Egyptian Council for Foreign affairs

Tower 2 Fakhir- Osman Towers, Nile Corniche, Maadi, 12th floor.
Telephone: (202)6-25281091 Fax:(202) 25281093
Website: www.ecfa-egypt.org
Email: info@ecfa-egypt.org ecfakegypt@yahoo.com

Founders:
• Amb. Abdel Raouf El-Reedy
• Amb. Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Shaker
• Dr. Osama Ghazali Harb
• Dr. Bahieldin H. Z. Elibrachy

Board Members:
-Ambassodor/ El Sayed Abdel Raouf El-Reedy: Honorary Chairman
- Ambassador/ Dr. Mohamed Mounir: Chairman
- Ms. Anissa Mohamed Hassouna: Board Vice Chairman
- Ambassador/ Hisham Mohamed El Zamaity: ECFA Secretary General
- Dr. Hazem Attiatallah: Treasurer
- Ambassador/ Dr. Hussein Abdul Khalek Hassouna
- Ambassador/ Ms. Mona Omar Attia
- Ambassador/ Dr. Mahmoud Karem Mahmoud
- Dr. Osama El Gazaly Harb
- Dr. Aly Eldin Helal
- Ambassador/ Sayed Abo-Zayed
- Ambassador/ Dr. Ezzat Saad El Said: Director
Index Topic

• A word from the Chairman: Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran..... 7
• A word from the Editor: Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad................ 13
• Chapter I: Conferences, Seminars and Workshops............ 19
  • Joint Round Table Between the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)........ 21
  • Symposium On “The Role Of Think Tanks And Their Importance In Light Of Global Developments”................................. 24
  • Seminar on a new book by Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry........................ 27
  • Symposium on “The Trump Peace Plan”................................. 29
  • Panel Discussion About “Developments of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) File”................................. 36
  • ECFA participation in the activities of The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania................................. 39
  • Joint Symposium between ECFA and the Embassy of China in Cairo... 42
  • “The Exit From The Vicious Circle Of The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) Crisis”................................. 46
  • “Arabs and Kurds in the Face of Turkish Ambitions”.................. 48
  • Panel Discussion About “The Possible Effects of the Israel–United Arab Emirates And The Bahrain–Israel Normalization Agreements”.... 51
• Consultative session on “Dimensions of Egypt’s regional role
and the related challenges in light of the changing regional and international environment”........................................................... 54

• UN Day-Webinar on “Saving Multilateralism”............................... 57
• Roundtable dialogue on “The future of Sudan”............................. 60
• The Middle East and the future of Egypt-U.S. relations............... 63

**Chapter II: Visits and Meetings** .............................................. 67

• Ambassador Mohamed El-Orabi’s Lecture on “Strategic Situation in the Middle East Region”................................................... 69
• The Council’s Meeting with Mr. David Makovsky.......................... 74
• Meeting with the former Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.......................................................... 76
• Meeting with the Chadian Ambassador........................................ 78
• Meeting with the Senegalese ambassador in Cairo......................... 80
• A Lecture by Professor / Hani Tawfiq on “Economic Reform in Egypt”... 83
• Meeting With The Ambassador of Brazil to Egypt........................ 87
• Meeting with the New Ambassador of Singapore.......................... 90
• Meeting with the Israeli Embassy’s Chargé d’Affaires in Cairo........ 91
• Meeting with the Hungarian Ambassador to Cairo......................... 92
• The Chinese Ambassador’s visit to the Council.............................. 94
• Seminar of the former Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mohammed Al-Dairi......................................... 98
• Meeting with the head of the EU delegation to Egypt...................... 100
• Meeting with the ambassadors of Chad and Niger......................... 101
• Meeting with the head of the Somali National Consultation Party...... 103
• Meeting with the Russian Ambassador to Cairo......................... 105
• ECFA meeting with Sudanese Minister of Religious Affairs and Endowments................................................................. 108
• Meeting With Officials Of the Finnish CMI (Crisis Management Initiative)................................................................. 110

**Chapter III: ECFA Annual training program** ........................................... 113

• Cooperation with the Institute of Diplomatic Studies.................. 115

**Chapter IV: Members’ Contribution** .................................................. 117

• Participation of ECFA Director in a seminar on the sidelines of the celebration of the Chinese National Day............................ 119
• Report of Mr. Fady Khalil on his participation in the roundtable on “The Philosophy of Tax Policy and Social Justice in Egypt”......... 122
• ECFA Director’s participation in some cultural activities on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.............................................. 124
• Meeting of the Board of Directors with H.E. Minister of Foreign Affair............................................................................ 128

**Chapter V: Press Statements** ................................................................. 131

• Statement condemning U.S. President’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel ........................................... 133
• ECFA Statement on the situation in Libya..................................... 135
• Obituary: Lt. Gen. Mohammed Saeed Al-Assar- Minister of State for Military Production................................................... 137
• Statement on ECFA solidarity with the government and people of Sudan ................................................................. 138
• Statement on The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons ............................................. 139
• ECFA commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations ................................................................. 141
• Statement on the Occasion of The Entry into Force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) .............. 143
• ECFA statement on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People ................................. 145
A word from the Chairman:
Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran
It is with great pleasure that I introduce the annual report of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs of 2020 with a few words to present this report which includes the main activities, seminars and workshops organized by the Council under the guidance and supervision of the Board of Directors, which has strived since the beginning of 2020 to prepare ECFA work program.

The Council’s work program during this year was affected by the novel Coronavirus pandemic “Covid-19” that swept the entire world starting with China, while Egypt has been affected by it since March 2020; hence the Egyptian government had to take precautionary measures by reducing the number of meetings and canceling a number of activities in various ministries and governorates, which was also reflected in the civil society activities, including the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs.

It is worth noting that the activities carried out by ECFA during this year include the Council’s meeting with Ambassador Mohamed Al-Orabi, the former Foreign Minister, in January 2020 to discuss the strategic situation in the Middle East, and the Council’s organization of a roundtable in coordination with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) regarding the progress in establishing
a Middle East region free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and the role and importance of think tanks in light of global developments in coordination with the University of Pennsylvania in the United States.

Among its activities, ECFA deliberated on the Egyptian economic reform program, tackled former President Trump’s Middle East peace plan, and organized a roundtable to discuss developments of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and its repercussions on the two downstream countries - Egypt and Sudan- as well as a panel discussion on peace agreements between Israel and a number of Gulf states and their repercussions, in addition to the dimensions of Egypt’s regional role in the MENA region.

The Council hosted the former Libyan Foreign Minister, Mohamed Al-Dayri, to discuss developments of the situation in Libya, as well as a number of other ambassadors accredited to Egypt.

The Council participated in a symposium with the United Nations and a number of ambassadors accredited to Egypt on the occasion of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations.

ECFA Board of Directors met with H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry to discuss the Council’s relationship with the Foreign Ministry and to review Egypt’s foreign policy.
Nonetheless, the Council was unable to call for the 2020 annual general assembly meeting, nor the annual conference due to the circumstances of the Coronavirus pandemic, after consulting with the Ministry of Social Solidarity in light of the precautionary measures and the necessity of social distancing in order to contain the pandemic.

I also express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for the valuable contributions by ECFA members in the activities and seminars organized by the Council during 2020, especially Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, for his efforts in preparing this yearbook, consulting and coordinating with members of the board of directors on ECFA activities and events throughout the year; ECFA annual report is considered an academic reference for researchers and those interested in the humanities and foreign policy issues of Egypt and the Arab world.

May Allah guide us to success,,,,

ECFA Chairman
Mounir Zahran
A word from the Editor:

Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad
The Council is pleased to launch this fifth edition of its annual report (2020), the year characterized by significant difficulties due to the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic with its catastrophic repercussions on economic and social levels, including the difficulties associated with social distancing and the decline of direct interactive activities in favor of virtual events.

Despite the negative repercussions of the pandemic on the Council’s performance and the participation in its activities, thanks to the enthusiasm and interaction of an important number of ECFA members, it was possible to carry out a fair number of activities, namely, conferences, discussions, seminars and workshops, as well as some visits at the Council’s headquarters while maintaining specific considerations for precautionary measures relative to the pandemic.

While the Council did not hold any external visits during the period covered by the report, due to the lockdown conditions in view of the Covid-19 outbreak, it has received many figures and foreign delegations to consult and exchange views on various local, international and regional issues of common interest. The Council also received about 15 students from the Faculties of Economics and Political
Science as part of its annual training program.

ECFA meetings with partners and guests provided an opportunity to inform them about developments in Egypt, especially the economic and social reform program, and its positive outcomes that were praised by the international financing and consultancy institutions. The role of the state in countering terrorism and restoring internal security and stability necessary for comprehensive development was also emphasized.

The Council’s activities also tackled a number of priority files from the Egyptian national security perspective, such as: the Palestinian file and its developments, the Libyan crisis and its complications, as well as the Syrian file, in addition to the local, regional and international repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic, as the members provided their contributions in this regard, which were issued in a publication entitled “Coronavirus Pandemic Crisis (Covid-19): The Domestic, Regional and International Repercussions”. It can be found on the Council’s website under the section “Publications”.

ECFA was also keen to observe the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. In this context, the Council, in cooperation with the UN Resident Coordinator in Cairo, participated in the celebration of the Organization’s 75th anniversary by holding a symposium under the slogan “Saving
Multilateralism”, and another symposium at the Council’s headquarters on October 24, 2020, which coincided with the anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Charter during which the members presented their contributions, and was attended by Ambassador Ihab Awad, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for United Nations Affairs, whereby he reviewed Egypt’s role in the UN Security Council since its inception, and Egypt’s contributions during five sessions in which the country enjoyed a non-permanent membership in the Security Council.

Moreover, the results of the U.S. presidential elections on November 3, 2020, were also well covered, as the Council organized a seminar in which these results, and the possible approach of the new U.S. Administration to regional issues and relations with Egypt, were discussed. Despite the circumstances of the pandemic, ECFA received a number of foreign ambassadors accredited to Cairo, who reviewed the developments regarding their countries’ relations with Egypt, and their respective positions on regional and international issues of mutual interest. Furthermore, ECFA annual conference was scheduled to be held in December - as is the case every year – however, the circumstances of the Coronavirus outbreak prevented this, and the conference was held later on February 20, 2021 under the slogan “The Egyptian Energy Strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean... Opportunities and Challenges”.

The report also sheds light on the regular events like members’ activities, including lectures, seminars, workshops... etc.

Finally, we hope that this publication will achieve its desired goal and benefit, especially for ECFA members whose circumstances prevented them from participating in these activities during this year, and that it will be a true mirror of the efforts exerted by the Council and its honorable members throughout the year covered by the report.

Ezzat Saad
ECFA Director
Chapter I

Conferences, Seminars and Workshops
The Joint Round Table Between the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)  

On "Egypt’s Vision for Establishing a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East"

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, jointly with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and at the initiative of the Institute, hosted a round table on Egypt's aspirations to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, on Wednesday, January 22, 2020. The round table was co-chaired by the two sides. The round table, in addition to UNIDIR, chaired by its Director, Ms. Renata Dwan, who has been appointed Director of UNIDIR since two years, was attended by experts on disarmament from amongst the members of the council as well as others.

The round-table deliberations were divided into three sessions, during which, among other things, the following were particularly highlighted: Firstly: The initiatives that have been taken at the United Nations since the 1974 session of the General Assembly, which had witnessed an initiative by Iran in which Egypt had participated in for establishing
a nuclear-weapon-free zone, with issuance of a resolution by the General Assembly at that time and this was annually repeated in all sessions of the General Assembly until the 74th session of 2019. Those efforts did not succeed in establishing that zone, given Israel’s refusal to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subjecting all its facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), despite the fact that all Arab countries and Iran have joined that zone. **Secondly:** Egypt’s security concern, and especially the terrorism to which Egypt has been subjected since several decades, due to which Egypt has participated in the international campaign against terrorism. Terrorist operations that had hit Egypt and a number of other countries have raised fears that terrorist organizations would gain access to nuclear materials in order to use them in their operations.

**Thirdly:** When the treaty review conference was reconvened in New York in May 1995, the United States continued to exert its pressures in order to issue a resolution for indefinitely extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was objected by Egypt’s delegation that insisted on voting. And in order to avoid voting, the United States negotiated a draft resolution on behalf of the depositary states (the Russian Federation and Britain) for establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and
other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the Middle East, and inviting the countries of the region that had not joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), without mentioning Israel by name, to join the treaty and subject all their nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In exchange for adopting the resolution on the Middle East, the decision on the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was adopted. Egypt’s delegation insisted that the adoption of the decision on the indefinite extension was made by a majority and to have this stated in the text of the resolution, and this is what has already been done, and until 2020, Israel remained the only country in the region that did not join the treaty. That zone has not been established yet.
Symposium On “The Role of Think Tanks And Their Importance In Light Of Global Developments”

At the invitation of Professor James McGann, coordinator of the research centers at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs called for holding a panel discussion on think tanks and their role in light of global developments, on January 30, 2020, which was accompanied by the convening of more than a hundred and fifty other panel discussions in many world cities, deriving their theme from the main title "Why Think Tanks Matter?" This panel discussion was moderated by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, with the participation of Their Excellencies Ambassadors: Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; Mohamed Anis Salem, Ihab Wahba, Youssef Al-Sharqawi, Mohamed El-Ashmawy, Mohamed Mounir, Dr. Hazem Atiyyatallah, Dr. Heba Ragheb Awad, Mr. Ahmed Abu-Shady, Mr. Hedayat Abdel Nabi, Mr. Fadi Khalil, and Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry.

