“Advancing a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East”

Wednesday, April 9, 2014 8:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Speaker’s Bios

Professor Sameh Aboul-Enein is the Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister of Egypt for Disarmament, International Security and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. Prior to this, he was Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Head of Mission of Egypt to the UK. Earlier he was Director of the U.N. Affairs Department as well as Director of the Specialized Agencies and International Organizations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Cairo. From 2002-2006 he was Alternate Representative to the Conference on Disarmament and to U.N. Offices. He commenced his diplomatic career in 1987 and served in the former Soviet Union and Turkey.

Michele Auga is the Executive Director of the New York office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Previously, she was the Head of the Africa Department at FES Headquarters in Berlin. She also served as programme manager and resident director of the foundation’s field offices in South Africa (1999 – 2000), Mali (2000 – 2002) and the Palestinian Territories (2002 – 2005) before becoming responsible for the conflict management and crisis prevention desk at FES Headquarters in Berlin. She holds an MA in Political Science from the Free University of Berlin.

Ziad Ali Khalil AbuZayyad is co-editor of the Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture. Before this, he was a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (1996-2006), serving as Chairman for the Law and Constitution Committee (2003-2006), Deputy Chairman of the Political Committee of the Euro-Med Parliament (2004–2005), and Minister of State for the Palestinian Authority (1998-2002). He also headed the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East multilateral peace talks in the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group from 1994 to 1996. He was an advisor to the Palestinian negotiating team in Washington, DC in 1992, and later a member of the post-Oslo negotiating team that concluded the 1994 Israeli-Palestinian Agreement.

Shlomo Brom is a senior research associate at the Institute for National Security Studies in Israel. He joined the Jaffee Center in 1998 after a long career in the IDF. In 2005-2006 Brig. Gen. (ret.) Brom was a member of the Meridor committee established by the Minister of Defense to reexamine the security strategy and doctrine of the State of Israel. In 2000 he was named deputy to the National Security Advisor, returning to JCSS at the end of his post. His most senior post in the IDF was director of the Strategic Planning Division in the Planning Branch of the General Staff. He participated in peace negotiations with the Palestinians, Jordan, and Syria, and in Middle Eastern regional security talks during the 1990s.
Ambassador Libran Nuevas Cabactulan is the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations in New York since April 2010, and he is the Chair of the 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Prior to his current appointment, he served as Assistant Secretary for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila. A career diplomat, he also served previously as the Philippine Ambassador in the United Arab Emirates, at the Philippine Mission to the United Nations – once in Geneva, twice in New York. He had also been assigned in the Philippine Embassy in Brussels and the Philippine Consulate General in Sydney. In 2010, Ambassador Cabactulan successfully guided the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference with the consensus adoption of a 64-points Action Plan on the three pillars of NPT (nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy), action on the Middle East, particularly implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, and action on other regional issue relating to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Thomas M. Countryman is currently serving as the Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation. The ISN Bureau leads the U.S. effort to prevent the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, their related materials, and their delivery systems. Mr. Countryman’s diplomatic career encompasses postings in Belgrade, Cairo, Rome, and Athens. He served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs in 2009-10, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs (with responsibility for Balkan affairs) in 2010-11. The Department of State gave him the Superior Honor Award for each of his assignments at USUN, EUR/SCE, Rome and Athens. He was awarded Senior performance pay in 2006 and 2007, and received the Presidential Meritorious Service Citation for 2007. Mr. Countryman graduated from Washington University in St. Louis (summa cum laude) with a degree in economics and political science, and studied at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Kelsey Davenport is the Nonproliferation Analyst for the Arms Control Association, where she focuses primarily on developments related to the nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea and nuclear security issues. Kelsey joined the Arms Control Association in August 2011 as the Herbert Scoville Jr. Peace Fellow. Prior to coming to ACA, Kelsey worked for a think tank in Jerusalem researching regional security issues and track II diplomatic negotiations. She holds a master’s degree in peace studies from the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Kelsey graduated summa cum laude from Butler University with a B.A. in international studies and political science.

Michael Wahid Hanna is a senior fellow at The Century Foundation. He works on issues of international security, international law, and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and South Asia. Hanna co-authored Preparing for a Strategic Shift on US Policy Toward Egypt (with Brian Katulis, 2013) and directs The Century Foundation's International Working Group on Pakistan, chaired by Ambassador Thomas Pickering. He has published widely on U.S. foreign policy in newspapers and journals and appears regularly on MSNBC, PBS, BBC, NPR and al-Jazeera. He served as a consultant for Human Rights Watch in Baghdad in 2008. Prior to joining The Century Foundation, Hanna was a
senior fellow at the International Human Rights Law Institute. From 1999 to 2004, Hanna practiced corporate law with the New York law firm Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton. Fluent in Arabic, he was a Fulbright Scholar at Cairo University. He received a J.D. from New York University School of Law, where he was an editor of the Law Review.

Trita Parsi is the founder and president of the National Iranian American Council and an expert on US-Iranian relations, Iranian foreign politics, and the geopolitics of the Middle East. He is the author of Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel and the United States (Yale University Press 2007), and A Single Roll of the Dice - Obama's Diplomacy with Iran (Yale University Press 2012). Parsi was born in Iran but moved with his family to Sweden to escape political repression. He has followed Middle East politics through work in the field and extensive experience on Capitol Hill and at the United Nations. He is fluent in Persian/Farsi, English, and Swedish. Parsi’s articles on Middle East affairs have been published in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, and others. He is a frequent guest on CNN, PBS Newshour, NPR, the BBC, and Al Jazeera. He received his Ph.D. from the Johns Hopkins’ School for Advanced International Studies and a Master’s Degree in International Relations from Uppsala University, as well as a Master’s Degree in Economics from the Stockholm School of Economics.

Hillel Schenker is co-editor of the Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture. Before this, he worked as Editor of New Outlook for 13 years. He has written articles for The Guardian, The Nation, Los Angeles Times, L.A. Weekly, Tikkun, Israel Horizons, and In These Times. He was an activist and co-founded the Peace Now movement. Schenker has also served as the spokesperson for the Israeli branch of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and an International Advisory Board member of the Global Majority center for Non-Violent Conflict Resolution at the Monterey Institute of International studies.

Ambassador Jarno Viinanen is the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations since 2009. Prior to this appointment, Mr Viinanen worked in the Cabinet of the President of the Republic of Finland for nine years. From 2005 to 2009 he was the Chief of the Cabinet and from 2000 to 2005 he was a Diplomatic Adviser to the President of the Republic of Finland and a member of the Cabinet. Mr Viinanen joined the Finnish Foreign Office in 1988 and he has served as a Diplomat in Embassies of Finland in Vienna, Tel Aviv and Washington. He has also worked as an Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Helsinki. Ambassador Viinanen was a Chair of the International Security and Disarmament Committee during the 66th United Nations General Assembly. He also chaired the Preparatory Committee for the 4th United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries in 2011. Ambassador Viinanen was a Vice President of the 64th United Nations General Assembly in 2009. Mr Viinanen earned his Master of Arts degree in Political Science at the University of Turku.