



ECFA ' s Annual Conference 2018 Egypt and Arabs in a Changing Middle East

The Annual Conference of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs Egypt and The Arabs in a Changing Middle East

Over Two days; from 18th to 19th December 2018, The Egyptian Council for Foreign affairs held its annual conference under the title of “Egypt and the Arabs in a changing Middle East”. An elite of ambassadors, academics, researchers, and those interested in regional and global issues, participated in the conference. The conference was opened by Ambassador Dr.Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, and Ambassador Hamdy Loza, Deputy Foreign Minister for African affairs, on behalf of His Excellency Foreign Minister Mr.Sameh Shoukry.

The Council selected the topic of this year's conference, with its complex and interlacing aspects, taking into consideration the changing regional and international environment and its reflections over the situations in our Arab World; particularly, the continuation of the increasing influence of Non-Arab States (Iran- Turkey- Israel) in Arab affairs and crisis; at a time which the Arabs do not seem to have a major role in causing the ongoing changes in our region, and the Arab League, which represents the official political regional organization bringing the Arabs together, with its declining role; led to aggravation of the challenges facing the Arab Countries such as the risks of fragmentation of some States, terrorism, and many other risks threatening the Arab Na-

tional Security, which is still a controversial and divisive concept between the Arab Countries that view Iran as the main risk source threatening the regional security and Other States emphasizing that Israel, by continuing its occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands, as well as its aggressive and racist practices, constitutes the major risk that must be dealt with and confronted.

With respect to the First view point; noticeably, there is a clear diplomatic and political Israeli activity towards some states that do not find communication with Israel a drawback, based on its being in the same ditch as such states are; against Iran.

In addition to the aforementioned; the roles played by the major powers in what is taking place in the Arab region are obvious and cannot be ignored. These are mostly conflictive competitive roles taking new military and economic forms. The matter here is not only related to the changes in US foreign policy towards the region's problems; of which the most prominent was Washington's shameful irresponsible position on the Arab-Israeli conflict; but also to the roles played by the other major powers (Russia- China- EU), as each is working to advance its own interests which might not necessarily match the interests of the region's states, or their security and stability needs.

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Editorial

The Arabs and getting out of the arc of crisis

Continuing to the meetings which be held at ECFA Headquarter within the framework of Activities of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs to discuss the issues in the Arab World from its various dimensions, and reached to integrated vision in favour of our Arab World.

Secretary General of the Arab league, Mr.Ahmed Abul Gheit, presented his vision in a lecture which the council organized under the title of "International developments and their reflections on the Arab World", Wherein he presented a comprehensive and profound view on the topic of his lecture in such a way that presents an objective, political, and scientific diagnosis of the Arab issues.

His lecture was preceded by a meeting of the Permanent Committee for Arab Affairs at the Council for formulating a number of ideas to be presented to and discussed with Secretary General Mr.Ahmed Abul Gheit focusing on the current Arab situation, and the challenges facing it internally and externally.

Such a circle was then completed by holding the Council's annual conference under the title of "Egypt and the Arabs in a changing Middle East" in which an elite of ambassadors, academics, researchers, who interested in regional and global affairs were invited to participate in the conference's Four Sessions over Two days which delving into the depth of the circumstances through which the Arab World is passing and the internal, regional, and external influences surrounding them, was conducted.

As such issues and crisis to which the Arabs are exposed to, were supposed to be taken control of and resolved by the stakeholders; the Arabs themselves, but what is really happening is the intrusion of international and regional powers into the arena of their vital field, to manage such crisis in favour of their interests which would increase the complexity of the crisis and prolong its duration in a process of attrition of the power and energy of the states suffering from such crisis.

There is no disputing that there are internal causes that established the circumstances for creating these crisis, but it is known that there was a prior planning seeking, since long time, to destabilization of Arab states and the spread of chaos therein. Therefore, any external power presenting itself as having the solution to these issues and crisis would be playing a deceptive role as the one who created the problem is never fit to be the one solving it.

The role of such external powers in creating these crisis in the region is not far away from us and that is what was known as surrounding the Arab World with an "arc of crisis" which is the expression admitted by senior officials such as James Baker, former US Secretary of State, at a conference, that was held in 1997, in which all US Secretaries of State have participated, and when it was time for Henry Kissinger to give his speech he referred to the same term; "Arc of Crisis".

Now, we have regional powers, having similar roles, including Israel as well as Turkey which did not hesitate to let its army invade Arab territories in Syria and Iraq.

If the Arab world is facing numerous challenges of which the most important are the attempts to marginalize Arab role in their most particular issues, and to withdraw the control of these issues from Arab hands and transfer it to foreign hands; so that is what their regional system, represented by the Arab League, is being exposed to, as well; for years, foreign powers have been lying in wait for the Arab League, aiming at diminishing its role in favour of projects bearing other names, aiming at integrating Non-Arab States in such proposed entities, of which the latest was proposing the idea of "The Union of the Mediterranean", and which was preceded by similar ideas that were known as "a regional system including Israel" and before that was the "Greater Middle East Project" that had among its objectives the reduction of the region's Arab identity and issues, to be within a broader framework, including states that extend geographically from Afghanistan, in the East, to the Arab Maghreb, in the West; and that was the project whose lines were laid down by the Neo-Conservatives, under George Bush, who completely adopt Israel's policies.