According to a presentation made by Ambassador Anis Salem, the panel discussion clarified the criteria on which the process of selecting and ranking various think tanks worldwide is based in the annual report issued under the supervision of Dr. McGann, which included the quality of
the technical and logistical aspects, work papers, and the intellectual output related to policy-making in various fields. Many problems facing Egyptian and Arab think tanks have been mentioned, such as the lack of financial resources, low level of human resources, bureaucracy, difficulty of communicating with and influencing decision makers, the inability to communicate with other think tanks, and the underutilization of knowledge societies and future studies. The relationship between Egyptian think tanks and the executive bodies or what is being crystallized in the decision-making process in the state, to what extent is the interaction between them, and the extent to which the outputs and recommendations of these think tanks are utilized, were also raised.

Some have suggested, by way of recommendation, the necessity of activating and maximizing cooperation among the various think tanks of all world continents, to constitute the so-called continental cooperation, which is based on activating the relations between the think tanks of each continent, in order to achieve the common good of humanity as a whole, and to solve the various problems facing its welfare and prosperity. With regard to the issues that should be given priority at the present time by the Egyptian and Arab think tanks; it has been pointed out that the deal of the century which is unjust to the rights of the Palestinian people must be confronted, as well as the necessity of endeavoring to establish a regional zone free of nuclear weap-
ons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and they denounced the claims of the major countries possessing such weapons that they are keeping them for deterrence, which could pose a danger to all mankind; and moreover, this is basically a violation of the principles enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, the attendees recommended the necessity of working towards the utilization of Egyptian think tanks as they represent a distinct soft power tool in Egypt, and it should also enjoy the independence needed for it to carry out its desired tasks in the best possible way, while engaging in achieving peace and sustainable development via a wide network of relations with one another.
Seminar on a new book by Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs hosted on Monday, February 10, 2020, a seminar by the columnist Atef El-Ghamry, former director of Al-Ahram office in the United States of America, about his book "Agents and Spies: The Foreign Intelligence Game." The seminar was opened by His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; and was attended by Their Excellencies Ambassadors / Farouk Mabrouk, Youssef Al-Sharqawi, Hisham Al-Zemiti, Fakhri Othman, Rifaat Al-Ansari, Muhammad Al-Ashmawy, and Dr. Adel Al-Salousi.

Mr. Al-Ghamri highlighted the role of intelligence services in threatening the security and stability of states, as well as their rapid development, and their functions that have rapidly developed. He explained that in this secret world, the intelligence man used to receive intensive training and learn the language of the country to which he was dispatched, hiding in the identity of a businessman, or an expert in economics or science, bearing in mind that this matter was not just limited to men, but women were also recruited as spies, to trap some important figures, as has been demonstrated by Monica Lewinsky's relationship with former US President Bill Clinton. Moreover, new mechanisms and means
have been introduced into the world of intelligence and espionage, using drones, attacks through cyberspace, as well as extracting selected information from social media, and subjecting it to study and scrutiny. But this does not mean dispensing with the human element in espionage, as it is able to explore the intentions of those whom it targets with its activity, which cannot be done with electronic devices.

Mr. Al-Ghamry pointed out that the Arab world was and still is an area for joint intelligence cooperation among the three intelligence services - the US, British, and Israeli. Egypt was the target of the operations of these services, the most prominent of which was the 1967 war conspiracy, in which they played coordinated roles between the CIA and the Mossad, added to that the plot to break the project of Abdel Nasser to manufacture an Egyptian jet and missile, as well as Abdel Nasser’s assassination attempt plan at Mansheya Square in 1954, as confessed by confidential British intelligence documents after their release. He also pointed out that the change in time, with the world entering into the period of information revolution, using various modern technologies, did not change the continuing existence of old and modern espionage as having a vital role in managing state affairs and foreign relations. Given the nature of the world we live in, competitiveness is one of its most prominent features, whether the front lines between countries are in a state of clash, or have been witnessing cooperation and calm.
Symposium on "The Trump Peace Plan"

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs organized on February 11, 2020, a symposium on "The Trump peace plan", within the framework of the council's interest in discussing the repercussions that followed the announcement of the deal of the century, as well as the future of the deal, its opportunities, and how to deal with it. The Palestinian Ambassador to Cairo Mr. Diab Al-Louh, in addition to a number of the members of the embassy in Cairo participated in the work of the conference, with the participation of the Chairman of the council, Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran; its director Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad; and a number of experts, academics and former ambassadors.

The themes of the symposium, which was moderated by Ambassador Ihab Wahba, Coordinator of the Standing Committee of the Council on Arab Affairs, included the following:

1- Key elements of the U.S. peace plan - Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Anis Salem (Coordinator of the Standing Committee of the Council on the United Nations and International Organizations); where it has been emphasized that the main feature of the plan is that a detailed map has never been put on the ground, and what is presented is a conceptual map, and the final map will be presented after com-
munication has been made to reach a consensus on this matter. The conceptual map includes a contemporary Palestinian state inside Israel, to which two sites will be added on the Egyptian border. Israel shall keep its settlements inside the Palestinian territories, in addition to keeping the Jordan Valley area as well. Whereas Palestine maintains an outlet to the Dead Sea as a tourist spot, while the Golan and Jerusalem will be parts of the State of Israel. The plan also included the disarmament of the militias therein, and the importance of achieving communication between the Palestinian north and south through bridges and roads passing through Israel, reaching up to the West Bank and Gaza, where the latter will enjoy the existence of an industrial island and a port that Israel shall control as well as controlling the exit and entry of goods into that port, while the Palestinian state shall have the right to manage and supervise the ports of Haifa, Ashdod and Aqaba in accordance with Israeli rules. The declaration stressed the Israeli demands and the necessity to end all forms of boycott and commitment to normalization, and gave Israel the right to control Palestinian airspace. The capital will also be outside the administration for a transitional period until it is transferred to the Israeli administration, with a basket of incentives given to the Palestinian side; such as a free trade agreement with the United States, a plan to regulate the governance of the Palestinian state to double the Palestinian national income, create one million new jobs, achieve a reduction
in unemployment rates to about 10%, and reduce government spending rates over the next ten years. The plan also includes regional normalization, and there are some points that can be negotiated between the two parties. The plan stipulates that Gaza remain under the administration of the Palestinian Authority, while Israeli control will remain over territorial waters, and the reactivation of the airport will be limited to domestic flights. The triangle, which includes 10 villages and inhabited by the 1948 Arabs, has been transferred to the Palestinian state. As for Palestinians residing in Jerusalem, they have three alternatives to choose from, namely: obtaining Israeli citizenship, moving to the new Palestinian state, or to be granted permanent residency in Israel (or a special status) which fulfills the decoupling of Palestinian citizens relationship from Jerusalem. Finally, security standards that are governed by Israel have been established, controlling the nascent Palestinian state in order to ensure peace. On the other hand, there are committees concerned with implementing the terms of the deal.

2- Ambassador Diab al-Louh, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Egypt, spoke about the Palestinian stance towards the deal, emphasizing that the Palestinian stance towards the deal is an integral part of the Egyptian stance, by which it is armed, and to which it adheres, and Palestine; government, leaders and people; appreciates the Egyptian position for the unlimited support it has provided and is still
providing to the Palestinian cause. He explained that the U.S. deal announced by Trump is a deal that has not been consulted about with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who met Trump four times. Following the announcement of the deal, President Abu Mazen directed towards requesting the League’s Secretariat to call for an urgent ministerial meeting, and communication was made to hold that meeting with the aim of launching a campaign for political, diplomatic and legal action at the international level based on the Egyptian position, which has coincided with a visit by President Abbas to Egypt, where a statement was issued by the presidential summit confirming the Egyptian constants with respect to the Palestinian cause and constituted a basic rule with the Egyptian President’s statement that Egypt will accept what the Palestinians accept and reject what they reject. The Arab rejection of the draft plan was noted, as expressed in a statement at the ministerial summit that has been fully adopted without introducing any amendments to the draft Palestinian statement approved by the Palestinian leadership.

3- Within the framework of evaluating Israel’s position on the deal, Ambassador Hazem Khairat (member of the Council) addressed the positions of the Israeli parties and the various supporting forces. The deal also reflects Netanyahu’s peace plan, hoping that he will obtain support for his position in light of the circumstances, prosecutions
and accusations he is passing through, calling for the exploitation of tensions within the Israeli society and not being limited to the opposing responses to the deal. However, in contradiction to the previous positions, the position of the Israeli centrists, which declared through Yusef Pele's words, its rejection of the deal, as it distorts the image of Israel and only aims at supporting Netanyahu in the election battle, especially as it relinquishes Israel’s interests, particularly as they fear that the deal will be faced with European rejection in light of the deteriorating human rights in Israel as well as the growing feelings of anti-Semitism in light of the special violations that are being committed, especially as Israel can no longer gain any sympathy.

Warning, in the same context, of what the 1948 Arabs would be facing in that deal which in some sort would result in demographically isolating them, as it allocates a separate area for them that would be under Palestinian sovereignty so that the settlements would include only the Israeli population. Thus, the deal gets rid of the 1948 Arabs, who represent an important and essential point for preserving the Arab-Palestinian identity inside Israel, and despite being forced to hold the Israeli identity cards, their patriotism and affection for their country still exists, and thus the deal aims at getting rid of them for being considered as a time bomb inside Israel.
4- Assessing the Arab position on the deal, Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Badruddin Zayed (member of the Council) emphasized the necessity of adhering to the three main Arab positions maintaining the Arab stance and steadfast support for the Palestinian cause, namely, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, because the popular domestic foundations within those countries prevent any normalization with Israel. But there are risks related to lacking confidence in the continuity of those positions, except for the Egyptian position, which cannot refrain from remaining in Palestinian confidence; while the Arab cohesion is unreliable.

5- Addressing the international position on the deal, Ambassador Sayed Abu Zeid (member of the Board of Directors) noted that the initiative was born dead and the reason for this is due to its lack of an important element, which is the element of negotiation between the two parties, as there is a party rejecting that deal and another seeking to impose it by force, and therefore this deal has no legal existence. Also, it is not possible for the Palestinians to negotiate that deal, as it will not address any of the Palestinian demands.

6- About the opportunities for implementing the peace plan and how to face it, Major General Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Duwairi, an expert in Israeli affairs, gave that speech; but as for how to move, three factors were recognized: Israel will continue proceeding with the annex-
ation, the United States will continue proceeding with the proposal and following up on the implementation, and the Arab countries range in their position from trying to avoid clashing with the United States on the one hand, to not refraining from Palestinian constants on the other.

In this context, there is a traditional move currently underway. After an unequivocal Arab rejection of the deal, action at the level of the Security Council and the UN General Assembly began. Also, his speech at the Security Council is a historic one, representing a strong response from the Security Council. Despite the possibility of rejecting the draft resolution, this action will convey a message of non-acceptance of the current reality, even though it does not change the facts on the ground.

As for the unconventional action, it would include three scenarios that may be summed up as follows: re-launching an Arab peace initiative, once again emphasizing that it represents the only Arab vision on settling the Arab-Israeli conflict, such national Arab position would become non-negotiable, and there must be tools available to market the plan proposed 18 years ago.
Panel Discussion About “Developments of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) File"

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) hosted a panel discussion on “Developments of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) dossier” on March 18, 2020 at its headquarters. A number of ambassadors and experts concerned with the Renaissance Dam dossier, the Nile Basin and Africa participated in the panel discussion. The participants were Their Excellencies Ambassadors: Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; Ahmed Hajjaj; Ali El-Hefny; Mohamed Hegazy; Marwan Badr; Salah Halima; and Yasser Sorour, Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Nile Basin Countries; as well as Eng. Luay Seif El-Din, from the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI); and Dr. Hazem Ateyyallah, Treasurer of the Council.

The panel discussion was started by emphasizing the importance of addressing the developments of this dossier, particularly after Ethiopia has refused to initial the draft agreement that was reached in Washington, DC, on February 28, which was attended and sponsored by the United States and the World Bank; thus insisting to impose a fait accompli by starting to fill the dam (GERD) in
July 2020, before signing an agreement that takes into account the interests of all parties.

In this context, the attendees valued the foreign tours that were conducted by Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry at the time to clarify the Egyptian stance towards the dam (GERD) and to warn of its dangers, expressing their hopes that these rounds would succeed in gathering the international momentum necessary to exert pressure on Ethiopia to sign and abide by the draft agreement, and realize the importance of feeling a responsibility to reach a final agreement before filling the Ethiopian dam (GERD) to avoid any risks and threats.

The panel discussion was concluded by recommending: The necessity for Egypt to uphold the agreement concluded by the Washington negotiations that Egypt has initiated on the basis of its being fair, balanced and achieving Egyptian interests. And to Confront and reject any Ethiopian attempts to create alternatives to the Washington agreement, under the pretext of solving African problems within the African framework. Furthermore, considering the possibility of moving on the African track within the framework of the AU Troika, and perhaps approaching the US side to call for holding a summit in Washington for the three countries or the countries directly concerned with the dispute, within the framework of what has been stipu-
lated in Article 10 of the Declaration of Principles, in order to contain the Ethiopian position. Moreover, conducting extensive communication with countries cooperating with Ethiopia to build the dam (GERD); especially China, Italy, Germany and Israel; in order to inform them of the facts of the Egyptian position and the bad intentions of the Ethiopian side from the beginning.
ECFA participation in the activities of The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania

In the context of public interest in the global crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania held several sessions to discuss the implications of its spread and to explore and identify the best scenarios to address this global pandemic or at least mitigate its severity on the various areas of human societies. In this context, about 1,200 researchers and directors of think tanks from all over the world participated in the three panels held by the TTCSP entitled: Global Think Tank Town Hall: Saving Lives and Livelihoods, on April 7, May 13 and June 30, 2020. The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs participated in the last two events, represented by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, ECFA Chairman, and Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director.

