation of UN Resolution 2254, which affirms that the constitution is being drafted by the Syrians themselves, and the paper states that it lacks executive mechanisms.

-The United States historically did not oppose the idea of a Kurdish state and the dispute was on timing, and despite the reliance on the element of Turkey in its presence in Syria, but that does not mean a confrontation with Turkey, in light of the rise of the US military and its impact more on decision-making amid the weakness of the US State Department and the intelligence service for internal American reasons.

-He explained that the decision to freeze Syria's membership in the Arab League is contrary to Article VIII of the University Charter, which is a serious mistake, but the expulsion of Syria from the Arab League was made when the role of Qatar in 2012 strong and effective. It is necessary to think about how and when to restore Syria to its seat in the Arab League Council. It is necessary to rethink how to conduct a dialogue with Tehran, to stop adopting the American and Israeli views on this matter and to alleviate the current pressures and escalation. The Gulf states will be concerned about the importance of that issue and the crisis in Syria will only move with Arab action.

-Egypt should exert greater efforts and provide moral support to the Kurds in the current war, and defeat the Turkish operations in Afrin amidst international idleness and stay silent in the framework of Turkey's double strategy. Cairo should also adopt a strategy to work on Kurdish reintegration in the Arab region and the return of historical relations with the Kurds as it was in the era of Nasser.

-With regard to the Turkish intervention in the predominantly Kurdish country of Afrin, Turkey's position is governed by historical sensitivities towards the Kurds, special economic interests and at least half of the oil fields in Syria are located in the Kurdish areas of Syria.

-Despite America's support for Kurds, it is keen on its relationship with Turkey for its strategic importance to America and to NATO in general.
Debate on the alternative to the old mediator in the peace process

On the 12th of February 2018, the council held a panel discussion on the "Future of the Middle East Peace Process, in light of the Trump Declaration of Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel", with the participation of the Chair of the Council and a number of its members. The meeting dealt with the American administration's policy towards the peace process, and President Trump's talk about what he called the "deal of the century", until his declaration of recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, which complicated the situation and increased the series of measures taken by the American administration to pressure the Palestinians to force them to negotiate, and the discussions reached the following points in particular:

- The need for Arab States to consider alternatives to the formula of peace talks of the past decades, in which the United States has played a pivotal role. Some have argued that US mediation is inevitable and that no other force will be able to fill this void. The United States is a mediator in the peace process between Israel and Egypt and Jordan, Robin's deposit with Syria in 1994-1995 before his assassination, and Olmert's 2007 depository. Even the Madrid negotiations of 1991 were under the threat of the United States. So all these treaties and initiatives included America as a mediator.

- America can be amongst other parties in the mediation for peace.

- Resort to the United Nations as the Palestinian issue has been dealt with in the scene and the issuance of dozens of resolutions, both from the Security Council or the General Assembly, and is expected to be resisted by the United States.

- That the peace process in the region should also include occupied Syrian territory in the Golan and the Lebanese territories still under occupation in the Shab'a Farms and Kafr Shuba.

- For the Quartet, it is proposed to be five-nation annexation of China to encourage it to engage in the peace process in light of its four-point initiative introduced last July. The foreign minister can brief the Chinese side on this matter before the idea is officially put forward.

- The need for coordination and close cooperation with countries that have shown sympathy for the Palestinian position since the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, because it is important to build on these positive indicators. There should also be an Arab delegation visiting these countries and affirming their appreciation to these countries and continued cooperation with them.

Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa Chairman of Yasser Arafat Foundation explained the activities of the Organization and the position on the Issue of Jerusalem

- On 26th of February 2018, Ambassador Abdul Raouf Al-Reedy, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Misr Public Library, organized a meeting with Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Chairman of Yasser Arafat Foundation, at the library's headquarters where he briefed the audience on the activities of the Foundation and ways of enhancing cooperation and partnership between the Foundation and the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs.

- The meeting started with the welcoming of Ambassador Abdel Raouf Al-Reedy in the interaction and cooperation between the Council and the Yasser Arafat Foundation. There should be an official framework for cooperation such as signing a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between the two sides or another practical framework such as conducting joint research and studies and joint seminars and workshops. etc., which was called for by Ambassador Mounir Zahran.

- Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa confirmed that the Foundation has issued four reports: The first on the US Congress and the Palestine Liberation Organization / legislation in Israel's service, the second on Trump and the chances of a political deal or move, the third on how to confront U.S plans after the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; the fourth on the state and national independence as a final goal.

- Stressing that the United States is unable to play a role in sponsoring the political settlement and the peace process, and it is necessary to search for a neutral international mechanism to take care of the peace process. Stressing that the Authority will not accept any deal that infringes on the rights of the Palestinian citizen and renounce the right to establish a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and does not expect to present balanced ideas from the American administration led by Trump. This is confirmed by the envoy of French President Emmanuel Macaron (Duchvaletti), he also confirmed the need to move to confront Israel regionally and internationally.
On 19th of February 2018, the Council organized a seminar on the promotion of Egyptian soft power, with the participation of Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council and a number of members of the Council of experts and former ambassadors, including Minister Hisham Zazaoua, former Minister of Tourism and Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization for the Middle East and North Africa, Dr. Samir Ghareeb, Member of the Council and First Undersecretary of the former Ministry of Culture, Ms. Mona Zaki, Founder and President of Soft Power Production Corporation, Mr. Raouf Kamal, Member of the Council and the Secretary General of the Association for Experts for Science and Technology, and Mr. Hassan Al-Mastakawy, and Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Anis Salem, a member of the Council.

The seminar took place in five sessions including:
- The role of culture and arts in promoting Egyptian soft power, the role of tourism in promoting Egyptian soft power, the role of science and technology in promoting Egyptian soft power, the role of youth and sport in promoting Egyptian soft power, the role of diplomacy in promoting soft power in Egypt. The seminar concluded by stressing on:
  - Egypt has a great potential of soft power, which needs to be developed and invested in the interest of economic and social development to serve the sectors of culture, media, science, arts, education, health, science and technology, tourism and promotion at the same time.
  - The need to rationalize the means of social communication, especially as they fall within the parameters of soft power and need to rationalize and control the service of society in the framework of adherence to the rules of ethics and public order and respect for ideals and traditions and purification of the impurities of extremism.
  - It is necessary to formulate a national strategy involving the institutions of the State concerned for the use of soft power, the optimal use of the objectives of economic and social development, and in particular the achievement of the 17 sustainable development goals by 2030.
  - Building on the existing foundations for the promotion of soft power, including Al-Azhar and the Egyptian churches to evaluate the religious discourse in favour of building society on rational basis and respect for the rule of law and the fight against terrorism and extremist groups.
  - The revival of specialized national councils and the implementation of studies and recommendations.
  - Activate public diplomacy by deploying soft power.
  - Modernization of cultural cooperation agreements, and the re-establishment of the Golden Age to the television.
  - The need to develop a comprehensive strategy for all tools of soft power to develop, both in the areas of culture or arts and Islam, tourism and human development and maximize the role of soft powers in the promotion of human development and modernization and reform of education and scientific research in Egypt from the stages of pre-education to university education.
  - Periodic review of Egypt's foreign policy along the lines of other countries.
  - The need to train diplomats at all levels and work on developing both approach and content.
Dr. Hazim Attiatalla’s Lecture on
“The Origination and Development of Ancient Egyptian Civilization”

On February 11th 2018, the Council organized a lecture by Dr. Hazim Attiatalla, Member of the Board of Directors, on “The Gift of the Nile: The Origination and Development of Ancient Egyptian Civilization”, to highlight the ancient Egyptian civilization as one of the elements of soft power. It was attended by Mounir Zahran, chair of the Council and Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council and a number of experts and specialists from the board members of the Council.

