Annual Report 2019

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs

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Editor’s Speech
This is the fourth edition of the Council’s annual report (2019), the year that marks the 20th anniversary of its establishment by a group of senior diplomats, academics, and experts in the field of public work and foreign affairs. In this regard, ECFA has devoted the opening session of its annual conference in December 2019 to celebrate this occasion with the participation of Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry who congratulated the Council and wished it continued success as a platform for free and in-depth discussion of foreign policy issues. Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran - ECFA Chairman, and Ambassador Abdel Raouf Al-Reedy- ECFA Honorary Chairman, delivered speeches at the same session in which they presented a number of the Council’s achievements and other aspects of its path throughout the past twenty years. These speeches can be found in the ECFA’s book of annual conference on “Middle East security... opportunities and challenges”(2019).

Regional developments have received the council’s special attention during the year covered by that report, especially those related to Egyptian national security issues, for example: a panel discussion to study the implications of the US decision to withdraw troops from Syria, and symposia on the situations in Sudan, Algeria, and Libya, in addition to the Council’s special interest in the developments of the Palestinian file, whereby a round table
meeting was held to discuss the peace process in light of the results of the latest (third) Israeli elections and their repercussions on the Israeli domestic situation and on the Palestinian cause. The Council also held an expanded symposium on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, during which the speakers assessed the results of the treaty, current features, and future prospects.

Nuclear non-proliferation issues also received special attention by hosting experts of ECFA members to speak about this file, including “security, safety and nuclear security assurances.”

Moreover, ECFA was keen to document its contributions in the three preparatory committees for the NPT Review Conference, in which Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran participated as a representative of the Council.

This is in addition to other contributions from the Council’s experts such as Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Karem, who participated in the fourth meeting of the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament to prepare a study on ways to advance nuclear disarmament efforts, and a brief report on the participation of Dr. Yousry Abo Shady, ECFA member, in the 63rd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency... among others, as indicated by the report.

The Council also focused on domestic situations, including a lecture by Eng. Dr. Hany Al-Nokrashy on “Energy Options:
traditional fuel or renewable sources?”, the Council’s visit to the New Administrative Capital to get acquainted with achievements there, as well as the Council’s marking of the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Suez Canal to international navigation, the organization of a lecture to cover all the historical, legal, political and economic aspects of this event, and the visit of the Council members to the headquarters of the Suez Canal Authority on this occasion.

During 2019, ECFA received a number of senior politicians, former officials, and foreign ambassadors, including ambassadors of: Japan, Venezuela, Ireland, Italy and China, in addition to hosting the Sri Lankan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Omani ambassador in Cairo. Moreover, direct contacts were held between ECFA and similar think tanks, including: China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, a delegation from the Chinese People’s Association for Peace and Disarmament, and another from China Institute of International Studies.

The Council also hosted a delegation from the Russian Parliament headed by the Vice Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs, a delegation from the Indian Council for World Affairs, and another from the Institute of International Politics and Economics in Serbia, whereby views were exchanged on all relevant bilateral, regional and international issues, in a manner that would strengthen the Council’s partnerships with think tanks.
The report also presents the participation of ECFA members in many domestic and external events, including bilateral and multi-lateral conferences, seminars, and other activities, as presented in the report.

**We hope that this publication fulfills its objective and serves as a true reflection of the Council’s efforts throughout the year covered by this report.**

Ambassador/Dr. Ezzat Saad

Director of ECFA
Chapter I

Conferences, Seminars and Workshops
Panel Discussion on “the Spillovers of President Trump’s Decision to Withdraw from Syria”

A panel discussion on the spillovers of President Trump’s decision to withdraw from Syria, as well as the regional and international reactions, and the future scenarios, was organized by the Council on the 16th of January 2019. This panel discussion which was opened by Ambassador Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; was moderated by Ambassador Ihab Wahba, Coordinator of the Permanent Committee of the Arab Affairs, with the participation of a number of ambassadors, experts and academics, namely: Their Excellencies, Ambassadors/ Abdel Raouf Al-Reedi, Honorary Chairman of the Council, Sayed Abu Zaid, Ezzat Saad, Mohammad Tawfiq, Mohamed Mustafa Kamal, Mohammed Badr El-Din Zayed, Prof.Dr. Mohammed Al-Saeed Idris, and Prof.Dr. Ahmed Youssef Ahmed.

A number of points and focal themes were discussed during the meeting as follows:

- The reasons behind the US withdrawal from Syria, and the domestic as well as the international reactions to such decision.

- US withdrawal from Syria is considered to be a fatal blow
against the Kurds, particularly under the Turkish threats of occupying Northern Syria, and the talk about restoration of relations between the Syrian regime and the Kurds in order to face Turkish threats, as well as another talk about a US-Turkish deal to set up a buffer zone in Northern Syria on the borders with Turkey.

- Highlighting the Russian expansion in Syria as the starting point and the real chance for the return of Russia to play a bigger role in the Middle East region.

- Contradictory statements from the United States (US) by announcing an unconditional withdrawal, and then the Assistant to the US President for National Security Affairs (APNSA) making another statement that the withdrawal shall take 4 or 5 months.

- The Iranian role; particularly, as Tehran is the main beneficiary of this withdrawal, and the Israeli role, in the aftermath of the withdrawal, as well.

- What role do the Arab States have amid after these developments, particularly that some of them have begun opening their embassies in Damascus as did the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain, in addition to the truth about Arab support to Syria’s return to the Arab League.

- Egypt’s role in crisis faced by the region, particularly as there is a need for adopting a suitable and strong posi-
tion by Egypt in order to reunify the Arabs through the following:

- The necessity to adopt a clear position on the Syrian crisis, particularly as Egypt has preserved its relation with the Syrian regime and rejected military intervention in Syria by Gulf States; thus laying a responsibility on Egypt’s side to launch an initiative for resolution.

- Egypt’s complete rejection to what is being said about an “Arab Nato” which would include Israel as part of it, particularly, as Egypt, since the Fifties of the previous century, had refused to be a part of any military alliances led by a western power in the Arab region. Egypt must maintain its current policy based on its commitment to protect the national security of Gulf States whenever there are direct threats. The dialogue with Iran, not getting dragged into any polarizations in the Arab region or any initiatives aiming at luring the region to form alliances against Iran that would escalate the situation with it, must be thought of.

- More attention must be given to the Palestinian issue; that is not a charity from the Arab states; particularly as the Palestinian issue to Egypt is a matter of Egyptian and Arab national security, and getting dragged into developing more relations with Israel must be avoided as coordinating with Israel does not mean ignoring the idea of Israel being an enemy and that it has never been an ally but it is the main source of threat to the national security of the Arabs and the Egyptians.
Closed Roundtable Discussion on the Developments in the Republic of Sudan

On Tuesday, the 29th of January, 2019, a closed roundtable discussion was held by the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) on “The developments in the Republic of Sudan”. The discussion was moderated by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, in addition to an elite of the members of the Council interested in Sudanese affairs, including; Ambassador Marwan Badr, Ambassador Mohamed Abdel Mon’em El-Shazly, Ambassador Ali Al-Hefny, Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Badr El-Deen Zayed, and Dr. El-Sayed Flaifel, Member of the House of Representatives.

Members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who also Participated: Ambassador Osama Shaltout, Assistant of Foreign Minister for Sudanese Affairs, and Minister Plenipotentiary, Mr. Osama El-Hadi, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Sudanese Affairs.

1- Firstly- Roots of the Crisis: The economic dimensions constitute the cornerstone of interpretation of the crisis of the Sudanese regime. The dimensions of the crisis are due to the continuation of the economic sanctions im-
posed by the United States, the burdens on the Sudanese economy that have been caused by the inflated numbers of displaced persons from the neighboring countries, the US dollar surge, lack of currency reserves anchored to the newly issued currency notes, inflation of annual deficit, and the failed and disorganized policies of the regime.

2- **Continuing the protests**, launching the demonstrations from outside Khartoum at the beginning, and joining these demonstrations by parties and professional associations, have given them a strength that is unprecedented in Sudanese situations. After such relatively longstanding persistence; the success of the regime, in containment of these demonstrations, is unlikely, without significant external support; and that is what could not be achieved by Al-Bashir’s external visits which included Qatar and Egypt.

3- **There are 3 possible scenarios:**

- **The first scenario**: Al-Bashir’s success in regaining his control over the political system.

- **The second scenario**: The occurrence of a coup d’etat from within the regime and the overthrow of Al-Bashir, with the ruling political forces, associated with Islamist currents, remaining in power.

- **The third scenario**: Is the overthrow of the regime, whether by the state of chaos, or by the success of army
members, from the second sector, in taking over power.

4- **Egypt’s position is critical:** Just as Al-Bashir historically caused great harm to both countries’ relations, the scenario of chaos and the displacement of large numbers of Sudanese to Egypt bears a lot of risks and burdens to Egypt and Sudan’s neighboring countries, with the deep awareness of the success of Al-Bashir’s regime in recruiting large cadres that are hostile to Egypt, particularly those in positions of executive power at various levels.

**Recommendations:**

1- To be cautious at the current stage regarding messages of support to the regime, and any future aids should seem as being directed to the Sudanese people and not to the regime.

2- Encouragement of opening calm communication channels between the Egyptian civil Society, research centers, some of the civil society channels, and University Professors with the Sudanese opposition and the civil society forces participating in the demonstrations.

3- Maintaining the status quo regarding the relations with the Sudanese residing in Egypt, but all this should not prevent the avoidance of exaggerating the restrictions imposed over the Sudanese at the current stage, without taking any new humanitarian steps that might encourage more
displacement and movement towards Egypt.

4- The significance of communicating with the Sufi movements in Sudan, taking into consideration the historical relations between such movements in both countries, revitalizing both Nile Valley people’s relations through proposed programs in the fields of culture, arts and sports, and activating links and communications of graduates from Egyptian universities and Al-Azhar with African graduates.

5- In case of regime collapse and the scenario of chaos that follows; Egypt must be prepared to act calmly and wisely to aid the Sudanese people in arranging their situation and facing the challenges, as well as thinking of playing exceptional roles that are managed in a politically balanced manner.
Round table Discussion on “Why Think Tanks Matter”

At the invitation of Professor James McGann, Coordinator of the Research Centers at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States of America (USA); the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) called for a panel discussion on think tanks and their role in the light of global developments on Thursday, January 31st, 2019. This was accompanied by the convening of more than 150 other panels in many cities around the world. The topic of the discussion was derived from the main title “Why Think Tanks Matter”. This panel discussion was moderated by Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran. A number of Council’s Members participated in that panel discussion, namely, Ambassador El-Sayed Amin Shalaby, Ambassador Hussein Al-Kamel, Ambassador Rakha Ahmad Hassan, Ambassador Mohamed El-Ashmawy, Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Badr El-Din Zayed, Ambassador Dr. Hassan Al-Haiawan, Ambassador Heba Ragheb Awad, as well as Dr. Eman Ragab, member of the Council and an expert at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Mr. Ahmad Abu Shady, Journalist, and Mr. Ragaie Fayed, Head of the Egyptian Center for Kurdish Studies and Research.
This panel discussion made clear numerous problems which face think tanks such as the lack of financial resources, reduction in human resources level, bureaucracy, difficulty in accessing and influencing the decision maker, inability to get in touch with other think tanks, and the underutilization of knowledge society and future studies. Many doubts were raised, as well, regarding Egyptian think tanks relations to the executive bodies or to what becomes crystallized through the decision making process in the state, to what extent will the interaction be between them, and to which degree will the outputs and recommendations of such think tanks be utilized.

Some of the participants proposed, as a recommendation, the necessity for activating and maximizing cooperation among the various think tanks in all world continents to constitute the so-called continental cooperation which is based on the activation of relations among the think tanks of each continent in order to achieve the common good of all humanity, and to solve the various problems that face its prosperity and progress. Three key regional issues have been emphasized upon as well, namely; establishment of a “Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA)” in order to confront Iran, the Syrian crisis, and the nuclear issue in the Middle East. The attendees pointed out at not following the US agenda to establish this alliance, while others emphasized that the announcement of US withdrawal from Syria was in
favor of the settlement of the crisis, then they stressed on the necessity to pursue the establishment of a free zone from nuclear weapons and from weapons of mass destruction (WMD’s) in the Middle East, they condemned the allegations made by the major powers, possessing these weapons, that they keep them for the sake of deterrence; an issue that may constitute a hazard to entire humanity. In addition to primarily violating the principles contained in the Second article of the UN Charter. Furthermore, the participants recommended the necessity to work on utilization of Egyptian think tanks as representing a distinct tool of the soft power in Egypt, and the necessity of enjoying the independence they need to fulfill their desired tasks best, in addition to their involvement and participation in achieving peace and sustainable development through a major network of relations among themselves.
Discussion on “Munich Security Conference (MSC): Regional and International Challenges”

A closed roundtable discussion on the results of the Munich Security Conference (MSC) at its 55th session that was held in Munich, Germany, from February 15th to 17th, 2019, was hosted by the Council on February 24th, 2019. About 35 heads of state and heads of government, 50 foreign ministers, 30 defense ministers, and 600 of military experts, security experts and diplomats, participated in the conference. The organization of this conference coincided with the organization of other several conferences in the same month such as the Warsaw Conference that was called for by the United States, as well as the Sochi Conference which was called for by President Putin, with the participation of the Turkish and Iranian presidents in talks on the Syrian crisis; but had not yielded any progress, in addition to the hosting of the Arab European summit over a couple of days on February 24th and 25th, 2019, by the city of Sharm el-Sheikh in which 49 countries had participated, including 24 European states at the level of heads of state and heads government, 11 Arab heads of state and heads of government, and the rest of the participants were the ministers.

Ambassadors who participated in this roundtable dis-
Discussion were: Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Abdul Raouf Al-Reedi, Honorary Chairman of the Council; Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; Ihab Wahba, Coordinator of the Permanent Committee on Arab Affairs at the Council; Rakha Hassan; Dr. Kamal Abu Aqil, Coordinator of the Permanent Committee on European Affairs at the Council; Dr. Hazem Ateyatallah, council treasurer; and Mr. Ahmed Abu Shady, member of the Council.

The participants emphasized that, the conference has been held amidst what the European Union (EU) is facing at the domestic level in terms of escalation of populism, right-wing extremism, fears regarding the future of the United Kingdom (UK), severity of the refugees and illegal immigration crisis, and people’s rejection to receive refugees. Similarly there are a number of threats facing economic and trade relations, which are affected by political relations, particularly in the presence of the special agendas possessed by each individual state. The issue is no longer confined to such domestic threats, but progressed to threats related to the situations in the Middle East region, particularly amidst what is being frequently alleged that the US is withdrawing from the region and making fateful decisions without coordinating with the European partners.

Those challenges demand the necessity of paying attention to crisis surrounding the globe which are multilateral rather than being bilateral. There are external parties fueling
such conflicts as the Iranian role in Syria and the Saudi role in Yemen are clear.

It has also been noted that, terrorism has become an international problem threatening world states in Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan, but amid that there is a clash among major countries, or among middle power states at the behest of major powers.

- It is necessary to pay attention to the rising rates of corruption and poverty; and to seek respect of free trade and human rights agreements.

Regarding the Arab situation, amidst this world which is threatened by collapse, it has been emphasized that the conference revealed the nature of the division in the western world between Europe and the United States regarding their views on Arab issues, which can be taken advantage of within the framework of the convening of the Arab-European Summit, so that this summit would be the beginning of cooperation between both sides. Particularly as the European position towards the Palestinian issue is consistent as compared to the Arab position which lacks that, and there is no strong international partner that can be relied upon with respect to the future of this conflict, as both Russians and Chinese are busy defending their interests as well as having significant and influential relations with Israel.

The proceedings of the roundtable discussion were con-
cluded by asking a question about the opportunities that Egypt may exploit so as to return to play a role and how may it formulate strategies to benefit from such opportunities, particularly as the region, although suffering from conflicts, is still rich in natural and energy resources, and these resources are possessed by Egypt as well; noting that the question that must be asked and answered is: How would it be possible for Egypt to return?
The Council’s Symposium on Occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel

The session held by the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), on Monday, March 25th, 2019, on occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, was multidimensional in terms of participation of a number of members in discussing various aspects of the treaty, and giving their visions which were not limited to the treaty itself, but also addressed the subsequent developments whether negative or positive.

The session was opened by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, by a reading of the Treaty recited by Ambassador Dr. Nabil Al-Arabi. Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad-Director of ECFA, Ambassador Hazem Khairat, Dr. Mohammed Kamal, Mr. Mohamed Kassem, and General Mohamed Ibrahim, members of ECFA also spoke during this session, in addition to interventions made by a number of attendees.

In his speech, Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, gave a historic presentation of the conflict with Israel, and Ambassador Dr. Nabil Al-Arabi presented in his speech an analy-
sis of the Peace Treaty texts based on his experience, his connection regarding the conflict and, then, the treaty and its consequences with respect to Egypt’s restoration of its entire territory. He explained that he is currently not optimistic about the existence of a genuine international effort to liberate the occupied Arab territories, due to certain reasons including Trump’s policy, the presence of Netanyahu as a Prime Minister of Israel, the Palestinian split, and the inability of the United Nations to stand firmly behind the implementation of its resolutions.

Dr. Mohamed Kamal spoke on the changes that took place in the US position towards the Peace Treaty after Four decades of the treaty.

Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad clarified that, the US position forces us to think about alternatives and complements to US role, as the resolutions of the United States including Israel’s annexation of the Golan in absence of any Arab reaction indicates severe powerlessness of the Arab body.

Mr. Mohamed Kassem touched on the prospects of the Egyptian-Israeli economic relations in various fields.

Ambassador Hazem Khairat, former ambassador to Israel, spoke on Israel’s gains from the treaty. He explained that, there is a reasonable segment within the Israeli society that has begun to question and cast doubt on Israel’s right to occupy land by force. He spoke from personal experi-
ence on the question that he used to face from the Israelis, namely: Why did not the peace between our countries reach to the citizen in Egypt?, and his natural answer was that as long as comprehensive and just peace and restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people were not achieved, as well as rejection of peace initiatives, then normalization at the peoples’ level will remain non-existent.
A lecture on «Nuclear Security, Safety, Security Assurances, and the Lessons Learned” was organized by the Council at its headquarters’ on March 31st, 2019. Dr. Yousri Abu Shadi, member of the Council and former inspector at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) spoke during this lecture, and Dr. Sayed Bahey El-Din Abdel-Hamid, member of the Council, former Chairman of the Nuclear Power Plants Authority (NPPA), and former Adviser to the Minister of Electricity, spoke as well during this lecture. The lecture was moderated by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran. The meeting was also attended by a number of ambassadors, experts and academics from among the Council’s members, namely: Ambassador Ahmed Hajjaj, Ambassador Mohamed Mounir, Ambassador Ahmed El Ghamrawy, Ambassadress Hajar El Islambouly, Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Wafik, and others.

The proceedings of the lecture commenced by emphasizing nuclear security, safety and security assurances as being three axes that are key to the 2020 NPT Review Conference.
Dr. Yousri Abo Shadi referred to several nuclear accidents and the measures taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to prevent them, particularly after the Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear accidents. Moreover, he highlighted the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that was distinguished by having guaranteed the right to transfer nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. But on the other hand, lacked a time limit to eliminate weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), lacked the implementation tool, in addition to the right of any state to withdraw from the treaty in case of viewing any threat in this treaty to its national security, and being influenced by the policies of the major powers towards a number of States, as was done in the reports issued by the Agency on the possible possession of nuclear reactors by Iraq and Syria, notwithstanding that these reports were later found to be untrue.

Regarding nuclear culture, there was an intervention by Dr. Sayed Bahey El-Din explaining the evolution of the nuclear security term after 2005 to include nuclear and radioactive materials. He also proceeded towards highlighting the Dabaa reactor that has an advanced technology to achieve maximum safety and an ability to combat any threats to the reactor as manifested in its design as well as in its proximity to the sea for the purpose of cooling and avoiding any temperature related reactor accidents.
Lecture by Dr. Eng. Hany Al-Noqrashi on “Will Energy Options in Egypt be The Limited and Costly Fossil Energy or The Renewable and Cheap Energy?”

Within the framework of the council’s keenness to highlight developments in several issues at the economic and political levels and in the light of the vital debates on energy within the framework of global trend to replace old energy sources by renewable energy sources, the council hosted Eng. Dr. Hany Al-Noqrashi Advisor to President of the Republic on renewable energy, on April 3rd, 2019, to highlight the most important renewable energy sources and current projects intended to be established in Egypt. This lecture was held with the participation of Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; Ambassador Dr. Nabil El-Arabi, Former Secretary General of the Arab League and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs; a large number of experts, diplomats and academics from among the council members, as well as those specialized in the field of energy, and those concerned with it.

During the lecture, Dr. Hany was Keen to emphasize the importance of energy as being the key driving force for wa-
ter and population. He also explained the three most important types of energy, namely: traditional sources such as wind and photovoltaic cells, which do not achieve the objective of dispensing with fossil fuels and only providing temporary availability, on the contrary to solar thermal power plants that fulfill the purpose of their establishment by providing availability of energy and possibility to fully replace traditional fuels, especially that they are characterized by sustainability in energy provision.

With respect to energy projects in Egypt, he called for the importance of starting to gradually diversify renewable energy sources and move towards increasing solar thermal power plants at the expense of wind farms and photovoltaic power stations, especially that such plants achieve the desired goal of energy provision, and also they can be made use of by replacing their air cooled condensers by a seawater desalination unit without reducing electricity production.
Lecture On

“Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW)”

The Egyptian Council for foreign Affairs hosted a lecture, delivered by Air Force Major General of Staff/ Hisham Al-Halaby, on “Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW)”, on Monday 8th of April 2019. The symposium was opened by Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, and was attended by an elite group of diplomats and academics concerned with the topic of the lecture; among them were Their Excellencies Ambassadors/ No’aman Galal, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, Farouq Mabrouk, and Osama Tawfiq; Professor Dr. Ahmad Al-Darsh, Eng. Afaf Ameen, and Professor Ahmad Abu Shady.