The first panel discussion was concerned with examining the fundamental repercussions of the pandemic, and exploring possible responses to similar epidemics in the post-Covid-19 world. In the second panel discussion, five working groups were formed to prepare reports containing
different scenarios to confront the repercussions of the pandemic on various facets of human life, which will then be submitted to the G20 secretariat for inclusion in the closing papers of the next group meeting. The third panel discussion reviewed the contents of the five reports, which dealt in particular with each of the following:

- Addressing the public health crisis.

- National and international strategies for reviving and improving economic activities.

- Developing innovative and comprehensive strategies, both public and private, to assist the groups most affected by the effects of the pandemic.

- How to strengthen international cooperation, such as creating systems that are more rapid, flexible and responsive to future crises.

- Readiness for a future that lacks certainty for the work of the various think tanks, in terms of finding new work patterns for these centers in their research missions, means of communication, and sources of financing.

The program’s activities and panels concluded with a number of important recommendations, including: the necessity of unifying the efforts of the various think tanks in
the same country to serve public interest without focusing on competition; working towards adopting a communication mechanism to accomplish various tasks, and the possibility of maximizing benefit from that in the future; initiating the treatment of various diseases using modern technical medical means, and ensuring the equitable distribution of various medicinal drugs to the relevant individuals; the need to adopt and adhere to sustainable economic policies; Maximizing cooperation and coordination with civil society organizations to help mitigate the negative repercussions caused by the pandemic; assisting small and medium enterprises and facilitating the financial and legal procedures necessary to carry out their tasks; seeking to enhance cooperation among countries in order to effectively overcome the repercussions of the crisis and the like in the future.
Joint Symposium between ECFA and the Embassy of China in Cairo


The meeting addressed the following in particular:

1- Both ECFA Chairman and Director raised the Chinese position on the Ethiopian Dam, as the file was brought up to the Security Council last June, expressing regret over the failure of the Chinese delegation to the Security Council to take into account the vital importance of the issue of Nile waters for Egypt and stressed that the Council in all its previous contacts with the Chinese side, urged it to give this matter the interest it deserves.

In this context, the Council expressed its hope that the Chinese position would be positive when the issue will be brought up again to the Security Council.

In his intervention, Chinese Ambassador Liao Liqiang addressed what he called the changing situation in the Middle
East, the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic on the region’s economies, and the Chinese government’s efforts to help contain and mitigate the catastrophic effects of the pandemic. In this context, he presented the Chinese-Egyptian cooperation in combating Covid-19 since its outbreak until present, as well as the presidential contacts and mutual assistance in this regard. He added that:

- This year marks the 64th anniversary of the establishment of relations between the two countries, and that Chinese companies operating in Egypt are keen to continue their work and production rates despite the circumstances of the pandemic, and that cultural exchange between the two countries has not stopped despite these circumstances.

- The ambassador was keen to express gratitude to Egypt for its support to China in facing what he called Western accusations that it is the origin or cause of the Covid-19 pandemic, pointing out that it is a challenge to the entire humanity and not to a specific country.

- The ambassador briefed ECFA on the developments in Hong Kong, referring to the national security law approved by Parliament on June 30, and affirming that the West seeks to politicize this issue. He expressed the Chinese government's appreciation to Egypt for its support - among many other countries - of the Chinese position in this regard at the United Nations Human Rights Council.
• He referred to the recent US sanctions on his country in connection with the situation of Muslims in the Xinjiang region, stressing that this is a blatant interference in internal affairs. He added that there are 20 million Muslims in China and that there are 24,000 mosques in Xinjiang alone. He thanked Egypt for its stance on this file as well.

• Regarding the Ethiopian dam issue, the ambassador indicated that they are interested in this issue and that although China is an upstream country, it stands with Egypt as much as possible and encourages resolving differences via dialogue. Ambassador Ezzat Saad commented that Ethiopia has been procrastinating for an entire decade to impose a fait accompli. He added that Egypt resorted to the UN Security Council to preserve its rights against Ethiopia's bad faith and the negativity showed by the friends of the parties to the dispute, stressing that the growing economic and trade interests of China in the Horn of Africa, East Africa and the Arab World allows it to play a positive political role to support and stabilize this region, which is situated at the heart of the Belt and Road Initiative.

• The ambassador tackled his country's relations with the United States, noting that Washington is trying to cover up its failure to manage the virus crisis by accusing China of causing the spread of the pandemic, which is unacceptable. He added that their Foreign Minister affirmed the need for China-U.S. cooperation and de-escalation of tensions
between the two countries since their economies are the world’s strongest ones, in a manner that contributes to combating the pandemic.

2- On his part, Ambassador Osama El-Magdoub - former ambassador to China - indicated that Egypt has supported the Belt and Road Initiative considering that its objective is developmental, adding that the general principles underlying China's foreign policy require it to convince Addis Ababa to adopt the voice of reason and take into account the interests of the two downstream countries, noting that the interventions of Ali El-Hefny and Hisham Al-Zimaiti went in the same vein.

Concluding his speech, the Chinese ambassador affirmed his country's support for Egypt in various issues and their appreciation for Cairo's stance on their issues. He added that he will inform Beijing of the Council's requests regarding the importance of China playing a greater role in the Renaissance Dam issue, expressing hope that the three countries will reach a negotiated solution soon.
The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs hosted on July 22, 2020, a seminar to discuss the developments of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) dossier, in cooperation with the Institute of Research and Strategic Studies of the Nile Basin Countries, Fayoum University. The seminar was attended by Their Excellencies Ambassadors: Marawan Badr; Mohamed Hegazy; Salah Halima; as well as Prof. Dr. Sayed Flaifal; Dr. Amani Al-Taweel; former Staff Major General Dr. Muhammad Abdul-Khalik Qashqosh; in addition to Dr. Ayman Abdel-Wahab; Dr. Hany Raslan; Major General Khaled Mukhtar; and Counselor Dr. Mosaed Abdul Ati Shteiwi. This seminar was moderated by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; and Professor Adly Saadawy, Dean of the Institute of Research and Strategic Studies of the Nile Basin Countries, Fayoum University.

The seminar emphasized the priority of reaching a legally binding agreement on the rules for filling, operating and managing the dam, as a prerequisite for the ongoing negotiations; requiring strong Egyptian action based on the Washington document, provided that it reflects Egypt's concerns and interests in a clear, disciplined and unambig-
uous manner. The participants agreed that in light of Ethiopia's political history, its relations with its neighborhood and the historical legacy of its relations with Egypt and their re-percussions, represented by the gap of distrust with Cairo, Egypt must adopt a sustainable program to dismantle the Ethiopian state. Particularly as the option of containment adopted by Egypt since 2011 has proven its failure, perhaps because the decision-maker has not been aware of the dimensions of the Ethiopian colonial project.

On the other hand, the participants emphasized that developing Egypt's relations with Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti and Kenya has become a vital issue that should be given priority by the Egyptian foreign policy within its strategy for the next fifty years. The participants also called for considering the establishment of a permanent advisory council of specialized experts and academics concerned with African affairs to provide advice to the Egyptian decision-maker in coordination with the sovereign authorities on all current and future matters related to the Nile dossier, including Egypt's relations with the Nile basin countries, the countries of the Horn of Africa and East Africa in general.
The Council hosted on August 12, 2020, a closed symposium about the topic of “Arabs and Kurds in the face of Turkish ambitions,” with the participation of: Professor Dr. Rajai Fayed, President of the Egyptian Centre for Kurdish Studies; Ambassador Abdel-Rahman Salah and Ambassador Hazem Khairat, members of the Council; and from the Kurdish side: Mr. Muhammad Arslan Ali, Director of Firat News Agency (ANF) office in Cairo; and Mr. Mala Yassin Rauf, the representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in Cairo. The symposium was moderated by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council.

The seminar began with Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad welcoming the participants. He then noted that the symposium comes in light of the developments taking place in the region, especially the Turkish practices in the MENA region, threatening the national security of many countries, and that cooperation to confront those ambitions is significantly required.

The symposium has addressed the following themes:

The Ottoman legacy in Egypt, the illusion of Neo-Ottomanism, the Turkish ambitions in the region, the opportunities for unifying the Kurdish forces and the stances of the
actors (Turkey, the United States, Russia), Israel and the Arab-Kurdish rapprochement, and the opportunities for Arab-Kurdish rapprochement to confront the common enemy (commonalities and disparities).

The following has been emphasized during the meeting:

- History still needs to be reviewed in order to monitor the crimes and violations committed during the period of the Ottoman Caliphate.

- Turkish policies are not expected to be voluntarily changed by the Erdogan regime, but they would be rather changed through imposing a fait accompli by a regional coalition of influential countries agreeing among themselves on the need to confront Turkish policies and ambitions. This must take place before 2023, the year in which Turkey would celebrate the 100th anniversary of establishing the first republic, and in which Erdogan intends to establish the second republic and abandon the Lausanne Agreement, because if this fact is ignored, there might be a major crisis between regional and international powers on the one hand and Turkey on the other.

- The Kurdish issue is not an internal one but rather a regional and international issue, particularly as those forces were the ones who caused the division of the Kurdistan region among 4 countries during the twenties of the last century; calling on the Arab countries to move, on top of which
is Egypt, and to coordinate with international and regional institutions to achieve Kurdish unity, which would be an important means of confronting the ambitions of a regional power seeking to impose its agenda in the region, and this cooperation shall determine the future relationship between Arabs and Kurds.

• The Arab rapprochement with the Kurds raises Israel’s ire, which has tried since its establishment to attract the Kurdistan region towards its side and support it in all forms, and despite the absence of documents indicating the good relationship between Israel and the Kurdish people, this is nothing more than media statements. Moreover, in light of the fact that relations are not built on the basis of emotions, these relations have not yet reached up to the level of being strategic between the two sides. Indeed, Israel violates the rights of approximately 160,000 Jewish Kurds residing inside Israel. Promoting Israel’s support to these factions originates from Israel’s desire to create weak entities and divide the motherland of the Arab countries with the aim of weakening them, and that is why Israeli attempts have always been there to support the Kurdish side, trying to incline the Kurds towards hostility with Iran and create an Israeli ally in this region.
Panel Discussion About "The Possible Effects of the Israel–United Arab Emirates And The Bahrain–Israel Normalization Agreements"

A panel discussion on "the possible effects of the normalization agreements between the United Arab Emirates and Israel and between the latter and Bahrain", was held on September 17, 2020, with the participation of Their Excellencies Ambassadors: Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Abdul Raouf Al-Raidi, Honorary Chairman of the Council; and Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; as well as Sayed Abu Zaid, Husam Zaki, Fahmi Fayed, Hazem Khairat, and Dr. Mohamed El-Saeed Idris, members of the Council; and Dr. Hassan Abu Taleb, Expert at Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies.

The panel discussion was launched on the basis of the fact that both agreements fall within the sovereign right of each state to engage in relations with another state or more for considerations valued by the state concerned in accordance with its national interests.

The panel discussion then addressed the extent to which the UAE-Israel cooperation could reach to in the economic and trade fields, and the effects this cooperation would
have on Egypt's interests as linked to its relations with the UAE as well as with Bahrain; particularly as the Israeli press, as well as officials, addressed major projects in the fields of transport and infrastructure the UAE intends to implement in cooperation with Israel, which requires consultation and coordination with the concerned parties.

The panel discussion also addressed the fact that cooperation and communication between Israel and both the UAE and Bahrain have been existing for decades, as well as the timing of the two agreements, whether from U.S. perspective, in connection with the US presidential elections scheduled for next November 3, or the internal impasse facing Israeli Prime Minister, Netanyahu, and his electoral base. Adding to this, the connection between both agreements and the U.S. policy towards Iran, the aggressive policy of the latter in the Gulf region, and the talk about a new alliance that includes the Gulf states and Israel to besiege Iran, along with the gradual withdrawal of the United States from the Middle East, which no longer has the same priority as it had in the past.

Finally, the panel discussion touched upon the assumption that the recent normalization agreements would enhance stability in the region as a result of an Arab-Israeli alliance against Iran. Whereas, it has been observed with respect to this assumption, that it would be more accurate to assume
that these agreements might increase polarization in the region; because as long as the Iranian regime remains and maintains its arms in the region, it is not expected to stand idly by about such developments. Moreover, Iran is not the only source of instability in the region. But Turkey is also there, and Israel itself comes first before Turkey, completely ignoring the rights of the Palestinian people in their independent state despite successive peace agreements with Egypt, the Palestinian National Authority, and Jordan. And thus, the other two agreements will change nothing with respect to the status of the Palestinians or the Israeli position.
Consultative session on “Dimensions of Egypt's regional role and the related challenges in light of the changing regional and international environment”

On October 9, 2020, ECFA organized a consultative session on the dimensions of Egypt's regional role and the related challenges in light of the changing regional and international environment, which was attended by a number of experts and academics, and which issued the following conclusions:

• The issue of comprehensive development constitutes the top priority of the Egyptian foreign policy due to its close association with Egyptian national security. In this context, reference was made to the policy of diversifying the strategic partnerships pursued by Egypt with the major powers in the world. In this regard, the participants hailed the independent trends in Egypt's foreign policy.