Thus the Arab States were under continuous plans aiming at besieging and penetrating their strategic and vital sphere, which represents a threat to the national security of all Arab States with no exception. So the Arab League must receive a look of awareness and vigilance from all its members as it is their regional inclusive framework expressing their identity; so as to be able to fail the plans of surrounding it with crisis and chaos, and to be the natural and original player with respect to the issues and interests that are related to the Arabs.

The Editor



Egyptian Council
for Foreign Affairs

Secretary General of the Arab League Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit analyze the “International developments and its impact on the Arab World”

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, on the 22nd of October 2018, hosted H.E. Secretary General of the Arab League Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit for giving a lecture on “ International developments and its impact on the Arab World”. The session was attended by elites of ambassadors, academics, and experts in the field of foreign affairs. This session was opened by Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, Chair of the Council.

During this lecture, Secretary General dealt with the unprecedented risks which the international order is passing during the current stage. He stressed that global situations are passing through a state of massive liquidity and rapid change, as well as witnessing the return of conflict between the Super Powers, and erosions in the stable rules upon which established the Post- World War II Order. He also added that synergies between various phenomenon such as the rise of right wing trends and the return of nationalism in their extreme forms alarm of forthcoming turbulence, and that other phenomenon as climate change and the increased dependence on artificial intelligence applications, might get out of control and increase the state of liquidity and uncertainty .

His Excellency Secretary General also made reference to the tragic phase that the Arab World is going through, and the state of Arab world is suffering from division and fragmentation which makes it incap-



Secretary General of the Arab League Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit In the Lecture in the Council on “International Developments and its impact on the Arab World” 22nd of Oct. 2018

able of dealing effectively with the serious challenges that the global situation poses in the future. He also added that the Arab League still represents the only framework through which the Arabs can discuss their problems and deal with jointly. But Absence of political will as well as the weak support offered by the States sometimes reduce its margin of activities and effectiveness in dealing with the challenges and risks facing the Arab World, particularly at the strategic level, pointing out that in spite of all of this, the Arab League continues to play its role through the pursuit of full integration and coordination between the Arab States in the economic, social and cultural policies.

The Ideas were discussed by the Permanent Committee of the Arab Affairs about the situations in the Arab Region

the Permanent Committee on Arab Affairs met on 11th of October 2018, in the context of generation of ideas that are expected to be developed for presentation and discussion with Mr. Ahmed Abou-elGheit, the Secretary General of the Arab league at the meeting that was scheduled on 22nd of October 2018, the meeting in presence of experts and specialists on Arab affairs.

In this meeting the Committee reviewed numbers of Ideas as follows:

- Regarding the International and Arab environments, they affirmed on the critical and unprecedented period witnessed by the Arab Region, as well as the challenges faced by the Arab world, also the consequences of the American attitude towards the Palestinian issue following the decision of transferring the American Embassy to Jerusalem and closure of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Office in Washington as well as the reduction and cutting off of the aids to “UNRWA” ,not only that, but even staying silent towards the aggressive actions committed by Israel, and moreover the tensions that Saudi relations witness with numerous world powers following the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

-Challenges facing the Arab League have been reviewed as well as carrying out discussions on the developments that the Arab League requires and the impacts restricting the ability of the Arab league to take positions concerning current Arab issues.

- Also discussing the Regional and Arab attitude within the framework of the Arab-Israeli conflict and role of the Arab League in standing up against and countering Israeli violations.

- The need for a more effective Egyptian policy to counter the failure of some of the Arab powers in taking positions for pacifying the situations in the region.

- The need for beginning a different Arab attitude in dealing with Tehran through providing platforms for a dialogue with Iran and to stop adopting the Anti-Iranian Saudi policy that fuels the sectarian conflicts in the region.

- The necessity for caution regarding the Israeli infiltration in Africa, as such this infiltration in African resulted to support Israeli targets and interests in numerous International platforms, that included abstaining from voting on the UN resolution with respect to the International community's condemnation of the American decision to transfer the American Embassy to Jerusalem.

The Major Powers and Their Changing Vision toward the Middle East

During the couple of days over which the Four sessions of the annual conference of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) were held, Speakers put forward their visions and analyses on the reality of what is going on in the Arab region, the role of the major powers, as well as that of the regional powers, and also that of the Arab States. Then the Fourth session tackled the topic of "Egypt and Regional Issues".

About Twenty Speakers participated in the Four sessions including Ambassadors; Mounir Zahran, Abdel Rouf El- Reedy, Ezzat Saad, Mohamed Tawfik, Raouf Saad, Ali El-Hefiny, Hussain Hassouna, Abdel Rahman Salah, Hazem Khairat, Sayed Abou Zeid, and Salah Halima. Experts and intellectuals who participated in this conference were Aliy El-Din Helal, Bahgat Korani, Niveen Mosaad, Amr El-Shobaky, Mohamed El-Saeed Edris, Shireen Shams, Gamal Abdel Gawad, Wahid Abdel Mageed, and Hassan Abou Taleb.