Dr. Hesham Al-Halaby indicated that there exists, in military sciences, a large group of divisions linked to the generations of warfare. One of the most important of such divisions was what has been presented, by an American group headed by the Strategic Thinker William Leen in 1989, in which Fourth Generation Warfare has been mentioned. In accordance with the State’s strategic view, it is divided into two sectors, a civilian sector and a military sector. What mostly characterizes the three previous generations of warfare was
that their aim was to mainly destroy the armed forces of the enemy state and then deal with its civilian sector. But Fourth Generation Warfare (4Gw) is an asymmetric warfare that mainly aims at firstly dealing with the civilian sector of the enemy state in preparation for taking control over it without the minimal involvement in military confrontation with the army of that state whether over its territories, the territories of other states, or even through the use of war proxies.

Targeting the civilian sector of the state, waging psychological warfare with all its tools, encouraging demonstrations under the pretext of peacefulness then committing assault against individuals, penetrating civil society organizations, and diversifying the use of all possible means of pressure on all economic, political, social, and military fields of the targeted state, with the taking into account of the various regional and international pressure sources, are among the means and methods used in Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). As means of protection against this warfare, efforts must be made to spread vigilance and awareness and to conduct scientific analysis of domestic, regional, and international events through strong and specialized institutions. And that would be the safety valve for any state wishing to maintain its national security. On the other hand, disagreements and differences among individuals within the same state must be respected and that is to be achieved through programs and training given to various age groups.
Symposium On

"Effects of Technological Progress on International Policy and the Balance of Power"

On Wednesday, April 17th 2019, The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs hosted a lecture on “Effects of Technological Progress on International Policy and the Balance of Power”. The lecture was delivered by Ambassador Mohamed Al-Shazly and was opened by Ambassador Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the council. An elite group of diplomats and those concerned with the subject matter attended this lecture. Ambassador Ezzat Saad, Director of the council, and Their Excellencies Ambassadors/ Gamal Al-Din Bayoumi, Kamal Abou-Aqil, Yousssef Al-Sharkawy, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, and Mohamed Tawfiq, were among the attendants.

Ambassador Al-Shazly pointed out that he prepared the topic of this lecture based on his firm conviction that we live in an age governed by science and culture; that developments in this field during the recent years indicate radical changes in the elements of power governing the world and tremendous changes in the production method and balance of power governing international relations. He reviewed how, since the dawn of history, states that were relatively, tech-
nologically developed, had the upper hand, as compared to their counterparts, in the wars they had fought against other countries. And so he pointed out that the fields that currently must be paid attention to; which are expected to change World map with its policies and equilibriums in the near as well as in the long-term future, are limited to the following: Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering, Nanotechnology, Space Research, Nuclear Fusion Technology, Applications of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence (AI), and The Scientific Research Stations in Antarctica.

In Conclusion of the lecture, Ambassador Al- Shazly recommended that, the council need to follow up scientific developments having influence over aspects of national security and economy. This can be achieved by hosting scientific figures who are specialists in such matters in order to have cognizance of their vision, intensifying contacts in this regard with the scientific and academic bodies, analyzing these developments and transferring them to the concerned authorities in order to alert them to their impact and significance, and making the council function as a lobby for scientific research; to draw attention to the importance of increasing scientific research spending and the significance of Egypt’s participation in the international scientific field. In this context, he pointed out to the need to work for the intensification of communication with audio-visual, print, and electronic media and to interact with them in order to em-
phasize the significance of following up the ongoing scientific developments to establish a public opinion interested in scientific research and appreciating its significance at the time when scientific media in Egypt is almost absent.
Lecture on “From Mythologies to Systemic Thinking, and Evolution of Human Thought regarding the Understanding of World and Life through Sufism, Philosophy, Religion, and Science”

On 21st of April 2019, the Council hosted a lecture by Dr. Mohsen Tawfiq, council member, to speak about the topic entitled “From mythologies to systemic thinking, and evolution of human thought regarding the Understanding of World and Life through Sufism, Philosophy, Religion, and Science”. Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, Ambassador/Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, and a number of ambassadors and academics from among the council members, participated in that event. This lecture was also attended by Engineer Ramzy Al-Adl.

The evolution of global thought system over 5000 years and the conceptual development that took place as a result of progress made in informatics and human thought have been discussed during this meeting.

Dr. Mohsen emphasized that human thought had passed through stages of Sufism, philosophy, and then scientific theories; all of which have influenced the understanding
of life system, and through which it has been concluded that a system of any science or field is only a system of interconnected complex parts, and that when studying any system, it will not be possible to study a part of that system in isolation from the whole, but shall be studied as an integrated system; as such, transition has taken place from the classic theory which is characterized by being a materialistic theory that depends on competitiveness to systemic thinking, that is characterized by being interconnected and non-complicated or inevitable, but governed by quantum and relativity theories, and characterized by cooperation and diversity of cultures.

He concluded his speech by emphasizing the significance of including all fields of development in systemic thinking, chiefly education, that takes all elements of internal and external environment into account, when conducting development.
The council organized a meeting for the Standing Committee on Arab Affairs with the aim of highlighting ongoing developments in states of the region; particularly in Sudan, Libya, and Algeria, on May 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2019. This meeting was convened at the invitation of Ambassador Ihab Wahbah, Coordinator of the Council’s Permanent Committee for Arab Affairs with participation of Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the council; council members, namely: Sayed Abu Zaid, Mohamed Al-Shazly, Youssef Al-Sharqawy, Mohamed Al-Ashmawy, Salah Halima; and Khaled Al-Kilany, a journalist interested in Libyan and Algerian affairs.

Ongoing developments on the scene in each of the three states were reviewed during the meeting, and were regarded as a new wave of the Arab Spring.

1- With respect to the ongoing developments on the Sudanese scene, the participants agreed that dealing with the ongoing situations in the country requires more caution and taking a wait-and-see approach when dealing with the new regime until its orientations are revealed, particularly that
the leaders of the occurring coup were among those close to Former President Omar Al-Bashir; their coup against him was mounted for seeking calm on the streets and overcoming the protests; this was what Sudan opposition became aware of, and such situation led the military council to make some changes to its composition. It is therefore necessary to be aware of this critical current stage through which Sudan is passing, particularly that it is a state with a long history of political turmoil and division. Hence, the participants recommended that the AU should play a role in easing tensions in the country and to work with all parties for guaranteeing the handover of power to civilians.

Regarding the Egyptian role, the attendants viewed the importance of closely coordinating with Saudi Arabia and UAE with respect to developments in Sudan, particularly with regards to combating any attempts for reviving the Islamic movement there, eliminating any impression that Egypt is supporting the military council in Sudan, and the need to appoint an Egyptian special envoy to Sudan, in light of the state of liquidity through which the crisis is passing and the interference in such crisis by many international and regional parties. It may be appropriate to advice the Sudanese side on issuing a constitutional declaration that can be prepared by a committee composed of the various political powers and the military council, to govern the transitional period, if so agreed by all parties upon its duration.
2- Regarding situations in Algeria and Libya, the discussions were concluded as follows:

- Situations in **Algeria** are almost worst than those in Sudan due to the interests of major powers over there, namely: oil; gas; strategic location, in additions to having doubts surrounding the truth about the loyalties of military leaders, who are currently taking the lead in Algeria, that are distributed between France and USA. However, the Algerian situation, on the contrary to its Sudanese counterpart, is characterized by moving within a constitutional framework and entering a transitional phase, after President Abdelaziz Bouteflika had stepped down, in accordance with the constitution. However, it can be said that there is a road map being drawn up for the Algerian future during which the army, whether before or after elections, will play a major role at all the political and economic levels.

- As for the situations in Libya, the country is still witnessing a state of tension, division, political instability, and the division between the recognized Libyan government supported by Turkey and Qatar, that has Islamic tendencies, which permitted militias and terrorist elements to exist over Libyan territories, and the Libyan national army forces, led by Khalifa Haftar, that control more Libyan land areas than Al-Sarraj government. Egypt supports the Libyan national Army forces as this serves its interests, particularly in light of the recently achieved gains as the army was able
to strongly tighten its grip in Libya, sparing Egypt from the hazard of terrorism that was threatening its western borders.

Concerning such dire situations witnessed over the Libyan scene, the speakers called upon UN Envoy to Libya Ghassan Salameh to play a more balanced role in order to reach a quick settlement of the situations in Libya, especially that European countries which are effective and influential over situations in Libya witness an obvious division between the French position which is close to its Egyptian counterpart as Paris fears terrorism and continuous illegal immigration, and Italy that regards Libya as its former colony, and that it is time to return back to again after the 2011 chaos. In this context, Italy supports Al-Sarraj government as do Britain and Turkey.
Symposium on «The Peace Process and Reconstruction in Afghanistan»

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs organized a symposium entitled «The Peace Process and Reconstruction in Afghanistan», on May 4, 2019; with the participation of the Afghan Ambassador to Cairo, Mohammad Moheq; Ambassador Hani Salah, the Ambassador of Egypt to Afghanistan; Mr. Al-Sayed Hani, council’s member; Dr. Mohamed Fayez Farahat, researcher at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS). The symposium was moderated by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, in the attendance of a number of ambassadors and experts from among the council members.

During the symposium, a number of themes were reviewed as follows:

-Causes of military solution failure in Afghanistan: although 18 years had passed since the US military intervention in the country, but the state still suffers the lack of peace-building mechanism in such country struck by security and political chaos, in spite of foreign military presence, and amid difficult economic situations suffered by the population.
- **Peace process developments and fate**: prerequisites for the success chances of the current peace process after five rounds of dialogue were held during which five key issues were discussed, namely: US troops withdrawal, future of the Afghan government, the ceasefire issue, the exchange of prisoners, and Taliban’s pledge of not turning Afghanistan into a threat to neighboring states or a haven for terrorist groups, as well as reviewing obstacles to peace process and future scenarios for the peace process.

- Also highlighting **the Egyptian-Afghan relations** that began more than 90 years ago and which has witnessed historical periods of political, cultural, and security cooperation between both sides, as well as cooperation between the intelligence agencies of the two countries.

- **Peace challenges and the reconstruction of Afghanistan**: especially that the reconstruction process is related to peace achievement; despite international and global interest in the Afghan war during the eighties of the last century, it suffered a gradual decline reaching today’s major crimes that are committed by Taliban movement against the Afghan people and overlooking the support received by the group at some point from some regional powers. Confrontation with the movement took place only after US intervention against Afghan forces amid fears of the movement returning back to its peak again with the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan.
The symposium was concluded by emphasizing that the peace process is still facing many internal challenges, namely: power structure, the change of social fabric, the emergence of parallel economy, spread of corruption, and ideological conflicts; and the external challenges consist in regional and international interventions by some powers seeking the enhancement of their influence and the protection of their interests.
Symposium on “An Analysis of Israel Election Results, and Their Impact within Israel and on the Peace Process”

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), organized a symposium, on Sunday morning, May 5th, 2019, entitled “An analysis of Israel election results, and their impact within Israel and on the peace process”. The symposium was held in the presence of the Palestinian Ambassador to Cairo and a number of Council members, with the participation of, Ambassador Hazem Khairat, Ambassador Muhammad Tawfik, Maj. Gen. Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Duwairi, and Ambassador Diab Al-Louh, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Cairo.

The symposium discussed the following topics:

- Analysis of the Israeli parliamentary elections results and the chances for forming a coalition government, especially since the elections held on April 9, 2019 resulted in the victory of the far-right nationalist camp led by Benjamin Netanyahu, Likud Party Chairman, while the parties supporting the peace process, namely: Labor and Meretz - only won 10% of the seats.
- **Reflections of the election results and the new coalition on the Palestinian scene**, especially since the new Israeli government is just a continuation of the approach of the previous government led by Netanyahu, which strived to abort all solutions introduced for establishing any peace status or activating the two-state solution that would establish a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel. It had rather resorted to the use and escalation of violence, particularly as it is being supported by the US. This was evident in all US decisions made, starting with the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, then transferring US embassy to Jerusalem, cutting the UNRWA funding, and moreover, striving to pass the “Deal of the Century”.

- **Diaspora Jews and their role in US-Israel relations equation**, whereas the organic relationship that brings Jewish groups and US administration together was stressed upon; noting that despite differences among American-Jewish organizations, they all agreed on one idea, namely, Supporting Israel; and highlighting that since the collapse of the left-wing, which are closer to the Labor Party, AIPAC and the Jewish-Israeli organizations started leaning towards the Israeli right-wing and the Likud.

**In conclusion, the policy of the new coalition government towards the peace process and how Egypt would deal with it, was reviewed.** A stress was laid on the priorities of the coalition government which includes deal-
ing with Iran and integrating explicitly into the regional and Arab system, which will be an opportunity for the Arabs to talk about the peace process by making it conditional on achieving the coalition’s priorities, which means linking between not talking about any Israeli integration in the Arab and regional system unless the peace process has been achieved in addition to all relevant issues, whether the Golan and refugees issues, or even the Deal of the Century.

Furthermore, a reference was made to the importance of Egypt’s role in this regard in light of its peace-based relationship with Israel; moreover, about the existence of areas of cooperation between both sides.
Meeting of The Permanent Committee for Arab Affairs to Discuss the Developments of Situations in Sudan

With the invitation of His Excellency Ambassador Ihab Wahba, Coordinator of the Council’s Permanent Committee for Arab Affairs, the Committee convened a consultative meeting, on the morning of 13th of June 2019, with the participation of Their Excellencies Ambassadors: Dr. Mounir Zahran, Dr. Ezzat Saad, Sayed Abu Zeid, Salah Halima, and Professor Khaled Al-Kilany, with a view to following up situations in Sudan in connection with a previous meeting of the Committee that had been held on the 2nd of last May.

The discussions included reviewing situations in Sudan at the domestic level, Arab and African stances towards developments in Sudan, the latest Ethiopian moves as demonstrated by Abiy Ahmed’s visit to Sudan Three days after the civil disobedience to propose an initiative that includes the release of detainees, and suspension of Sudan’s membership by the African Union (AU). Egypt’s position and the challenges facing it were also highlighted, particularly as it lacks effectiveness when compared to its Ethiopian counterpart; through which, the later tries to play a strong role in influencing the course of events in Sudan.
At conclusion, the participants made a set of recommendations, of which the most important are:

1- Supporting the choices of the Sudanese People.

2- Priority must be given to maintaining unity, security, and stability of the territorial integrity of Sudan.

3- The importance of reaching a settlement to the crisis between both sides of the Sudanese equation so as to ensure rapid establishment of executive, legislative, and judicial state institutes.

4- Achieving the demands, objectives, and hopes of the Sudanese People for a democratic civil regime.

5- Opening direct communication channels with all Sudanese political forces and parties.

6- Supporting and endorsing the mediation efforts by the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which are consistent with the United Nations position.

7- The importance of the rapid preparation of a permanent constitution via a specialized legal committee that would be constituted on the bases of appropriate legal and political foundations for supporting state institutions.
Roundtable dialogue on “The future of Sudan”

On August 22nd, 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 Ambassador 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.
Seminar on Spiritual Diplomacy and the Common Abrahamic Bond

The Council organized a seminar on October 8th, 2019, to discuss Dr. Heba Gamal Eldin’s book (under publication) on “Spiritual Diplomacy and the common Abrahamic bond: between the deal of the century and the colonial plan of the new century”. Dr. Heba Gamal Eldin is a Professor of Political Science at the Institute of National Planning (INP) and a member of the Council. The meeting was attended by a number of ambassadors, academics and experts from among the members of the Council, as well as a number of non-council member press and media figures. The meeting was moderated by Professor / Dr. Ali El Din Helal, member of the Board of Directors.

Dr. Heba Gamal Eldin, during her presentation for reviewing the most important topics in the book, emphasized the following in particular:

- The talk on the “common Abrahamic bond” has recently started to be frequently mentioned as a means of moving towards global religious peace, a vehicle to eliminate extremism and violence, and even for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. And divine reli-
gions have been called the Abrahamic religions as a step to express the convergence of religions, to take advantage of the common denominators, and to reach a human brotherhood based on mutual respect and setting aside conflicts inherited from ancestors due to religious differences.

- This would be within the framework of forming a mental picture which would be acceptable and close to the heart with respect to everything described as Abrahamic. Here, the matter requires mindfulness and contemplation; so as to think to what extent could the common Abrahamic bond be used? Would its use be limited to religion, and why did it replace the term “divine religions”? And if its use extends beyond the scope of religion, would it be politicized, and what would be the extent of its politicization? And what is the sky-high limit through which the term “Abrahamic” would be employed? The most important matter to consider is to understand what is “Abrahamic”, and to whom does it refer? Does it refer to God’s Prophet, Abraham (peace be upon him)? And if that is the case, then why is it being raised now? And who is the Founding Father? who would employ the Prophet of God as a means of combating protracted conflicts, reaching a common bond, and achieving global religious peace. Does “Global religious peace” represent a new term? Why is peace described as “religious” despite establishing the world on the basis of rejecting the involvement of religious matters in political life?, which has
lasted for many centuries?, and why is religion global despite the absence of a single world religion that prevails over the whole world?.

- In fact, the research into the concept of the common Abrahamic bond has been supported by U.S. governments since 1990 with the speech of U.S. President George Bush Senior on the “New World Order” following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the U.S. war on Iraq, as well as the support that was crowned with an institution within the U.S. State Department in 2013.

- In this regard, I noted that we are faced with a confused and ill-defined picture as we speak of the “deal of the century” which is based on the elimination and disappearance of borders by taking into account the freedom of worship and belief, eradication of religion derived hatred and setting aside ancestors’ differences based on religion; according to statements by Kushner, the advisor to the President of the United States on the “Deal of the century”, in February 2019.

- Do environmental threats have a role in fuelling the situation and resorting to talking about the common Abrahamic bond so as to be a significant entry point to the near future? Moreover, what is the relationship of what is offered for the sake of future generations, such as the speech of sustainability, with the common Abrahamic bond? Is it being politi-
cized so as to comply with the U.S. proposal that is planned to be announced with respect to the “Deal of the century”?

- She concluded her speech by emphasizing that the book aims at unveiling the new plan proposed by the U.S. think tanks since the beginning of the millennium, while extrapolating and refuting the plan as well as trying to foresee its path and direction in light of upholding the Arab interests as an integrated whole; this intersects with the features of the “Deal of the century,” the importance of introducing new confrontational policies and reassessing the internal situation.
The Egyptian council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) held a seminar entitled “Future of peace process in light of recent Israeli elections and their reflections over the Palestinian question”, on October 21st, 2019. The seminar was attended by an elite group of ambassadors, academics, and researchers interested in the Arab-Israeli Affair. This Seminar was opened by Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran. A number of research papers, each addressing a specific theme or aspect of the issue under research, have been reviewed over the course of this seminar. The first theme revolved around the topic of “Assessment of current Israeli stance in light of the results of latest elections and their reflections over Israeli policy towards the peace process”; the second theme revolved around “The Palestinian stance… where is it going to? In light of regional and international changes”; the third was around “The limits of Arab stance and the peace process advancement opportunities”; the topic of the fourth theme was “Looking forwards to the stances of other major powers (Russia, China, and the EU) towards the peace process in the next Phase”; and the fifth theme addressed the
The participants asserted that the results of the latest Israeli elections involved various negative effects due to extreme right wing dominance in Tel Aviv, as well as not attaching any significance to the peace process or settlement with the Palestinians as the priority list of competing parties did not include any mention of the peace process in these elections; which foreshadows a peace process that is not going to be easy, and the lack of a reliable partner to resume that process.
Round table Discussion By The Committee On Arab Affairs An Egyptian Initiative For an Arab Settlement to The Syrian Crisis

In connection with the developments taking place in Syria, especially after the launch of the Turkish operation Spring of Peace into northern Syria, Ambassador / Ehab Wahba, Coordinator of the Permanent Committee on Arab Affairs in the Council, called for holding a round table discussion at the Council to discuss “Developments of the Syrian Crisis”, on November 18th, 2019, with the participation of Ambassador / Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Ambassador / Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; and members of the Council, Ambassadors: Sayed Abu Zaid, Abdul Rahman Salah, Hazem Khairat, Muhammad Abdel Hamid Qasim, Yousef Al-Sharqawi, and Dr. / Rajai Fayed, member of the council.

The discussion addressed the initiatives to resolve the crisis, including the launch of a Constitutional Committee authorized to draft new constitution for the country, and the conference to be held in Washington on 14th November 2019, on the basis of a French initiative, which includes the countries participating in the International Coalition against
Terror, in light of the liquidation of the leader of ISIS. This did not reduce the fears and criticisms of the western countries regarding the U.S. decision of withdrawing from Syria, considering that this can support ISIS’s efforts to return back to the scene and threaten their security and interests despite the death of its leader. The developments of the Turkish, Iranian and Russian roles in Syria were also discussed, especially in the light of the Turkish military operation launched by Erdogan on October 9th, 2019, into the north-east of Syria and the new facts that it imposed, a process that was halted by understandings reached between Turkey and the United States on the 17th of the same month.

In this context, the importance of an effective Arab stance on the ground in support of the Syrian state, which has become a field for regional and international rivalries, and proposing an Egyptian initiative in coordination with the Arab parties to guarantee a just Arab settlement to the Syrian crisis and not leaving the Syrian scene to regional and international competition.
Lecture by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran
Views on The Suez Canal from Historical, Political, Legal, and Economic Perspectives

The council organized a lecture given by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the council, on November 18th, 2019. It was attended by a number of ambassadors, experts, and academics of the council to address the topic of “Views on the Suez canal from historical, political, legal, and economic perspectives”. This event was moderated by Ambassador/Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council. This lecture was organized within the framework of celebrating the 150th anniversary of Suez Canal’s opening to international navigation.