• The future of Egyptian foreign policy is linked to the existence of genuine development at home and building an internal model that guarantees progress in its human development indicators in all fields, including improving the business environment, education, health, scientific research, and the use of science and technology, which do not com-
mensurate at all Egypt's stature and its great cultural and civilizational assets in its region and in the world. The internal structure must include creating a strong political current to confront the Islamic movement and building hard power and soft power elements.

- In the above framework, the participants agreed that the regional role of Egypt is closely related to its position on the Palestinian cause and the necessity for a just solution to it. If the Gulf States want to mobilize against Iran and ward off its danger, then resolving the Palestinian cause will deprive Iran of the most important pillars on which it relies for its interventions in the region. In addition, the settlement of this question is a matter of close relevance to Egyptian national security, and it is closely linked to terrorist activities in the Sinai.

- The participants agreed that Turkey is the strategic opponent of Egypt, even if Israel remains the enemy.

- The need for an accurate and timely follow-up process for developments in the region in terms of research, intelligence and diplomacy, because normalization may involve economic projects that may affect Egyptian interests.

- The participants agreed on the need for Egypt to build new and flexible alliances that is not necessarily based on
a total convergence of interests. Rather, it is sufficient to agree on a specific interest and adhere to the Egyptian position even if it contradicts the positions of the other allies.

• Some also noted the importance of restoring Syria, reviving the Egyptian role in Lebanon, and continuing the active diplomacy towards Africa adopted by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.
UN Day-Webinar on “Saving Multilateralism”
Opening Remarks by Ambassador Mounir Zahran
ECFA Chair

On the 24th of October, the United Nations celebrates the United Nations Day every year. The UN Day marks in 2020 its 75th anniversary.

On the occasion of this UN 75th anniversary, we should bear in mind both the achievements and shortcomings of the world organization, based on the provisions of its Charter. Today, as an Egyptian and Chair of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), I feel honored to recall the Egyptian contributions to the United Nation. Abdel-Hamid Badawy represented Egypt in the San Francisco Conference in 1945 and participated in the drafting of the UN Charter; Ambassador Mahmoud Azmy participated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948; and Boutros Boutros-Ghali was the UN Secretary-General of the world organization from 1992 to 1996 and the author of the “Agenda for Peace” that was requested by the Security Council Summit in January and issued in June 1992.

Boutros-Ghali was also behind the organization of several world conferences, namely; the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, the Universal Conference on Human Rights in Vi-
enna in 1993, the Cairo Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995 and the Beijing Summit on Women and Development in 1996. The outcomes of these world conferences contributed to the adoption by the General Assembly in the year 2000 of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I shall take this opportunity to highlight the discrepancy between the principles highlighted in Article 2 of the Charter and the practice in as far as the political and security matters including in particular the provisions of chapter V of the Charter, as far as the composition and voting rights of the permanent members of the Security Council; a subject matter which should be revisited and amended. I have to recall that the Charter has been amended in accordance with Article 108 in relation to Articles 23, 27, 61 and 109 of the UN Charter and adding Arabic to the languages of the organization.

Among the shortcomings of the multilateral system is the delay to agree on binding definitions of the terms “aggression” and “terrorism” which are among the sufferings and instability of mankind and obstacles to the maintenance of peace and security.

The organization of the UN 75th webinars should also ad-
dress the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the future of multilateralism, including the accessibility to basic health services and medicine.

Among the main shortcomings of multilateralism is the observance by member-States of the provisions of Article 17 para. 3 of the Charter. Such provisions should be strictly observed by the United Nations, specialized agencies, funds and programmes to ensure greater coordination among the UN system organizations in the implementation of the SDGs. Needless to state that the consequences of the Covid-19 reduced the opportunity of achieving the objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development since a greater coordination should take place among the UN system organizations to ensure its implementation.
Roundtable dialogue on "The future of Sudan"

On August 22, 2019, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) held a roundtable dialogue on “The Future of Sudan and its Relationships with Egypt” in light of the ongoing developments on the Sudanese political arena. A number of ECFA members who are interested in Sudanese affairs, as well as guest experts non-members of the Council, participated in the dialogue.

In his opening speech, the Council’s Chairman pointed out that the regime of the ousted Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir severely damaged relations between Khartoum and Cairo during the thirty-year period he ruled Sudan, left generations that hated the Egyptians, and portrayed Egypt as an occupier of the Halayeb and Shalatin Triangle, over which Sudan claimed its sovereignty. On the other hand, he referred to the constitutional declaration signed on August 17, 2019 in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, in presence of a number of representatives of African and Arab countries. Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly represented Egypt at the signing ceremony. He also indicated that the members of the Sovereign Transitional Council delivered the constitutional oath on August 21, which was considered as an important and decisive step in the political life of Sudan, heralding a new chapter of history by which it turns a black page that lasted for about 30 years.

The symposium continued with an intervention by Ambassa-
dor Osama Shaltout - Assistant Foreign Minister for Sudan Affairs, during which he addressed the reasons behind the demonstrations and protests that led to the overthrow of Al-Bashir regime, the first and second declarations issued by the Transitional Military Council, and the new forces and currents in Sudan and those involved in the movement of freedom and change. The professional groupings ... etc.

Ambassador Shaltout outlined Egypt's stance regarding the new developments in Sudan, stressing Cairo’s keenness on Sudan’s stability and security. In this context, he referred to Egypt's call, in its capacity as the then African Union Chair, to hold a consultative meeting on the situation in Sudan with the participation of the African Troika, neighboring countries and IGAD, in addition to Egypt's proposal to extend the deadline for reaching an agreement between the Sudanese parties from 15 days to three months, which was reduced by the AU Peace and Security Council to only two months, before the military council’s dissolution and the sit-in by force on June 3, 2019, with the ensuing increased Western pressure that led to the of the Peace and Security Council to announce the suspension of Sudan’s African Union membership.

Assistant Foreign Minister for Sudan Affairs reviewed the position of the various regional and international parties regarding the new situation in Sudan and the challenges it faces during that stage and in the foreseeable future, especially the grinding economic crisis, the problem between the center and the suburbs, the challenge between the military establishment and shadow militias, as
well as the challenge of the deep state and how to dismantle it, and the pattern of dealing with the forces inside Sudan, and many other challenges.

A discussion took place between the participants, namely, Ambassadors: Dr. Mounir Zahran, Abdel Raouf El-Reedy, Ezzat Saad, Dr. Salah Halima, and Professor Dr. Sayed Felfel - Member of Parliament, Professor Hani Raslan - Adviser to Al-Ahram Center for Studies, and Mr. Mahmoud Mourad - Journalist and Member of the Council. The participants agreed on the paramount importance of Sudan’s stability at that stage and recommended that Egypt should adopt a different position vis-à-vis Sudan than that which prevailed during the thirty years of Al-Bashir's rule.

On his part, Ambassador Abdel Raouf El-Reedy suggested inviting the entire Egyptian society, including ECFA in particular, to form a working group for Sudan that would envision prospects for cooperation in the upcoming period. He added that it is important for the Council to adopt an initiative to form a delegation of civil society representatives to head to Sudan to communicate with events there at that crucial stage, and to affirm Egypt's interest in the ongoing developments which herald the beginning of a juncture in the history of Sudan, which could also be a new and positive stage in the Egyptian/ Sudanese relations which suffered over the past three decades.

The dialogue concluded with a set of recommendations on ways and means to support and interact with the new Sudan at this critical stage.
The Middle East and the future of Egypt-U.S. relations

On November 10, 2020, ECFA hosted a symposium on “the results of the recent U.S. presidential elections on the new Administration’s policy vis-à-vis the Middle East and the future of Egypt-U.S. relations,” with the participation of a number of experts, academics and former ambassadors who are ECFA members. The symposium tackled four axes: the new Administration’s policy vis-à-vis the Middle East, the challenges that will face the new Administration in the Middle East, the new Administration and the future of Egypt-U.S. relations, the actuality and future of Egypt-U.S. economic relations.

The symposium was concluded as following:

1- It is likely that the priority of the new U.S. Administration, led by President-elect Joe Biden, will focus primarily on domestic issues, such as improving the health and economic conditions that are currently ravaging the country, as well as working to unify the American nation and eliminate the polarization that the recent elections showed.

2- On the other hand, the foreign policy of the new U.S. Administration will pay special interest to attempting to cor-
rect what Trump has spoiled by withdrawing from some international organizations and moving away from the United States’ traditional allies.

3- With regard to the foreign policy of the new Administration vis-à-vis the Middle East, most of the participants agreed that there is a relative decline in the importance of the Middle East for decision-makers in the United States, and it is expected that the importance of the region and its conflicts with the will continue to decline for the new Administration, especially since the United States has been able to secure its oil needs through the exploitation of shale oil, and even export. In addition, the cost of the military operations America was carrying out in the region exceeds the value of its benefits from them, besides the failure of all U.S. attempts to build a regional security system that includes all the countries of the region.

4- As for the Arab-Israeli conflict, given the absence of a reference to the peace process in Biden's speech, it is expected that there will be some kind of freezing of the cause, and the preservation of the gains Israel realized thanks to the Trump Administration. As for Iran, the speakers linked the issue of the continuation of the hard-line U.S. approach towards Iran or the occurrence of a breakthrough in this file with Iran's announcement of its return to strict commitment to the terms of the nuclear agreement.
5- Concerning Egypt-US relations, the participants expressed "conditional optimism" on the basis of the challenges and opportunities that these relations also entail. Nevertheless, one must wait to find out what the new administration requests from Egypt, and it was pointed out that restoring the vitality of Egypt-U.S. relations depends on an active Egyptian role in some areas of top priority at present, including: working to create a business climate in Egypt conducive to attracting American investments, making use of the U.S.-China competition atmosphere all over the world, in all areas, and the importance of moving forward in improving programs of health, education, scientific research, scientific and technological progress and the environment for doing business, in order to develop the Egyptian state, in a manner that enhances the chances of restoring the leading Egyptian stature in the region, keenness on changing the image of the human rights’ file in Egypt.
Chapter II

Visits and Meetings
Ambassador Mohamed El-Orabi’s Lecture on “Strategic Situation in the Middle East Region”

The Council hosted on January 5, 2020, a lecture by Ambassador Mohamed El-Orabi, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, to discuss "the developments of strategic situations in the Middle East region," with the participation of Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, and its Director, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, in addition to a number of experts and academics from among the council members.

During addressing the developments of the situation in the region, Ambassador El-Orabi stressed that there is a mutual influence between viewing local situations and the rapid developments taking place in the region, within the limits of the national obligations of states. Moreover, there is a clear link between international strategies and some countries in the region with respect to the implementation of such strategies, and this led to increasing the appetite of some regional states to interfere in the affairs of the countries of the region, which led to the prolongation of the chronic problems that plagued the region in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Some of the main regional states in the region have also developed their tools and exploited all available strategic vacuums in order to control the situations in the region. In this regard, the role of the influential states (Turkey, Iran,
Israel, and Ethiopia) can be emphasized, as each one of them possesses its own scope and tools, and has become a strategic burden to the region.

As for the Egyptian strategy with respect to dealing with these challenges, he emphasized the existence of determinants of the Egyptian position based on not compromising the principle of unity and cohesion of every Arab country, under the leadership of a central government, and refusing regional and international interference in the internal affairs of states, as well as the importance of respecting the right to expression of opinion without prejudice to the entity and institutions of the state. He added that the desires for change must be sought through peaceful movements and national consensus, emphasizing the importance of preserving national armies, as they are an essential element for defending the borders of the state and maintaining its cohesion, but not to use that power against the peoples. Moreover, he laid emphasis on development as an essential foundation for the elimination of any environment that may contribute to the exploitation of the complex economic and social conditions of societies by terrorism, as well as not to align with one party at the expense of the other due to ideological or sectarian basis, but to believe in the single fabric of each country, and uphold national constants without exclusion, except for those who practice violence and terrorism, also stressing the importance of touching the desires
for community cohesion, calling for stability and unity of the national fabric, according to mechanisms that respect constitutional legitimacy; as the process of legislation and making constitutional laws originates from within, and not by the effect of an external influencer, provided that this precedes the establishment of a stable and solid state.

He also pointed out that Egypt has presented a model that has managed to win the trust and attention of international parties. It has also developed sudden, surprising, and more powerful strategic axes that match its moral political constants. Egypt has not abandoned the Arab and African dimensions as the basis for its strategic vision, which holds a firm foundation for progress and development, through the establishment of successful social and cultural communication, despite the obstacles set, the role of soft power in that framework had a commendable effect; and through the common vision of the necessity of keeping the forces of political Islam away from the scene, as well as working towards protecting the image of moderate Islam in its true form, Egypt has contributed to an attempt of unifying a religious discourse calling for peace and acceptance of the other.

