

The NPT, the IAEA, and the Arab Fuel Cycle: Potentials and Challenges

Professor Sameh Aboul-Enein¹

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I. Introduction

1. Let me begin by extending my thanks and deep appreciation for inviting me to speak in my personal and academic capacities, to discuss the perspective from the developing and Arab world on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the fuel cycle. The non-proliferation Treaty's three pillars (Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and the Right to Peacefully Use of Nuclear Technology) remain to this day unbalanced; further collective effort must be exerted to strengthen all three pillars of the NPT in a balanced and non-discriminatory fashion, with particular interest given to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. I will be discussing, First, the potentials for developing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Arab world; Second, the challenges to the implementation of peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Arab world, and Finally, I will end my presentation with a number of conclusions on the way forward.

¹ Dr. Sameh Aboul-Enein is an adjunct professor of international security and disarmament in the School of Global Affairs at the American University in Cairo. This presentation is in the author's personal and academic capacity.

II. Potentials for peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Arab world

- 1- The Arab Atomic Energy Agency is an Arab scientific organization, based in Tunisia, concerned with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, its development and technological applications. It is a subsidiary of the Arab League, but it has an independent identity. Its main role is to coordinate among Arab states, and to assist in research activities, human resources development, and technical and scientific information. The Arab Nuclear Agency seeks to coordinate scientific and technical activities with concerned regional and international organizations. It aims to establish unified regulations for radiological protection and the safe handling of radioactive materials; to support and protect patents in the peaceful uses of atomic energy; and to encourage and assist Arab scientists in the field of nuclear sciences and technologies to attend relevant conferences.
2. It is important to point out the decisions made at the March 2007 Arab Summit in Riyadh. One of the decisions were to undertake joint Arab cooperation activities for the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and related technology and to carry out a practical programme including "joint ventures for the development of nuclear technology applications in various developmental fields especially energy, water, medicine, agriculture and industry". The Secretary General of the League of Arab States was requested, with the participation of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency, to form groups of experts and specialists to consider ways and means for such cooperation to take place within an integrated Arab framework.
3. The Summit also adopted a resolution inviting Arab countries to use or expand the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes for all fields of sustainable development, with due consideration to the diversity of their needs and to the strict observation of the provisions of all international treaties, conventions and regulations that they have signed. Among the executive steps to be taken, the Summit provided support to the Arab Atomic Energy Agency as the organ for joint Arab action in this field and called upon Arab countries that had not yet joined the Agency to do so without delay. The Summit requested the agency to develop an Arab strategy for the mastering of nuclear sciences and technology for peaceful purposes until 2020. The

Riyadh Declaration and Decisions struck a balance between peaceful nuclear ambitions and the reaffirmation of "the importance of clearing the region from all weapons of mass destruction [WMD].

4. In this view, any multilateral approach to the nuclear fuel cycle need to be economically viable, sustainable, non-discriminatory, predictable and transparent under the auspices of the IAEA and any other regional and multilateral forums. Any decision on proposals regarding multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle must be made by consensus, and any proposal from the IAEA must be consistent with its statute, without prejudice to the inalienable right of States partied to the Treaty, if they so decide, to develop a full national fuel cycle, according to article IV of the Treaty.
5. The multilateral approach can include proposals for assurance of supply in response to the needs of interested States, and that fully takes into account all technical, legal and economic complexities surrounding these issues and be conducted through wide, comprehensive and transparent multilateral consultation.

III. Challenges to the implementation of peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Arab world

1. Without a doubt, Arab countries face many challenges concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including the following:
 - a) the IAEA has a major and important role in assisting State parties, particularly developing States, including the Arab countries, in planning for and using nuclear science and technology, to sustain and further enhance their scientific and technological capabilities, to share nuclear knowledge, and to transfer nuclear technology to contribute to their socio-economic development.

- b) The IAEA plays a central role in nuclear safety related matters, including the establishment of nuclear safety standards, owing to its mandated functions and long standing expertise. With that in mind, any possible review of nuclear safety standards, in association with nuclear energy uses, at the global level can be carried out within the IAEA. The implementation of the Nuclear Safety Action Plan endorsed by the General Conference of the IAEA is of utmost importance.
 - c) Measures and initiatives aimed at strengthening nuclear safety and nuclear security must not be used as a pretext or lever to violate, deny or restrict the inalienable right of developing countries, including the Arab States, to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.
 - d) Any attack or threat of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities, operational or under construction, poses a great danger to human beings, and the environment and constitutes a grave violation of international law, the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the regulations of the IAEA. In this regard, there is a need for a comprehensive multilaterally negotiated instrument prohibiting attacks or the threat of attacks on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This is a main challenge and concern that need to be addressed.
2. For far too long has the agenda been focused on the non proliferation aspect of the Treaty. Developing Countries, including the Arab States, are of the position that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non discriminatory agreements that are transparent and that do not impose restrictions on access by developing countries to equipment, material or technology for peaceful purposes which such countries require for their continued development.

IV. Conclusion

1. let me conclude by emphasizing that the 2010 Review conference of the NPT strongly called for all State parties to ensure that their nuclear related exports do not directly or indirectly assist the development of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and that such exports are in full conformity with the objectives and purposes of the Treaty as stipulated particularly in its articles I, II and III and with the decision on the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted in 1995 in the review and extension conference of the treaty.
2. Moreover, in the Arab region, the activities of IAEA in the field of technical cooperation, nuclear power and non-power applications contribute in an important way to meeting energy needs, improving human health, including the application of nuclear technology in cancer therapy, combating poverty, protecting the environment, developing agriculture, managing the use of water resources and optimizing industrial processes, contribute to achieving the objectives set forth in article IV of the Treaty.
3. There is a real need, in the Arab region, to strengthen both nuclear and radiation safety as well as radiation protection measures at facilities utilizing nuclear and radioactive materials and at radioactive waste management facilities, including the safe transportation of these materials. Furthermore, it is essential to strengthen existing international regulations relating to the safety and security of materials. In this regard, the effective implementation of the Code of Practice on the IAEA International Trans-boundary Movement of Radioactive Waste is of utmost importance as a means of enhancing the protection of all States from the dumping of radioactive wastes on their territories.
4. Developed countries have an obligation to promote the legitimate need of the developing countries, including the Arab States, to nuclear energy by fully respecting the right to participate

in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, it remains deeply concerning that there is continued limitations and restrictions on exports to developing countries for peaceful purposes, despite such limitations and restrictions being inconsistent with the provisions of the NPT.

5. To conclude, transfers of nuclear technology and international cooperation among States parties in conformity with the NPT should be supported and pursued in good faith without discrimination. The elimination of constraints that are inconsistent with the requirements of the NPT would ensure that article IV of the Treaty is fully implemented with regard to facilitating the transfer of nuclear material, equipment and technological information for peaceful purposes among the State parties.

Thank You!

NOTES:

1. Egypt is part of the Synchrotron-Light for Experimental Science and Applications for the Middle East (SESAME) regional initiative, which is scheduled to end in 2015. The initiative, which began in 2003 as a means for building trust in the nuclear field through technology sharing on peaceful nuclear uses, is hosted by Jordan and includes Israel, the Palestinian National Authority, Bahrain, Egypt and Turkey.