Mohamed Ismail

_Diplomatic notes_

**Middle East free of WMDs**

The annual meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will begin on Sunday with strong participation from Egypt, which has been given greater attention to nuclear energy and its peaceful uses.

Egypt shows great interest in cooperating with the IAEA in many fields especially in the field of training and scientific co-operation that can benefit Egypt and the whole region, particularly in the field of generating energy, which is the main aim of the Egyptian peaceful nuclear programme.

But according to Sameh Aboul-Enein, deputy assistant foreign minister for disarmament and international security issues, the Egyptian delegation this year will have another important issue to concentrate on, which is creating a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear arms.

Egypt has long proposed for the international organisation to place all nuclear activities in the Middle East under the supervision of the agency, especially in Israel, which is widely believed to possess the Middle East's only nuclear arsenal, drawing frequent Arab condemnations, as it is the only country in the region outside the global Non-Proliferation Treaty.

And I wonder why everybody now is busy with the Syrian chemical weapons, while no one is talking about the Israel arsenal. Why is the international community unable to address the Israel's nuclear programme? Why is the international community not able to press Israel to repeat the initiative of countries such as Kazakhstan or South Africa that dispensed with their nuclear arsenal to keep their area empty of such a threat?