During the lecture, Ambassador Zahran highlighted the history of dredging the old canal and who was behind that idea. In addition, he referred to the period that followed the opening of the canal when Egypt, after making great sacrifices to dig the canal and having disputes with de Lesseps, sought arbitration to resolve such issues. The result of the arbitration was to abolish the system of corvée labour, and to cede the territory that had been previously granted to the company by the Khedive in return for compensation, as well as determining the appropriate compensation in exchange
for return of land. In addition, the company would cease to fulfill its obligations to labors with respect to wages and food quota. Moreover, the canal dredging concession would begin from the date of its opening to navigation and not from the date of the company’s possession of land allocated to both of the salt water and fresh water canals; this led most observers to view the result of the arbitration as causing injustice and prejudice to Egypt’s interests, in favour of the company.

This was followed by reviewing the phases of dredging the canal till its opening and the costs of which amounted to about 40 billion Pounds Sterling (the Egyptian Pound was equivalent to or higher than its Sterling counterpart); as well as the Egyptian rejection to the support given by the British government, representing the occupation authority in Egypt, for the Suez Canal Company’s request to extend the concession period, which was scheduled to expire in 1968, for another 40 years, which was followed by announcing the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956; and the grave losses suffered by the Egyptian people after that announcement. Ambassador Mounir Zahran affirmed that this was a prelude to and a cause of the 1967 setback (Naksa), in addition to president Abdel Nasser’s demand for the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency force (UNEF) from Sinai, which was previously approved by Egypt in 1956 in return for Israel’s withdrawal from Sinai, and imposing a
blockade on Israeli navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. This led some to believe that if Egypt would have waited till expiry of the Suez Canal Company’s concession, Egypt could have restored the Suez Canal, had not to pay compensation for the nationalization, would have avoided the tripartite aggression without losses, and then the 1967 war would have been avoided, especially since the nationalization announcement resulted in freezing of Egyptian balances in American, French, and British banks and compensating the company’s shareholders through buying the shares of some and paying a compensation of USD81.2 million to others.

In conclusion of the lecture, Ambassador Zahran reviewed the New Suez Canal and the efforts made within the framework of developing the navigation canal as well as the Economic Zone of the Suez Canal and how would that be of great benefit to Egypt.
Joint Symposium on “Azerbaijan’s Diplomacy in its Centenary Celebrations”

Within the framework of the centenary celebrations of Azerbaijan’s diplomacy, the Council hosted a joint symposium with Al- Hewar Center for Political and Media Studies to discuss the book of Dr. Emil Rakhimov, Cultural Counselor at the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Cairo on December 14th, 2019. This book, was issued in June 2019, to commemorate this occasion, on “Azerbaijan’s diplomacy in its centenary celebrations”.

Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the council; participated in, and moderated this symposium. In addition to Ambassador Youssef Al-Sharkawy, council ‘s member; Dr. Adel Darwish, former Director of Egyptian Cultural Center in Azerbaijan; and Mr. Mohammed Salama, journalist and former editor in chief of Al- Akhbar newspaper; who have all participated in this symposium.

At the beginning of the proceedings of the symposium, Ambassador/ Dr. Ezzat Saad emphasized several points, one of these points was that Azerbaijan has always practiced multilateral diplomacy owing to its geographical and geopolitical position; where the state of Azerbaijan repre-
sents a hub between Central Asia and Europe.

Following that, Dr. Emil Rakhimov reviewed his book; during which the historical stations of Azerbaijan’s diplomacy have been reviewed, on the understanding that diplomacy is the executive tool of any state’s foreign policy.

During the symposium, developments in bilateral relations between Egypt and Azerbaijan as well as the cultural cooperation existing between the two sides have also been reviewed. The significance of working towards moving forward with the enhancement of such relations at all levels, were also stressed.
The 2019 Annual Conference of The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) on “Middle East Security... Opportunities and Challenges”

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) convened its annual conference under the slogan of “Middle East Security... Opportunities and Challenges,” over two days; December 23rd and 24th, 2019. An elite group of outstanding academics, ambassadors, researchers, and those interested in issues of the region and the world, attended and participated in the works of the conference. H.E Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sameh Shoukry, opened the works of the conference by a speech addressing the strategic objectives within the Government’s Action Programme for protection of Egypt’s national security and foreign policy in consistency with the presidential mandate to move from the state stabilization phase to the phase of reaping the benefits, emerging from the fact that Egypt is a regional power that works for achieving the common interests of the region or the continent and defending them in accordance with principles of international law and multilateral frameworks, thereby enhancing cooperation among states within a framework of equality and mutual respect as well as achieving common interests, and upholding the role of the
nation state and its institutions as a guarantee to achieving the objectives of reform and development in accordance with the vision and will of peoples and not according to the priorities and interests of external parties.

In addition to its opening and closing sessions, the conference held four sessions, each one of them addressing a theme; the first one focused on the internal determiners for Middle East security, the second one addressed the economic, political, and legal aspects of East Mediterranean gas, while the third theme focused on regional visions for Middle East security, and finally, the fourth theme addressed international visions for security of the region.

The first session addressed the internal determiners for Middle East security, in this regards, speakers’ papers and interventions revealed the fact that internal determiners for security of the states of the region, such as demographic development, type of education, declining rates of human development and competitiveness; including scientific and technological research, empowerment of women, productive labour and others, all of which are serious challenges to the national security of these states and are far greater than external challenges or sources of external threat. In this context, it was pointed out that while the population growth rate is moving towards decline, globally and regionally, the rate in Egypt is moving towards an increase by 56% over the 1990-2050 period; Turkey and Iran are also heading to-
wards an increase of their population growth rate, though at lower percentages; 15% and 23% respectively. But such an increase in population growth rate was not accompanied by a similar increase in the indicators of competitiveness and education quality, or a decrease in the rates of inequality and unemployment. It was therefore noted the need for caution regarding failure to address such risks in the future with such inescapable growth of population. If Egypt wants to achieve regional leadership; it can only achieve this by improving the quality of education, which will have a positive impact on the increase of productivity, as well as working towards the empowerment of women which will lead to an increase in the GDP.

In this context, the discussion concluded that there exists a wide range of variation in these indicators among the countries of the region, and hence the extent of competition among these actors over the achievement of their various interests in the region, and if the variation and competition are considered as being themselves a positive indicator for development, the lack of consensus among the states of the region and their different orientations and strategies prevent the integrated and equitable development of the states of the region, constituting in its entirety an obstacle to the process of economic and social development of the peoples of the region.

On the scientific and technological development and its
connection to the security of the Middle East, the close link between the scientific research system and the education system was emphasized, which can be drawn from all indicators of development in this field prepared by research centres and universities at the global level. It was also noted during the session that all developed countries’ governments work to link the education system, capacity building and scientific research to societal and developmental needs while linking these systems to achieve specific requirements such as graduating human resources with relevant technical and professional specialities, or establishing basic industries using local resources and services supporting development and achieving a link between higher education and the industrial sector through activating the partnership between the state and the private sector in supporting and stimulating innovation.

In this context, it has been pointed out that the scientific and technological development in Israel is taking a very advanced direction, especially as it receives unlimited support from the U.S. and the West in this field and in other areas as well, while the rest of countries in the region are still suffering from being underdeveloped with respect to such important area, which is expected to outline the features of international policies in the near future; and that despite the Arab demographic growth, it has not been matched by a similar growth in technological and economic performance.
Regarding that point, the session concluded the necessity of linking education, scientific research and economy, considering that this represents the vision on which the comprehensive development of any country is based, as the transformation of the research system into economic products requires building human capital responsible for achieving the will of innovation and creativity, the necessity of working towards eliminating the gap between scientific research and application, and to work towards achieving full coordination between scientific research institutions and various state sectors in a manner that would achieve the success of efforts to support economic performance and achieve sustainable development plans through building strategic partnerships between scientific research institutions and relevant parties, in addition to promoting common national values in a way that increases the bonds of belonging and citizenship so that Egyptian universities would become leading ambitious institutions playing a pioneering role in providing economic and social services. In addition to the formulation by developed states of effective policies, strategies, scientific and technological plans through which all scientific, cognitive and technological capabilities are harnessed and directed towards achieving national development goals and priorities.

The third theme, related to economic development in the countries of the region, addressed the mutual relation-
ship between economic development and security stability, as both of them represent a prerequisite for the other. In this context, reference was made to (12) indicators of economic development in the countries of the region, which are as follows: The state’s ability to increase its production of goods and services (rates of GDP growth), the state’s economic performance (gross domestic product per capita and per capita income according to purchasing power), using labour force (unemployment rate), Human Development Index (HDI), price changes (inflation rate), the government’s ability to meet its financing needs (general budget balance to output ratio), the government’s ability to fulfil its future obligations (Public debt-to-GDP ratio), state commitment towards non-residents (External debt-to-GDP ratio), the ability of the country to compete in the goods and services market (current account to output ratios), state’s true production capacity (trade balance in billion U.S. Dollars), the strength of the balance of payments (International reserves), and the competitiveness of the state (Competitiveness Index). In this regard, it was emphasized that despite the advanced positions of some countries in the region in terms of the Human Development Index and the Global Competitiveness Index, the region suffers from a modest and declining growth rate in most countries, a fluctuating and low standard of living during 2018 compared to 2013, volatile unemployment rates which are heading towards rising in 2017 and 2018, a deficit in their public budgets in
2016 and 2017, an increase in the public debt-to-GDP ratio exceeding 60% in seven countries, the external debt-to-GDP ratio is heading towards a significant rise in 2016 and 2017 except in Algeria and Yemen, and chronic trade deficits except for oil-producing countries.

Light has also been shed on the region’s economic strength as compared to other regions in the world, especially since the region possesses significant economic elements, which are: natural resources and the size of their stockpiles, the human resources possessed by the region, and the policies it follows to achieve the maximum degree of rational and highly efficient exploitation of all of its resources. Moreover, the region’s integration is imperative to achieve common prosperity and security stabilization through coordination and cooperation.

- The second session addressed the economic, political and legal aspects of Eastern Mediterranean gas, and how this thorny dossier has strongly imposed itself recently on the Middle Eastern arena, particularly in light of recent Turkish provocations and harassment regarding the rights of other countries in the region to exercise their rights to explore and extract gas within the framework of the demarcation of their maritime borders in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. In this context, the speakers shed light on Egypt as one of the important countries on the gas and energy map, which qualifies it to transform into a regional
energy hub, according to the oil capabilities and recent gas discoveries, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean region, which moved the country from a net importer to the level of self-sufficiency as well as starting to export.

In this context, the theme addressed the legal concepts and regulations governing the exploitation of seas’ wealth as well as the political and legal repercussions of signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Erdogan regime and the Head of the Presidential Council of the Libyan Government of National Accord, Fayez al-Sarraj, and the substantive reasons for the invalidity of such an MOU, this includes violating the provisions of the Law of the Sea as codified by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as refuting the Turkish claims and allegations concerning the maritime boundaries delineation agreement between Egypt and Cyprus. Emphasis has also been laid on the need for Egypt to lead the efforts of other member states of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, which was announced in Cairo in January 2019, to consolidate their cooperation in order to exploit and share reaping the benefits of the eastern Mediterranean region’s energy wealth on the basis of common interests and mutual benefits, so that the forum would be transformed into an international organization governed by international legal rules binding on its members.

In a related context, the participants called for the need
to work on diversifying energy sources in Egypt and balancing their use, as well as rationalizing their consumption and maximizing their efficiency, particularly since investment in the energy field in Egypt is characterized by a distinctive and attractive investment climate, in light of the stable legislation that has proven its efficiency throughout the previous years.

- **The third session addressed regional visions for the security of the Middle East region**, noting that it is a very important region due to the important strategic advantages possessed by the region. As it has the most important international waterways in the world, and possesses the largest oil and gas reserves in the world; focus has been laid in this context on non-Arab regional countries, specifically the Israeli, Iranian and Turkish visions for the region’s security, based on the great role that these powers play in the course of events in the Middle East region, posing a challenge to the security and stability of the region as well as being a major factor in the chaos harming the region, and it has been emphasized that the rift that affected the Arab system is what led to the increasing regional influence of these countries. The speakers agreed on the dangers posed by the policies and strategies of the neighbouring Arab states to the stability and security of the region. The speakers related the interventions of these countries to their non-state ‘proxy’ actors, especially Hezbollah and the Houthis that are linked to Iran; and Hamas and the Brotherhood that are
linked to Turkey and Qatar. Participants explained that most Arab countries are in a state of flux and severe chaos, which made them unable to control their destinies.

The session also assured on the views of Arab countries on the security of the region, as it has been made clear that the risks facing the Arab region are grave and multifaceted and there is no consensus on the nature and priorities of such risks, while the Arab nation does not have a single safety net capable of facing them, as some do not care much about the existence of such a network and think that they are not vulnerable to these risks, unaware that if they do not get directly affected by such risks, they will be indirectly harmed by these dangers. The participants emphasized the need to activate the Treaty of Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation between the States of the Arab League, which has been frozen since its approval in 1950. Moreover, the efforts made to create the joint Arab force, which was led by Egypt in 2015, did not yield the creation of a joint force because some of the states of the Arab League requested more time to study such a step.

Regarding Egypt’s vision for the security of the region, it was addressed through the analysis of two parts, the first part being Egypt’s vision of the sources of threat, and the second one is an Egyptian view on the mechanisms of action. The sources of threat are Israel, the Hamas movement, deterioration of situations in Libya and the fear
of continuing the previous policy of former Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir towards Egypt in the south, which was characterized by ambiguity, as well as the Ethiopian position regarding its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project and its negative repercussions on Egypt, in addition to the fear of Yemen and the influence on Bab el-Mandeb Strait and maritime traffic in the south-east, in addition to the hotbeds of tension in the Eastern Mediterranean. This theme was based on analysing President Abdel Fattah El Sisi’s speeches at recent Arab summits and the Egyptian leadership’s emphasis that one of the most important dangers facing the Egyptian state is the threat posed by terrorist groups to state’s entity, while the risks arising from the policies of countries within the regional environment of the Arab system represent the second fear.

Regarding the possible Egyptian mechanisms of action to confront such challenges, it was emphasized that Egypt should have a clear role to play in this respect, in addition to appraising the principles of Egyptian foreign policy in terms of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states, preserving their regional sovereignty, and not being biased towards one party at the expense of another, to the detriment of the national security of other countries, and solving problems by peaceful means, within the framework of the United Nations. Emphasis has also been laid on the importance of moving forwards with activating and revitalizing the
Egyptian role at both the Arab and African levels, and the strong link that this role has to the process of economic recovery and completion of the Egyptian economic and social reform program, along with the need to reach a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause.

Emphasis has been also laid on launching initiatives that seek the reunification of Arab countries within the framework of the Arab League, by attracting African brothers to support the issues, visions and positions of Arab countries on various issues, particularly since this support has declined in the recent period. The role of the Arab Quartet must also be activated and expanded to come up with constructive efforts that would contribute to solving the region’s crises that are becoming inflamed day after day, and seek to restore stability and bolster Arab national security as much as possible. In this context, the idea of formulating a comprehensive Arab strategy for Arab national security has been proposed.

- The fourth and final session of the conference addressed international visions for the security of the region, through reviewing U.S. strategy for Middle East security under the current U.S. administration, and its position on many Arab issues in general and the Palestinian cause in particular, as well as discussing whether it is possible to say that there is a U.S. withdrawal from the region and its effects on its security and stability. In this context,
reference was made to the constants and variables of U.S. foreign policy under the current administration. Moreover, the importance of communicating and interacting with the United States has been emphasized. This would include similar think tanks and research centres, in order to explain the reality of Egyptian stances on various issues.

**The vision of other major powers for the security of the region** was also **addressed** by focusing on both Chinese and Russian visions and the increasing role of China in the Middle East. In this regard, emphasis has been laid on the importance of moving forward with enhancement of relations of economic cooperation, trade exchanges and other aspects of cooperation between Egypt and both of Russia and China, particularly in light of the foreign policy principles of both countries that bear resemblance to Egyptian foreign policy, in terms of non-intervention in internal affairs and peaceful settlement of international disputes; moreover, each party respects the values, traditions and model of development of the other party, etc. Regarding the European Union, it has been pointed out that despite the strategic significance represented by the Middle East for the EU, it is unable to engage effectively in order to achieve stability and security in the region, focusing the bulk of its efforts on preventing illegal immigration and securing EU borders. In this context, reference was made to the EU’s internal divisions and the divergent positions of its members on many issues,
including how to deal with Russia, Brexit, and the implications of all this on the effectiveness of the European role in the region. The conference criticized the extreme negative stance of the EU towards Turkey’s provocative practices in the Eastern Mediterranean and its violation of the rules and provisions of international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in connection with the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the Erdogan regime with Fayez al-Sarraj.

At the conclusion of the session, the international agenda for combating terrorism in the region was touched upon, due to its serious and significant impact on Middle East security as well as on the development of its states. In this context, the conference stressed the need to reinforce the collective effort to combat terrorism, especially with the growth and spread of this phenomenon due to the selective approach of Western countries in this regard by contenting themselves with confronting ISIS and Al Qaeda and leaving the Muslim Brotherhood free; moreover, some states support political Islam under the pretext of protecting democracy and human rights. It was also pointed out that the issue of setting out a specific definition of terrorism is still controversial, and that some Western countries are still promoting many misleading terms in order to seek the legitimization of some of these terms; moreover, the Western approach is still characterized by double standards. The con-
ference condemned the continuation of some states of the region to harbour terrorist elements and allow them access to media platforms to spread extremist ideology and incite terrorism, constituting a flagrant violation of the relevant UN resolutions, and that some states continue to exalt political interests above combating terrorism, which is reflected by the situations in Syria and Libya, where terrorist organizations are active. The conference concluded its work in this regard by emphasizing the necessity of adopting a comprehensive approach to combating terrorism that would exceed security aspects to include the economic, social, cultural, educational and developmental dimensions.
Chapter II

Visits to the Council
Figures:

Meeting with Ambassador of Afghanistan in Cairo

On January 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2019, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the council, received both the Afghan Ambassador to Cairo and Mr. Kamal Gaballah, the writer at Al-Ahram newspaper and council’s member; for discussing the latest developments on the situation in Afghanistan.

\textbf{Whereas the Afghan Ambassador affirmed} that his country seeks the achievement of stability and security as this will play a role in achieving economic development and prosperity. Particularly that the total state budget was approximately 100 billion Dollars before President Hamid Karzai came to power after President Burhanuddin Rabbani, as the economy have had collapsed, in addition to the complete collapse of the infrastructure and political institutions in the country due to Three decades of war and destruction, but today it is amounting to approximately Three trillion Dollars.

The inner strength of Afghanistan drives the community
to prosperity, and if the country could overcome the security problem whether by means of reconciliation, strengthening the army, or through other means, then the doors would be widely opened to the development process.

- **At the level of Egyptian-Afghan relations;** he demanded that there should be a long-term cooperation project between Egypt and Afghanistan, at least, for the next Ten years, regardless of any political volatility (such as change of Governments, Foreign Minister, or the person of the President of the Republic), thus the Two countries should seek shaping a holistic framework for their relations.

- **With respect to the settlement of the Afghan crisis;** he emphasized upon the multiple courses undertaken by the international powers (Iran, Russia, the USA, as well as Saudi Arabia, and Qatar) but he affirmed that the multiplicity of such formulae would increase the complexity of the situation, stressing that the settlement process should be carried out through a single channel, namely, the Afghan government, and this requires that the Americans, Russians, and others stand by the Afghans, thus the Afghan government has to be at the forefront and those powers have to support it from the back; and that is what the Afghan President demanded from the US envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad.
Meeting with Ambassador of Japan in Cairo

On Sunday, January 27\textsuperscript{th}, 2019, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) received the Japanese Ambassador to Cairo, Masaki Noki, where he spoke on the bilateral relations between Egypt and Japan and means of promoting it. The meeting was attended by Their Excellencies Ambassadors; Mounir Zahran, Ezzat Saad, Hisham El-Zamaity, Hussein Hassouna, Amin Shalaby, Mohamed El Ashmawy, Dr. Aley El Din Helal, Mohammed Kamal, Dr. Iman Rajab, Ahmed Abu Shady, Farouk Mabrouk, Ibrahim Fawzi, Mohamed Abdel Maaboud, and Attorney/ Mohamed Hassouna.

As regards the Egyptian-Japanese relations; the Ambassador pointed out that they are witnessing great development in the recent period, and that has been prompted by Egypt’s weight in the region. He indicated that both countries have fulfilled many achievements together. The most significant to be mentioned with respect to such issue is the establishment of the Japanese Experimental Schools in Egypt that seeks the building up of the Egyptian child and enhancement of his capabilities, and he denied any sort of colonization attempt or intellectual invasion to be there behind this experiment.
The Japanese Ambassador indicated that Japan has a special geographical nature, as it is surrounded by many significant countries that have special nature as well. There is China with which countries of the region have disputes over the South China Sea, and that has recently witnessed other trade disputes with the United States which is Japan’s closest ally. There is Russia, with which Japan has a border on the northern part, and also having some border problems with Japan. There is as well North Korea, which is famous for its nuclear program and contentious ballistic missiles, and that has carried out several illegal nuclear tests and fired more than one missile in the direction of the Japanese territories.