Firstly: In the First session the participants presented their vision which viewed that what to be detected from; both the US National Security and National Defense documents issued in December 2017 and January 2018; is that the relative significance of the Middle East region as a whole, including the priority of countering international terrorism, has diminished. The axis of US policy in the Middle East has shifted from the Arab-Israeli conflict to a conflict of the Saudi-Gulf-Israeli side against Iran; a development which is not surprising as it has been gradually crystallized over the last years and decades so that it became an officially announced policy.

However, that does not mean a full US withdrawal from the Middle East but trends toward preserving US interests with a lower cost, Even if this led to giving up certain spheres of influence that are considered marginal by Washington or abandonment of regimes and political groups that are allied to the US. Protection of Israel's security remains a priority issue in Washington's policy in the region, as well as guaranteeing gas and oil supplies from the region to US allies in Asia and other areas at reasonable prices, and preserving the security of waterways in the region; primarily Suez Canal, in addition to preventing the extension of Chinese and Russian influence in the region.

In light of that all, the US still has military presence in Iraq and possesses military bases in the Gulf and the Red Sea, whereas these bases provided logistic support to forces of the Allies in Yemen.

The US role, to get the Arab region out of liquidity it is currently facing at all levels, is unreliable. Although the US still remains the world's and the region's dominant super power, having huge capabilities and great potential, several internal determinants have negatively affected its role in the Middle East and made the prediction of US reaction more difficult and less accurate. It is no more possible to count on the US concept of peace in our region after having the goal of rearranging it in order to ensure the inclusion of Israel and Turkey, take advantage of the region's wealth, particularly the Gulf region, and weakening its states so as to make them dependent states in their decisions and policies.

With respect to Russian foreign policy in the region as it represents a significant factor in the equation of Russia-US relations; whereas Moscow seems to be keen to restore the role of the super power in the region, particularly after the Ukrainian crisis and annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the resulting US and European sanctions that aimed at imposing global isolation on Russia. Moscow has returned back with a different face from that of the Soviet one, so that the Middle East became the region where Russian policy has, at least, a tactic advantage making it different from Western policies. No doubt that military interference in the Syrian Crisis last September 2015 that was brought about as a Russian reaction toward the Western attitude from the Ukrainian Crisis; marking a milestone in the Russian policy in the region. In addition, its being the first time for Russian forces to fight outside the former Soviet territories since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has succeeded with great skill to overcome the diplomatic isolation it found itself in, after the annexation of Crimea, through playing the Middle East card.

However, Russian military interference in Syria remains an exception to

Russian policy toward the region's problems as it has avoided, interference in conflicts of the region, sometimes even if diplomatic.

While the Russian role in the region is condemned and considered to be opportunistic by the EU and the US. Great openness and a cooperative more than a competitive or a conflictive nature characterize Russian policy in the region. As the Russians have always emphasized that there is no alternative to international collective efforts for solving regional and international problems.

As Russia's relation with the US and the EU in the region, in its entirety, is characterized by competitiveness; on the contrary China stands out as a major power that firmly stands politically with Russia. It is noticeable here, the relation of the Two powers with the region, that China seems to be satisfied by letting Russia play the leading role in the Middle East, as well as recognizing Russian interests in Syria. As is the case with Russia, China's foreign policy is characterized by an obvious extent of balance between various parties; a position dictated by China's national security considerations and supreme interests.

After China has become the Premier trade power and the Second largest world economic power, It started seeking engagement in international affairs and actively participating in multilateral institutions through proposing regional and international initiatives of which the most prominent was "The Belt and The Road Initiative". Beijing has put forward Its vision of the Arab-Chinese relations and Its strategy towards the Arab region in a paper submitted by the Chinese President during a meeting with representatives of the Arab States at the headquarters of the Arab league on the margins of his visit to Cairo in January 2016, inviting these states to join "The Belt and The Road Initiative" and promoting the relations with his country on the basis of joint interests and mutual benefits; considering that the region is central to the initiative.

Indeed, the participants in the Conference had no difference in views on the fact that the Twenty First century is perfectly an Asian century after the space between China and the US has been narrowed in numerous fields. However, certain related questions have been raised before; what would happen when China becomes the First global economic power, and whether it is going to be militarily so, as well?, how would the US and the West react to that, and how would China deal with the developing countries then?

Regarding the role of the European Union (EU) and the styles governing its relations with the other major powers in the region; the declining role of the US in the region has been in favor of the role of the EU that is witnessing a rise due to its huge economic and commercial interests in the region, including cooperation in the field of energy so as to reduce the EU States' dependency on Russian gas, and in order to address the challenges related to refugees, illegal migration, transnational crime, as well as the Libyan and the Syrian crisis, and the Iranian nuclear issue. There is continuous coordination and consultation on these issues between Egypt and the EU. The EU seeks confirming its worth and significance in light of Britain's departure out of the Union next March, as well as the rise of populist and right-wing extremist trends in several European countries raising doubts on the survival of the EU and promoting the concept of national identities against that of the Union and its objectives.