He concluded his speech by drafting his forward-looking vision for developments in the region, where he noted the following:

- The year 2020 to 2021 shall witness structural and political transformations within the European Union, which could
make it very weak in dealing with Arab issues.
- The forces of terrorism will rebuild their entities and gather in new areas, perhaps in the countries of the Sahel and Sahara (Chad - Niger - Mali), and this new African belt that begins from Somalia and ends in Nigeria will constitute a strategic burden on Egypt.
- Chronic issues in the region are expected to run for longer terms.
- Turkish infiltration may increase in intensity, directing its arrows against Egypt and seeking to support the forces of the Muslim Brotherhood and its other supporting forces in the region.
- The importance of supporting the Arab Safety Net, which began with the countries of the Arab Mashreq (Jordan - Iraq) to run parallel with the Egypt-Gulf relations.
- Egypt, during its presidency of the African Union, must set profit and loss accounts with regards to its African relations; especially since Egypt has offered a lot during the past years, specifically in 2019, and the African response was not up to the level of what Egypt has offered. This does not mean, in any way, abandoning Africa. Rather, the stances of others and their impact on Egyptian interests must be taken into account.
- Egypt may take more concrete and forceful steps towards the Renaissance Dam (GERD) dossier.
- The importance of reaching a formulation that would be consistent with the Egyptian pillars and national security in
the Red Sea, especially with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
  - There may be a unified media formulation that refutes the allegations of the opposing voices and those lying in ambush, with more flexible methods of responding to them.
  - Maintaining strong bilateral relations with each EU country, building on the strategic leap that took place with Greece and Cyprus.
  - The importance of linking the interests of major international companies to Egypt's vital economic field as a guarantee of development and stability.
The Council’s Meeting with Mr. David Makovsky

The Council hosted on January 14, 2020, Mr. David Makovsky, director of The Washington Institute's Project on the Middle East Peace Process at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, to talk about the chances of the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis and the future prospects, in addition to the developments taking place in the Middle East and the ways of establishing peace among the regional powers.

The guest emphasized that achieving peace in the region and finding a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict will not be achieved as long as the political process remains stalled among Palestinian factions, especially as Fatah and Hamas have different agendas and mechanisms for achieving their political visions. And the Arabs should exert more efforts to unify the Palestinian line to start achieving a true peace process in the region.

He also noted the importance of adopting strategic visions for achieving peace in the region, and working towards resolving the differences and any causes aggravating them, on top of which is resolving the differences between the Gulf states and Iran, which can only be achieved through exerting real efforts to contain the differences and launching
a real dialog based on mutual respect for the sovereignty of states, equality and non-interference in their internal affairs.

In this regard, Mr. David called on Egypt to play a greater role in dealing with these crises and in formulating visions for resolving the crises of the region, particularly the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis in light of the good relations that Egypt has with both sides of the conflict.
Meeting with the former Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) hosted Mr. Mohammed Al-Dairi, former Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, on January 15, 2020, to talk about developments of the Libyan crisis. The seminar was opened by His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; with the participation of His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; and Their Excellencies Ambassadors: Ihab Wahba, Yousef El-Sharkawy, Nevine Semeika, Adel Al-Salousi, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, Sayed Abu Zeid, Mohamed Badr El-Din Zayed, Mohamed El-Nakli, Farouk Mabrouk, Mohamed Mustafa Kamal, Hazem AtiyatAllah, and Dr. Yousry Abushady.

His Excellency the Minister pointed out at the outset of his speech that there exists a strong historical relationship between Libya and Egypt, and that the bonds of friendship and brotherhood are extremely great between the peoples of the two countries. Speaking about the Libyan crisis, he mentioned that it is a highly complex issue, due to engagement of several regional and international powers having different interests, not to mention the inter-parties conflict among the Libyan parties themselves. The discussion touched upon reviewing the security, political, economic and international scenes in Libya.
His Excellency the Minister pointed out at the outset that Qatar and Turkey have the upper hand in what is happening in Libya, and that they have used the Libyan territories to train mercenaries and armed militias (“irregular” armed forces) to achieve their own ends in a number of states in the region, adding that these armed militias include: **Firstly:** The terrorist elements that were present in Afghanistan, which had assassinated General Abdel Fatah Younis in July 2011, and which include Ansar al-Sharia group that attacked the U.S. consulate in Benghazi and killed the U.S. ambassador to Libya, as well as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) that had emerged from bin Laden’s al-Qaeda group in 2008, and has been designated as a terrorist group by the United Nations Security Council. **Secondly:** These militias include purely criminal groups. The constitution of such militias was helped by the criminal elements that had been launched by Gaddafi in February 2011 and which had carried out systematic operations during the period from 2012 to 2014 to assassinate nearly 600 officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers in the city of Benghazi. The international aspect of the Libyan crisis indicates the existence of a lack of consensus among some Arab and European countries on the settlement of the crisis, of which special mention may be made of the fierce competition between France and Italy in this regard. Pointing out that the blatant Turkish intervention in Libyan affairs, through the agreement concluded between Erdogan and Al-Sarraj in late November 2019, will have dire consequences that would be manifested in more and more escalation and provocation of the situation in the region.
**Meeting with the Chadian Ambassador**

The Council hosted on January 16, 2020, the Chadian Ambassador to Cairo Mr. Al Amin Dodo Abdullah Al Khat-tari, with participation of Their Excellencies Chairman and Director of the Council as well as Mr. Mohamed Al-Naqli, a businessman and member of the Council.

The Chadian ambassador has been keen to give a brief on the Chadian state, reviewing the historical and political issues as well as the geographical location of the country, in addition to the wealth it possesses that can be used to enhance investment cooperation between the two sides, through joint work to inform Egyptian businessmen of these opportunities, especially in the fields of agriculture and livestock, in order to enhance trade exchange between the two countries.

Regarding the means of Egyptian-Chadian cooperation and coordination on the continent's issues, he stressed the need for integration of the political and economic will among African countries, which will in turn work towards combating terrorism and organized crime as well as eradicating poverty and disease, and moreover paving the way for implementing the idea of economic, political and security integration as well as establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area in all its elements.
In this regard, he called for the importance of playing a role in intra-African investments by the private sector and businessmen, especially in the field of infrastructure, which would open horizons for foreign investment.
Meeting with the Senegalese ambassador in Cairo

The Council hosted on February 6, 2020, Mr. Ely Sy Beye, Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal to Egypt, upon his request, accompanied by Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Gueye, the Embassy’s Advisor for Cultural Affairs. The meeting was attended by Their Excellencies the ambassadors: Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Mohamed Al-Naqli; Adel Al-Salousi; Council Members; as well as Prof. Mohamed Kassem, businessman and member of the Council; and Mr. Youssef Wali, representative of the Egyptian-European Council (EEC).

1. The meeting began with the Chairman of the Council offering a welcome to the ambassador, the advisor to the embassy and the participants, noting the great importance Egypt attaches to the African continent, and what the state has been working on since President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi took office, who was keen to emphasize that the first concern of the Egyptian foreign policy is the African sphere.

2. The Senegalese ambassador expressed his happiness for holding this meeting, praising the strong relations between the presidents of the two countries, expressing his hope that it will be activated on the ground in all fields, especially as it has not risen to this day to express the truth
about what the two countries have in terms of common potentials, praising the Egyptian efforts made to interact with the continent’s issues, which emerged more clearly in the work of the African summit hosted by the city of Sharm el-Sheikh as well as the Aswan Forum, noting the importance of working towards achieving rapprochement between the peoples of the continent through the enhancement of cooperation in the fields of culture, education and tourism and not only being limited to political, diplomatic and economic aspects, stressing that trade relations between the two countries are still not up to the required level, which requires holding meetings and reciprocal visits at all levels and not just being limited to the presidential level.

3. He emphasized the importance of joint work to strengthen and develop the bonds between the two countries, and to overcome all obstacles, calling on the Egyptian side to invest in the country’s large hydrocarbon reserves, as well as introducing investment opportunities in Egypt to Senegalese investors and for the joint ministerial committee scheduled to be held in March 2020, which includes ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Health, to contribute to activation of areas of cooperation between the two sides. He also stressed the importance of tourism and culture sectors in strengthening ties between the peoples of the two countries, adding that Ms. Enas Abdel Dayem, the Egyptian Minister of Culture, is invited to attend the 2021 Dakar International Book Fair, and he also stressed the importance
of studying the granting of free visas to Senegalese to enter Egypt, based on the principle of reciprocity, especially since there exists a great difficulty in granting this visa, and even he himself faced such a challenge during taking over his work in Egypt, where he was only granted a one-time entry visa; moreover, he stressed the importance of working on studying the launch of direct flights between the two countries, especially as Egypt Air is a large company that flies to all destinations in Europe unlike its African counterparts.

4. **At the conclusion of the meeting, the Senegalese ambassador emphasized the following:**

Regarding cooperation in the textile industry, he stressed the importance of overcoming the language barrier, especially since Senegal and the Francophone group of countries, despite their capabilities and resources, face difficulties related to communication.

He called for the Council to attend the meetings of the African Committee of Ambassadors to exchange views and inform them about the future of economic cooperation between Egypt and the countries of the continent so that it could be discussed during the ambassadors’ meetings, calling for joint work between the Council and other institutions with African ambassadors to develop a strategy through which the desired cooperation can be strengthened in all fields, and to overcome related challenges.
Lecture by Professor / Hani Tawfiq On "Economic Reform in Egypt"

Within the framework of the Council’s interest in highlighting developments of the economic situation in the country, the council hosted a lecture by the economist Mr. Hany Tawfiq on February 9, 2020, to talk about “economic reform in Egypt: achievements and challenges,” with the participation of Their Excellencies, Ambassadors: Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Dr. Ezzat Saad, its director; as well as Mohamed al-Naqli and Prince Abbas Helmy, Council members.

Regarding the reality of the economic situation on the ground, **he stressed that there** are **positives** associated with an increase in GDP growth rate that has risen from 2% in 2013 to 5.8% in 2019; restoring peace and internal stability that has been positively reflected by the rates of tourism as well as by direct and indirect investments; achieving political and economic balance and stability in Egypt’s foreign relations, which was based on the adoption of balanced regional policies by the Egyptian state with its partners, and not militarily interfering in any of the Middle East crises; a significant and noticeable improvement in the infrastructure sector coincided with the establishment of major national projects, such as developing the Suez Canal axis, road and
bridge projects, as well as energy sector projects, along with major gas discoveries ... etc; the balance of economic reforms and their synergy with a set of community reforms and humanitarian programs to achieve development in the sectors of health and education and to promote the poor and middle classes.

In terms of fiscal and monetary policies, although there has been an improvement in the indicators related to the period when the decision of floating the Egyptian pound was taken, improving foreign exchange reserves to around $45 billion instead of $16 billion in 2013, those steps have not continued.

As to the other aspect, namely, the challenges, there are many challenges that must be addressed which are divided into general ones related to the high rate of corruption that hits all sectors of the state despite the attempts of reform, and another related to the rise of population growth that reaches up to about 600 thousand new births every three months and this challenge has not been used as an opportunity to advance the country, in addition to the country's entry into a process of extreme water poverty due to the increase in population growth rates and Egypt’s fixed water share since the 1950s at 55.5 billion cubic meters.

The second challenge concerns the state financial sector, noting that the reform process of any country
should include financial, monetary and institutional reforms. Regarding the financial reforms undertaken by the Ministry of Finance, it confirms the lack of a clear governmental perception of the prioritization of expenditures and resources. The state also suffers from the acceleration of the growth of the state's public debt, whether domestic or foreign (with a total of 6 trillion pounds as the value of foreign debt and about 11 million dollars as the value of domestic debt), which together represent more than 100% of the value of the country's GDP of 6 trillion pounds in 2019. In addition to lacking the efficiency required for the tax collection process, as it does not exceed 15%, while it is assumed to be not less than a quarter or 25% of the GDP, as is the case for the rest of the world. As the government is required to collect taxes that amount to about 1500 billion pounds, but only 800 billion pounds are collected annually, and therefore there is a loss of 700 billion pounds. In fact, achieving efficiency in the collection process will in turn reduce the increase in budget deficit, in addition to the waste resulting from continuation of subsidies in kind, and the state crowding out the private sector, which has resulted in wasting state resources and weakening investments.

On the other hand, there is a defect related to the policies taken after the flotation process, because the price increase occurring after the floating currency is a natural reaction to this change. This should not have been met with
the same mechanisms used to confront inflation (the con-
tinuous rise in the general level of prices), especially since
what happened was a cost leap, and the rise in prices as
a result of the increasing demand rates for commodities
has not been the cause of the rise in price levels. Thus,
the mechanism of increasing interest rates to overcome
inflation by withdrawing market cash liquidity in order to
achieve the decline in prices has not been achieved be-
cause this was not the appropriate mechanism, and all of
that only led to the increase in prices as well as the entry
of the economy into a cycle of depression, recession and a
rise in unemployment rates. Despite the increase in foreign
exchange reserves, this increase has been offset by a rise
in debt to about 110 billion dollars and the absence of any
clear mechanisms of resources to repay the debts, as most
loans are paid through long-term resources and loans to
pay short-term debts.

**Finally, with regard to institutional reforms,** there are
still many sectors requiring major institutional reforms pro-
cess, whether legal, judicial, or at the local government lev-
el. In addition to the high rates of corruption and the number
of employees in the state governmental sector, that reached
about 13 million employees, which means low efficiency in
performance. The institutional sector also faces the lack
of real consultations due to absence of any effective role
played by the specialized national councils.
Meeting With The Ambassador of Brazil to Egypt

The Council hosted on February 17, 2020, the Ambassador of Brazil to Cairo, Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, upon his request for a get to know meeting.

