

Country Reaction Paper

Egypt

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Many issues are of great concern to Egypt . I shall try to enlist them in the following order without prejudging their priorities. They are all important and crucial.

Security and Stability in the Middle East

Egypt and Jordan have concluded peace treaties with Israel followed by diplomatic relations. The rest of the Arab World has not yet reconciled with Israel although it put forward a plan of action in 2002 at the Beirut Arab Summit based on Land for Peace but Israel has yet to respond positively.

The Road map put forward by the Quartet (US-Russia-EU-UN) is still on the table. It suffers from lack of implementation as a result of the upheavals the Middle East has experienced in the last few years, especially between Palestinians and Israelis. The oppressive actions by the latter (the wall-settlements-confiscation of Palestinian land-imprisonment –killing of resistance leaders—etc) have poisoned the atmosphere. On the other hand, Palestinians have to mend fences among themselves. Egypt is playing a leading role in this respect.

An independent Palestine is not the only challenge in our region for peace and security to endure. The situation is further complicated by the situation in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria whose territories are occupied by Israel, Iran's nuclear ambitions, just to mention a few examples of instability.

The crux of the matter remains, however, the two states solution with regard to the Palestinian issue and on the basis of resolution 242 of the UN Security Council , the Arab initiative of Beirut and the Road Map . The latter may have to be reviewed after a long period of stagnation and frustration.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation in the Middle East and the Establishment of a zone free of Weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East

Egypt played a leading role in the negotiations leading to the conclusion of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 . It also presided over the NPT Review Conference of 1985. It believes that nuclear proliferation is detrimental to world peace and security.

Strongly linked with stability and security in the Middle East is Egypt's first proposal (with Iran) in 1974 to establish a Middle East zone free of

nuclear weapons and a second proposal in 1990 of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in the Middle East.

There could be no security and stability in the region in the presence of such weapons. More particularly, the acquisition of a nuclear weapon capability by one state in the region, Israel, is distabilsing and may invite others to follow , such as Iran, thus endangering the survival and wellbeing of the people of the region .

The establishment of a zone free of WMDs in the Middle East received wide support. The Arab Summit in Tunisia in 2004 issued a statement calling for an international conference under the UN auspices to establish such a zone. This means that countries of the Middle East region need outside help in their effort to establish the zone.

Energy security

Egypt is blessed with great sources of oil and gas. However, according to experts theses sources would last only for thirty years to come. Therefore investing in other sources of energy is being contemplated, such as wind power , solar and nuclear energy.

In 1986 and before the great discoveries of gas in Egypt , the latter was about to commission its first power nuclear plant to be built on the Northern Coast of Egypt on the Mediterranean. As a result of the

Chernobyl accident in the Ukraine, Egypt shelved its nuclear power programme.

Nowadays and as indicated above Egypt is currently contemplating other sources of energy apart from oil and gas. The Higher Council of Energy and the ruling party, the National Democratic Party, are debating the alternatives including nuclear power. No decisions have been made yet. The revival of nuclear power is not farfetched taking into consideration the present day limitation to expand quickly with regard to the other sources of energy .

With regard to energy, the transfer of technology is crucial . There is one aspect that needs to be attended to: The transfer of technology to the developing world has been insignificant so far.

Climate Change

Closely linked to energy are the adverse effects of using conventional sources of energy . Reducing emissions is a great concern for humanity. For that reason , Egypt adhered to the UN Framework Agreement on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol on the basis of shared responsibilities. Egypt did so inspite of the fact that emissions in Egypt do not exceed 0.05% of total world emissions.

Egypt believes that the developed countries are historically responsible for the climate change phenomena as a result of emissions emanating

from its flourishing economies . Here too the developed countries have to transfer its technologies to the developing world to face up to the phenomena . It is unfair to the developing nations to take national decisions to reduce emissions that would affect their economic and social situations without transfer of technology. This would affect their capabilities and performance.

Egypt has proposed in a Bonn meeting , May 2006 to allow the special fund on climate change to finance specific activities to assist concerned countries to diversify their economies . For example, African share in projects of clean energy development is very limited.

Secure Water Resources from the Upper Nile

As it has been rightly said "Egypt is the gift of the Nile" . Without the Nile , there would have been no Egypt. Our life line is the water reaching us from Upper Nile Sources . Therefore, Egypt has to keep good and friendly relations with its immediate and distant neighbors in the South, especially Ethiopia, Sudan and the other riparian countries of the Nile. The threat of Sudan's disintegration (self determination in the South and Darfur) and Ethiopian involvement in the internal strike of Somalia are disturbing and threatening Egypt's stability .

The Nile also offers Egypt a chance to invest in the generation of hydro power in the Upper Nile ,(approximately 10.000 mgnt.)

Poverty

This is a great challenge to Egypt , especially in the light of a growing population increasing about 1.5 million a year. Egypt has a population of almost 75 millions as compared to 20 millions in 1957.

Unemployment has reached the figure of 6 million with only a fraction of this number benefiting from social security .Poverty is a serious blow to Egypt's security and stability. Government and civil society share the responsibility to find urgent solutions, such as increasing job opportunities and gigantic development projects conquering the desert and preserving at the same time our present cultivated land in the rural areas (the Delta + the Valley).