The regional and international organizations are playing a significance and positive role in dealing with regional issues cannot be underestimated; there are UN Peace keeping forces and UN peace missions in a number of Arab States. With respect to the Arab League; all major Arab initiatives such as the Arab Free Trade Zone took place within its frame, and an Arab development summit to be held in Beirut on January 2019. Thus implying that, it is still of importance in the attempts for Arab reunion. In this context, both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, in particular, as being influential in the region must take reform and corrective initiatives within the league, to attract the rest of the member states to adopt such initiatives; let this be on issues such as the sustainable development, climate, and human rights, but first and foremost is the exertion of constructive efforts in order to settle inter-states differences in the region.



How to restore the political balance in the region in favor of the Arab States?

During the last three sessions; discussions were held on regional issues, the role of the regional powers, the role of the Arab States, and the real opportunities for Egypt's foreign policy to be in favor of the Arabs.

During the Second session's discussions on the role of regional powers:

Based on the participants, assessment, the political balance in the region is not in favor of the Arab countries at the moment, but rather in the hands of the neighboring Non-Arab countries (Iran, Turkey and Israel). And that each of the US, Israel, Turkey and Iran want the steadfastness of the Mid-East regime at the expense of the Arab system, which would lead to marginalization and dilution of the Arab identity in favor of the Mid-East regime.

The chances of settling the Palestinian issue through a process of negotiations face a serious challenge in light of the Trump administration's full acceptance of the vision of the Israeli right that totally denies considering the rights of the Palestinian people as national rights. In spite of the settlement policies of Israel and their related procedures in Jerusalem and the Haram Al-Sharif itself, and the encouragement of successive Israeli governments to divide and split Palestinian entities; the normalization of Arab States with Israel, particularly the Gulf States, is no longer related to a just settlement with the Palestinians. Hence, the conference emphasized the need to restore the Palestinian issue to its position in the hierarchy of priorities, as the central and main Arab issue, which is to be achieved through collective Arab effort, in addition to the importance of reviewing the management process of the Arab-Israeli conflict and extracting the policies that have led to positive results in favor of the Palestinian issue. In this context, the achievement of Palestinian national reconciliation must be accelerated and the Egyptian efforts to accomplish it must be strongly supported.

The necessity for communication with Iran and Turkey has been looked at as well as it was pointed out to by some speakers. Whereas diplomacy was found to deal with both friends and enemies alike, and that cutting off communications between two «Central States» in the region was not in the favor of Egypt; therefore, the Egyptian state may allow some sort of a second track diplomacy through a reliable civilian body to communicate with these two states without informing or announcing, and the role that can be played by businessmen in this regard has been mentioned here.

During the Third session's discussions on the role of the Arab States:

The Arab States seem to be surrounded by different forms of penetration, influence, pressure, and blackmail. The region as well witnesses the emergence and promotion of sub-ethnic identities. This necessitates respecting all sub-cultures, such as the Kurds, that are present in the region. The cultural rights that the Arabs claim for themselves must therefore be fully guaranteed to such sub-ethnic identities as long as they remain an integral part of Arab States.

Declining African and international support to Arab issues has been noted. This requires reviewing some of the Arab rhetoric to make it acceptable to the regional and international communities.

It is important to exert efforts for clearing the air over differences and disputes among Arab States, and putting forward a clear vision on the definition of Arab national security concept and the real nature of the challenges and threats faced by Arab States.

During the Fourth session's discussions on Egypt and regional issues:

It was agreed upon that major powers, in some instances, do not look at the Arab States individually but as a group of countries in a particular geographic area such as the Gulf region, the Arab Mashreq, or the Maghreb region. Hence, one of the options that Egypt has is to present itself within a frame of collective position which would seem difficult under the existing circumstances, and the other option is to present itself as an influential element that can exert pressure over the collective position.

Egypt's influence and the significant regional role it has; necessarily



Part from ECFA 's Annual Conference 18th &19th Dec. 2018

requires having the ability to afford that, in both material or human terms, for such role. Speakers emphasized here that the main challenges faced by Egypt are; the economic and social development process, accelerating the economic recovery through implementation of its reform programme, and achieving high growth rates for several consecutive years without depletion of resources which would allow maintaining equal and balanced relations with other states, even if they were allies, and also to speak from a position of strength. In this context, it was pointed out that despite the difficulties and the events the Egyptian state has faced in recent years, it is still the most acceptable state among the Arab peoples, and the influence it has over the states of the region is not limited to official and media channels, but also through unofficial popular channels which are many.

Negative developments taking place regionally and internationally offer to the Egyptian foreign policy real opportunities for the contribution to the reunification of Arabs and to clear the air through rational policies emphasizing the concepts of the national state in the face of sectarianism, and dealing cautiously with the initiatives that might be proposed by the US administration in such uncertain circumstances.

With respect to countering terrorism, the conference focused on three main axes of interest to the Egyptian policy: military and security confrontation, cultural and intellectual confrontation, and coordination with other states in countering terrorism. The greatest success achieved so far is mainly noticed in the first axis, ie; the military and security confrontation, and it is also possible to say that coordination with other parties in the face of terrorism has achieved great success. But the second axis of cultural and intellectual confrontation was less successful, despite its great importance.

Regarding Egypt and the Arab future; President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi expressed Egypt's vision in this regard since 2014, which is based on the following main elements:

- Egypt views that the future of the Arab world is related to arriving at a comprehensive Arab security strategy.
- Facing external threats.
- The Arab League to remain; as the institution of the Arab system, the umbrella, and the framework that plays an essential role in activating the Arab agreements, arriving at the economic integration, and also achieving the comprehensive Arab security strategy.