He mentioned that his country’s Minister of Foreign Affairs would come to visit Cairo on March 5, and he hopes to seize this opportunity to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and the “A Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão (The Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation (FUNAG))”, which has not yet been signed by our council:

1- I welcomed the signing of this memorandum, hoping that the Council would receive the Brazilian guest upon his visit to Egypt and complete the signing of the memorandum.

2- I asked the ambassador whether his country had fulfilled the promise of his country’s new president to move the Brazilian embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The ambassador mentioned that the new Brazilian president was subjected to the influence of President Trump, but the pressure exerted by the Brazilians of Arab origin prevented
him from fulfilling his promise. All what has happened was the opening of a private-sector business office in Jerusalem, and that office does not enjoy any official status or diplomatic immunities.

3- He inquired about the round table that had been hosted by our council in conjunction with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on January 22, and its results. I informed him of what had taken place in preparation for the establishment of a zone free of all types of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. I pointed out that the meeting had touched upon the means of providing assurances of compliance with the new treaty, and I noted the importance of taking advantage of the experience of the five nuclear-weapon-free zones in the world, particularly the Treaty of Tlatelolco. I added that regarding the Middle East region, the situation is more complex, since the latter region needs to be free of all weapons of mass destruction and not just nuclear weapons. I personally believe that radiological weapons which are not yet subject to any treaty arrangements to ban them need to be added to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

- As for compliance mechanisms, I have expressed my conviction that the compliance regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is the one to be used, particularly “The challenge-inspection system (CI)”. 


I added that the round table also addressed the situation in the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, which Mauritius claims as being an extension of its sovereignty, so as to be included in the Treaty of Pelindaba. But the United States and Britain objected to this, as the UK leased the U.S. this Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, which the U.S. use as a base on which it stores nuclear weapons, and it had already used it as a base to attack Iraq in 2003. The status of this island and its evacuation from weapons of mass destruction must be deliberated upon, if there is any serious intent to evacuate the Middle East from weapons of mass destruction, and also in the context of the denuclearization of the Southern Hemisphere; not to mention the nuclear states that are outside the NPT, which are, Israel, India, Pakistan and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).

4- He asked why Egypt did not accede to the Treaty of Pelindaba. I explained that Egypt has signed it, but it was necessary to wait for the establishment of the Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction for Egypt to ratify it, where there is an overlap between the two regions. The ambassador inquired about other Arab African states that have not acceded to the treaty, so I referred to the case of Morocco, Sudan and Somalia, which, like Egypt, have signed the treaty but have not yet ratified it.
Meeting with the New Ambassador of Singapore

The Council hosted on February 24, 2020, Ambassador Dominic Goh, the new Ambassador of Singapore to Cairo. The meeting was held with the participation of His Excellency, Chairman of the Council, Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran; and its Secretary General, Ambassador Hisham Al-Zumaiti; during which the guest expressed his aspiration to establish cooperation with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, as well as establishing continuous consultations between the two sides. In this regard, Ambassador Mounir Zahran stated that the Council is pleased to welcome him in a meeting in which he would talk about his country's policy, its relations with its regional environment, its stance towards the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, in addition to our aspiration to receive Singaporean visitors in meetings at the Council.

Singapore’s ambassador inquired about the activities of the council; hence, they were reviewed and he was briefed on the most important activities that have been recently carried out, especially the seminar on studying President Trump's peace deal, and the symposium held with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on disarmament in the Middle East region... along with other activities.
Meeting with the Israeli Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires in Cairo

The Council received Mr. Eyal Sela, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Israel in Cairo, on March 4, 2020, upon his request.

The Chargé d'Affaires spoke and reviewed a number of issues, some of which relate to the Israeli internal affairs, while others are related to relations with Egypt, in addition to his viewpoint regarding Israel's stances towards a number of Arab and African issues.

He asserted that they understand that relations with Egypt are almost frozen, and they hope that matters will change for the better.
Meeting with the Hungarian Ambassador to Cairo

The Council hosted on March 11, 2020, Mr. Peter Kveck, Hungary’s Ambassador to Cairo, on a friendly visit to the Council within the framework of the end of his tenure, during which the developments of the bilateral relations between the two countries were reviewed, as well as the mutual meetings between members of the Council and Hungarian officials throughout his tenure in Cairo. The meeting was attended by: Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Ambassador Hisham Al-Zimaiti, Secretary General of the Council; Ambassador Ahmed Hajjaj, member of the council and President of Egyptian Pugwash Society for Science & International Affairs; Ambassador Mohamed Al-Ashmawy; Dr. Yousry Abu Shady and Dr. Ola Ragab, members of the Council.

Addressing developments in the Egyptian-Hungarian bilateral relations, he stressed that Hungary was one of the first Western states to support the Egyptian regime after the June 2013 revolution, and which has proceeded to correct the Western viewpoint and the confused policies that some European states have followed after the fall of the Brotherhood regime; emphasizing the importance of working towards supporting the Egyptian state in its war against ter-
rorism, as well as looking differently at events in the region and to learn from the Syrian crisis.

He also highlighted the trade and economic relations as well as the cooperation agreements that bring the two countries together, calling for the importance of supporting the bilateral joint committee to ensure the continued implementation of joint projects and agreements signed before 2010, as well as those signed during the past two years in the field of technology and energy cooperation.
The Chinese Ambassador's visit to the Council

On September 20, 2020, the Chinese Ambassador in Cairo, Liao Liqiang, visited the council, at his request, as the meeting with Ambassadors Mounir Zahran and Ezzat Saad tackled the following in particular:

1- Ambassador Liqiang briefly presented the developments of the situation regarding his country’s management of the Covid-19 crisis and their cooperation in this regard with other countries, including Egypt.

The ambassador indicated that - in the framework of regular consultations with ECFA - he would like to listen to the Council's views on developments in the region, especially the UAE - Israel and Bahrain - Israel agreements, and U.S. President Trump's plan for what he called "Dawn of a new Middle East". He also asked to get acquainted with developments in Arab relations with Iran and Turkey.

2- In their intervention, ECFA Chairman and Director raised the following points:

- China's successful role in managing and containing the COVID-19 crisis and its determination to produce a vaccine for the benefit of all countries.

- The issue of normalization is taking place under
a lot of pressures from the Trump Administration, and that the UAE and Bahrain did not need an agreement in this regard, because everybody knows their undeclared relationship with Israel, which is the biggest winner from this, as well as giving a boost to Trump in the elections.

- Egypt's concern that Ethiopia is moving forward with its plan to complete the construction of the dam without taking into account the interests of the two downstream countries, and that China can play a role in this regard.

3- The Chinese ambassador commented on the issue of the Ethiopian dam by emphasizing the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries, explaining that it is the basis of mutual trust between them. He added that Beijing assured the Egyptian ambassador there that China is fully aware of the vital importance of the Nile River to the Egyptian people.

4- In connection with the issue of water, the ambassador mentioned that the United States is campaigning against them due to some water problems between China and a number of Asian countries, and that Secretary Pompeo is using this issue to constantly attack China.

5- The ambassador indicated that they are aware that the Palestinian cause is the first core issue for the Arabs, and that in light of new developments and the preference
of some countries for their technological and security interests, is there any direct communication between Egypt and the United States in this regard?

The ambassador also inquired about ECFA’s vision concerning the winner of the U.S. presidential elections and Russia’s strategy towards the region in light of recent developments.

6- The ambassador’s inquiries were answered as follows:

• Egypt will not abandon its fundamentals regarding the Palestinian cause and it affirmed these fundamentals to the U.S. side in connection with the Trump deal.

• The results of the U.S. presidential elections remain pending until they are completed, and that a Biden or Trump victory is possible.

• Russia adopts a realistic strategy based on keeping its contacts open with all parties in all files.

7- The ambassador reiterated China's understanding of the importance of the Ethiopian dam issue, explaining that there are exchanged messages between the two countries’ leaderships and direct coordination between the two foreign ministers.

8- The ambassador tackled the Libyan crisis, noting that they welcomed the Cairo Declaration and that they have
high understanding with Egypt on this file in a manner that would provide security and stability for the Libyan state.

9- Finally, he noted China's full support for Egypt's efforts to create conditions conducive to improving the standard of living of Egyptian citizens and achieve comprehensive development in the country under the leadership of President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.
On October 12, 2020, ECFA hosted the former Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mohammed Al-Dairi, to speak about the developments in the Libyan crisis; with the participation of a number of ambassadors, experts and academics specialized in Libyan affairs.

At the beginning of his speech, the guest referred to the lecture he delivered at ECFA premises on January 15, 2020 regarding the developments of the Libyan crisis at the time, shedding light on the close historical relations binding Libya and Egypt, as well as the deep bonds of friendship and fraternity between their two peoples. Concerning the Libyan crisis, he mentioned that it is a complex issue to a large extent, given the involvement of many regional and international powers with different interests in the crisis, not to mention the conflicts among the Libyan factions themselves.

The Libyan Minister emphasized that Qatar and Turkey both have the upper hand in what is happening in Libya, and that they used the Libyan territories to train mercenar-
ies and irregular armed militia elements to achieve their own objectives in a number of countries in the region, that the agreement concluded between Erdogan and Al-Sarraj in late November 2019 led to the dire consequences represented in further escalating and stirring up the situation in the region, that the Turkish intervention in Libya was not acceptable in any way, and that the Egyptian state stood bravely against such intervention with the brotherly Libyan people.

The Minister discussed the current state of affairs in terms of international efforts to solve the Libyan crisis under the auspices of the United Nations representative concerned with the crisis, including meetings and preliminary discussions to attempt to agree in principle on a number of issues such as elections, the transitional phase ... etc, these meetings which Egypt and Morocco host part of their segments, with the participation of a number of Libyan politicians.
Meeting with the head of the EU delegation to Egypt

On October 14, 2020, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs hosted Ambassador Christian Berger, the head of the European Union delegation to Egypt, to discuss a number of current issues. The meeting was inaugurated by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, ECFA Chairman, and attended by ambassadors: Dr. Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director, Raouf Saad, Noman Galal, and Wafaa Bassim, as well as Engineer Nabil Shoeib, Businessman Mohamed Kassem, Dr. Hazem Attiatallah, Engineer Loay Radwan, and Dr. Ahmed Abu Dumah.

The discussion shed light on the Egyptian-European relations, and European policy regarding a number of issues and crises in the region, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Libyan crisis. It also tackled the global Covid-19 crisis, and its repercussions on the global economy and inter-state relations, including the cooperation that emerged between countries in the framework of the global initiative to find a drug for the pandemic, and China's recent accession to it, therefore we can assess that there is some kind of cooperation between states to build upon it in the future for a world in which security and stability prevail.
Meeting with the ambassadors of Chad and Niger

On October 21, 2020, the Council hosted the Ambassador of Chad to Egypt Al-Amin Dodo Abdullah Al-Khatri, and the Ambassador of the State of Niger, Moumouni Boureima, to discuss the impacts of the developments in Libya on security and stability in both Chad and Niger, and the efforts with which the two countries can contribute to settling the Libyan crisis.

The following points were emphasized during the meeting:

- The Chadian ambassador affirmed that the Libyan crisis needs a definition that comprises the challenges and negative effects it left behind, which also extended to its neighbor Chad at the political, economic, social and in particular security levels in light of the massive proliferation of huge numbers of weapons and ammunition and the access of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram to them, amid the lack of border control between the two countries.

Afterwards, the ambassador presented his vision to solve the Libyan crisis through Libya’s neighboring countries, which are in fact the most affected by the Libyan crisis and from regional interventions in the country to impose their
agendas and visions. These countries have an obligation to unify the Libyan tribes in countering armed militias, reaching about 300 militias, which do not belong to these tribes, noting the importance of continuing the recent Egyptian efforts in order to unify the Libyan tribes (the tribes of the East and the South), as if they convene, the eastern and southern borders will be secured, thus stopping the supply of weapons to militias and being able to achieve stability in the Libyan regions.

On his part, the ambassador of Niger tackled the repercussions of the Libyan crisis on his country, and noted that his country is suffering from the Libyan crisis like the rest of the Sahel and Sahara countries that are hit by terrorism, and which suffers from the flow of weapons to terrorist groups and the inability of the state to control this flow under the instability it is witnessing, along with the weak security institutions. The deteriorating security situation has also caused the suspension of commercial exchanges between Mali and Niger and replaced by the exchange of weapons, the activities of unorganized groups, and kidnappings to seek ransom, as these funds are used to finance terrorist groups, as well as the rising rates of youth migration to search for better job opportunities.
Meeting with the head of the Somali National Consultation Party

On November 18, 2020, the Council hosted Dr. Mahmoud Daher Aweys, of Somali American nationality, head of the National Consultation Party, upon his request, as he stated that he intends to run for the presidential elections in his country, which are scheduled on February 2021. He added that, in light of his deep appreciation for the historical Egypt-Somalia relations, and Cairo’s well-known positive role in supporting the Somali people since independence, and for his own and his family’s constant communication with Egypt and its people for decades, he decided to inform the Egyptian side of the developments in his country and his evaluation of them, hoping to consider the possibility of activating Egypt’s role in Somalia.