Generally, the Japanese ambassador said that, the US foreign policy depends on six pillars or major priorities; which are, respectively: to promote the Japan-US alliance, to enhance relations with neighboring countries as much as possible, development of economic diplomacy, to launch initiatives on global issues, to engage in the Middle East peace process and to participate in its stability, and finally to guarantee the freedom and openness of the Indo-Pacific region.
Meeting with the Advisor to the Iranian Foreign Minister

On March 6th, 2019, Ambassador/Sabah Zanganeh, Professor at Shiraz University, and Advisor to the Iranian Foreign Minister and Chairman of the Iranian/Egyptian Business (Trade) Council, visited ECFA accompanied by Mr. Ali Reda Ashraf, Secretary General of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Ambassador Nasser Kanaani, Head of the Iranian Interests Section in Cairo, at the request of the latter, as he was received by: Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, President of the Council, and Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council.

After ECFA Chair welcomed the guests, the Iranian side expressed that they came to Cairo to participate in the meeting of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, and he seized this opportunity to visit the Council. Mr. Zanganeh addressed Egypt-Iran relations, indicating in this regard that the two countries have always found a space for cooperation and coordination on major issues in the region and the world, but at the expense of the bilateral ties, referring, in particular to the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as nuclear non-proliferation issues as both countries submitted a draft resolution to the General Assembly in 1974 declaring the
Middle East a zone free from nuclear weapons. He added that this issue is still vital, as Egypt and Iran share the pressures exercised by the West to prevent them from maximizing their benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in accordance with Article 4 of the NPT.

He added that the major powers did not accept for the countries of the Middle East to take their suitable stature and overcome the obstacle of underdevelopment, especially in the fields of science and technology, affirming the importance of cooperation between the two countries in these areas.

Mr. Zanganeh reviewed his country’s position regarding the Palestinian cause, the situation in Yemen, and the Syrian file. He also answered some inquiries about the Iranian government’s position on Iran’s Kurds and developments in Iraq.
Meeting With Ambassador of Venezuela to Egypt

On April 1st 2019, Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the council, and Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the council, received Mr. Wilmer Omar Barentus, Ambassador of Venezuela to Cairo, aiming at highlighting the current developments over the Venezuelan political Arena as well as the country’s political future.

The Venezuelan Ambassador commenced the meeting by expressing his welcome to the convening of this meeting to update the Council on the ongoing developments in his country, aiming at delivering the voice of his country to the Egyptian institutions, particularly as Egypt has always been characterized by its honorable, unwavering, and supportive stances towards the choices of the Venezuelan People; respecting their free independent will, and categorically rejecting any foreign interference in the country’s domestic affairs.

Thereupon, Ambassador Barentus reviewed his country’s history along with periods of suffering from dictatorship, colonialism, political and economic instability till President Hugo Chavez took power, under the free will of the people,
in 1999, and the wave of political and economic changes that coincided with amendments to the country’s constitution, which had been witnessed by his country during his reign. In spite of the state of democracy that had been experienced by the country, conspiracies and blockade continued to be practiced by the United States (USA) against Venezuela through supporting Venezuelan right wing opposition, aiming at creating chaos in the country. This issue became clearly prominent since 2013, that is to say, after the death of President Chavez, especially that the opposition had been seeking termination of the reign of Chavez and commencement of a new intellectual phase in the country’s history. This unrest and demands for early presidential elections continued, and indeed a date had been set for holding the elections in May 2018 in which 16 opposition parties had participated. President Nicolas Maduro won these elections with a majority of 6 million votes out of a total of 10 million participating votes, but the opposition did not accept the results. Then comes out the Chief of the Venezuelan Parliament, Juan Guaido, proclaiming himself interim president of the country in a flagrant violation of all constitutional laws of the country; the astonishing fact with respect to this issue is that states calling for respect of laws and regulations were the First to violate this by recognizing the legitimacy of Mr. Guaido as President of the country, and have even imposed sanctions on the country and withheld billions of Dollars; even threatening a possible military intervention in
Venezuela, by the United States *(USA)*.

He concluded his speech by emphasizing the awareness of the Venezuelan People of the gravity of situations, and their gathering around their leadership to affirm their right to the freedom of their choice; calling for an international uprising against Western powers, at their head being the United States of America *(USA)* that continues to threaten the unity and stability of the country and behaves as if it were dominating the world.
Meeting with Director of the Arab Institute for Security Studies in Amman

On April 15th, 2019 at the ECFA headquarters, Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, ECFA Chair, received: Dr. Ayman Khalil, Director of the Arab Institute for Security Studies in Amman, Jordan, and Mr. Samuel Hickey, researcher at the Institute, at their request, to shed light on the latter study he prepared on the Egyptian-Russian agreement to establish the Dhaba’a nuclear plant.

Mr. Hickey explained his study, noting that it takes into account the states of the (Middle East +) as labeled by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as the definition includes the League of Arab States in addition to Iran and Israel. The study includes Turkey, especially since it has a strong relationship with Russia in the nuclear file. The study shows how these countries usually rely on foreign aid and investment in light of their limited resources, which requires cooperation with major powers in the nuclear field, whether in the provision of financial or technical resources, which are considered a threat and/or a burden to these countries’ economies.

He added that his analysis includes the classification of
states as end users comprising a number of Middle Eastern countries, namely Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Iran, which have entered into negotiations to establish reactors for peaceful use of nuclear energy or divert some of them from military nuclear production and enrichment for peaceful uses — the case of Iran — as opposed to six major nuclear-exporting countries competing with each other on the Middle East market (considering it as a nuclear market), namely Russia, China, the United States, France, South Korea, and Japan, bearing in mind that Russia enjoys the lion’s share of this market.
Meeting With The Ambassador of Ireland To Egypt

On 16th of April 2019, the Council hosted Ambassador Sean O’Rgan, the Ambassador of Ireland to Egypt, to talk about Egyptian-Irish bilateral relations and his country’s vision on developments of situations in the Middle East, and the influence of Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit) over his country, with the participation of Ambassadors: Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council and Dr. Kamal Abu Oqail, Coordinator of the Standing Committee on European Affairs at the Council.

The guest touched upon a number of issues that are related to Irish-British relations following completion of Brexit, and the preparedness of his country for all scenarios, noting that negotiations between the Two sides are ongoing and continuous to affirm British abidance by the Good Friday Agreement reached by the Two sides in 1998 which contributed to the resolution of several controversial border issues between the Two sides.

And with respect to regional issues, developments of the Palestinian issue were focused upon, whereas His Excel-
lency expressed his country’s support to all resolutions of International legitimacy and relevant Security Council resolutions that stipulated the Establishment of a Palestinian state on the basis of the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and denouncing the recognition of Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel by the USA and rejecting Israel’s continued violations of the rights of the Palestinian People, as well as calling upon both parties to the Palestinian conflict to return to dialogue, especially since Palestinian reconciliation would give the Palestinian negotiator strength during negotiations with Israel.

The discussion also touched upon bilateral relations holding Egypt and Ireland together as well as witnessing several positive developments at all levels. And His Excellency expressed his hope that tourism to Egypt would be strongly restored, and to proceed towards enhancing cultural and educational exchanges, in addition to enhancement of trade and investment relations between both sides.
Meeting with the Italian Ambassador to Egypt

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) received His Excellency Ambassador Giampaolo Cantini, the Italian Ambassador to Egypt, on Tuesday, 23rd of April 2019, during which he spoke about the Egyptian-Italian bilateral relations, and means of promoting them. The meeting was attended by Ambassador Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; and Ambassador/ Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; as well as Their Excellencies Ambassadors/ Youssef Al-Sharqawy, Farouq Mabrouk, Dr. Hazem Atteyyatallah, Dr. Kamal Abu Oqail, and Dr. Ahmad Mahdy.

The meeting was opened by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, who then presented a brief profile of the Italian ambassador, noting that he had worked in the General Directorate for Multilateral Political Affairs and Human Rights in 2003, then appointed as head of that bureau in the same year, and then as plenipotentiary minister in 2005. He later served as the consul-general in Jerusalem in 2012, and was promoted to ambassador in 2016, and he then assumed the post of Assistant Secretary-General of the Italian Foreign Ministry in August of the same year. He was awarded the Order of the Italian Republic in 2008. And he was appointed as ambassador to Cairo a few months ago.
Replying to that, the Italian ambassador began his speech by thanking the council for its hospitality, and he then reviewed the Egyptian-Italian bilateral relations with their various areas, indicating that they are characterized by very strong historical roots. His Excellency affirmed that the investment climate in Egypt at present is an attractive climate and that Egypt is one of the promising and attractive markets worldwide for global companies to attract and increase investments in the country, pointing out that Egypt’s presidency of the African Union (AU) this year, happens to be the most important political event in 2019, indicating that this represents an extremely significant step that makes Egypt a center for stepping to Africa, and for the resolution of conflicts in the various regions of the continent. Also Egypt will be the main and important gate for the Italian companies to increase investments in African states, which is a matter that demands exertion of joint efforts for the benefit of bilateral relations. He affirmed the existence of outstanding Italian companies having advanced technological expertise in various fields. The ambassador also pointed out to Italy’s strong support to Egypt in its war against terrorism, as well as Italy’s support to Egypt in its march towards development and path of democracy.
Meeting with the Director General for Africa (Sub-Saharan Africa) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain

Upon his request, The Director General for Africa (Sub-Saharan Africa) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain, Ambassador Raimundo Robredo Rubio, visited the Council on the 15th of July, accompanied by the First Secretary of the Embassy in Cairo. The meeting was attended by Ambassadors Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; and Marwan Badr, Coordinator of the Standing Committee on African Affairs at the Council.

The Spanish guest noted that he is on a flying visit to Cairo, where he met, this morning, Ambassadors Amr Ramadan, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs of Egypt; Abu Bakr Hefni, Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs; and Osama Shaltout, Assistant Foreign Minister for Sudanese Affairs; where views were exchanged about the overall situation in the African Continent, especially in the Horn of Africa, in addition to the opportunities for a Spanish-Egyptian cooperation in the Continent, indicating that they have adopted a strategy for dealing with Africa in the forthcoming phase, especially in light of the growing
interest of Spanish companies to work there, likewise their interest to work in Latin America.

- The guest was interested to learn from the council about the developments in the Horn of Africa, the challenges facing the region and the role that can be played by the European Union and Spain in this regard. He also asked about the Council’s vision towards the situations in Sudan, Ethiopia and Sahel Region.

The Spanish Ambassador acknowledged that the international community shows some kind of complacency towards some countries including Ethiopia, whilst being stricter with others, noting that this was the topic of a conversation he had with the current Ambassador of Ethiopia to Cairo, when they worked together in South Africa.

He added that what matters to them is the stability of Ethiopia. Therefore they support Abiy Ahmed in this transitional phase, which does not mean they support all Ethiopian policies. In addition, they do not believe in an African Horn that is solely confined to Somalia and Ethiopia. The Spanish guest mentioned that they want all the donor community to bear the burden of funding the 100% European Union-funded peacekeeping forces in Somalia, expressing his regret over the lack of interest some donors are showing, such as the United Arab Emirates, towards the regional safety and Somali territorial integrity. He added that Spain
has a greater interest in the nearby Sahel region, and noted that they are convinced of the importance of reducing the funding provided by European Union to peacekeeping forces in Somalia, especially after Brexit.

In connection with the foregoing, Ambassador Marwan Badr commented that, by virtue of his previous work as an ambassador in both Kenya and Ethiopia, he wishes to emphasize that the latter does not view the stability of Somalia as serving its interests, unlike Kenya, but is working to keep it divided into states. He added that he believes that reducing Ethiopian influence on Somalia will restore security and stability to this state. Ambassador Badr’s comment came in response to the Spaniard’s statement that Kenya is strengthening its relations with Somali Jubaland on its borders, while UAE supports Somaliland, something that impedes the return of stability to that country.

Ambassador Badr concluded by stating that all of this confirms that IGAD is an ineffective regional grouping in light of Ethiopia’s domination over it and using it to serve its own interests.
Visiting of Chinese Ambassador to the Council

on August 25th, 2019, when the new Chinese Ambassador visited the council; whereas, at his request, the new Ambassador of China to Egypt, Mr. Liao Liqiang, accompanied by two of his assistants, paid a courtesy visit to the council. At the council, he was received by Chairman and Director of the council; Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran and Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, as well as Ambassador Ali El-Hefny, Coordinator of the Permanent Committee for Asian Affairs at the council.

- The Chinese Ambassador spoke paying tribute to the progress achieved in China-Egypt relations noting the six visits of President Al-Sisi to his country and the obvious interaction between leaderships in the two countries. He said that he does not have much experience in Middle East affairs and problems (as he had served as an ambassador to Senegal), and he is looking forwards to the council’s cooperation and support for promoting his message as his country’s ambassador to Egypt. He noted his knowledge of the council’s strong and deep-rooted relations with Chinese Embassy for years. He also expressed his interest to listen the council’s viewpoint regarding his country’s relations with the United States of America.
Ambassador Ezzat Saad indicated that the policy of the United States of America in the region is a series of mistakes, particularly since Trump took office, whose administration’s priorities contradicts the peace and security requirements of the region; whether through absolute and unlimited bias towards Israel at the expense of Palestinians and Arabs; or through holding Iran, which he mobilizes all kinds of support against, responsible for what is going on in the region. He added that these policies as well as the other policies of Trump related to immigration and his obvious racism resulted in increased anti-American sentiments in the region, and that the circumstances are suitable for more cooperation between China and countries of the region that occupy a key position in China’s strategy in connection with its initiative known as the Belt and Road.

Ambassador Ali El-Hefny addressed the developments in bilateral relations between the two countries, noting that these relations have taken a new dimension since President Al-Sisi took office; as they have transformed from strategic cooperation to comprehensive strategic partnership. Ambassador El-Hefny pointed out to the need for new horizons and areas of cooperation, noting the close opening of the grand Egyptian museum next year with Japanese financial support in addition to Japan’s successful experience in elementary education councils which Egypt seeks to apply. He added that Chinese companies, in their turn,
are doing a great job in the New Administrative Capital of Egypt; “but we expected more”.

Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran paid tribute to China’s wise and quiet diplomacy when addressing tensions raised by the United States of America, as well as other international and regional problems; referring to the nuclear disarmament issue, and the firm stance of the Chinese delegation during the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).
Meeting with Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Cairo

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs held a meeting on November 21, 2019, with Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Cairo, Mr. Ali Bin Ahmed Al-Esaei, at the invitation of the Council, where the discussions assured on the following points:

- Developments in the Egyptian / Omani relations in all fields, coordination and joint cooperation between the two countries.

- Muscat’s relations with its Gulf Arab neighbors and Iran. In this context, he addressed extensively his country’s historical relations with Iran, the cultural exchange between the two countries, their interaction due to the common maritime borders (350 nautical miles) and the influence of each on the other throughout history.

- The Omani guest assured on what he called the differences between Iran’s dealings with the Sultanate and its dealings with other Gulf countries, referring to the absolute equality between the people of Oman, Shiites and Sunnis, and thus there is no way for Iranian interference in Omani internal affairs.
- The ambassador gave his own assessment of the ongoing demonstrations in Iran and the difficult economic conditions the people are suffering from, which could put an end to the mullahs’ rule there unless the regime searches for solutions to them.

- He concluded his speech by talking on the Iranian-American relations, the vision of each side, and Washington’s view of Iran as a major player in curbing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean and in the Middle East.
Meeting with Syrian Democratic Council (SDC) Official Sihanouk Dibo

On December 30, 2019, ECFA hosted the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC) Official Sihanouk Dibo to speak about the current Syrian situation and its developments, and the Kurds' position in this regard. It was the third visit of Mr. Sihanouk to ECFA, as he has visited it twice during 2015 as part of the Syrian opposition delegation.

At the beginning, Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, welcomed Mr. Dibo, affirming the Egyptian state’s keenness to ensure Syria’s unity, independence and territorial integrity. Then he invited the guest to take the floor.

Mr. Dibo noted in his speech the following:

1- He outlined the structure of the Syrian Democratic Council, indicating that it includes all the components present in northern Syria (Arabs - Armenians - Syriacs ... etc.) with the largest share for the Kurdish component, and is co-chaired by Ms. Ilham Ahmed (Kurdish) and Mr. Riyad Darrar (Arab). The council is affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces, which played a major role in eliminating ISIS and is led by General Mazloum Abdi.
2- Speaking about the causes of the Syrian crisis, he indicated that one of the underlying causes is the regime’s failure to involve all components of the Syrian people in power, so that there could be a sense that Syria is the homeland of all Syrians. Instead, authority was concentrated in a centralized system dominated by the Alawite minority, which is self-centered.

3- Against this background, the Syrian crisis is considered as a mirror of all the crises in the Middle East. It is an evidence of the failure of the central nation-state that has been imposed on the region since the Sykes-Picot arrangements in 1916.

He added that Egypt remains an exception in this regard in view of its history and social fabric, noting that the success of the nation-state model in Europe is mainly due to the separation of religion from state and politics.

He explained that the ideal model is the nation-state in which there is an equality between all sects, and that Kurds have been defending such a model for years, explaining that they have chosen “democratic decentralization” as an opposition to the future Syria, in a way that allows power for all.

4- Political Islam, and its support by both Turkey and Qatar in Syria, is another major cause of the Syrian tragedy. Except for the Muslim Brotherhood, the Kurds welcomed
dialogue with all parties of the opposition, pointing out that although the regime in Damascus was the cause of the tragedy, it is part of the solution. Stemming from this conviction, the Kurds held a dialogue with the regime in four rounds in which all controversial issues were discussed. However the regime insisted on reproducing itself as it was before 2011.

5- Turkey is exploiting the situation in Syria and the Syrian refugee problem to achieve its objectives and ambitions in Syria. However, the ceasefire agreement concluded by Turkey with the United States on October 17, and with Russia on October 22, 2019, resulted in a relative containment of the conflict and a halt to Turkey’s control of more territories in northeastern Syria. In this context, it is worth noting that Erdogan’s primary goal is to bring non-local citizens and force them to settle, and to expel the Kurdish people from the border areas and non-local citizens, who are mainly mercenaries whom Erdogan uses to implement his agenda in Syria. This agenda is clearly crystallized in Afrin where a number of Arabs settle in the homes of the Kurds there.

Despite the retreat of the SDF following Turkey’s Operation Peace Spring on October 9, 2019, and the previous loss of Afrin during Operation Olive Branch in March 2018, which made them lose control over Ras al-Ain and Tel Abyad; they managed to maintain their de facto independence, by establishing a balance between Moscow, Damascus, Ankara and Washington, without disintegrating. Also, the
continued US presence in the oil-rich areas in northeastern Syria provided these forces with an advantage in the negotiations in Damascus.

6- In addition, the Syrian Democratic Forces have reached understandings with Damascus, mediated by Russia, to protect the Syrian borders. According to the assurances of the SDF commander, they will join the Syrian army only if a new constitution guaranteeing the right of the forces to “preserve their independence in their area of command and their institutions” is put. On its part, Damascus still refuses to agree to any provisions stipulating recognition of SDF. It remains determined to integrate its fighters on an individual basis into the Syrian army. Al-Assad does not seem interested in concluding a similar agreement, even though it may improve Syria’s deteriorating economy, as the SDF controls large oil and agricultural resources and conducts trade deals with the Iraqi Kurds, which could provide flows to the Syrian economy as a whole in the event that an agreement is reached.

In fact, in case Damascus and SDF were unable to reach an agreement, tensions could rise again. The ongoing regional tensions between the United States and Iran could also negatively affect the “Syrian Democratic Forces”, especially in light of the deterioration of its economy, and thus the SDF will remain a de facto independent entity despite its uncertain future, unless there are sudden changes at the
political level in Syria.

7- Mr. Dibo concluded his speech by noting that they count to a great extent on the Egyptian role and that they are holding frequent visits to Cairo to continue the dialogue, recognizing that Egypt has no ambitions in Syria. He added that they believe that it is important to restructure the Cairo platform for the Syrian opposition. In this context, they are preparing for a third round in Cairo, to be scheduled later.

The audience posed some questions to the Syrian Kurdish guest, and he answered them.
Delegations:

Visiting of the delegation of China Center for Contemporary World Studies (CCCWS)

on July 2nd, 2019 council hosted CCCWS’ Delegation for discussing the belt and road initiative, in addition to some important international issues, with the participation of Ambassadors: Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the council; Ali El-hefny, Coordinator of the Permanent Committee for Asian Affairs at the council; Magdy Amer, and Abd El-Fattah Ezz-Eldeen.

In this context, the Chinese delegation expressed their interest to listen the ideas and suggestions on means of strengthening Egyptian-Chinese relations, in view of the importance of Egypt as a country of ancient civilization that played an important role in African affairs and in developing countries through means of solidarity and cooperation, and due to the faith in Egypt’s capacity to effectively present the stance of Africa and its ideas on the international arena; as the voice of Africa.

The Egyptian side was keen to emphasize that the sec-
ond forum of the initiative has been successful in appearing as a multilateral platform for follow-up on the current status of the initiative and the development of its roadmap, under the significant increase in the international support to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Suffice it to note that, the number of states having signed the initiative reached 173 states, and representatives of 130 states and 29 international organizations have attended.

Concerning the Egyptian-Chinese relations, the Egyptian side emphasized that Egypt is keen to enhance Chinese- African relations within the framework of the initiative, and urge the Chinese side, on the one hand, to promote investments within the framework of the initiative, and to work on reduction of loans interest, and that this comes in light of the cooperation witnessed by the bilateral Egypt-China relations at all levels, in light of the mutual belief in the principles adopted by the two sides as for the establishment of an international community that cares for common future of humanity and that has effective measures for peaceful settlement of disputes, particularly the region’s crisis and conflicts in which key super powers of the world are being involved.
Visiting of Russian parliamentary delegation to ECFA

Within the framework of the multiple aspects of development of Egypt-Russia Relations, that included the fields of economy, industry, commercial exchange and tourism, Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs emphasized during the meeting held with the Russian parliamentary delegation, at the Council on July 16th 2019, the importance of starting its activity in the Russian Industrial Zone in East Port Said. This could be Particularly put in place in parallel with Moscow’s interest to promote its relations with the African continent along with the first Russian-African summit in Sochi, co-chaired by Presidents of the two countries, for cementing the relations between Russia and Africa.