Following his review of the concept paper, he stressed on the following points in particular:
- Regarding the claims of the Jews’ contribution to the construction of the pyramids, he pointed out that these were mere lies that were constantly said from the Israeli side. He explained that given the ancient Egyptian thought at the time of the construction of the pyramids, which was expressed by one of the texts written in the terraces of “Memphis”, and refers to the organization of work in the construction of the pyramids and the division of work groups concerned with the construction, beginning of stone–throwing in the quarries of Tura or Mokattam, and the group that carries out the transfer, as well as the group involved in laying stones and construction of the Egyptians. It is mentioned that the person who contributes in the construction process must not come to the role more than once, which indicates the rush of ancient Egyptians to build, and their desire to sacrifice their lives in order to accomplish this construction, noting that this poetic condition of the ancient Egyptian was closer to what is now circulating on who dies at building a church or a mosque, where he is martyred in the cause of God, stressing that all these allegations are mere fabrications and not unfounded.
- Concerning the question of the history of the dynasties, he pointed out that the first dynasty began in 2900 BC in the ancient era, where it took about 250 years, while the second dynasty took about 300 years, and therefore the total of the old age 450 to 500 years. The beginning of the third dynasty with the beginning of the era of the ancient state in 2654 BC, noting that the date between the first dynasty and the present age is 5000 years on the beginning of the ancient Egyptian civilization, noting that the passage of the current century to complete 5000 years of ancient civilization.
- He pointed out that migrations in the prehistoric era can be summed up in the high migrations that came from Asia and minor Asia, pointing out that the Semitic race settled in the East Delta and then in the entire delta, and on the relationship between the high sex and the Arab sex who were present in Asia and minor Asia, pointed out that it is an independent subject.

Dr. Osman Mohamed’s Seminar on his book
“The Revolution of the Egyptians: Between Economy and Politics and the Road to Development”

On Wednesday February 28th 2018, the Council held a closed session at its headquarters, where the former Minister of Planning, Dr. Osman Mohamed Osman, talked about his new book “Revolution of the Egyptians: Between Economy and Politics and the Road to Development”.
- Dr. Osman presented in his book a method to analyze the uprisings of the Arab Spring as an attempt to explain them scientifically, and concluded that these uprisings were accompanied by “an implicit collapse of the social contract.” In an attempt to compare the idea of the rentier state to the Egyptian reality, it is found to be baseless and does not apply to it. Agriculture and construction contribute more than half of Egypt’s gross national product.
- Economic and social developments over the course of a decade have led to a change in the balance of power among the strata of society, and this is a fundamental reason for the popular anger of Mubarak and his regime. Since the mid-1970s, and more so since 2005, businessmen and capitalists have sought to expand their political influence to maintain their financial and economic conditions. Their method was to distance themselves from the domination of the military mindset and the transition to a full civilian rule and to push the beauty of Mubarak to fulfill this purpose. At the same time, there were Egyptian-American differences on the subject of the nuclear reactor in Dabaa, the military bases, human rights and democracy, and personal relations between the leaders of the two countries. The most serious thing came when the United States of America expressed its satisfaction with the Muslim Brotherhood to take over the reins of power in Egypt, at the time the army was working to defend the style of the Egyptian state that prevailed in the sixties; In this context, his prominent role in preserving the Egyptian identity is due to the spread of religious extremism and religious resistance.
Implications of the Military Presence of Some Countries in the Red Sea Region

Within the framework of the regional arrangements undertaken by some regional and international countries for re-positioning in the Red Sea region, by strengthening the military presence there in a manner that will have security implications for Arab countries including the Egyptian national security; the Council in cooperation with the Friends of League of Arab States, organized on 21st of March 2018 a seminar to discuss a paper presented by Ambassador Mohamed Anis Salem, member of the Council, on the "Arab States in the Globalization of the Red Sea". It was attended by Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chair of the Council, and a number of members of the Council.

The paper included a presentation of the approaches that dealt with the importance of the historical background of the Red Sea and the geopolitical and economic dimensions. The countries of the Red Sea region were identified, the connection between the regional system of the Red Sea, the multiplicity of its conflicts, failed regimes, regional conflicts, the liquidity of patterns of alliance and harmony, the review of new forms of international intervention, militarization of conflicts and the proliferation of military bases.

The paper also included a review of a comprehensive strategy to coordinate Arab efforts in the Red Sea, including elements comprising:
- To carry out an objective analysis of the current and future challenges in the Red Sea, with the introduction of multiple scenarios that include, at the very least, the prospects: Firstly, the situation remains the same; Secondly, the deterioration of the situation significantly increases the severity of conflicts, increasing foreign intervention and increasing instability in the countries of the region; Thirdly, the improvement of security and economic conditions in the region, and Lastly, unexpected scenarios (called "black swan")
- Identify the Arab interests that need protection in the theater of the Red Sea, and choose the best means and tools to achieve these goals, and limit the international parties that can be coordinated with in this direction, while identifying parties that have reservations or adopt targets that conflict with Arab interests (Some Arab parties joined the United States in opposing Djibouti’s intention to give Russia a military base).
- Revitalize the diplomatic processes that seek to resolve the multiple conflicts that interact in the Red Sea region and identify those that can be launched across the countries of the region and the concerned regional organizations with the aim of minimizing foreign intervention.