The Somali guest also discussed the developments in his country since the fall of the Siad Barre regime, and the Turkish, Qatari and Ethiopian influence in the country and the agendas of each of these three countries in Somalia, as well as the complications associated with the compliance of the current President Farmaajo and his special relations with the three countries. He also presented his views regarding the chances of Somalia overcoming its crises, indicat-
ing in this regard the necessity of working with Egypt and other Arab countries to confirm the identity of Somalia and its Arab ties. He concluded his speech by expressing his preliminary perceptions of the outcomes of the upcoming general elections in the country, the absolute support that Farmajo receives from Ethiopia, Qatar and Turkey, and Ad-dis Ababa's keenness to maintain the status quo in Somalia and the integration of the Ethiopian Oromo ethnicity inside Somali territories.
Meeting with the Russian Ambassador to Cairo

On November 23, 2020, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) received the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Cairo, Ambassador Georgiy Y. BORISENKO, with the participation of both ECFA Chairman and Director; the meeting was also attended by a group of ECFA members including ambassadors, experts and academics, with the aim of exchanging views on developments in Egypt-Russia relations, as well as regional and international developments.

As for bilateral relations, the guest affirmed Russia's keenness to continue the state of prosperity at the level of bilateral ties between the two sides, especially since Russia considers Egypt a strategic partner and a pillar of the Arab region, and also a foundation for enhancing Egypt's relations with the African continent and a starting point for free trade. In addition, bolstering Russia's relations with the Arab region and Africa stems from its relations with Egypt. He also stressed the importance of working to overcome obstacles related to Russian projects in Egypt.

Regarding regional files, in particular the Syrian and Libyan files, he asserted Russia's awareness of the seriousness
and complexity of the situation in Libya under the people’s division, multiple governments, and the state fragmentation, adding that Russia has attempted to limit Turkish interventions and held meetings between foreign ministers and security and intelligence officials of both sides to try to explain the situation on the ground and emphasize the grave repercussions of any practice that would threaten the Egyptian national security. Moreover, the Russian Ambassador expressed his country’s support for the Egyptian moves towards unifying the Libyan tribes to ensure that there is consensus on any political transition in the country in a manner that enables the Libyan state to complete the electoral process, whether for the Presidency Council or the Libyan Parliament.

Concerning the situation in Syria, the ambassador pointed out that his country is constantly striving to achieve balance in its relations with Turkey by reaching common understandings that realize both sides’ interest, and even despite the existence of differences, Russia does not adopt the policy of alienation vis-à-vis the Turkish state, but rather seeks to contain it continuously through the establishment of cooperation relations with it.

With regard to the new U.S. Administration, the ambassador expected the continuation of the policy of imposing sanctions on Russia, noting that although it negatively af-
fects investments and prices inside the country, it represents an impetus to expand investments and open new markets for Russian projects, which is evident with the development of the electronics industries and the boom in the agricultural sector and its productivity.
ECFA meeting with Sudanese Minister of Religious Affairs and Endowments

On December 23, 2020, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs hosted Mr. Nasr al-Din Mufreh Ahmed, Minister of Religious Affairs and Endowments in Sudan, to speak about developments taking place in his country since the outbreak of the Sudanese Youth Revolution in December 2018. The symposium was opened by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, ECFA Chairman, and attended by a number of ambassadors and academics of ECFA members concerned with Sudanese affairs. The Minister was accompanied by Dr. Abdel-Rahim Adam, President of the Islamic Fiqh Academy of Sudan; Dr. Adel Hassan Hamzah, Secretary General of the Fiqh Academy; Mr. Abd Al-Aty Ahmed Abbas, Secretary General of the Islamic Endowments Bureau of Sudan; Mr. Montasser Abbas, Secretary General of the Hajj and Umrah Council; Mr. Mohamed Youssef, Director General of the Endowments Department in Khartoum State; and Mr. Abdel Aziz Sadek, Department of Information and Protocol at the Sudanese Ministry of Endowments.

The guest began his speech by expressing gratitude to the Council for organizing this symposium, indicating the existing close historical ties of fraternity and affection bringing Egypt, Sudan and their peoples together. In the con-
text of tackling developments in Sudan since the outbreak of the December 2018 revolution, and its repercussions on the climate of religious freedom in the country, he noted that these developments are taking a remarkable positive character in all fields, which resulted in significant progress in the processes of correcting the situation in Sudan, and rectifying many of the evils that the previous regime had committed during its unjust rule.

For example, the aforementioned regime used to allocate about 70% of state resources to war and defense, while the leadership of the Sudanese transitional government was keen on redistributing these resources and spending them in the right aspects, as now about 34% get educated after it was only 2% in Al-Bashir era. This is also the case in the field of health. The arbitrarily dismissed persons from their jobs since 1989 have been compensated for the damages they suffered, in addition to giving priority to marginalized groups, youth and women. Moreover, after the great success in removing the name of Sudan from terrorist lists, work is now underway to confront extremism and terrorism through the restructuring of curricula and the launch of religious convoys to raise awareness and clarify the true essence of Islam.
Meeting With Officials of the Finnish CMI (Crisis Management Initiative)

The Council hosted on Monday morning February 24, 2020, each of: **Dr. Ville Brummer, Programme Director at CMI (Crisis Management Initiative)** founded by former President of Finland **Martti Ahtisaari**, with Dr. **Yasar Qatarneh**, Senior Advisor to CMI for the Arab Region. The delegation was received by Chairman of the Council and its Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, and Ambassador Hisham Al-Zemiti, where the meeting covered the following:

1- The aim of their visit to Cairo which is to resume cooperation with Egypt, that was in existence from 2010 and 2013, and as part of their regional programs (Eastern Europe - Middle East and North Africa - Sub-Saharan Africa - Asia). Moreover, they look forwards to holding a symposium with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs on developments in the region, while highlighting that their current interests revolve around issues such as Libya, Palestine, Iraq and Yemen, and that Egypt, as an influential state within its region, can contribute to what they called Cross-Regional Dynamics.
2- They had previously organized a training program on capacity building during the period from 2010 to 2013 in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Egyptian Cabinet’s Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC), and Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS). Delegations from Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria participated in the program (the latter did not participate after 2011), and that training program was divided into three phases addressing: Capacity building in terms of identifying problems, finding solutions to those problems, then finding a mechanism to implement the solutions. And they have not implemented any program with Egypt since 2013.

3- Dr. Brummer mentioned that they seek to listen to the different parties to the conflicts and encourage them to initiate dialogs, and that their role is advisory in order to seek solutions to disputes if possible, and in response to the Council’s inquiry he mentioned that they submit annual and quadrennial reports to the Finnish government on the results achieved, and that what they achieve contributes to supporting the Finnish government, and facilitates communication between the direct parties to the conflicts they focus on, such as Yemen and Libya.

4- In response to an inquiry about their stance towards political Islam and the negative role it plays with the support
of the West in destabilizing the countries of the region since 2011, and that it is necessary for them to deal with Egypt and the region on the basis of the current reality, which is based on the complete rejection of political Islam by the peoples of the region. The Finnish guest responded that they have no position on political Islam and that what matters to them is the success of their mediation, rapprochement among parties, and to be in communication with all parties, even with those who sabotage reaching solutions.

He stated that they are in contact with the Director of the Office of His Excellency the Ambassador, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for African Affairs, to discuss the possibility of establishing cooperation with Egypt.
Chapter III

ECFA Annual training program
Cooperation with the Institute of Diplomatic Studies

- Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, supervised and participated during the months of June and July 2020 in discussing two research papers by two diplomatic attachés (batch number 52) at the Institute of Diplomatic Studies operating under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about:

1- "Russia’s energy security diplomacy in the Middle East".

2- "The effects of the transition to renewable energy on international politics".

- Ambassador Hisham El-Zimaity, Secretary General of the Council, participated during the period from April to July 2020 in discussing 6 research papers submitted by the diplomatic attachés (batch number 52) at the Institute of Diplomatic Studies operating under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about:

1- “Impacts of the transition to renewable Energy on International Politics” by Mr. Islam Qenawy, Diplomatic Attaché.

3- “Cyber terrorism and its danger to the Egyptian national security” by Mr. Mohamed Kamel Mahmoud Kamel, Diplomatic Attaché.

4- “Nuclear weapons and international humanitarian law: Egyptian foreign policy inclusions” by Ms. Israa Osama, Diplomatic Attaché.

5- “The issue of nuclear proliferation and its role in influencing the course of Egyptian foreign policy” by Mr. Karim Farouk, Diplomatic Attaché.

6- “The role of local communities in enhancing the effectiveness of peace processes in Africa: a Critical Study on Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding policies” by Mr. Hussein Shoukry, Diplomatic Attaché.
Chapter IV

Members’ Contribution
Participation of ECFA Director in a seminar on the sidelines of the celebration of the Chinese National Day

At the invitation of the Chinese Embassy in Cairo, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad – ECFA Director, participated at the Embassy's celebration of the 71st anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, on September 28, 2020, in which a number of senior Egyptian officials participated in a virtual symposium.

1. The Chinese ambassador delivered an opening speech at the symposium in which he presented the following:

* His country's economic achievements and efforts to contain and control the Covid-19 pandemic and then engage in humanitarian and medical assistance operations with more than 150 countries all over the world.

* He spoke at length about the role of the Communist Party of China in managing the crisis since the beginning in the framework of its development role in the country, and its adherence to holding a session of the Chinese National People's Congress last July with the participation of about 3000 members from various regions of the country.
* He addressed what he called the lessons learned from the crisis, noting that China's vision of the governance system is fully consistent with the requirements of confronting this crisis that affected all countries of the world and required multilateral international cooperation and a free flow of goods and services, which China affirms within the framework of the concept of Chinese President Xi Jinping about building a community of a shared future or mankind, which is based on five pillars.

* The ambassador presented the support provided by China to Egypt in connection with the pandemic, noting that it exceeded 100 million pounds from private sector institutions only. He also addressed the ongoing cooperation between the two countries in the field of developing a Covid-19 vaccine.

* The ambassador concluded his speech by noting that they are working on making China-Egypt relations a model for other countries in the region to follow.

2. Minister of Health and Population, Dr. Hala Zayed, representing the Egyptian government, delivered a speech (in English) in which she presented the mutual assistance between the two countries since the outbreak of the epidemic till present, noting in this regard the continuation of close cooperation between the two countries in the fields of pub-
lic health and vaccine development under the directives of President Al-Sisi.

3. Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs, Ambassador Hatem Tageldin, delivered a speech on behalf of the Foreign Minister, in which he congratulated the Chinese side on the 71st anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and presented the positive aspects and developments witnessed in the relations between the two countries in recent years.

4. First Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Mahmoud Al-Sharif delivered a speech on behalf of the Egyptian Parliament in which he praised the close relations between the two countries and the parliamentary exchange with the Chinese National People's Congress and keenness on continuing it.
Report of Mr. Fady Khalil on his participation in the roundtable on "The Philosophy of Tax Policy and Social Justice in Egypt"

On October 17, 2020, Mr. Fady Khalil, ECFA member, participated in a roundtable organized by the National Council for Human Rights to discuss the topic "The Philosophy of Tax Policy and Social Justice in Egypt".

The roundtable presented the main features of the current tax system in Egypt, with indications of social justice (tax exemptions) in it, and comparing it with a number of previous tax systems in Egypt. It emphasized that tax justice is an ongoing process linked to political and societal development in the state, and requires the citizens’ ability to pay the tax, sense its benefits, and his high potential as a taxpayer before the various state agencies, without causing prejudice to the required balance between the national interests of the state and basic human rights.

The attendees also approved the concept of the right to life as a governing principle for the tax that must be stipulated in legislation with clear rules, without elaborating on the content and interpretation of these rules so as not to harm taxpayers. It was agreed that the government is responsible
for clearly defining ways of tax disputes appeal, and for tax dispute procedures to be reasonable and specific, taking into consideration that the right to litigation is the last line of defense that taxpayers should not resort to.

The roundtable stressed the importance of solving the problems of implementing tax legislation, clearly identifying the various obstacles, monitoring the public expenditure process, and implementing all that is necessary to complete the structuring and implementation of the "program and performance budgeting" mechanism in Egypt in the best way to complete the monitoring and follow-up of all aspects of the state's revenues and expenditures, with transparency and accuracy.
ECFA Director’s participation in some cultural activities on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

During the month of November 2020, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad - Director of ECFA- participated in the following activities:

(1) Participating in the celebration of the Supreme Council for Culture on Egyptian-Russian relations, as a representative for the Foreign Ministry:

The celebration took place on November 11, 2020 at the headquarters of the Supreme Council of Culture, as ECFA Director delivered a speech in which he affirmed that since the June 30, 2013 Revolution, relations between the two countries are going through a new phase towards further cooperation in various fields, after they were in certain periods of history limited to the field of military cooperation, as Russia has become an strategic partner for Egypt indispensable in preserving the region's security and stability and settling its problems. Among the outcomes of cultural cooperation and exchange in the past was the establishment of an Academy of Arts in Egypt and the laying of the scientific and artistic foundations for the national troupes of folklore, the symphony orchestra, the Conservatoire, the ballet institute, and the creation of the first of its kind Egyp-
tian ballet companies in the Arab region and Africa, and the Russian theater was one of the most influential theaters in Egypt in terms of realism.

However, this momentum no longer exists today, despite the presence of hundreds of scholarships for Egyptian students which do not meet the aspirations of both sides. Hence, Ambassador Saad called for seizing the occasion of the Year of Culture between the two countries 2021 to formulate a comprehensive plan in order to revive the Egyptian-Russian cultural cooperation in all its forms, in a manner that would serve as a tool for rapprochement and acquaintance between the two peoples who are bound by strong historical bonds of friendship.