Within the diversity of the fields of cooperation, the two parties demonstrated their readiness to organize cultural and civilizational cooperation events considering 2020 to be the year for Egyptian culture in Russia, and Russian culture in Egypt.

These ideas were presented during the visit of the delegation of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (The upper house of parliament), headed by Deputy Chair of the Federation Council Com-
mittee on Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of Egyptian-Russian Parliamentary Friendship Association, Mr. Farit Mukhametshin. The delegation included: Deputy chair of the Federation Council Committee on the Budget and Financial Markets, Mr. Andrei Yepishin; Member of the Federation Council Committee on Agriculture and Food Policy and Environmental Management, Mr. Ivan Kulabukhov; Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Mr. Paveler Moshin; Member of The Group of Strategic Vision “Russia – Islamic World,” Mr. Irek Shamhunov; and Second Secretary at the Embassy of Russia in Cairo, Mr. Nikolai Liagoshin.

Embassy of the Russian Federation in Cairo has been arranging that meeting, upon the request of Mr. Mukhametshin, Deputy Chair of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs and Deputy Chair of The Group of strategic Vision “Russia-Islamic World” which the membership included Ambassador Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council. During the delegation’s visit to Cairo, meetings were held with Chairman and members of the House of Representatives Foreign Relations Committee; Head of the Egyptian-Russian Parliamentary Friendship Association and Cairo University President and the Egyptian-Russian Business Council which the membership included Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council.

The meeting was attended by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council; Ambassador Dr. Ezzat
Saad, Director of the Council; and Dr. Moustafa Khalil, businessman and member of the Egyptian-Russian Business Council (with the invitation of the Director of the Council).

The importance of restoring Russian tourism to Egypt, albeit gradually, was stressed upon during the meeting, owing to its significance for enhancing cultural ties and connections between the people of the two countries.

The talks addressed situations in the region, including the USA foreign policy centered on Iran, as well as the significance of the development of the relations with Russia and China.

In response to an inquiry from the Russian side, the council asserted that it is planning to invite its Russian counterpart for foreign affairs, to hold a further round of consultations soon in Cairo.
Meeting with a delegation from a number of Chinese cities

On August 4, 2019, ECFA received a delegation from a number of Chinese cities headed by Professor/ Wang Xingping, Director of the Institute of Civilization and Regional Development at the Southeast China University, with the membership of: Dr. Zhao Sidong and Dr. Mao Bin, researchers at the Institute, and Mr. Chen Qinin, Chairman of SCP Consultants Ltd., Economic Analyst Chen Yanjie and Assistant Planner/ Yang Sihan. The delegation purpose was discussing many issues of common interest, topped by economic and commercial cooperation between Egypt and China in the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The meeting took place with the participation of the ambassadors: Abdel Raouf El-Reedy - Honorary Chairman of the Council, Dr. Ezzat Saad - Director of the Council, Hisham El-Zimaity – Secretary-General of the Council, Ali El-Hefni - Rapporteur of the ECFA Permanent Committee for Asian Affairs, Ambassadors Magdy Amer, Mahmoud Allam, Abdel Fattah Ezz El-Din, and businessman Mohamed Qassem - members of the Council.

Ambassador Abdel Raouf El-Reedy welcomed the par-
Participants, stressing the existence of an enormous and great heritage of commonalities between the two countries, noting the role the Council plays in all areas of external cooperation, in addition to being a platform bringing together different points of view. He also stressed the importance of attaching a high priority to heritage, which represents an essential element in the continuation of communication between current generations, suggesting in this context, the establishment of a library in the city of Suez to be a beacon for cultural cooperation between the two sides, especially since the city is located within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, and this cooperation will be within the framework of the cooperation network joining the Library and its partners in many regions across the world, including its partners in Western Europe.

The prospects for cultural cooperation between the ECFA and the Chinese Institute, as well as between the latter and MISR Public Library, were discussed, especially in light of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative’s emphasis on cultural cooperation between China and the member states of the initiative, including Egypt. In this context, Ambassador El-Reedy invited the Chinese delegation to visit the MISR Public Library. A visit that was organized following the meeting.
Visiting of the Delegation from Renmin University to ECFA

On September 17th, 2019, the council received a delegation from Renmin University of China. The delegation was headed by professor WU Xiaoqiu, Vice President of the university. The meeting was discussed some issues that the Chinese side views as a priority, while the Egyptian side presented some points that aim at fostering relations of economic and investment cooperation between the two countries, and means of achieving equilibrium of trade balance between the two countries by concentrating on attracting Chinese tourism to Egypt.

The following were the most important points raised during the meeting:

After welcoming the Chinese delegation; Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, indicated that:

- The comprehensive strategic partnership between Egypt and China places Egypt as a key player in the Belt and Road initiative, and that Suez Canal would be the most important shipping lane for its success; and we expect doubling Chinese investments in the economic zone of the canal.
- We support the principle of resolving all trade disputes through World Trade Organization (WTO), the need for respecting its rules, and not resorting to preventive measures by any side so that the trade system would not be affected, and globalization would not be hindered and would not negatively influence other trading partners.

Mohammed Qasem, council member and businessman; spoke clarifying the following three important points:

- Within the framework of his interest in the Belt and Road initiative, he would like to know how China would integrate Egypt in the initiative due to the passage of the shipping route through its territories and its vital location rendering it the gateway to Africa, Arab states, Europe, and Latin American states through free trade agreements. He added that, although the role that is playing by TEDA-(Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area) (the Chinese Developer) is very important in attracting Chinese investments. However, TEDA alone is not enough and we wish to see more Chinese developers and investors in the economic zone.

He asked how can Egypt and China cooperate in the African continent, especially in the textile industry? He also indicated that, depending on his knowledge, China seeks to reduce its production of textiles by 15% which amounts to $55 Billion, while the exports of textiles of all African states...
amount to $15 Billion. The Chinese delegation may visit Ethiopia, which has substantial investments in the textile industry; as African states also compete for their investments, so there could be coordination in that field for the benefit of all.

Mr. Qassim suggested preparing a master plan for textile industry in Africa that Renmin University of China can play the role of the think tank in that regard.

Eventually, Mr. Qassem pointed out that he is not surprised by what is going on between China and the United States of America; as it is a conflict between an emerging power and a declining one.

It seems that the United States of America was not prepared for that, emphasizing his conviction that Beijing has the ability to manage such conflict.

He added that the trade system, after the Second World War (Bretton Woods Institutions), is an American creation, but as the United States of America is giving up its position since this system does not work in its interest, then China is eligible to play such role.

- Ambassador Hisham El-Zamaity discussed Egypt’s qualifications in terms of political and economic stability after fall of the Muslim Brotherhood, the role of western media in defamation of Egypt, and the importance of China obtaining its information about Egypt from Egyptian sourc-
es, and the same for Egypt.

Ambassador Ezzat Saad discussed developments in the economic performance of Egypt noting that World Bank and the International Monetary Fund reports affirmed the great achievements fulfilled in the area of financial and monetary reform; but in spite of that, the investment climate in Egypt has been negatively addressed in the reports, and Egypt would seek to overcome that in the next stage.

The need to increase the number of Chinese tourists visiting Egypt has been mentioned; as that number did not exceed 200,000 over the past year, and this is totally inconsistent with the tourism potentials of the country, whether this be leisure tourism or cultural tourism; while the total number of Chinese tourists, mainly visiting Japan, Korea, and the Maldives, reached up to 150 million tourists.

The possibility of China’s contribution to solve the Renaissance Dam obstacle: Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, in his talks on Egyptian-Chinese relations, said that the Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia, where Chinese companies participate in its construction, is one of the possible areas in which China can assist, and may solve the problem of the first filling of the tank so that Egypt’s water quota would not be affected. The Chinese side can, through quiet communication, contribute to help overcome that obstacle.
Visiting the Delegation of the Indian council of World Affairs

Over 10\textsuperscript{th} -11\textsuperscript{th} of September 2019, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) hosted a delegation from Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), for discussing the means of developing Egypt-India bilateral relations and a number of other critical issues. These talks lasted over five sessions, where each day included two sessions. The first session tackled the international issues from the Egyptian-Indian perspective, including reform of the United Nations, counter-terrorism and illegal migration, etc. Meanwhile, the second session discussed developments in Egypt-India bilateral relations in all fields. On the morning of September 11\textsuperscript{th}, three themes were under discussion over three sessions, including: developments in the Middle East and Arab Region that included latest developments in Arab- Israeli conflict, crisis in Libya, Sudan, Syria, Yemen and Iran; developments in Indian-Chinese relations and their stances towards one another, particularly on the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative; and finally developments in the India - Pakistan relations including the latest crisis in Kashmir, and the Indian vision for peace and security in South Asia.

In the same regard, the two parties agreed on the impor-
tance of the United Nations’ reforms in order to ensure the effective and successful treatment of the various international and regional issues encountered by the international community. They also emphasized the need for moving forward with exertion of necessary efforts to combat cross-border crime such as terrorism, illegal migration, cyber threats and climate change, etc. The need to pay more attention to Egyptian-Indian relations was also emphasized, including maximizing cooperation in agricultural and technological fields, particularly since India has become one of the world’s major leading technologically advanced states. On the other hand, both states agreed on the need for an Egyptian-Indian joint action for the placement of a common and agreed upon frame for the resolution of crisis that abound within the Middle East through peaceful means in accordance with the United Nations framework and the relevant resolutions issued by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
Visiting of The delegation of The Institute of International Politics and Economics (IIPE) of Serbia

In the framework of ECFA’s keenness to establish collaborative relations and new partnerships with its counterparts worldwide, the council hosted the delegation of the Serbian Institute of International Politics and Economics (IIPE). The delegation visited Cairo from 15th till 19th of September 2019. The delegation included: the director of the institute, Prof. Branislav Djordjevic; and the head of the regional center of the institute, Dr. Ivona Ladevac. The first round of talks between the two sides was held on September 18th, 2019, at the headquarters of the council.

During the meeting, the two parties expressed their pleasure to establish a framework of cooperation combining the two organizations; expressing their aspirations that this would be the onset of enhancing cooperation between the two countries, especially in light of the long and shared history that had been demonstrated by the coordination within the Group of Non-Aligned States framework. At the conclusion of the meeting, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between the two parties was signed.

Following that, the director of the institute gave a lecture about “From conflict to peace in the contemporary world” in which he exposed the threats facing the world in
the Twenty-First century whose effects exceeded the extent of devastation after the second world war; in terms of number of victims, and the extent of devastation that affected the states. These threats include primarily terrorism, civil wars within the states, the spread of the extremist groups, immigration problems, as well as economic problems that have become a threat to many countries suffering from the scourge of terrorism and war, amid international interests and agendas of conflicting powers, each seeking to further its own agenda, to militarily intervene in order to exert its control and exercise hegemony over land, causing disasters and civilian causalities, without contributing, as promoted, in resolving the problem.
Visiting of the Delegation of the Chinese People’s Association for Peace and Disarmament (CPAPD)

In coordination with the Chinese Embassy in Cairo, the Council received on October 30th, 2019, a delegation of the Chinese People’s Association for Peace and Disarmament (CPAPD) headed by its Secretary General, Mr. An YueJun. Three themes were reviewed during this meeting, and points of view were exchanged in their regard; **these three themes were as follows:** the Egyptian stance towards the Belt and Road initiative, emphasizing Egypt’s positive stance; Egypt’s full support for the initiative, especially since it represents a new form of global economic cooperation within the framework of what the world is facing in terms of protectionist policies and rise of Right-wing populism which is the main threat to current global economic system; and the developments related to the ongoing trade war between the USA and China, in addition to economic competition among major powers where the success of Chinese diplomacy in dealing with this dossier without escalation was noted, especially as there is global rejection of the unilateral reformulation by the USA of the global trade rules stipulated in the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), owing to which the US has achieved its current prosperity and progress.
Meeting with the Delegation from the Middle East Studies Institute of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)

Within the framework of continuing concern for enhancement of cooperation and continuous coordination between the Council and its partners from similar Chinese research centers, the Council received on November 7th, 2019, a delegation from the Middle East Studies Institute of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). The Chinese delegation was headed by Prof. Zhang Li, Assistant President of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR); Dr. NIU Xinchun, Director of Institute of Middle East Studies at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR); and researchers at the institute, namely, Mr. Gong Zheng, Mr. Li Yanan, and Mr. Dong Bing. The participants from the Egyptian side were; Ambassador /Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the council; Ambassador/ Hisham Al-Zmaity, Secretary General of the Council; Ambassador/ Ali Al-Hefny, Coordinator of the Permanent Committee on Asian Affairs at the Council; Ambassador/ Abdel Fattah Ezeldin, Council’s member; Mr. Mohamed Qasem, Business man and Council’s member; and Dr. Nasser Fouad, former secretary General of the Suez Canal Economic Authority.
During the meeting, points of view on current Egyptian economic status were exchanged; positive Egyptian economic performance indicators were emphasized, as issued by international institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), asserting the high growth rates of Egyptian economy at approximately 5% and the decline of Unemployment and inflation indicators, indicating that the economic development plan formulated by the Egyptian government is progressing down the right path. Discussions were also held on the current obstacles to activation of the strategic framework between China and Egypt in all fields, and not only limited to the economic field; that would help to give impetus to their bilateral relations. Furthermore, conducting coordination between the two sides to resolve the crises in the region as they both have their shared principles and common denominators in terms of rejecting interference in the internal affairs of other states, placing importance on peaceful settlement of disputes, and acting against terrorist organizations in all their forms, for achieving stability in the region.
Visiting of Delegation of South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA)

Based on a pre-arranged appointment, the delegation from the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) attended at the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) on Monday, November 18th, 2019, and met with Ambassador / Mounir Zahran and Dr. Sayed Bahi El Din Abdel Hamid, member of the Council (and former head of the Nuclear Power Plants Authority (NPPA)); whereas, the purpose of the guests’ visit was to discuss topics of cooperation in the nuclear field.

The guests, namely, Mrs. Aditi Lalbahadur (Programme Manager) and Professor Jo-Ansie van Wyk (Researcher); explained that the Institute has a plan for African cooperation at the informal level with each of Egypt and Ghana on matters of mutual interest, and particularly with respect to two matters:

- Preparation for the Review Conference for the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (The 2020 NPT Review Conference), 50 years after its entry into force, which will be held in New York in late April and first half of May 2020.

- Cooperation in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear
energy within the African framework (AFRA), starting with South Africa, Egypt and Ghana.

Regarding the preparation for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, they explained that the three preparatory committees, which were held in Vienna in 2017, Geneva in 2018 and New York in April/May 2019, failed to reach negotiating stances on the review of the implementation of the treaty with respect to its three pillars, namely, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy, in addition to reviewing the progress in establishing a free zone of nuclear-weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The 2020 NPT Review Conference should therefore focus on the causes of dysfunction of the non-proliferation regime and the reasons for the non-implementation of the decisions adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, whether with respect to the Middle East, improving the review mechanism, or the principles and objectives.

The two visitors added that there will be a call for a conference on African cooperation in the nuclear field in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre in Africa (The African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) which is to be held in South Africa in late 2020 or early 2021, and the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) will be invited to participate in that conference.
Meeting with The Delegation of China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

The Council hosted a delegation from China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) on December 3rd 2019. The delegation included the membership of Prof. Cui Lei, Head of the delegation, from the Department of American Studies at the institute; as well as Mr. Wang Zesheng; and a number of researchers at the institute.

During the meeting, discussions were held on several issues related to the changing global alliances under the new US administration, the possibility of having a transformation within the structure of such alliances, the truth about the US strategy shift from interfering in Middle East crises to strengthening its presence in the Pacific Ocean and South Asia region, the current Chinese rapprochement with Middle East states within the framework of enhancing Chinese strategic partnership with the states of the region, in addition to the active Russian role in the Middle East region, and the possibility of an action being taken by the US about such crises.

The participants agreed that the US withdrawal from the region pushed its states towards rapprochement with Russia and China; in this regard, China should take advantage of such rapprochement for playing a more effective role in the region towards its crises.
ECFA’s Meeting with The Delegation of Sri Lanka

The Egyptian council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) received on December 11th, 2019, the Sri Lanka delegation headed by Mr. Ravinatha Aryasinha, Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for discussing developments of bilateral relations between Egypt and Sri Lanka, as well as Sri Lanka’s relations with Africa and its stance towards a number of issues in the region. The meeting was attended by Ambassadors Mounir Zahran, Ezzat Saad, Nagla’a Al- Zawahry, Ali El- Hefny, Farouk Mabrouk, Yousri Khalil, Youssef El-Sharkawy, and Mohamed Mounir. The Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was accompanied by a number of members from his country’s embassy in Cairo, including Her Excellency Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Cairo.

The Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs admitted his country’s fairly humble status; particularly at the economic level, and he asked the attendees to suggest as many strategies and mechanisms as possible to enhance cooperation between his country and the region, especially Egypt for being a key player in the region; and as Egypt is experiencing an impressive economic boom, moving with steady steps towards progress and prosperity, after having succeeded in confronting many challenges.
Chapter III

Council’s Visits Abroad
Council Members’ visit to the New Administrative Capital

On April 6, 2019, with the aim of getting acquainted with one of the mega projects being undertaken by the Egyptian Government, a delegation of the Council members and their families organized a visit to the New Administrative Capital, during which the delegation was briefed on the developments of work on the ground, including the construction of residential units and infrastructure, comprising the new government administrative district, the Opera House, the Presidential Park, and the Sports City. In addition, the delegation visited Al-Fattah Al-Aleem Mosque and the Cathedral of the Nativity, where memorial photos of the Council’s delegation were taken in two of the New Capital’s key landmarks.
Council’s Members Visit to Suez Canal Authority

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Suez Canal’s opening; and at the initiative of Ambassador Abdel Raouf El-Reedy- Honorary Chairman of the Council; a group of members of the council headed by Ambassador/ Abdel Raouf El-Reedy, and Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahr- ran, Chairman of the board of Directors; paid a visit on November 17th, 2019, to the General Authority of Suez Canal, where they were received by Admiral Osama Rabie- Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority and his assistants.

In addition to watching a documentary on Suez Canal’s history, the Suez Canal Authority organized visits to the De Lesseps’ museum and residence, as well as to the tunnels connecting Ismailia to the Sinai peninsula, for the council’s delegation and other delegations as well, including the Association du Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez, the French ambassador, and the Panamanian ambassador.

The delegation’s visit was concluded by accepting a generous lunch invitation from the Chairman of the Authority; and on this occasion, Admiral Rabie presented the Suez Canal Authority’s shield to Ambassador/ Abdel Raouf El-Reedy.

The council decided to arrange a visit, for the council’s members, to the Suez Canal Economic Zone in Ain Sokhna.
Chapter IV

Council’s Members activities
Participation of a number of ECFA’s members in a symposium on “Egypt-Japan Cooperation in the Evolving Strategic Context of Middle East and Asia”

At the invitation of the Japanese Embassy in Cairo, a delegation of the Council participated in a symposium on “Egypt-Japan Cooperation in the Evolving Strategic Context of Middle East and Asia” organized by Japan’s Embassy in cooperation with the Japan Institute of International Affairs and the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy of the American University in Cairo, on February 5th, 2019, in addition to organizing a closed session on “A New Middle East: The Egyptian and Japanese Visions”. The two sessions discussed issues regarding the geopolitical and security situation in the Middle East, migration from the Middle East and North Africa, and the changes in the security situation in the Middle East since 2011.

Moreover, the symposium tackled the consequences of US policies in both the Middle East and Asia, as the participants agreed that such policies are negative, including Washington’s withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, UNESCO, and the UN Human Rights Council, and discontinuing funding of UNRWA, and assistance to the Palestin-
ian Authority, as well as its withdrawal from the JCPOA and the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Russia, and from the NAFTA agreement with Canada and Mexico, and refusal to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership Treaty.

They pointed out that such policies have led to the current chaos and collapse that some countries in the Middle East suffer from, in addition to the policies of withdrawal from international agreements and organizations, and bilateral agreements, especially the JCPOA, in a manner that undermines global stability and peace, which requires global cooperation with the leading countries in the region and the major powers in the world.

On the other hand, the Japanese participants were keen to send an alarm regarding the Chinese rise, at the same time, confirm that the Free and Open Indo-Pacific initiative is not directed against the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and that reports on their steps with India and the United States against China are incorrect, in spite of their deep concerns over the rising Chinese tide, and their warning message against cooperation with China, even if it is indirect, it reflects the deep concern regarding the Chinese challenge at both the military and economic levels.

On their part, the Egyptian participants emphasized that Egypt-Japan cooperation file is the best among Egypt’s development partners. However, the successful Chinese ex-
perience in getting 700 million inhabitants above the poverty line over the past forty years is considered as an important experience for Egypt and African countries, and there are efforts to learn and benefit from its lessons.

Japan has been called for further engagement in the Middle East and seeking to invest its good relations with all parties, especially Israel, to advance towards serious peace negotiations with the Palestinians.
Meeting of the Chairman and members of the House of Representatives’ Foreign Relations Committee with ECFA Board of Directors

On March 11, 2019, and at his invitation, Mr. Karim Abdel Karim Darwish, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the House of Representatives, received ECFA Board members.