Meeting the Terrorism in a Post - Phase ISIS What Happened in the Munich Security Conference

On March 12th 2018, a seminar was held at the Council to discuss the results of the Munich Security Conference held on 12 February 2018 in the presence of the Egyptian Foreign Minister and Ambassador Ahmed Salama, Assistant Foreign Minister for Security and Strategic Organizations. It was attended by Ambassador Dr. Munir Zahran, Chair of the Council, Dr. Ezzat Saad, director of the council and a number of the Council’s board members.

He stressed that the most prominent at the Munich conference this year is the release of a report before the conference gave a perception of the situation in the world and security issues and hotspots and current actors on the international scene.

During his participation in a session on terrorism, the minister expressed his objection to the title of the session, "Jihadism, after the Caliphate" i.e. the state of the Caliphate, stressing that ISIS is not a succession state, and that what is happening is not a Jihad.

He also pointed to the Egyptian view of what it needs to face terrorism in a post-conflict phase, with the need to consider creating safe havens for terrorists, fighting sources of funding that are placed under the guise of charity, and the need to avoid duplication in dealing with terrorist groups. As well as the need for cooperation between these countries to develop a strategy to counter terrorism and put efforts at the internal level to stop the expansion of extremist thought.
Ambassadors guests of the Council and Dialogues on Bilateral Relations and International Issues

During March 2018, the Council hosted three foreign ambassadors in Egypt, in mutual dialogues on the problems in the region, as well as bilateral relations between their country and Egypt.

On 4th of March 2018, the Council welcomed the Japanese Ambassador Taki Hiro, who emphasized Japan's keenness on Japanese-Egyptian-African cooperation in all fields. He also stressed Japan's contribution to peace and stability in the world and the concern for peace in the Middle East. He also spoke about Japan's vision on many international and regional issues.

On March 11, the Council welcomed French Ambassador Stephane Romatet, who explained that his country does not support radical Islamic groups. He spoke of the Syrian crisis, stressing the need for coordination between Russia and the United States to balance the political process.

With regard to the peace process, he said that the Trump Declaration to transfer the Embassy of America to Jerusalem has led to its return to the forefront of the victims put forward, and a joint action is required to resolve them. Moreover that Europe will not comply with America's position and that France will recognize the Palestinian state in the right position.

The third Ambassador that was hosted by the council on March 29, was the Swiss Ambassador Paul Garnier, who stressed his country's keenness on economic cooperation to be an important part of its foreign policy, and that the Egyptian and Swiss presidents understand the importance of coordination between the two countries in the field of investment, especially as Egypt is attractive for investment.

Visit of a delegation from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)

On Wednesday, January 31st 2018, the meeting was attended by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chair of the Council, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, and Ambassador Dr. Hussein Hassouna, member of the Council, together with a delegation of representatives of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, consisting of General Kristin Lund, Head of Mission, Judy Hyltn, Nils Vindeson and David Foley.

General Christine confirmed that the headquarters of the Authority is the city of East Jerusalem and its branch is located in Egypt in the city of Ismailia. She stated that the mission was the only one in the Middle East to monitor all cease-fire agreements between the five countries; Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan with observers in the Golan and the southern part of Lebanon. The other task is to support the countries concerned and to speak with the authorities and governments, not just the armies but the actors, which requires the need for further consultation with experts on regional developments, particularly the peace process, is essential for the visit of the Council, especially as the Council has an independent vision of transparency and clarity.

She also stressed that during the delegation's meeting with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they assured them:

- Egypt's first priority is to combat terrorism, followed by the Iranian role in the region, then the repercussions of the American decision to transfer the US Embassy to Jerusalem, and the impact on the Palestinian cause.
- The declaration of East Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has hampered the peace process. All parties must cooperate to avoid further conflict within the region. All borders of all the countries of the region must be preserved, work to develop a comprehensive approach to terrorism and reform of religious discourse, and finally work and coordinate with all the United Nations to activate its role on the ground.
- The United States can't be excluded from the peace process, although Washington can be integrated into a body of the five permanent members of the United Nations under the auspices of the United Nations to take care of the peace process.