In the context above, and at the level of the movement, Egypt currently believes that there is no so-called sole leadership of the Arab regional system, but a collective leadership necessitating a sort of coordination and prioritization with the active States.

It is understood that the participation of the Arab states in shaping their future is of particular importance, although the current situations do not suggest the availability of a collective political will to repulse external interventions in the region. Thence, the Arab countries bear the responsibility of what is happening; and that is the case as with all Arab crisis.

Visits of Foreign Delegations to the Council:

A Visit by a Delegation of The China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)

Within the framework of exchange visits and strategic partnership that brings the Council and its partners in China, particularly the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), a delegation of the China Institutes paid a visit to Cairo within the period of 15th to 18th October 2018 . The visiting included business dinner and discussions were held on Tuesday 16th October 2018. The Council's delegation included Ambassadors/ Dr. Mounir Zahran; Chairman of the Council, Dr. Ezzat Saad; Director of the Council, Hisham Al-Zamaity; Secretary General of the Council, Ali Al-Hefiny; Coordinator of the Permanent Committee for Asian Affairs in the Council, Dr. Mohamed Tawfik and Magdy Amer; members of the Council, while the Chinese delegation included each of : Prof. Liao Baizhi; Deputy Director of the Institutes, Mr. Gong Zheng and Ms. Tang Tianbo; Researchers at the institutes.

The discussion agenda included a number of



Delegation from CICIR During their visit to the Council 16th of Oct.2018

themes as follows:

- Development of Egyptian- Chinese bilateral relations following President Al-Sisi's recent visit for the attendance of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Results of China- Africa cooperation during the forum, as well as the latest developments with regards to the Belt and Road Initiative and American foreign policy and Regional Issues.

- Korean Delegation in the Round table to discuss the Situation in Korean Peninsula



Round Table on "the Current Situation in the Korean Peninsula" 23rd of Oct.2018

On 23rd October 2018, the Council hosted a Round Table discussion on " Current Situations in the Korean Peninsula" in collaboration with the Korean Embassy in Egypt. Participants included Ambassador/ Dr.Mounir Zahran; Chairman of the Council, Ambassador/ Dr.Ezzat Saad; Director of the Council, and a number of the Council's members. Delegation from the Korean Embassy included the Korean Ambassador to Cairo Mr.Yoon Yeocheo and a number of the Korean Embassy's members in Cairo.

Themes of the meeting included the following

points:

- The USA-North Korean relations and developments with respect to the setting up of a "Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) – Free Korean peninsula" which was spoken on by Prof. KIM Hyun-Wook, Professor at the National Diplomatic Academy in South Korea, who affirmed that the Year 2018 witnessed noticeable developments with respect to the toning down of rhetoric between the two sides and holding the USA-Korean Summit that was hosted by Singapore which the two parties appeared as if they were pursuing to find a more peaceful alternative, abandon the established sanctions regime, the setting up of a "Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) - Free Korean peninsula", and reach a full irrevocable agreement.

- As to the developments related to the signing of the Peace Agreement between both Koreas, spoke Mr.Kim Jihoon; Deputy Head of the Department of Policy Planning at the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who affirmed that peace efforts between both sides were called for it by South Korea with the aim of creating comprehensive peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

A Meeting with Argentina's Ambassador to Cairo



Ambassador/ Eduardo Antonio Varela During his meeting with ECFA's members to talk on Several Issues 25th Oct.2018

On the 25th of October 2018, The Council received, with the participation of Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran; Chairman of the council, Ambassador/ Dr.Ezzat Saad; Director of the Council, and a number of experts and academics from amongst the members of the Council, His Excellency Ambassador/ Eduardo Antonio Varela, Argentina's Ambassador to Cairo.

During the meeting, a number of issues related to Argentina's internal economic situation and governmental procedures taken to combat such social and economic crisis, aiming at the reduction of debt ratios, domestic consumption, inflation ratios, and promotion of the rates of investment, were reviewed.

As regards Egypt-Argentina bilateral relations, His Excellency emphasized upon the political and economic relations that bring both countries together as well as the continuous talks between both sides for discussing the political situations and the crisis that the region witnesses, expressing his hopes for a comprehensive strategic dialogue to be launched by both countries with the objective of deepening cooperation fields between both of them.

A Meeting with the Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum Delegation



Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum during their visiting to the Council, 10th of Dec.2018

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs received on the 10th of December 2018, at its headquarters, a delegation from The Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum. The Delegation was headed by His Excellency Ambassador Li Chengwen, who was accompanied by a number of Representatives of the Chinese Embassy in Cairo; as a part of a his current visit to the region that included Mauritania, Tunisia, and Egypt.

The Egyptian Delegation included each of Their Excellencies: Ambassador Dr.Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the council; Ambassador Dr.Ezzat saad, Director of the Council; Ambassador Hisham El-Zamaity, Secretary General of the Council; Ambassador Ali El-Hefiny, Coordinator of the Council's Permanent Committee of Asian Affairs; Ambassador Dr.Mohamed Badr ElDeen Zaied and Ambassador Magdy Amer, Council's members.