1- The following ECFA members attended the meeting:

- Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran – ECFA Chairman.
- Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad - ECFA Director.
- Ambassador Hisham Al-Zimaity - ECFA Secretary General.
- Dr. Hazem Attiatallah- ECFA Treasurer.
- Ambassador Dr. Hussein Hassouna - Board member.
- Ambassador Mona Omar - Board member.
- Ambassador Sayed Abo Zeid - Board member.

The following representatives and secretaries of the House of Representatives’ Foreign Relations Committee attended along with its chairman:
- Ms. Anisa Hassouna
- Dr. Tarek Al-Khouly (Vice-Chairman of the Committee)
- Ms. Dalia Youssef
- Mr. Hossam Mohamed Mahmoud Al-Omda
- Mr. Ibrahim Abdel-Wahab
- Dr. Sherine Farrag
- Ms. Sarah Othman
- Mr. Kamal Ahmed
- Dr. Abdullah Mabrouk
- Ms. Samia Rafla
- Ms. Ghada al-Ajami

2- The discussions dealt with a number of points that the committee chairman had asked ECFA to talk about in advance, namely:

- Assessment of ECFA on the future of the international order in terms of its structure, its leading countries, the nature of future interactions between those forces and the foreseeable international-regional interactions, the future issues of this system, and the Egyptian interests in this regard.
- Council’s assessment of the future of international organizations such as the United Nations and new regional organizations such as ASEAN, APEC and others?

- Assessment of the alliances’ role, their future and their orientations towards the Arab region and the Middle East?


- The future of the European Union in light of the BREXIT reactions, plans to include new members for it, the role of its major countries (the axis of Germany-France), and the visions stating that other axes from Eastern European countries were crystallized with Italy, then the relationship of the Union with the United States and its impact on the EU foreign and security policy, especially towards the Arab region.

- The future of partnership agreements between the European Union and the Mediterranean countries, specifically Egypt, evaluation of the contractual frameworks between Egypt and the European Union in light of the treaty and legal developments of the Union, which tried to establish principles for conditionality, politicization of human rights, and how to build on the achievement of the Arab-EU Summit in this regard, and highlight assessment of the various partnership issues launched by President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.

- The council’s assessment of the current initiatives to
resolve a number of crises and issues, topped by the Palestinian cause, and the Syrian, Libyan, and Yemeni issues, as well as the future of political settlement of these issues?

- Assessment of the situation regarding the relationship of Egypt and sisterly Arab countries with the neighboring regional countries, and their attempts to infiltrate in the region?

3- On his part, ECFA Chairman raised the following questions, answered by the Chairman and the members of the Committee:

- The committee’s role in relation to the parliament’s relationship with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and other regional parliaments (Arab-African-Islamic-Mediterranean)?

- The role of the committee regarding the visit of parliamentary delegations visiting Egypt and vice versa.

- The role of the committee with regard to international negotiations to conclude international treaties and agreements.

- The committee’s interaction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign embassies in Cairo.

- The committee’s relationship with the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), and whether there is any communication with it?
On 19th March 2019, Ambassador Dr. Hussein Hassouna – ECFA Board Member participated in the United Nations International Law Commission during its seventy-first session, as a number of legal issues related to developing and legalizing the rules of international law were discussed in various fields.

These were the main conclusions of the committee session:

1 - Adoption of a number of articles within a draft agreement for the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity. The committee recommended that the General Assembly allocates an international conference for commissioners to develop an international agreement in accordance with those draft articles addressing mainly with the definition of these crimes and enhancing international cooperation in terms of their prevention and punishing the perpetrators, based on the gravity of these crimes and posing a threat to international peace and security.

2 - The committee adopted 28 articles from a draft agreement on the protection of the environment in times of
armed conflict. The draft includes a reference to the obligations of the occupying state in protecting the environment of the occupied territories, and the obligations of the parties to non-international armed conflicts to protect the environment and not causing any harm to it.

3 - The Commission has also adopted 23 articles on peremptory norms in international law that include a definition of these rules and their basic elements and the extent of their relationship with other rules of international law.

4 - The Commission continued its examination of the immunity of state officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction.

5- The Commission continued to examine the issue of state succession in state responsibility, and what is related to the inheritance of states as a result of unity or separation, and related issues regarding the damage resulting from internationally illegal acts committed against the predecessor state and its nationals.

6 - The Commission has included two other topics in its long-term action program:

(a) Indemnities for individuals on grave violations of the international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

(b) Preventing and suppressing acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea.
Participation of Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Karem in the fourth meeting of the Group of Eminent Experts to prepare a study on means to advance nuclear disarmament efforts

Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Karem - Member of ECFA Board of Directors, participated on 20th to 24th March 2019, in the fourth meeting of the Group of Eminent Persons to prepare a study on means to advance nuclear disarmament efforts, a committee formed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan and held recently in the Japanese city of Kyoto, as the committee adopted the “Kyoto Appeal”, which will be presented at the session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference, held in New York in April / May 2020.
The participation of Ambassador / Dr. Ezzat Saad at the Third Summit of the India / Africa Forum (IAFSIII)

“India's Partnership with North Africa and the Horn of Africa: Issues, Initiatives, Expectations”

(Addis Ababa, 29th-30th of Marh 2019)

During the period from (29th -30th ) March,2019, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, participated in the Third Summit of the Forum of India / Africa (IAFSIII) under the theme “The Indian Partnership with North Africa and the Horn of Africa: Issues, Initiatives and Expectations” In Addis Ababa, with the invitation from the Indian Council for World Affairs(ICWA).

In his Intervention at the first session on the “Political and Diplomatic Relations: Issues and Perspectives on Global Political Dialogue and Good Governance”, he emphasized the importance of the the Horn of Africa represents a vital significance to both India and the North African region due to many geo-political, security, and developmental considerations.

In this context, the challenges that face some of the
states in the region, particularly political instability and state weakness (as in the cases of Yemen and Somalia) have led to aggravation of the phenomena of terrorism, piracy, refugees, and the threat to international waterways. These in turn represent a threat to global trade flows as well as a threat to the securing of oil and gas passage, representing a serious threat to the interests of the states of the region in particular and to the international community in general.

These deteriorating situations opened the door widely for the intervention of many extra-regional countries to politically and militarily exist in the region. This represents a retreat from the objectives of The African National Liberation Movement in terms of escaping foreign influence and dependency. Dealing with such complicated and deteriorating political, military, security, and humanitarian situations necessitates the promotion of political dialogue among the states of the region and external parties having interest in its affairs based on respecting the principles of non-interference in internal affairs as well as respecting state sovereignty, its regional safety, security, and stability, in order to push forwards the comprehensive development process therein.

It is important to emphasize the impossibility of tackling such challenges and problems by individual states. This, therefore, imposes bilateral and multilateral cooperation and coordination which includes Institutions of the African
Union as well as other suggested forms of cooperation amongst the states of the region in this respect such as establishing an institutional framework for the coordination and cooperation amongst States of The Horn of Africa and the Red Sea Region.

India, as a large state, having interests in this wide region as well as having historical relations with the region is qualified to play a significant role in the contribution to this region’s stability and development. And India, in this respect, having an outstanding political status, adopting the principles of good international governance, at the political and economic levels, as well as the South-South cooperation, and the huge developmental achievements it fulfilled over the last few years where it has become the World’s Sixth largest economy and as it also ranks Fourth on the list of Africa’s Large Partners as well as being the Third largest exporter to the Continent with a value of exports that reached up to 62.66 billion dollars in the year 2017-2018, is, with possessing all such major potential, qualified for more engagement in the problems and the challenges facing the region.
Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad’s Participation In The Symposium On “Sino-African Cooperation... And Communication Among Peoples”

With the invitation of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad participated in the works of an international symposium held in Beijing, over Two days, on April 9th and 10th, 2019, under the slogan “Sino-African cooperation ... and communication among peoples.“

The participation took place as follows:

1. His Excellency presided a session on “China and Africa... mutual learning among civilizations and communication among peoples”, during which he emphasized the following points, before giving the floor to the speakers (Six speakers from China and Africa):

   - The concept of mutual learning among civilizations and communication among peoples must be viewed in the context of the new international relations pattern defended by China within the framework of its active foreign policy objectives, which include, in addition to mutual learning among civilizations and communication among peoples, the creation of an international community sharing the future of hu-
- Mutual learning among civilizations and communication among peoples, that are among cooperation priorities, are clearly reflected in all forms of cooperation between China and all developing countries, including Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum, and China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Cooperation Forum, in addition to other bilateral and multilateral cooperation forms between China and many countries in the world.

- The abovementioned concept has been emphasized in paragraph 15 of the Declaration of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), at the conclusion of the Summit in Beijing, on September 4, 2018.

2. Prior to the launch of the abovementioned symposium, the President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) held a meeting that brought together researchers, academics and former senior officials, in addition to Egypt, South Africa, Senegal, Nigeria and Tanzania, on 9th of April, during which the China Africa Institute has been launched. Selection of representatives from these countries for the membership of the International Advisory Committee of the Institute for the period April 2019 - April 2022 took place in this meeting. During the meeting, the Chinese side delivered letters of credence to Members of the Committee
including Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, former President of Mozambique, in a simple ceremony in which the External Relations Manager of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China had participated.

3. It is noteworthy that establishment of the Institute was initiated by Chinese President Xi Jinping in his opening speech of the China Africa Summit, on 3rd of September 2018, when he launched eight major initiatives in cooperation with the African side, including establishment of the Institute to foster mutual learning between Chinese and African civilizations as well as fostering communication between peoples of the Two sides.

4. The New Institute, headed by Professor Cai Fang, is affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). The Institute’s activities include preparation of academic and scientific researches; in particular those related to the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as deepening mutual understanding between the two sides.

5. The institute will also serve as a training center for personnel concerned with China-Africa cooperation and as a window for enhancement of friendship and cooperation between the two sides. The Institute will give priority to the following research areas: combating poverty, environmental protection, peace, security and mutual learning among civilizations (history, philosophy, religious studies, etc...).
The institute will publish a periodical on Sino-African Studies (The Chinese side delivered a first copy to us (As a model for such periodical)).

The institute was launched at a grand ceremony where, along with Chinese officials, Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union Commission as well as Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, member of the Institute’s International Advisory Committee, spoke therein.
With the invitation from Chinese side to the countries which are participating in the Belt and Road Initiative to attend the second forum of the NGO SIRONET 2 network, Ambassador Ali Al-Hefny - Coordinator of the Permanent Committee for Asian Affairs, as a representative of the Council, participated in the forum’s work, which was held in Beijing during the period 27/28 April 2019.

**In his speech, He assured on the following points:**

- It was a dream and quickly turned into a reality. Five years only have passed since the launch in 2013 of the Belt and Road initiative and yet BRI has succeeded in transforming the world economic order and laid the ground for a different, brighter, more democratic, more vibrant and more energetic world economy based on an enhanced multilateralism. With around 80 nations that signed for the membership, and around 120 nations that signed deals related to BRI with many many mechanisms that have been swiftly created in particular the BRI fund and the Asian Bank with the needed financial tools that allowed the speed implementation of that new world vision, BRI has cemented its place
in world affairs. The main initiative mushroomed and turned into many other initiatives as it has succeeded in interconnecting government, business communities, academias, customs, ports, NGOs and others more through several networks covering many fields including energy, in particular new energy and more specifically solar energy, including as well ICT and the transformation of our societies and our world into a digital one, and including also studies and research centers. At the very beginning it was an enigma that raised many questions, once it turned into a comprehension about its different and real aspects certain international media and renowned research and studies centers in their attempt to objectively assess the initiative raised fears and doubts about the real purpose and proceedings behind the launch by China of its initiative. Today as we witness the presence of almost 5000 participants at the Second BRI Summit Forum with almost 40 nations’ leaders and around 100 CEOs, the heads of the United Nations Organization and international financial institutions and world banks and a G7 member becoming a BRI member it became obvious that BRI gained credibility and trust and that it is here to stay and it is going to remain and shape up the world economy for the 21st century bringing a new impetus and new features to a globalization that will better interconnect the world nations, that will enhance the transfer of capitals, will promote world investments, will ensure trade growth, the diffusion of technology, the development of our industrial
capacity and the creation of millions of job opportunities.

- Listening to yesterday’s speech given by Leader Xi Jinping at the opening of the Second BRI Summit Forum and the additional measures he announced and his genuine, wise and transparent approach he demonstrated not just in his speech but from the very first day he launched his initiative, it made us all more optimistic as well as more ambitious about the benefits each and every of our nations can achieve out of this initiative.

- China possesses the intellectual property of the Belt and Road initiative and yet the initiative became our all initiative and it is our role and responsibility to make of it a real and more sound, unshakable and solid future world order. As the honorable Chinese leader has put it in his speech we need all, to work together and cooperate through our inputs and proposals to make of it an even better scheme for our nations and future generations, make connectivity clean, green, sustainable and diversified as Leader Xi said this morning, and strive together to always find solutions to whatever obstacles and problems we do and might encounter while moving forward and while we are progressing, in particular the devastating effects of global warming and climate change.

- In Africa we are among the most and the first to have
sensed the genuineness of BRI in particular the fact that it is based on the principle of win-win cooperation. China has so far invested a lot in infrastructure projects which constitute the first of priorities in our continent as we need to integrate, to enhance our intra-African trade, to implement the March 2018 Agreement on the establishment of a Free Trade Zone, to establish the African Common Market and to achieve our vision and plan for 2063, a matter that our African Leaders have been raising at different meetings and that President Abd El Fattah El Sisi, not only as President of Egypt but in his capacity as the current Chairman of the African Union has as well raised it in his meeting with the Honorable Leader Xi a couple of days ago but again at his speech at the Forum yesterday. We know that we can count on China as one of our main partners in the continent, a strategic partner, and also through a trilateral cooperation that link Africa to China and a third party representing our world partners to achieve this. Africa and China can do it and will together do it.

- In November 2017 we held in Beijing our first SIRONET Forum and today, and after a year and a half we are here again to discuss about our future cooperation as NGOs. And I am certain that through our deliberations and exchange of views, tomorrow we will give a momentum to our network activities and together we can work on any challenges we were faced with during the last period and together we can
examine the profitability of holding with the assistance of China the NGOs regional meetings as one of the means how to move forward.

- Having said so I wish before concluding and on behalf of all of us here to address a sincere congratulations message to the Honorable Leader Xi Jinping for the success of the second BRI Summit Forum, and to the government and people of China for their strive under the wise leadership of Leader Xi Jinping to make of BRI a healthier, sounder, more inclusive and equally profitable world scheme that will make of our world a better place and make of our world economy a more vibrant, just and equally beneficial one. We wish you success in your future endeavors not just related to BRI but also as far as the implementation of your 2 successive national plans for sustainable development and rest assured the you can always count on our support.

- I wish as well to thank China NGO Network for International Exchanges and in particular the ability of President for having offered us that wonderful opportunity to meet again in Beijing and for the warm reception and the gracious hospitality that we received since our arrival, a matter that have always characterized the genuine friendly people of China.
Participation of Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran in Third Session of the Preparatory Committee (The 2019 NPT PrepCom) for (The 2020 NPT RevCon)

During the period from 29th of April to 10th of May 2019, Ambassador/Dr. Mounir Zahran – Chair of ECFA participated in the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee (The 2019 NPT PrepCom) for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (The 2020 NPT RevCon).

Firstly: A Brief Overview.

1- The Third NPT PrepCom was held in New York from 29th of April to 10th of May 2019; Malaysia’s Ambassador Syed Md Hasrin Syed Hussin and the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations in New York was the Chair of the 2019 PrepCom. 150 of the states-parties to the Treaty participated in this PrepCom. None of the non NPT states requested to participate in this PrepCom as an observer. Mr. Ian Tudas, Head of the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Branch at The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) undertook the duty of Secretary of the Committee, and the International Atomic En-
nergy Agency (IAEA) participated in the proceedings of this PrepCom.

2- Egypt’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Mohamed Idris, headed the Egyptian delegation to the Third PrepCom. The delegation included members of the Egyptian Permanent Mission to the United Nations (UN) in New York, Minister Plenipotentiary Ahmed Khaled Al-Fadhli, Director of Disarmament Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Ahmed Saeid, Second Secretary for the Foreign Minister’s Cabinet. On instructions of Foreign Minister, Chairman of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs Ambassador Mounir Zahran joined the Egyptian delegation as adviser.

3- The Chair of the committee relied on datums, including improvement of the review mechanisms in accordance with the resolutions of the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) through three sessions of the Preparatory Committee. Regarding the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the First Preparatory committee (NPT PrepCom) was held in Vienna from 2nd to 17th of May 2017 under the chairmanship of the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament and Disarmament Ambassador at large, and the
Second Preparatory committee (NPT PrepCom) was held in Geneva from 23\textsuperscript{rd} of April to 4\textsuperscript{th} of May 2018 under the chairmanship of the Polish Ambassador (The Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN Office and the International Organizations in Vienna). Failing to reach a consensus on the results of both the First and Second sessions of the Preparatory Committee, each one of them was concluded with a summary from each of the Chairs of both Preparatory committees which were issued under their responsibility as an official document by each. The summaries from both Chairs of the First and Second sessions of the Preparatory committee (NPT PrepCom) and the 1995 Review conference (The 1995 NPT RevCon) resolutions including the Middle East resolution and the results of the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences (The 2000, 2010 NPT RevCons) were also taken into account by the Preparatory Committee (NPT PrepCom). Whereas the 2005 and 2015 Review Conferences (The 2005, 2015 NPT RevCons) have failed to reach a consensus on the outcome documents, this was mainly due to the objections, made by a number of states parties, to the draft outcome documents owing to the differing stances toward the Middle East. At the same time that several delegations criticized the nuclear-armed states (The Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS)), particularly the United States, for developing their nuclear arsenal; the majority supported the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which is rejected by the nuclear-armed
states (NWS) and their European allies, the western states launched a campaign against The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea for its nuclear and missile programs; the United States, France, and Britain were at the head of a parallel campaign launched by the western countries against Syria for being accused of violating its obligations to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding Dair Alzour reactor.

4- It was decided to permit the representatives of specialized agencies, regional organizations, as well as non-governmental and civil society organizations to participate in the 2020 Review Conference (The 2020 NPT RevCon) upon their request.

5- It was also decided to convene the 2020 Review Conference (The 2020 NPT RevCon) in New York during the period from 27 April to 22 May 2020 under the Chairmanship of a representative from the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) that has nominated Ambassador Rafael Mariano Grossi, Ambassador of Argentina to Austria and International Organizations in Vienna; owing to the continuing discussions on such issue due to Venezuela’s objection to the Argentine candidate, it has been decided to conclude the issue of approving the Chairmanship of the 2020 NPT RevCon by the Argentine Ambassador by the last quarter of 2019. The Ambassador of Malaysia shall open the 2020 Re-
view Conference (The NPT 2020 RevCon) and chair its First committee; the Second and Third committees to be chaired respectively by the Ambassadors of the Netherlands and Poland who had chaired the First and Second Preparatory Committees.

6- The Preparatory Committee (The 2019 NPT Prep-Com) adopted The 2020 NPT Review Conference (Rev-Con); the allocation of agenda items and their assignment to the main committees of the conference has also been adopted by the Preparatory Committee; as well as the rules of procedures of the 2020 NPT RevCon.

**Secondly: Commentary and Evaluation**- In light of the deliberations of the Three sessions of the Preparatory Committee (The Three NPT PrepCom Sessions) for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (The 2020 NPT RevCon), expected to be held in April/ May 2020, and that had witnessed confrontations between nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear weapon states and not reaching results and recommendations with consensus over its outcomes; there is pessimism regarding the opportunities for success of the 2020 NPT RevCon which happens to be the Fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty’s entry into force.

- There is an opportunity to render the 2020 NPT RevCon
successful, in case of lack of consensus till the final session, by raising a point of order by one of the delegations for the implementation Article 28 of the Rules of Procedures through requesting the Chair of the Conference to suspend the meeting in order to carry out consultations for improving the drafting of the outcome document to satisfy the stances of the concerned delegations, and in case of not reaching a consensus in spite of following the aforementioned procedure then the Chair of the conference shall call for voting on the outcome document in accordance with Article 28 of the rules of procedures; voting results need a two-thirds majority approval vote to pass.

- Also a top priority of global public opinion is upholding human rights; chief among these rights is the right to life. Hence the chief among the priorities of global public opinion was nuclear disarmament and freeing the world of such most lethal and destructive weapon. The vast majority of civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) place this issue among its top priorities. We have proposed, within the framework of the general debate of the Three Preparatory Committees, amendment of the rules and procedures of the NPT 2020 Review Conference (The 2020 NPT RevCon) so as to permit the participation of such organizations in reviewing all provisions of the treaty in the Three Preparatory Committees for the Review Conference (NPT RevCon) and not only in the general debate;
along the same lines of practice as in the Human Rights Council permitting non-governmental organizations that so request, to interfere in the debates after concluding the list of speakers from the states parties. Hence we propose that this issue be raised within the framework of preparations for the conference via regional groups and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), so that, in case of approval, one of such groups shall propose an amendment to the rules of procedure which will be discussed at the outset of the conference.

- Although failure of the next conference is a likely possibility, Ambassador Mounir Zahran emphasize the significance of letting all know that Egypt is getting well prepared for the conference, hoping for its success, and whatever initiatives or proposals we make are intended to increase the opportunities for success of the conference, though precedents indicate that until now, no two successive NPT Review Conferences (NPT RevCons) have ever failed before following failure of the two NPT Review Conferences (NPT RevCons) of 2005 and 2015; though the Middle East region was the stated reason that has been alleged to be the cause of failure of both conferences, but the true reasons were the issues of nuclear disarmament and freeing the world of such lethal weapon. Whereas, nuclear-armed states (The nuclear-weapon states (NWS)), and states that have boycotted the Treaty and preferred not to join it, insist on pos-
sessing nuclear weapons; they are, namely: Israel, India, Pakistan, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, some of which adhere to the policy of “No First Use (NFU)” which means there is a possibility of its utilization in case of necessity.