(2) Participating in another celebration on Egypt-Indonesia relations, as a representative for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad delivered a speech in which he emphasized that Egypt was the first country to recognize the independence of Indonesia, a country that is characterized by ethnic, cultural and religious diversity as well as its extended geographical nature. He added that bilateral relations between the two sides have witnessed a qualitative leap, since President Al-Sisi came to power following the visit of the Egyptian President to Indonesia in September
2015, in various fields at the bilateral and multilateral levels, including Egypt’s cooperation with the ASEAN, which Indonesia is considered as its driving force and largest economy, as well as cooperation between them in resolving issues related to the Middle East region through coordination between them in various fora. Regarding trade exchange, the volume of trade exchange reached USD1154 million (in 2019), according to the Indonesian statistics body, and it tilts in favor of Indonesia with imports amounting to USD1019 million, and there are 22 companies investing in Egypt with a value of USD57.99 million operating in the fields of construction, communications, glass and anhydrous tannic acid. The Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Cooperation between the two countries is the main mechanism based on the relations between the two countries.

Cultural cooperation between Egypt and Indonesia emerges to represent - rightly- the main pillar of the two countries' relations, despite the promising potentials in the economic and commercial fields. In this regard, Al-Azhar Al-Sharif plays the main role by virtue of its special status for the Indonesian people, given its moderate ideology that is compatible with the nature of the Indonesian people. This recognition for Al-Azhar also encompasses the political leadership in Indonesia. This is evident in the regular visits of the Grand Imam and the allocation of scholarships to Indonesia with 178 university and institute scholarships.
annually. It is through this role that the cultural expansion of Egypt in Indonesia is achieved, especially since there are approximately a thousand students enrolling in Al-Azhar annually at their own expense (the total is about 600 students). Al-Azhar Foundation has done well by opening a center for teaching Arabic language to non-native speakers in Jakarta in July 2019, noting that here is an agreement for cultural cooperation signed between the two countries in June 1955, and its executive regulations signed on October 20, 1961, in addition to several fraternity and friendship agreements between a number of Egyptian governorates and their Indonesian counterparts.
Meeting of the Board of Directors with H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs

On December 13, 2020, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry received, in his office at the Foreign Ministry headquarters in Maspero, ECFA Chairman, Board of Directors, and Director, in an annual meeting in which the members are keen to discuss the Egyptian vision regarding the main challenges witnessed in the region, in addition to the latest developments related to a number of important files, especially the Palestinian cause, developments in Libya, GERD negotiations, as well as Egypt's efforts and steps aimed at achieving regional peace and stability, and its active diplomatic interaction in the various foreign policy circles in a manner that contributes to realizing Egyptian interests.

The Minister expressed his appreciation for the important role of the Council in introducing the various foreign policy issues, and communicating with the corresponding institutions (think tanks and research centers) in order to convey the Egyptian vision regarding these issues and the main challenges facing the regional and international milieu in an objective and professional manner. In this context, he praised ECFA's leadership and accumulated experiences qualifying it to continue this role effectively.
On his part, Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran expressed gratitude for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ support to the Council and its activities, hailing the extended cooperation between the two sides, and referring in this context to a number of important activities organized by the Council over the last period, including Arab, regional and international issues. ECFA Chairman also extended an invitation to the Foreign Minister to inaugurate the Council's annual conference (2020).
Chapter V

Press Statements
Statement condemning U.S. President’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs condemns in the strongest terms the declaration signed by U.S. President Donald Trump to recognize Israel’s sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, which is a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the fact that the President of the United States does not have the right and legal capacity to legitimize the Israeli occupation of Syrian territory, and therefore the resolution is absolutely null and void, and is a violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Council affirms its full support for the position expressed by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which affirms the position of the Arab Republic of Egypt, which considers the Syrian Golan to be occupied Arab territory in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, notably UN Security Council Resolution 497 of 1981, which declared Israel’s decision to impose its legal and judicial jurisdiction over the occupied Syrian Golan null and void.

President Trump’s announcement and previous decisions to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and
the latter’s designation as the capital of Israel in violation of international resolutions, as well as Washington’s announcement to cut off aid to the Palestinian National Authority and to stop funding UNRWA, measures that threaten security and stability in the entire Middle East region, and provide an environment conducive to extremism and terrorism at a time when the United States of America had to act responsibly by virtue of its obligations not only as a sponsor of peace, but also As a permanent member of the Security Council, it is the responsibility of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security and not to create chaos and instability in this region, in the light of the expansionist and racist practices of the State of Israel, the only military occupation state in our contemporary world with the absolute support of the United States of America.
ECFA Statement on the situation in Libya

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) welcomes Cairo Declaration to end the conflict in Libya and the agreement of Libyan leaders at their meeting in Cairo yesterday, June 6, at the invitation of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and their support of the Cairo Declaration, which included a Libyan initiative as a basis for resolving the crisis in the brotherly country based on UN resolutions and previous international initiatives, particularly the outcome of the Berlin summit, which resulted in a comprehensive political solution with clear operational steps, and the commitment of all parties to a ceasefire as of Monday morning, June 8, 2020.

For the initiative to succeed, the United Nations and the international community must commit all foreign entities to remove foreign mercenaries from all Libyan territory, dismantle militias and surrender their weapons – so that the Libyan National Army and Libyan security services can carry out their military and security responsibilities in the country, as well as complete the course of the 5+5 military commission in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) also supports the representation of Libya’s three provinces in a pres-
idential council elected under the auspices of the United Nations and the unification of Libyan institutions to ensure the performance of its mandated roles, the adoption of a constitutional declaration regulating the requirements of the transitional phase for the return of security and stability in Libya, and condemning terrorism supported and financed by well-known external actors, which hinders the return of security and stability to Libya and respect for its independence and territorial integrity.

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs appreciates the broad international support given to the Cairo Declaration and calls on all parties to cooperate with the Libyan parties concerned with the restoration of security and stability in the country in implementing that declaration to restore security and stability in Libya to ensure that Libya’s natural resources are utilized for the benefit of the economic and social development of that brotherly country.
Obituary: Lt. Gen. Mohammed Saeed Al-Assar-
Minister of State for Military Production

With profound sorrow and sadness, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, is mourning lieutenant General Dr. Mohammed Saeed al-Assar, Minister of State for Military Production, who contributed to defending his country over his long life and was one of the loyal military figures, who shared the responsibility of the administration of the country in a difficult period characterized by many challenges, responsible for the file of foreign relations and communication with the media and political forces after the revolution of January 25, 2011, and extended his tremendous efforts and dedication to the service of Egypt until his death yesterday, July 6th;

The Council expresses its deepest condolences to the armed forces and the people of Egypt for the death of the deceased, and prays to God to extend his mercy to him and to inspire his family with patience.
Statement on ECFA solidarity with the government and people of Sudan

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) expresses its full solidarity with the governments and peoples of Sudan and South Sudan, over the damage and suffering witnessed by the two brotherly peoples as a result of the rains and floods that have swept the two countries since the beginning of September, which led to human suffering, loss of lives, the displacement of more than half a million inhabitants, destruction of property, demolition of homes, the death of thousands of livestock, and the destruction of agriculture and infrastructure, which necessitated the solidarity of the Egyptian government and people with the two sisterly countries and sending them urgent humanitarian aid necessary to relieve the affected ones.

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs expresses its full support for the efforts undertaken by the Egyptian government by dispatching shipments of humanitarian assistance to support the peoples of Sudan and South Sudan in order to alleviate their suffering, and backs these efforts at all social and humanitarian levels.
ECFA Statement on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

On the occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 26 September 2020, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) reiterates its appeal to all Nuclear Armed States (NASs) to achieve the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the world.

The 10th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was supposed to take place in New York in April/May 2020, and coincided with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the entry-into force of the NPT. Unfortunately, that Conference was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic to a later date in 2021.

It is worth noting that the NPT which was recommended by the General Assembly in 1968 did not achieve its ultimate objective, namely nuclear disarmament, after fifty years since its entry into force in 1970. Although the postponed NPT Review Conference is the 10th of the series of Conferences assigned to review the NPT, no progress was realized to achieve the said objective due to the nuclear arms race led by the Nuclear Weapon States (NWSs) and
States that did not adhere yet to the NPT, including Israel, that maintained their nuclear arsenals. ECFA expresses its great concern of the failure of the NPT Review Conferences to accomplish its stated objective.

Since the Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWSs) lost hope in reaching the elimination of nuclear weapons from the world, fortunately they succeeded in negotiating a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was adopted in New York by 122 countries on 7 July 2017. The TPNW was opened for signature on 20 September 2017 in New York, at the beginning of the 72nd General Assembly session. So far, with Malta signing the treaty on 25 August 2020, the number of signatories of the TPNW reached 84 countries, with 44 countries ratified it. Once 50 countries ratify or adhere to it, the TPNW will enter into force, hopefully before 2021. ECFA appeals to all States, particularly the Nuclear Armed States, to adhere to it at their earliest convenience, so the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the world will be realized.
ECFA commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations with the entry into force of its founding charter on October 24, 1945, the Council organized, alongside a webinar in cooperation with the United Nations Coordinator in Cairo on October 18 on “Saving Multilateralism” - a symposium on October 24, 2020 in which a number of ECFA members participated, including ambassadors and specialized experts.

The symposium outlined Egypt’s role as a founding member of the Organization as it participated in drafting the Charter at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and also actively participated five times in the Security Council as a non-permanent member, and in counter-terrorism activities. Egypt is also the seventh largest contributor to peacekeeping operations worldwide.

Moreover, discussions stressed the need to build on the lessons learned in order to enhance the UN role by the centenary of its establishment in 2045, as the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated to a large extent the need to strengthen the international cooperation system between countries and peoples so as to address common challenges at the bilateral,
regional and international levels, and affirm that the United Nations system has a role to facilitate this cooperation, via the concerned international organizations, especially the World Health Organization, stemming from the complementary roles of international organizations. This also requires reviewing the current situation and the relevant ongoing arrangements to determine the prospects for promoting them.

The pandemic also generated a new type of cooperation, as some countries, including Egypt, provided aid to many afflicted countries at the beginning and throughout the crisis, especially African countries. Afterwards, Egypt received external assistance when the pandemic exacerbated in it.

**During the meeting, the following issues were addressed:**

- The United Nations on its 75th year: An Assessment.
- 75 years since the founding of the United Nations: the crisis of multilateralism.
- Egypt and the UN Security Council.
- The economic aspects of the UN activities.
- The United Nations and Human Rights.
- The United Nations and international law.
- United Nations reform and chances for amending the Charter.
ECFA Statement on the Occasion of The Entry into Force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) welcomed on 1\textsuperscript{st} November 2020 the ratification by Honduras, on 24\textsuperscript{th} October 2020, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Thus, the quorum of the entry into force of that treaty is attained as Honduras is the 50\textsuperscript{th} country to ratify it. By that ratification, the TPNW entered into force on 22\textsuperscript{nd} January 2021 after 90 days of the deposit of the Honduras’ instrument of ratification of the treaty in accordance with its Article 10 (3).

Once that treaty is enforced, it would, in parallel, contribute to the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. ECFA deplores the non-adherence of Israel to the NPT, while all other countries in the Middle East adhered to it.

The Nuclear-Armed States (NASs) are against the entry into force of the TPNW. The NASs pretend that the TPNW is incompatible with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); while it is not. The TPNW recognizes the role of the NPT in the promotion of international peace and security, since the TPNW plays a complementary role to the NPT by reinforcing the non-proliferation regime.
and by providing an avenue to attain nuclear disarmament which is the ultimate objective of the NPT.

The TPNW does not contradict the NPT. On the contrary, it is considered as complementary to the NPT since it stems directly from its pan-ultimate pp. stating “… the desire to further the easing of international tension and the strengthening of trust between States in order to facilitate the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons, the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles, and the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery….“ In addition, NPT Article VI stipulated that “each of its parties undertook to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.”

All countries which have not yet signed and/ or ratified the TPNW are called upon to adhere to it as soon as possible, so that it will gain more momentum as a legal instrument leading to the realization of a Nuclear Weapon Free World and to put an end to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, bearing in mind that the civilian victims of the use of the atomic bomb against Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 were 226 thousand.

There is a vital role being played by the United Nations and the civil society towards the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, to save humanity from annihilation.
ECFA statement On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

At an invitation, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) participated on December 8, in a virtual meeting - due to the pandemic – convened by the United Nations to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, according to UN General Assembly Resolution B40/32 issued on December 2, 1977.

In this regard, ECFA affirms its full support for the international legitimacy resolutions on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of its independent state on all the territories occupied by Israel since June 5, 1967, including East Jerusalem, the complete withdrawal of the occupying state from those lands, and the return of Palestinian refugees to their usurped lands and compensate them in accordance with General Assembly Resolution No. 194 of 1949.

The Council condemns the Israeli practices that violate the provisions and principles of international law, including the United Nations Charter. It also condemns the policies of house demolitions, terrorizing civilians, confiscation of property and other practices infringing the provisions
of international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Council also condemns the announcement by the occupation authorities of the annexation of Palestinian territories in the West Bank and the building of settlements on them. In this context, ECFA supports the efforts exerted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people and the civilian population under occupation and call on donor countries to provide the necessary contributions to enable them of carrying out their humanitarian tasks.

The Council reaffirms that the Palestinian people their full rights to establish its independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital, is the cornerstone for restoring security, stability and prosperity to the peoples of the Middle East region; therefore the Council calls on the international community to assume its responsibilities in this regard in accordance with the United Nations Charter and UN Resolutions, thus to ensure that these rights are restored as early as possible.