

## **Report by the Arab Forum for Security and Nuclear Non-proliferation**

on

### **The Arab Forum involvement in the 2013 NPT Preparatory Commission Meetings**

Geneva (April/May 2013)

#### **Report I**

The United Nations Offices in Geneva witnessed a notable presence by members of the Arab Forum for Security and Nuclear Non-Proliferation during the 2013 NPT Prepcom (Preparatory Commission of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) which took place in Geneva during April/May 2013.

The Arab Forum was represented by members of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, the Arab Institute for Security Studies as well as the Arab Thought Forum.

Members of the Arab Forum were engaged in two primary events on Tuesday, April 30, 2013. The first event was organized by the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP) which held an NGO briefing on the Helsinki Conference for a WMD-Free Zone in the Middle East. The event was chaired by Ambassador Fred Tanner (Director of the GCSP), Ambassador Hannu Kyröläinen (the Deputy Facilitator of the Helsinki Conference ) and Ayman Khalil (Director of the Arab Institute for Security Studies) with active participation and sponsorship of the Permanent Missions of Finland and Japan. The meeting was intended to inform the NGO community about the efforts exerted by the Facilitator, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, in consultation with all the relevant states, to create the conditions for a successful conference. Ayman Khalil made a number of remarks concerning the current status of the Helsinki conference following the contradictory statements made by the conveners (namely, the US, Russia and the UK) and the subsequent suspension (or) cancellation of the meeting. The sessions concluded with a diagnosis of the situation in addition to highlighting a number of measures that could be employed to revive the process. More details about the event could be found on the following link:

<http://www.gcsp.ch/Emerging-Security-Challenges/Events/NGO-Briefing-on-the-Conference-on-a-WMD-Free-Zone-in-the-Middle-East-in-Conjunction-with-the-2013-NPT-Preparatory-Committee>

## Report II

On the expanded meeting organized by the Egyptian Council on Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the 2013 NPT Preparatory Committee, which was held in the United Nations building, Room XVI on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor during April 30<sup>th</sup> 2013; the Arab side was represented by Ayman Khalil (Chairman of the Arab Network), Ambassador Mohamad Shaker (President of the Egyptian Council and Chair of the meeting), with the presence of Ambassador Abdul Raouf Al-Reedi (Honorary Board President of the Egyptian council), Minister Ali Al-Saeidi (Egyptian Council Member), Ambassador Dr. Moneer Zahran (Egyptian Council Member) and Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Karam (Member of the Board of Directors, who prepared this report).

There was great interest on behalf of official delegations, decision-making forums and non-governmental organizations at the event organized by the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Council. This was manifested by the wide attendance, large participation as well as the significant intellectual interaction that enriched the event. The session proposed holding a mock conference to simulate the Helsinki conference on establishing a zone free from nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East. Some of the meeting attendees had indicated that while the official Egyptian delegation had officially announced its withdrawal from the remainder of 2013 NPT Prepcom activities, Egyptian diplomacy registered a major achievement under a non-governmental umbrella, chaired by the Egyptian Council on Foreign Affairs, to convene this extended panel of discussion and to introduce new ideas.

Speakers of the session were introduced by Ayman Khalil, who explained the concept of the Arab Forum which had held its first meeting in cooperation with the League of Arab States in September 2012 at the League's headquarters in Cairo, indicating that the membership of the forum has expanded to reach a total of 19 research centers and think tanks. Ambassador Mohammed Shaker introduced the idea of a mock conference on light of the difficulties facing holding an official meeting, including the walkout of the Egyptian delegation, which compels us to take quick action to enact a simulation conference involving research centers and non-governmental organizations from the US, EU and the Arab region. He added that he had received approvals from Centers in Israel and Iran to join this initiative, noting that these institutions enjoys the flexibility and freedom of movement provided by the academic/research umbrella.

Ambassador Shaker noted that the concept of simulation exercises have been widely used to developing alternative plans when there are difficulties in official efforts. For the purpose of holding a mock conference, the speaker suggested inviting Kofi Annan to act as the UN Secretary General (for the simulation), with Hans Blix to act as the representative of International Atomic Energy Agency, adding that the Finnish side is willing to support any party that would simulate the facilitator role

Ambassador Shaker indicated that he had developed an agenda for the meeting and a comprehensive paper on the factors necessary to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The paper examines conditions to start a negotiation process, it looks at the geographical scope of the region and identifies the responsibilities of neighboring countries as well as permanent members of the UN Security Council; the paper identifies features for a regional system based on transparency and sheds light on monitoring, verification and inspection elements. The simulation conference will serve as a useful experience which will prove that the conference is doable.

On logistical issues, Ambassador Shaker mentioned that there are ongoing communications to secure the conference budget, he indicated that Geneva is considered as a suitable venue for hosting the simulation conference.

Session audience reacted positively towards the concept of a “Mock Conference”, some stressed on the importance of putting more focus on non-proliferations studies, others spoke of the success of simulation programs within academic institutions and universities, stressing that a simulation conference differs greatly from purely theoretical exercises.

Ambassador Abdul Raouf Al Reedi responded to a question on the Egyptian Delegation withdrawal from 2013 prepcom, indicating that the walkout of the delegation came in response to hearing many arguments, which he described as being intended to gain time, waste opportunities, and dilute the official decision of NPT Revcon 2010 which created specific responsibilities for the US, the UK and the United Nations Secretary-General. Ambassador Reedi praised the Russian position in support of holding of the Helsinki conference in 2013.

Mr. Mahmoud Karem then spoke about the business of the Preparatory Committee for the simulation-conference. The Chairman of the Egyptian Council, Ambassador Shakir held several meetings with some experts to clarify dimensions of the simulation idea, and to answer questions regarding the time and duration of the conference.

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