- Even though we were the initiators to prompt the issuance of a resolution from the General Assembly at its 73rd session through a call by the UN Secretary General for a conference on establishing a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) in the Middle East and that has been scheduled to be held in New York from 18th to 22nd of November 2019, but the possibilities of failure of such conference are more likely than its success opportunities after failing to implement the 1995 Conference resolution on the Middle East and failing to convene an independent conference on the Middle East, which had been called for by the 2010 NPT Review Conference (The 2010 NPT Rev-Con), since 2012, particularly that both Israel and the United States (USA) announced that they would not participate in such conference, also Britain and France were not enthusiastic regarding participation in that conference. Therefore, as a consequence, it is expected that the Secretary General of the 2020 NPT Review Conference (The 2020 NPT Rev-Con) would submit a negative report on that conference in spite of the appropriation of funds equivalent to 1.07 Million Dollars for conference expenses; it would be futile, as to
what we have heard from the delegations of the Prepara-
tory Committee, for the Secretary General to call again for
reconvening the conference with the provision of the same
appropriation of at least 1.07 Million Dollars each time.

- Regardless of Israel’s stances which are supported by
the United States (USA), Ambassador Zahran assured that
Egypt’s accession to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-
Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nu-
clear Weapons (TPNW) might be considered, as by acced-
ing to these Two treaties Egypt shall not be entailed any
additional commitments considering that Egypt is one of
the states parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of
Nuclear Weapons (NPT), “that is to say that Egypt is already
prohibited from producing or possessing nuclear weapons”.
Participation of Ambassador/Dr. Ezzat Saad on the Conference on «Dialogue of Asian Civilizations ... Denouncing any attempts to claim the supremacy of a particular civilization or culture over others

During the period from 15th to 17th of May 2019, Ambassador/ Dr. Ezzat Saad- Director of ECFA participated on the Conference on “Dialogue of Asian Civilizations ... Denouncing any attempts to claim the supremacy of a particular civilization or culture over others”. The opening of the conference, which witnessed the participation of a number of presidents from Asia, Africa and Europe, took place on May 15th, 2019 morning, with a speech given by the Chinese President Xi Jinping, during which he underlined that “it is foolish to believe the claim that one’s race and civilization are superior on the others”. Moreover, it is disastrous to willfully reshape or even replace other civilizations, he added. He also highlighted the importance of mutual respect and equal treatment among civilizations, pointing out that the Chinese civilization seeks the good of its neighbors and the maintenance of harmony with all nations, as this is the Chinese way to engage with the world.

Likewise, the Presidents of Greece, Sri Lanka, Singa-
pore and the King of Cambodia also gave speeches in the opening session about the Asian civilizations and the importance of dialogue among civilizations in general, while denouncing any attempts to claim the supremacy of a particular civilization or culture over others.

They also stressed the importance of having an international cooperation achieved among different civilizations and cultures, within a framework of mutual respect, regardless of the number of people belonging to any of it.

* The co-chairmanship of a session on “Asian Civilizations and the Development of Contemporary Asia”, held on the first day of the Conference:

1. Ambassador Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, along with the Director of the Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, co-chaired a session on “Asian Civilizations and the Development of Contemporary Asia”.

   In this session, seven participants talked about various economic, developmental and social issues related to the Chinese experience and its related regional impacts, the interplay between the continent’s civilizations, and how does Europe and the western Christian civilization see it.

2. Ambassador Saad also participated in a session, the following day, by introducing a paper on “Dialogue of Asian
Civilizations ... and the Concept of Building a Community of Shared Future for Mankind”, in the context of China’s relations with the Middle East, through which he presented the China-Arab civilizations coexistence throughout history, with the ancient Silk Road being one of its manifestations and through which the Chinese civilization interacted with its Islamic and Arab counterparts.

Then, he addressed the concept of “Building a Community of Shared Future for Mankind” in the political thought of the Chinese President Xi Jinping, and finally China’s relations with the Middle East Region and what Beijing can offer to restore peace and stability in this Area on one hand, and achieving economic and social development therein, on the other hand.

**Participating in a seminar at The Institute of West Asian, Middle East and African Studies at The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, May 17th, 2019, morning:**

1. A number of important issues were addressed including the Deal of the Century, the US withdrawal from the Middle East from the Chinese point of view, as well as the Chinese cooperation in relation to maintaining security in the Red Sea, the Strait of Bab el-Mandeb, the Gulf of Aden and the Chinese military base in Djibouti in addition to the Israeli reservation about establishing Chinese military bases in the region thus affecting the qualitative superiority of Is-
Israel military power in this region.

2. Furthermore, Chinese investments in Israel were also discussed (in the port of Haifa, in particular) and the facts about Netanyahu welcoming such investments despite US criticism.

* Participating in a seminar at The University of International Relations on the security situation in Asia: The Opportunities, Challenges and Civilizations in the context of Modernization ... Heritage and Renovation:

The seminar had seen, from the Chinese side, the participation of Professor DA Wei, Vice-President of the University, and Mr. Wei Chunjiang, Secretary of the Communist Party at the University, in addition to a number of professors.

The discussions held included the bilateral Sino-Russian relations within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the North Korean nuclear issue and the Chinese role in this regard.

Ambassador Saad spoke about the geopolitical rivalry in Eurasia, the Turkish role in the region, the linkage between the security in Central Asia and the developments in Afghanistan and the need to restore stability there. Moreover, the difficulties associated with the North Korean nuclear issue, especially that the Korean leadership lacks confidence in the intentions of the United States in light of the western
policy towards Gaddafi’s Libya and Iraq during Saddam’s reign, as well as the withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal last year.
Attending of Ambassador/ Ezzat Saad Symposium On “Sudanese Revolution: Opportunities and Challenges”

A symposium entitled “Sudanese Revolution: Opportunities and Challenges” held at the American University in Cairo (AUC) on July 8th, 2019, with the participation of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) represented by Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; and a number of prominent Sudanese personalities, namely, Mr. Salah Manna, leader in the Forces of Freedom and Change; Mr. El-Shafie Khadr, writer and political activist; Mr. Ibrahim ElBadawi, Managing Director of the Economic Research Forum (ERF). The symposium was moderated by Prof. Hamid Eltigani Ali, a Sudanese Professor at the American University in Cairo (AUC).

Speakers agreed that the Sudanese Revolution was not a Revolution of the Hungry, despite the severity of the ongoing economic crisis; in addition to that, those who revolted were the young people and also women, from all ethnicities, backgrounds and partisan affiliations; all of them fused together in one crucible, so that it can be said that the key players in the Sudanese revolution were the youth who were born under the rule of the authoritarian Muslim Brotherhood
Salvation Front; moreover, Omar Al-Bashir’s policies over the past thirty years have turned Sudan into divisions, conflicts and proxy wars which is a serious challenge Sudan will face after the revolution; furthermore, such policies that permitted extremists to participate in government and infiltrate vital authorities of the state, do not only pose threat to security and stability of the country; but to the security and stability of neighboring states as well, especially Egypt.

With regards to the security of the Red Sea region and Sudan as a State of the Nile Basin, his policies have led to exposing this area to dangers, especially after offering to host foreign military bases.

**The following were the most important issues raised by the speakers:**

1- Mr. El-Shafie Khadr started his speech by stressing that this revolution is not a Revolution of the Hungry, despite the severity of the ongoing economic crisis. He added that those who revolted were the young people and also women, from all ethnicities, backgrounds and partisan affiliations; all of them fused together in one crucible, so that it can be said that the key players in the Sudanese revolution were the youth who were born under the rule of “The authoritarian Muslim Brotherhood Salvation Front.” He added that the lessons learned from this revolution could be summarized as follows:
- Young people were the fuel of the revolution, and even after the military junta had shut down the internet, young people continued with their revolution on an ongoing basis. Issues moved from the concept of a charismatic leader to the young, responsible and active leader within his group; the idea of a Political activist was replaced by that of a social activist.

- The revolution benefited from globalization, as it broke out of the closed society and became like a revolution of a common man; the chants were amazing and instead of "Long Live Sudan" which we used to chant in the past, the slogan became “Freedom, Peace and Justice”. He also noted that each of them requires small prolonged periods or revolutions, as was the case with the French and German revolutions.

- The revolution confirmed the idea that protests and claims are the top political tactics, as focus was not directed to economic problems, but rather to the policies.

- The revolution proved that people’s trust, particularly the youth, in the Transitional Military Council is non-existent, therefore the partnership between the two sides will be almost unachievable as the Council is an extension of the previous regime, but in a new form. People felt so while observing the Council’s relations and external movements, then there was a complete breakdown in trust after the sit-
in was ended by the Council using violent and bloody procedures and how silly they later dealt with the issue, like claiming that those who broke up the sit-in were arrested.

- Al-Bashir’s policies over the past thirty years have turned Sudan into divisions, conflicts and proxy wars which is a serious challenge Sudan will face after the revolution, and there exists a serious risk with regard to maintaining a united Sudan, especially in connection with the demands by the West and Zionist circles for what is called the New Middle East.

- A third challenge existed relating to the country’s security and stability as well as the neighboring countries’ security and stability, especially Egypt, as Al-Bashir permitted extremists to participate in government and infiltrate the vital authorities of the Sudanese state.

- Al-Bashir’s policies regarding the security of the Red Sea region and Sudan as a Nile Basin country have exposed this area to dangers, especially after he has offered, then hosted, military bases, which is a major challenge to Sudan’s stability.

- Another challenge is the insistence of some states to deal with a strong central authority in Sudan, believing this would be better for, while it constitutes a major mistake on the part of these forces, as they must be open to all.
- It is necessary that the state’s official posts, especially the economic posts, be assigned to competent persons. There are risks resulting from the possibility of assigning important posts to some of the revolution’s young people, despite their lack of practical experience.

- It is extremely important to strike a blow against the deep state in Sudan and reconsider the Sudanese military involvements, whether in Yemen or Central Africa, where there is a Russian, or other states, military presence.

2- Mr. Ibrahim Al-Badawi spoke about the economic situation in Sudan, pointing out that the economy was the victim of politics, however it could be its savior after the revolution, as in the case of Sudan, there was no social contract between the one governing and the governed, but rather a group that dominated power out of nowhere, destroyed the country and its resources. Economy will remain a key factor in dialogues between partners in government, including that between military officials and The Forces of Freedom and Change.

Al-Badawi added that the way of governance being used during the past thirty years led to the Sudanese economy becoming a rent-seeking economy being in the hands of many militias and forces away from the state - and in this context it is necessary to institutionalize fiscal policy and re-shape resources, especially since the previous regime used
to conclude deals with militias in various regions. Hence, there must be an economic dialogue in Sudan that guarantees development for all and avoids uncontrolled disbursement of funds in favor of what he called “Political Clientelism.”

Ibrahim Al Badawi also stated that the dialogue on the Sudanese economy should extend to include the regional framework, to create a solid economic partnership with neighboring countries, especially Egypt, adding that the new Sudan can benefit from the Egyptian experience in the field of economic reform, especially with regard to supporting the poor and cutting subsidies that go to people ineligible to receive it.

He concluded by saying that there must be economic legitimacy for the new regime, in the sense of having social consensus on the urgent political and development issues, provided that this be included in the constitutional declaration and to not only be satisfied with the principle of free elections.

On the proposed economic axes, Mr. Ibrahim Badawi referred to three axes in this regard, which are: stabilizing the macro economy, curbing inflation, chasing corruption, liquidating the gains obtained by the salvation regime, creating a fund for reconstruction, and building capacities in which the Sudanese Diaspora contribute in integration with South
Sudan and friendly strategic countries.

He added that it is important to remove Sudan from the List of state sponsors of terrorism and provide support to the agricultural sector, noting that references were made from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to supporting Sudan in this regard, as well as references from friendly states since Sudan has a huge agricultural potential.

Mr. Ibrahim Al-Badawi concluded his speech by emphasizing the importance of combating poverty, achieving sustainable development and providing support to the poor.

Therefore, the economic reform program must be revolutionary, in other words; to be consistent with the slogans of the revolution.

3 - Dr. Salah Manna started his talk by expressing his optimism towards the future of Sudan, noting that the roots of the revolution extends to 1989; from day one of the foundation of the Salvation Front or Muslim Brotherhood rule, “who had been corrupting the country for thirty years.”

He added that:

- The secession of South Sudan took place based on the misunderstanding by some ignorant people to the Quranic verse “To you be your religion, and to me my religion”.
- There is no state in Sudan in the conventional sense, and the Military Council has no will in that.

- With regard to the challenges facing Sudan now, he pointed out that there is a blatant and egregious regional intervention, hence calling on “our brothers in the region to keep their hands off us and realize that Sudan revolution is a pure Sudanese revolution” unlike the Arab Spring revolutions that received support from abroad.

- The National Salvation Revolution adopted the use of violence and abuse with people from the beginning, which were accumulations that has started with the incident of Ramadan army officers and then many uprisings here and there over the past thirty years.

- The first and biggest challenge is the peace dossier during the transitional period, and in this regard, all the local political movements must be in conformity with each other to avoid a repetition of what happened in the years (1956-65-85), as the war’s bloodshed did not end. He stressed that the Deep State controls 100% of the situation while they forgot the Transitional Military Council which is the main enemy; as it is the Muslim Brotherhood.

- Another challenge no less serious than its predecessor is the Sudanese army, or rather the Sudanese armies, because the Sudanese army was a Muslim brotherhood invention, where the organization completely controls the
military establishment and the military and security departments and militias loyal to the regime, adding that its budget exceeds the state budget. In this context, Manna pointed out that the solution lies in merging these forces so that there is only one army using same gun, stressing Sudan’s need for the support of the countries of the region to build the Sudanese National Army, otherwise Sudan will remain threatened by the specter of civil war.

- Another challenge is represented by the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood was able to fully control the Sudanese economy, the thing which the old Salvation regime worked on from the beginning (he mentioned that Sudan’s gold production is about 100 tons, 70 of which are set aside annually to be sent to the Muslim Brotherhood abroad).

On this point, he concluded by saying that unless there is full cooperation to implement the framework agreement that is supposed to be signed within days, this will be a threat to any upcoming civilian authority.

- The spread of weapons stored by the Muslim Brotherhood for the current situation and for defending their interests is a serious security challenge. He added that he would like to emphasize that Sudan is the main center of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the region, and that the Military Council’s insistence on prolonging the transitional period clearly reflects that, adding that what is happening in
Libya is related to what is happening in Sudan.

- In context with the aforementioned, Manna mentioned that the University of Africa in Khartoum is a breeding ground for terrorists and extremists in Somalia, Syria and Iraq, serving as one of the strongholds of the Muslim Brotherhood.

- A significant number of the Muslim Brotherhood members of the Military Council are keen to make the transition of power process just a mere formality so that the organization remains in control.

- There are military bases for countries in the region in each of Suakin and Port Sudan, which will make Sudan a battleground that its scourge will reach the seven neighboring countries.

- They are monitoring a clear regional intervention, especially from a very small state, as separate movements have begun to appear, holding press conferences in which they denounce the framework agreement likely to be signed soon.

- Manna concluded by stressing the importance of the role of the states of the region to safeguard the agreement after being signed, and to implement it faithfully, and that it is necessary to have security arrangements to ensure such implementation. He added that he took into account that the Military Council resorted to signing this agreement be-
cause it did not find an alternative, especially with the eruption of the revolution and the persistence to take it forward.

Hence, many Sudanese are counting on the role of Egypt and the need to provide technical assistance to Sudan for developing its armed forces, indicating that it may be necessary to have UN forces supervising the implementation of the agreed-upon process; that would contribute to overcoming the previously mentioned challenges and guaranteeing the speedy restoration of security and stability in Sudan.
Two Lectures Given by Director of the Council at 
The Institute of Diplomatic Studies

With the invitation of the Institute of Diplomatic Studies, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, gave two lectures to the new batch of students at the institute (Batch no. 52). **These two lectures were given in the following order:**

**The first one:** On the afternoon of August 19, 2019, about “Public International Law and Foreign Policy,” during which the following points were particularly addressed:

- The main characteristics of public international law as being based on agreement of wills among states, and the incorrectness of comparing this law with domestic law.

- The direct relation between public international law and the principle of balance of power; the reflections that this would have on the principle of using force in international relations and the rule of law in the norms of international law.

- Spillovers of the one pole domination after the cold war, particularly with respect to using military force based on humanitarian and other considerations, whether with the per-
mission of UN Security Council or without resorting to.

- The rise of new world superpowers, particularly China, Russia, and regional powers; the reflections that such rise would have on the enforcement of the norms of international law, and the US reactions towards that, through attempting to contain the new superpowers and returning back to old system, whether with unilateral American will, or through NATO, or even through the EU.

All that led to undermining existing international norms in the most sensitive fields such as international peace and security, at a time when new norms have not been crystallized yet.

The second lecture: On August 20, 2019, about diplomatic relations, during which the concept of diplomacy has been addressed together with the modern changes that have been introduced to it in connection with the information revolution, as well as the use of social media by states leaders and officials for their messages and for their diplomatic activities. The lecture also discussed the types of diplomacy and their means, in the sense contained in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, the Convention on Special Missions, and the Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character.
Participation in a Workshop on China’s National Defense White Paper

On August 25th, 2019, a delegation from the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) participated in a workshop to discuss the white paper recently issued by China on its National Defense policies. The Workshop took place in Sofitel hotel in Cairo with the participation of the new Chinese ambassador to Egypt, Liao Liqiang as well as a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Defense, which presented the paper.

Director of the Council, Ambassador Ezzat Saad, had earlier received the Chargé d’Affaires of the Chinese Defense Attaché in Cairo Colonel Liu Jia, and his deputy Fu Xiao at ECFA headquarters on August 25, 2019, as he requested the participation of Ambassador Saad and a number of ECFA members interested in Chinese affairs in the workshop. Accordingly, members of the Asian group were invited to participate, in addition to fellow ambassadors: Hisham Al-Zimaity, ECFA Secretary General, and Coordinator of the Standing Committee for Asian Affairs, Aly El-Hefny, as well as Mohamed Noman Galal, Reda Al-Taify, Dr. Ahmed Hafez, and Prof. Dr. Mohamed Kamal, members of ECFA.
1- In his presentation of the main features of the White Paper, which is the tenth edition of its kind, the head of the delegation of the Chinese Ministry of Defense, Director and Spokesman of the Ministry of National Defense Information Bureau, Wu Qian, pointed out the following in particular:

- The workshop held in Cairo comes in the framework of the importance of the book’s theme, as well as the specificity of their relations with Egypt in all fields, including military and security cooperation.

- The white paper addresses the various aspects of Chinese defense strategy “in the new era” as envisioned by President Xi Jinping in light of the foreign and security policy foundations that he outlined amongst his various initiatives, especially with partners in Africa, Arab countries and other world regions.

- The paper highlights China’s efforts to modernize the People’s Liberation Army (the Chinese army), in line with the new phase under President Xi’s era.

2- In his intervention after presenting the features of the book, Ambassador Ezzat Saad made some general observations, referring in particular to the following:

- It is in no one’s interest, whether China or the United States, the outbreak of a war between the two great powers.
• The growth of Chinese military capabilities, especially the navy, has become a major concern for the United States and its NATO allies, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, which is the region in which the US-China war scenarios are likely to occur.

• Chinese reactions to the US escalation against China in the recent period are considered calm and wise. Meanwhile, the US is taking deliberate steps through which it seeks to send a message of dissatisfaction to China, but it does not provoke aggressive reactions against Beijing. All what the United States has done recently is to increase the frequency of dispatching warships across the Taiwan Strait and conduct military exercises under the pretext of protecting freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, which is what France and Britain are doing as well.

• Many countries do the same as China to protect their security, but the problem is that the United States holds accountable for intentions.

At the end of his remarks, ECFA Director raised a question about whether China is ready to join negotiations between the United States and Russia in order to conclude a new treaty to replace the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) from which the US withdrew on August 2, especially since, among the reasons for the withdrawal - according to the Americans - China possesses most of the
missiles prohibited by the treaty while it is not a party to it.

3- The head of the Chinese delegation commented that he fully agrees that the Sino-American relations are “stable” and not as the media portrays the problems between them, however, these will not lead to a military confrontation according to them. He also indicated that there is a hotline between the two countries’ Defense ministries as well as regular bilateral consultations, however, errors cannot be ruled out, despite the existence of other mechanisms for mutual reporting, especially for major military operations, and that there are restrictions and written instructions regarding possible clashes between Chinese vessels and their American counterparts.

The Chinese official concluded that he worked as a defense attaché in Washington, and that “the American mind prefers cooperation over confrontation.”

As for the possibility of China joining negotiations on a new treaty to replace INF, the Chinese official emphasized that his country will not join any negotiations in this respect, as the capabilities of China in this regard cannot be compared with those of Americans. For this reason, he added, they condemned the US withdrawal from the treaty.

4- In his intervention, Ambassador Hisham Al-Zimaity praised China’s role in peacekeeping operations across the world, especially in Africa, stressing Egypt’s appreciation
for that, and hailing Egypt-China military and security cooperation.