The meeting included the discussion of a number of topics as follows:

- Chinese position towards the Sino-Arab cooperation, the Belt and Road Initiative, highlighting the developments witnessed by the Middle East region.

Both the Egyptian and Chinese sides shall seek the promotion of economic and security cooperation, information exchange, and also cooperation within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative for achieving development in the African Continent as well as in the region as a whole.

A Discussion Symposium on Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry's Book "In The Backstage of Press and Politics: One's Own Experience"



A symposium to Discuss Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry's Book On "In the Backstage of Press and Politics: One's Own Experience" 18th of Nov. 2018

A session was held, at The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs on Sunday, November 18th, 2018, for discussing Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry's Book published, under the title of "In The BackStage of Press and Politics", by The General Egyptian Book Organization (GEBO).

The book comprises a preface, 6 chapters, in addition the conclusion, the First Three chapters speaking on his experience in the press, as well as on the journalistic and political life in Egypt since The Abdel Nasser era, passing through Sadat's, and then arriving at Mubarak's with reference to censorship, while the Fourth and Fifth chapters focus on the secrets and their vaults in the U.S, and the Sixth chapter on his return to Egypt after ending his mission in the U.S, as well as to his post-Mubarak experience since the 2011 revolution and the overlap between press and politics including The Brotherhood era until the June 30th revolution.

Mr. Atef Al-Ghamry reviewed his book which represents the harvest of his own experience for more than 50 years since the early Sixties of the last century under 5 Presidents of the Republic.

The author begins by giving a realistic picture on the professionalism by which the press was characterized, and how bonds were established between the newspaper and the reader when the reader finds the same ideas that were going on his mind on the previous day therein as he reads his news paper in the morning. Whereas the pages of the newspaper did not just bear mere words put down on papers; but at that time, each news paper was a press school by itself characterized by a distinct identity and a unique individuality.

The author presents the harvest of his experience by working under the chairmanship of press leaders, such as Mustafa and Ali Amin, Musa Sabri, Ihsan Abdul Qudus (at Akhbar El Yom newspaper), and then Mohammed Hassanein

Heikal at Al-Ahram news paper, and each one of them having his vision, thought, experience, and position.

He quotes facts from the backstage that are far away from the reader's eyes, such as the relationship of Ihsan Abdul Qudus with Sadat, during which he maintained his independent personality.

The author then moved to Al-Ahram news paper and the events that took place in its backstage including the interview made by a group of Al-Ahram authors with Gaddafi whom he had asked to meet, the logicless and reasonless dialogues that took place in that meeting, and the interviews made by the author with Dr. Murad Ghaleb in which he narrated his meeting with Abdel Nasser at his home days after the 1967 defeat, what Abdel Nasser said about the defeat, and what he intended to do politically and militarily following that defeat.

The book as well included a highlight on the relationship of each of Abdel Nasser and Sadat with the press.

The author then moved to the period during which he worked as the Director of Al-Ahram offices in Britain and the US. He narrated facts mainly related to Egypt. Then he searched the vaults of secrets in the US where he found documents on the involvement of the US with Israel in the 1967 war, as well as an official confession by the US that Israel was on the brink of defeat, in the 1973 war, had it not been for the US military rescue to Israel.

Having worked as a White House reporter, he narrated the details of the relationship of the US Presidents with the press and Journalists. After 7 years, following his return to Egypt, he faced the experience of the fall of the press into the grip of "lack of professionalism" as the Brotherhood tightened their grip over Al-Ahram and masked the newspaper's identity.

Then he concludes the chapters of the book by the commencement of a transitional phase by the press after January 25th and June 30th as well as the official media's accession as a partner to the written press.

The Participation of the Council's members

Ambassador Dr.Mounir Zahran at The Eleventh Session of Amman Security Forum:

At the invitation of the forum, Ambassador Dr.Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Council, took part in the work of Amman security Forum , from 23rd of April to 4th of May 2018, with the participation of Ambassador Dr.Mahmoud Karem, Board Member, and Mr.El-Sayed El-Ghannam, First Secretary at The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Disarmament Affairs Department. The Forum addressed a number of regional and international topics that are specific to the region, as well as the disarmament, non-proliferation, and terrorism agenda.

Themes addressed by the Forum included; the report of the Committee of Arab Experts on the “establishment of a Middle East Free zone from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”, which was submitted to the Arab Foreign Ministers and then to the Arab summit that was held at the Dead sea in Jordan on April 2017; as well as issues related to the “Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)”.

Ambassador Zahran emphasized, during his speech, the need to work towards achieving the success of the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear weapons, through the preparatory committees, through the following:

A- Accelerating the establishment of a Middle East Free Zone from Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) before holding the Conference.

B- Requesting all Region States that have not yet acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); to deposit their instruments of ratification at the Security Council through the United Nation's (UN) Secretary General before Review Conference in 2020, so as to provide that Conference with opportunities of success.

C- Review and amendments to the Conference's Rules of Procedures so that decisions are made by a two-thirds majority according to Article XVIII of the UN Charter, and also allowing Civil Society Organizations to participate in all Deliberations, Committees, and Preparatory Committees of the Conference, under all aspects of the Treaty, along the same lines as practiced at the Human Rights Council.

Ambassador Dr.Ezzat Saad at The Ceremonial Celebration of “The Russian Statesman and Academician, Yevgeny Primakov”

At the invitation of the Russian Embassy in Cairo, Ambassador Dr.Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, took part in the Ceremonial Unveiling of the Bust of the Russian Statesman and academician Yevgeny Primakov on October 14th , 2018. During his intervention; His Excellency mentioned that he came to know the late academician Yevgeny Primakov, at the beginning of his work as Ambassador of Egypt to the Russian Federation, in the winter of 2006, at the kind invitation of a common friend, Journalist Samy Emara. His friendship with Primakov was an extension to years of working in Moscow and working closely with him, whether within the framework of his initiative “The Russia- Islamic World Strategic Vision Group” or as President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation.

He said that Late Primakov represented the voice of the Middle East, particularly the Arab Region, in Russia; as he was the person who was most able to know the regional issues, orientations of events, and policies therein, from an objective perspective consistently caring for the common interests of those states with his country, Russia.

The Late academician wrote numerous books on the region and its issues, representing a key reference for those who would like to stand over the region's problems, including:

“The Middle east: the Known and the Hidden”, or “The Middle East on Stage, and Behind the Scenes”, “Years in Major Politics”, “Egypt in the age of President Abdel-Nasser”, “Anatomy of the Middle East Conflict”, “The World without Russia”, “The World after 11 September and Invasion of Iraq”, “The East after the collapse of the Colonial System”, and others.

Primakov was keen, in his book “The Middle East on stage and behind the scenes” whose First edition appeared in 2006 under the title of “The Middle east: the known and the hidden”, before the publication of many further editions in several Arab Capitals, to review the events of the past through what is somewhat similar to commandments by which he aimed to rationalize present time steps for seeking a better future for his country and the world. This emerged from the cumulative experience and the lessons gained over several centuries since the Sixties of last century which has witnessed the beginning of his association with the region as a correspondent for the Pravda news paper that represented the mouthpiece of the Soviet Communist Party in Cairo; the City within which he came to be linked to the most important political symbols in Egypt and the Arab World.

Participation of Ambassador Dr.Ezzat Saad in The Work of the Fourth Session of The “Russia and The Islamic World: A Strategic Partnership” Group

At the invitation of Presidents of the Russian Republics of Tatarstan and Dagestan, Ambassador Dr.Ezzat Saad, Director of the Council, participated in the Fourth session of the “Russia and the Islamic World: A Strategic Partnership” Group which was held from 11th to 13th November 2018 in a resort on the Caspian Sea Coast in the Russian Republic of Dagestan located in the southwest of Russia.

As the first speaker during his participation in the work of the First session, he made a speech referring to the great role undertaken by the Egyptian Government, under the personal auspices of President of the Republic, to empower youth; whether through the organization of the World Youth Forum which held its Second session from 3rd to 6th November, 2018, or through the decision of establishing “the National academy” for qualifying youth and government employees for taking on leading positions; pointing out the possible utilization of Egypt's experience in such field by the Strategic partnership Group .



Turkey's tactics to circumvent the Arab region on Symposium «Turkey... at the Crossroads»



Part from Seminar on “Turkey... at the Crossroads” 5th of Nov.2018

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs held, on the 5th of November 2018, a symposium with the title of “Turkey... at the crossroads” which was attended by a distinct elite of Diplomats, Academics, and Researchers. This symposium was opened by Chairman of the Council, Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran. Speeches were given in this symposium by Ambassadors/ Dr. Ezzat Saad, Dr. Mohamed Badr-El-Deen, and Abdel Rahman Salah, as well as Professor/ Mohamed Kemal (Professor at the Faculty of Economics and political Science, Cairo University), on Turkey's relations with the Major Powers and the Arab Region, as well as on its internal situations and bilateral relations with Egypt.

In general, the symposium addressed the Turkish steps to circumvent the Arab region and its techniques to regain the glories of the Ottoman Empire in controlling the region particularly through interference in the internal affairs of Arab Countries of which first and foremost are its interference in the Syrian crisis, its support for the Muslim Brotherhood, and its support for the State of Qatar that sponsors terrorism and Hamas Movement, in addition to seeking military presence in a number of Arab States, of which the most significant are Sudan and Libya.

The symposium was concluded with a number of recommendations, but within the context of two points of view that prevailed over the discussions:

The First: This point of view adopts an open vision towards Turkey based on establishing a non-official and unannounced dialogue between Egyptian and Turkish Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) that are closely related to the of-

ficial circles in both countries, as well as establishing a similar dialogue between the Egyptian and Turkish business communities. The dialogue may aim at settling down matters of disagreements and disputes between both countries.

The Second: This point of view originates from the presence of an Egyptian-Turkish strategic contradiction as the Turkish side continues to show lack of responsiveness- not even partially- to the requisites of The Egyptian national security, particularly adopting a hostile approach to the Egyptian State and policies, attempting to play a leading role in the region through the forces of Political Islam, and supporting hostile interventional policies in a number of Arab countries. Therefore, Egypt must follow active policies as an attempt for the containment of Turkish trends, as well as adopting an external and internal political and media discourse stating that continuation of such policies by Turkey shall support tension, instability, and extremism in the region and the world. This point of view supports as well the enhancement of strategic partnership between Egypt and both Greece and Cyprus. The management of this file shall be made with great caution. Despite that, this point of view has no objection as to opening calm dialogue channels with Turkey at proper and calculated timings that shall be preceded by informing Turkey that its regional weight and economic interests shall be in a better condition in case it abandons its escalational hostile policies towards Egypt with the emphasis on the necessity of avoidance of opening such channels in a context that would be perceived as if there was any Egyptian urgency to establish relations with Turkey.