Ambassador Al-Zimaity raised a question on whether there is a Chinese strategy to confront the United States in its military support to Taiwan (the recently announced $8 billion deal) and the encouragement of the West to Hong Kong residents to rebel against the Chinese administrative authority. The head of the Chinese delegation replied that the white paper contains answers to all these queries.
Brief report on the 63rd IAEA General Conference

- From 16th to 20th September 2019, Dr. Yousry Abu Shady - member of the Council and a former IAEA inspector, participated in the 63rd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as observer at a personal invitation from the Agency. He was keen on presenting a report on the meeting, mainly:

- From 171 IAEA Member States were invited to attend the conference; 151 attended the meeting, while 8 countries did not have the right to vote on the decisions as they did not fulfill their financial obligations towards the Agency. The 63rd IAEA General Conference elected Ambassador Alicia Massieiu of Mexico as its President.

The conference was attended by delegations headed by a number of high officials, including the Vice President of the Republic of (Iran), the spouse of the President of Niger, and a number of Ministers of Energy and Science. The representatives of 133 countries delivered speeches before the conference.

The Egyptian delegation was headed by Dr. Mohamed
Shaker, Minister of Electricity. The delegation consisted of Ambassador Omar Amer - Egypt’s ambassador to Austria and a number of heads of nuclear authorities in Egypt, as well as officials from the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The session proceedings were managed by Mr. Cornel Feruta, Acting Deputy Director General Yukiya Amano, who passed away in July 2019, until a new Director General will be elected. There are four candidates, including Cornel Feruta himself from Romania, Rafael Mariano Grossi, Ambassador of Argentina to Vienna, Dr. Lassina Zerbo from Burkina Faso, Head of the CTBTO, and Ms. Marta Ziakova, President of the Nuclear Regulatory Authority from Slovakia and President of the 2018 General Conference.

- The IAEA agenda was approved without discussion or voting, including the item on “Israeli nuclear capabilities”, which was subsequently submitted by the Arab countries, despite Israel’s objection.

- The Agency’s budget for the following fiscal year was approved and amounted to $374 million in addition to $83 million as voluntary contribution for technical cooperation. The United States share for the largest percentage of contribution, the safeguards budget, which amounted to 40% of the original budget and 50% of the additional budget, while the technical cooperation programme budget amounted to less than 7%.
- The Statement of Egypt was delivered by Dr. Mohamed Shaker, Minister of Electricity and Energy, in which he addressed Egypt’s ongoing finalization of procedures for building four nuclear plants in El-Dabaa, adding that Egypt had received two delegations of IAEA experts for the Dabaa site, and another visit will be held next January. The minister also called on all countries in the Middle East to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to subject all nuclear facilities to IAEA inspection.
Ambassador/ Dr. Ezzat Saad’s Participation in the Fifth International Forum of Journalists and Bloggers from Muslim Countries Group of Strategic Vision “Russia-Islamic World”

September 25th – 28th 2019- St.Petersburg

During the period from 25th till 28th of September 2019, Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad participated in the Fifth International Forum of Journalists and Bloggers from Muslim Countries and talked in the session of “Diplomacy in the Information Age ... A Window to Good Governance”

The paper deals with the following points:

1) The definition of good governance, its relationship with diplomacy in light of the information age and the challenges it faces under Western applications, which can be described as one of the bad forms of governance, whether political or economic.

2) Standards of good governance in the information age, in connection with American practice, in particular in the era of Trump administration’s foreign policy in the Middle East.

3) Some ideas on how to be effective in the age of a modern diplomatic system.

Good and effective governance is one of the basic ways
to make a fair and effective decision according to the criteria set by the United Nations, which affirms that good governance “must be accountable, transparent, rule of law, participation, inclusiveness, legitimacy, efficiency and justice”.

The western societies are witnessing negative developments in the information age in terms of lack of good governance standards in the context of advocating isolation rather than openness, as advocated by Trump administration, unlike other countries such as Russia and China, which call for more joint efforts to promote peace and security, common development and mutual benefits under several initiatives. In this context, it has to be noted that:

- The bias of some Western media and its lack of credibility, which is reflected in the handling of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the demonstrations in the Gaza Strip.

- Unilateralism and disregard of international legal obligations, which is highlighted in the U.S. unilateral withdraw from the Iranian nuclear agreement.

Diplomacy can cope with the modern era of information by working on the concept of digital diplomacy and its tools, especially that it goes beyond the concept of using social media, working to raise the skills of diplomats, and developing a special strategy for spreading the concept and developing tools for improving and enhancing effectiveness in the new diplomatic order.
Participation of Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Karem at the Moscow Non-Proliferation Conference

Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Karem - Board member of ECFA – participated on October 8-10, 2019 at the Moscow Non-Proliferation Conference, which discussed prospects for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, the problems ensuing from the US withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal, the security situation in the Korean Peninsula, as well as the global security situation, following the US withdrawal from many agreements in the field of arms control. In addition, there was a main session that discussed the situation in the Middle East region and ways of international cooperation therein in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. There was also another session about the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the role of parliamentarians in advancing disarmament efforts.

During his speech, Ambassador Karem affirmed that the upcoming NPT Review Conference is to be held under very delicate circumstances in light of the deterioration of the global security situation as a result of the unilateral US actions, widespread manifestations of mistrust, the absence of the language of negotiation and dialogue, and the spread
of threatening sources in the world, thus endangering the existing international order, which requires dialogue and joint negotiations about the future of this order and means to overcome the current challenges.
Ambassador / Mounir Zahran’s Participation
On Amman Nuclear Forum

With the invitation of the Amman Security Forum, Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, participated in the proceedings of the Amman Security Forum, which was held in the Jordanian capital Amman on November 6th and 7th, 2019.

The conference was attended by the Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); Ayad Allawi, former Iraqi Prime Minister; Shaikh Abdulla Al Khalifa, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain; and from among the Jordanian officials, Dr. Khaled Toukan, Chairman of the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC); as well as Ali Asghar Soltanieh from Iran; Deborah Rosenblum, the Executive Vice President of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) from the United States; Undersecretary of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and a number of Arab, American and European civil society organizations, including the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA). Rafael Grossi, Argentine Ambassador to Austria and to International Organizations in Vienna, apologized after being elected Director General of
Ambassador Zahran spoke three times at the forum; he spoke on the first day on the Arab stance towards the 2020 NPT Review Conference, which will be preceded by the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, called for by UN Secretary-General, which is to be held in New York from 18th to 22nd of November 2019, and the fiftieth anniversary of the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT), and beyond; during which he explained that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) of 2017 came to fill the gap left by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) due to failure of the latter to achieve the desired goal, that is achieving denuclearization of the world; which is expected to enter into force before the end of 2020 after having been signed by 79 countries by the end of October 2019, as well as having been ratified by 33 countries. He also expressed hope that the conference, scheduled to be held in New York on the Middle East this November, would succeed, provided that Israel and the United States would participate in it, as both of them have so far announced that they will not participate in that conference, because its failure will negatively affect the 2020 NPT Review Conference success opportunities. He also called for amending the rules of procedure of the review conference in order to achieve democratic deci-
sion making by allowing a two-thirds majority vote in the event that consensus is not reached, and to allow civil society organizations to participate in the review of the treaty in all three committees of the conference, similar to what is being done in the Human Rights Council.

Dr. Khaled Toukan, Chairman of the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC), talked about the activities of the agency, especially in building nuclear reactors in Jordan; the 2020 NPT review conference; and threatened that Arab countries might withdraw from the NPT if the UN Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction fails, and if Israel does not join the treaty.

Ali Asghar Soltanieh defended Iran and his country’s stance against the sanctions imposed by the U.S. after Washington’s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal.

One of the Japanese research centres has been interested in encouraging civil society organizations to achieve nuclear disarmament and raise awareness of the risks and dangers of using nuclear weapons on the lives and health of various peoples as well as on the environment, after the unspeakable sufferings that Japan had endured as a result of the scourge of using nuclear weapons in 1945.
Participation of Mr. Fady Khalil in the regional workshop on strengthening the national implementation of UN sanctions

Member of ECFA, Mr. Fady Khalil, participated on 6-7 November 2019, in the Middle East Regional Expert Workshop organized as part of the project on ‘Strengthening Implementation and Enforcement of the Arms Embargo on North Korea’ (SAENK), Amman, Jordan. The Small Arms Survey cooperated with the Arab Institute for Security Studies in organizing the workshop in which more than 30 representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior, customs authorities, and non-governmental institutions from 12 countries in the Middle East, participated.

The SAENK project is intended to strengthen national implementation and enforcement of United Nations (UN) sanctions on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). A key element of the project is identifying and sharing best practices and lessons learned regarding the implementation and enforcement of UN sanctions at both the regional and national levels. To this end, the SAENK project organized a Middle East Regional Expert Workshop to:

(1) Raise awareness of UN arms embargoes, their func-
tions, the techniques used to evade them, and possible counter-measures.

(2) Facilitate an exchange of information on good practices and lessons learned regarding the implementation and enforcement of UN sanctions and arms embargoes.

(3) Identify effective measures to prevent, detect, and respond to attempts to circumvent UN arms embargoes.
Participation Of Ambassador/Ezzat Saad In The Middle East Security Forum Held In China

At the invitation of the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad participated in the proceedings of a forum on the topic of “Middle East Security under recent changes: opportunities and challenges”. The forum was hosted from November 26 to 28, 2019, by the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), which is the Chinese think tank directly administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China.

The forum was participated in by State figures and research centers from several states of the region including Turkey and Iran, in addition to Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Sultanate of Oman, Kuwait, and Tunisia. The following public figures were amongst those who participated (only in the opening session): Eyad Allawi, former Iraqi Prime Minister; Jawad Anani, Jordan’s former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister; Prince Turky Al-Faisal, Chairman of King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies; Ahmad Teguedy, Mauritania’s former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Ali Jarbawi, former Minister of Planning and Administrative Develop-
ment of the government of the Palestinian National Authority and Director of the Center for Researches and Studies at Birzeit University; and Hani Al-Masri, Director General of the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies (Masarat); as well as researchers and experts in Middle East security and Diplomats from the Russian Federation, France, India, Djibouti, Switzerland, Comoros, UK, EU, and the USA. Ambassadors of the states of the region were invited to attend the opening session. The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) participated in the proceedings of the forum, as the Chinese side had invited three of its members, namely, Ambassador Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council; Ambassador Mahmoud Allam, Egypt’s former Ambassador to China; and Ambassador Mohamed Hegazy, former Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs. Also, from Al-Ahram Center for political and strategic studies, Dr. Mohamed Fayez Farahat participated in this forum.

The Chinese side selected and approached an agenda that would be compliable with the Chinese vision towards Middle East disputes; so as to reach a resolution of such disputes, particularly from the perspective of President Xi Jinping’s political thought which he has expressed in various occasions, including China’s paper on its policies towards Arab states that was proposed in January 2016 at the Arab League, during his visit to Cairo, as well as his two opening speeches at the first and second Belt and Road
Forums for International Cooperation of 2017 and 2019, in addition to the report delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

It is known that China recognized the independent Palestinian state, since its declaration in 1988, based on the borders of June 4, 1967, and with East Jerusalem as its capital; as it has also, timidly, adopted two initiatives in 2016 and 2018, for settling the problem of the Israeli occupation of Palestine (known as the four point initiative; then as the five point initiative).

- The Chinese side organized a meeting, on November 27 morning prior to opening of conference proceedings, for a limited number of the participants, that included the Director of the Egyptian council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), with the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs who gave a speech in which he presented the strategic significance of the Middle East to China and its ever-growing economic and commercial relations therein, as well as his country’s special interest in the stability and security of that region, in addition to economically and socially developing its people; and that these were the reasons behind the organization of this forum by China.

The conclusion is that; while the Middle East is passing through a time of unprecedented instability state, whether this be linked to the US foreign policy regarding the Arab-
Israeli conflict, the ongoing tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, or to what is going on in each of Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon, in addition to Turkish provocations in the Middle East; China, by organizing this forum, aims at conveying a message to the states of the region that it cares for their problems, particularly with its growing economic and commercial interests in such states.
Participation of Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad in the annual meeting of “Russia- Islamic World” Strategic Vision Group

At the invitation of the Secretariat of the Strategic Vision Group (Russia- and the Islamic World), Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, Director of ECFA, participated in the annual meeting of the group on the Dialogue of Civilizations, Cultures and Religions (an Egyptian Vision), in the City of UFA (Republic of Bashkortostan, the Russian Federation) on November 28 to 30, 2019.

Ambassador Saad affirmed a number of points reflecting Egypt’s stance regarding the dialogue of civilizations and cultures. He concluded that the problem is neither civilizations nor religions, so intellectuals and the elite gather often in order to discuss the clash of civilizations or religions, without reaching any concrete results, because they do not find what they differ about. They come up with conciliatory and positive slogans and broad lines, but they are useless because they deal far from the core of the actual problem. This is attested by the fact that old accusations of Muslims and Arabs of rejecting and excluding others do not any longer exist and are totally invalid at present, after the wave of globalization and everything that
is Western extending into our societies.

It has been proven that Arabs and Muslims have a high ability to absorb and accept the others as they are, and what has been witnessed for a while so far is that the other is the one who is antagonizing Arabs and Muslims and exercises against them all human and political violations.

In this context, it should be recognized that there is a current trend in the US policy that clearly reveals a civilizational conflict against Islam and Muslims, with which talking about dialogue corresponds to surrendering, because the dialogue that will take place will be conducted on the terms of the West, according to its perceptions, and towards its ends, and because the American policy employs cultural dimensions to serve predominantly political purposes.

In this regard, one should not ignore the fact that stopping and/or decreasing the US aid to the Palestinians, which is intended for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), and all the measures and procedures that the US Administration has taken in this direction, were, through the statements of the pillars of the Trump Administration, in the words of the Trump Administration top staffers and Trump himself, the same thing, forcing the Palestinians to sit at the negotiating table and accept what is called the «Deal of the Century.»
Lecture of Amb. Mounir Zahran on “Enlightenment and modernity ... and the role of soft powers”

On 30 November 2019, in cooperation between ECFA and “the League of Arab States Friends’ Association”, Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran - Chairman of the Council, delivered a lecture on the enlightenment and modernity, at the Association’s headquarters in Mohandeseen, during which the two concepts were reviewed since the beginning of religions until the separation of the Church from the State, as well as the role of philosophers and scholars, and the role of state institutions in education, culture, media, universities, research councils and civil society organizations, each of which played an important role in the enlightenment and modernity.

The lecture tackled the following themes:

**First: an introduction**

**Enlightenment in language:**

In the “Lisan al-Arab” by Ibn Manzur and Al-Wasit dictionaries, it is stated that enlightenment is the time of the breaking of the dawn, illumination; being aware and educated. When added to prepositions, it means drawing on its
rays, and being victorious. Light also refers to guidance to the right path by God, The Almighty, as in the Holy Quran.

Second:

Enlightenment as a term:

It is the general use of the human mind in all issues, and adopting the slogan: “There is no authority over the mind except the mind,” which is the courage to use the mind, and recognizing the human’s own ability to understand, analyze and legislate. The term enlightenment in modern Arab discourse refers in general to the movement of awareness, education, and modernization that took place in the Islamic world two centuries ago.

Third:

Modernity

Modernity or modernization: The innovation and renewal of what is old, a term that appears in the cultural, intellectual and historical fields.

Dr. Zahran spoke about the beginning of modernity, how it is understood, its contemporary concept, and other details that can be found on ECFA website, under the section: Members’ Activities (with Arabic Language).
Participation of Ambassador Hisham El-Zamaity in the RDCY International Symposium on “China and the World in a New Era”

At the invitation of Renmin University of China, Ambassador Hisham El-Zamaity – Secretary-General of ECFA participated in the International Symposium organized by the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, affiliated to the university on “China and the World in a New Era”, on December 16th, 2019, in Beijing, as His Excellency participated in the second session about the importance of Chinese development to the world. He delivered a speech in which he stressed the importance for states’ relations to be based on respect for sovereign equality of nations and non-interference in their domestic affairs, which are among the principles of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law, including the commitment to peaceful resolution of disputes between countries, as well as adhering to the collective security system; this is paramount in dealing with threats to world peace and confronting all terrorist organizations without discrimination. It is also to strike a balance between them and solving the problems of economic and social development, especially since the two goals of peace and development are complementary and indivisible goals. Their realization requires effective cooperation to eradicate poverty being a way to achieve peace and development.
Participation of Ambassador Sayed Abu Zeid in a symposium on “Indonesia and Peace in the Middle East”

On December 18, 2019, Ambassador Sayed Abu Zeid, member of ECFA Board of Directors, participated in a symposium entitled “Indonesia and Peace in the Middle East”, organized jointly with the Dialogue Center for Political and Media Studies, which was attended by a large number of specialists and interested personalities, during which several valuable studies inputs were presented. The symposium tackled the following themes:

**First:** Indonesian foreign policy vis-à-vis the peace process, by Dr. Reda Helal - Political Science Professor at October Higher Institute.

**Second:** The role of Indonesia in the peace process, by Dr. Osama Khalil Shaath (Palestinian).

**Third:** The role of Indonesia in the security field in the Middle East, by Brigadier/ Khaled Fahmy - Adviser to the Center for Strategic Studies at Nasser Higher Military Academy.

The session was moderated by Dr. Mohamed Talaat, Editorial Assistant of Al-Gomhuria newspaper.

**Ambassador Abu Zeid referred to the following is-**
sues in particular:

1- What happened to the Palestinians is a historical injustice ... saluting all those who stand with them in their ordeal ... and this also applies to the occupied Syrian and Lebanese lands.

2- The United States’ positions on the final settlement issues, such as Jerusalem, refugees and settlements, as well as the Golan, are unilateral positions that are not binding to anyone but to the United States solely. This does not change the position in anything but only proves that the US is biased towards Israel and that it is a dishonest mediator.

3- The necessity of responding to the rights of the Palestinian people that came at the end of the paper submitted by Dr. Shaath, which are not only from Indonesia, but also from all countries that support peace, integrity and justice.

4- The necessity of seeking to unify the Palestinian people, as division weakens the Palestinian position, and every effort aimed at restoring unity to the Palestinians consolidates the Palestinian position.

5- Egypt spares no effort in advocating the Palestinian cause at all levels.

6- He hailed the position of the Indonesian Republic in support for the Palestinian people, especially as it is the largest Islamic country, a member of the G20 Economic Commission, and currently a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council.
Chapter V

Council’s Statements
Date: 26th March 2019

Statement on condemns the proclamation signed by U.S. President Donald Trump on Recognizing the occupied Syrian Golan Heights as Part of Israel

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) condemns in the strongest terms the proclamation signed by U.S. President Donald Trump on Recognizing the occupied Syrian Golan Heights as Part of Israel sovereignty, which is a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, in addition to the fact that the U.S. President does not possess the right nor the legal capacity to confer legitimacy to the Israeli occupation of the Syrian territories, and therefore the proclamation is absolutely null and void, and constitutes a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

ECFA affirms its full support for the position expressed by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which stresses the steadfast stance of the Arab Republic of Egypt regarding the Syrian Golan Heights, being an occupied Arab land in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions, foremost of which is UN Security Council Resolution No. 497 of 1981,
which stipulates that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect.

President Trump’s announcement and previous decisions to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and to consider the latter as the capital of Israel, is a violation of international legitimacy resolutions, as well as Washington’s announcement to cut aid to the Palestinian National Authority and stop financing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). Such measures are susceptible of threatening security and stability in the entire Middle East region, as well as providing an environment conducive of extremism and terrorism at a time when the United States had to act responsibly by virtue of its obligations, not only as a sponsor of peace, but also as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which has the responsibility to maintain international peace and security; not spreading chaos and instability in this region, due to the expansionist and racist practices of the State of Israel, which is the only military occupation state in our contemporary world, with the full support of the United States of America.
Date: 3rd of September 2019

Statement on Mourning The Death of Ambassador, Sergie Kirpichenko, of The Russian Federation to The Arab Republic of Egypt

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA), mourns with deep sorrow and profound grief, the death of Ambassador, Sergei Kirpichenko, of The Russian Federation to The Arab Republic of Egypt, who passed away on the morning of September 2, 2019;

On this sad occasion, the Council affirms its deep appreciation and gratitude to the great role played by the late Ambassador in supporting and enhancing Egyptian-Russian relations, in its various aspects, since his arrival to Cairo, during delicate circumstances, in 2011, with which a new phase of Egyptian-Russian relations began;

By virtue of the direct and continuous communication and cooperation with the Russian Embassy in Cairo, the Council recalls the characteristics of the late Ambassador in terms of his great emotions for the Egyptian people, high moral character, diplomatic professionalism, and comprehensive and accurate knowledge that were not just limited to the various aspects of issues of bilateral relations, but
also to the overall complex issues in the Arab region and Middle East;

Mourning the capable diplomat, the Council extends its deepest condolences to his honorable family, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, his friends, and devotees.
The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) condemns in the strongest terms the declaration made by the United States on 18th of November 2019 recognizing the legality of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, constituting a flagrant violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as set out in Article (2), and the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, as laid down in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The declaration also poses a challenge to the resolutions of international legitimacy issued by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, especially Security Council Resolution No. 2334 of 2016 condemning settlement activity, which called on Israel to stop settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and not to recognize any changes that Israel makes to the 1967 lines other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations. Moreover, the declaration itself represents a disavowal of the official U.S. position in 1978, which emphasized that the establishment of settlements in the West Bank is “inconsistent with international law.”
The recent U.S. declaration also provokes the sentiments of the peoples of the Arab and Islamic world as well as Muslims and Christians all over the world, it also adds more complexity to how to manage the peace process, and entrenches the blatant U.S. bias towards the Israeli side, which undermines the possibility of Washington playing the role of the neutral and honest mediator to reach a comprehensive peace settlement of the conflict in the Middle East region on the basis of a two-state solution.

Accordingly, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) reaffirms its condemnation of the U.S. declaration, and the necessity of adhering to the resolutions of international legitimacy and international law regarding the status of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank as being illegal and inconsistent with the rules of international law and relevant international resolutions.