Palestinian Characters Discussed the Developments in the Palestinian arena, at the Council



Round table Discussion on "Developments in the Palestinian arena, Chances for the National Reconciliation Process within the Peace Process" 28th of Nov.2018

A round table discussion on the developments in the Palestinian arena, chances for the national reconciliation process, and ideas and initiatives related to such issues with respect to the peace process, was held at the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs' Headquarter on 28th November 2018 with the participation of Major General Mohamed Al-Masry who is the Director of the Palestinian Center for Strategic Studies in Ramallah together with Professor Ahmad Rafik who is Professor of Political Sciences at Al-Quds University and a group of Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs members,.

The discussion included three levels:

1-The Palestinian level which includes two points: the First one is related to the current division among Palestinian Parties and the Second related to building of the political system as a entire structure that can protect the Palestinian Issue.

2-The Palestinian-Israeli level which is not considered to be a part of the Arab-Israeli conflict any more but basically a Palestinian-Israeli conflict due to a number of reasons of which the most significant are: the signing a number of states (Jordan and Egypt) peace treaties with Israel by, progression of Arab region towards normalization with Israel, and the Israeli internal changes as reflected by the rise of the extreme right.

3-The international level and what is being said on "The Deal of the Century" and the at-

tempts made by the U.S. to pass it amid international concern about other issues related to countering terrorism and illegal migration.

- The discussion was concluded with emphasis on the presence of political personages who do not want to achieve reconciliation and resolution of tension among peoples of the same nation.

- The Palestinian Authority probably sees that the solution does not in the 2011 document but in the 2017 document. And the Egyptian Leadership is now working on reconciling visions of both documents.

- The decision of boycotting U.S. Administration was wrong, and it would have been better off to reject the proposed solution without boycotting.

- Both parties have erred and the past must be forgotten starting from today as there are major hazards threatening the Palestinian issue, which are of greater importance than Fatah and Hamas, and facing such hazards requires cooperation between both parties.

- The Arabs must be aware that Israel is not just the enemy of Palestine alone, and the Arab Countries must unite on the basis of an Arab project as there is an Arab peace agreement that we can proceed from in negotiations with Israel as this Entity is not only a risk to Palestine alone but to all states of the region, where Egypt comes first as Egypt is the largest, leading, and most well-armed state in the region.

Symposium on “The Developments in the Horn of Africa and The Red Sea Region”

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with Egypt/ Africa Center at the British University in Egypt, organized a symposium on Monday 3rd December 2018 under the title of “Developments in the Region of The Horn of Africa and Security of the Red Sea”. A distinct elite of Intellectuals, Diplomats, Academics, and Business Men participated in this symposium. This symposium was held at a time when the Red Sea Surroundings are witnessing rapid and qualitative developments that would affect the security of the sea as well as patterns of interactions in and across the sea.

The first axis of the symposium tackled the latest developments in the Horn of Africa Region, its implications, challenges to stability in the region, and during which the geostrategic significance of the Red Sea and the challenges that threaten its stability and security were dealt with. On its eastern bank tensions are almost completely prevailing in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the western bank of the sea, In spite of the positive signs that resulted from the moves of Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, challenges remain complex. Tensions over borders existing between Djibouti and Eritrea are still there, in addition to instability in Sudan and South Sudan, the rise of terrorist actions by “Mujahideen Youth Movement (Al-Shabaab)” in Somalia, in addition to considerable Ethiopian presence there in violation of the agreement implying that not any of the forces of the states surrounding Somalia should enter its territories, and in addition to the trend shown by Djibouti, that its national security is continuously threatened and has

no trust in its neighbors, and which is clearly manifested by the presence of various military bases of a number of major and regional powers over the Djiboutian territories.

The second axis of the symposium tackled the Red Sea Region security issue as regards opportunities and challenges, which participants spoke on challenges of Red Sea globalization and risks to its security constituted by instability and related future scenarios. In this regard, threats, constituted by all previous challenges to Egyptian national security that would not accomplish its pillars without achieving the security of this region, have been emphasized upon.

In this context, the symposium was concluded with a number of recommendations of which the most significant were; formulating a comprehensive strategy for managing challenges imposed by current situations in the surroundings of the Red Sea, enhancement of cooperation amongst states of the Red Sea region to prevent further escalation, and creating an Arab-African security and cooperation system, based on mutual benefits and interests, in this significant region. The Participants emphasized that Egypt’s Presidency of the African Union during the year 2019 offers a good opportunity for Cairo to introduce its vision in this respect, in terms that will secure the principles of Good Neighborliness and Non-Interference in the Internal Affairs of States in the region, and solving their disputes within an atmosphere of security and stability which are necessary to achieve sustainable development for all the peoples of these states.