

REMARKS BY NABIL FAHMY, EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S., TO THE CARNEGIE
ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE SUBJECT: NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION LOCATION:
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE, WASHINGTON, D.C. TIME: 10:20 A.M.
EST DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2005

Copyright (c) 2005 by Federal News Service, Inc., Ste. 500 1000 Vermont Avenue,
NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA. Federal News Service is a private firm not
affiliated with the federal government. No portion of this transcript may be
copied, sold or retransmitted without the written authority of Federal News
Service, Inc. Copyright is not claimed as to any part of the original work
prepared by a United States government officer or employee as a part of that
person's official duties. For information on subscribing to the FNS Internet
Service, please visit <http://www.fednews.com> or call (202) 347-1400

(Applause.)

AMB. FAHMY: Thank you, Joe. Thank you very much.

Incidentally, let me start by thanking you all for being here this morning, and for thanking our hosts for getting me down particularly to speak. The Carnegie International Nonproliferation Conference is an annual pilgrimage for anybody really interested in nonproliferation. And I am honored to be able to speak to you.

I've been asked this morning to share my thoughts about where we are on nonproliferation issues 60 years after the discussion started with President Truman. In doing so, I want to state at the outset that while I assume I will be giving you a Middle Eastern perspective of this issue, I am doing that in my personal capacity. I don't intend to stick to the Egyptian government position formally, but I will give you my own point of view with the objective of encouraging the debate and the discussion in your conference.

Ladies and gentlemen, nonproliferation, nuclear nonproliferation in particular, is not a novel issue. Frankly, still addressing it today, 60 years after it was raised, is in itself incriminating evidence of our failures. Today's environment, with nuclear disarmament dormant, questions existing regarding nuclear-capable states outside the NPT, NPT parties withdrawing, and others their nuclear programs in question, only further underscores our failures.

Our basic objective when we embarked on nonproliferation efforts, was to use them as a stepping stone toward nuclear disarmament, and from that to general and complete disarmament. The NPT was envisaged as a cornerstone of these efforts. Consequently, in the next few minutes, I would like to take the NPT regime and use that and the lessons learned from it to draw some wider conclusions as to nonproliferation efforts in general.

The NPT, with the momentum it helped generate at its inception, has made an important contribution in years past. Its membership has increased. Some states with economic and scientific capability to do so have chosen not to become nuclear states. The treaty has helped in highlighting the goal of nonproliferation. It has provided norms and a system for states to gravitate towards if they decided to remain non-nuclear. In fact, it is these norms that constitute the NPT's greatest achievement, for they helped generate all the

subsequent nonproliferation measures -- (inaudible) -- safeguard supplier groups, et cetera.

Nevertheless, ladies and gentlemen, in the spirit of candid and clear-sighted analysis, one must be obliged to acknowledge that very few non-nuclear weapons states -- parties -- actually joined the treaty because it responded to their immediate security concerns. Most of the parties that joined NPT did so for political or economic reasons or circumstances, or because they had no reason to pursue nuclear weapons or nuclear programs from the beginning. Some parties did join because they assumed the NPT would generate a wider nuclear nonproliferation regime and disarmament effort, ultimately dealing effectively with nuclear weapons concerns. This was particularly true of states that initially had peaceful nuclear programs and the potential to develop them.

Regrettably, however, the treaty has not really been successful in dealing with immediate security concerns of almost any of the NPT non-nuclear weapons states. This has been a result of the parties to the treaty limiting its focus and trying to enhance nonproliferation through prohibition, which became an end in itself. Consequently, they developed a more rigid safeguard system, as did several members and groupings of the international community, but did not sufficiently expand the scope of nonproliferation efforts or deepen their disarmament endeavors. As such, the NPT regime became a static process, with its credibility over the years being increasingly eroded by technological advancement and symbiosis, and its usefulness progressively diminished in the light of changing security paradigms. Lately, questions have been raised whether the basic trade-off of the NPT remains credible as a nonproliferation measure; in other words, the commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons in return for the access to peaceful use of nuclear technology.

I think this question in itself reflects one of the mistakes that we have all made and now want to hold the NPT regime responsible for. As such, we have been and are being myopic underachievers.

Although the mentioned trade-off is no doubt a basic trade-off of the NPT, it is not the only one. An equally if not more important one was that nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapons states committed themselves alike in Article 6 to pursue negotiations in good faith on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control in exchange for codifying the de facto status of nuclear weapons states as the treaty pursues its objectives. Singling out one trade-off and neglecting the other implies that nonproliferation can ultimately -- can be obtained without disarmament, and that the NPT was to be an end in itself. Both of these assumptions are flawed, in my opinion.

My second point is that if one looks carefully at these two basic trade-offs, the track record is not by any standards Olympian. On the one hand, there is little evidence that states who have the capacity to pursue peaceful nuclear programs, that by joining the NPT they provided themselves better access to the technology than they would have had had they pursued their programs indigenously. If one looks at the second trade-off, it would take a monumental and, frankly, blind leap of faith to argue, as we close in on the 40th anniversary of the NPT, that negotiations are being pursued on issues of nuclear disarmament in good faith towards general and complete disarmament.

Ladies and gentlemen, the nonproliferation and nuclear disarmament record is in my mind crystal clear, and regrettably I feel compelled to reiterate that the international community has failed in dealing with this issue

in a manner commensurate with its importance and the dangerous ramifications of failure in this regard. In fact, there is a general negative assessment toward the NPT, particularly in problem areas around the world such as South Asia, the Korean Peninsula and the Middle East. And I believe that the reasons for our failures are several.

The most important amongst them are that nuclear disarmament efforts have essentially come to a halt, and thus international interest in both nonproliferation and nuclear disarmament has diminished. One cannot expect global nonproliferation efforts to gain traction and international support if at the same time nuclear disarmament comes to a halt.

Two, more and more we witness attempts to completely de-link disarmament and nonproliferation efforts, a mistake that can only hurt on both counts. This phenomenon actually may encourage states to go nuclear.

Three, nuclear nonproliferation concerns are dealt with only when they become mature, and consequently with a sense of urgency, leading to problem management rather than problem solving approaches.

And four, nuclear nonproliferation concerns and efforts have been governed by shifting standards, and been driven by political and occasionally parochially domestic considerations, when in the past the only criteria was, no more nuclear weapon states and the nuclear ones should disarm.

All of these reasons provided potential proliferators a fertile environment to pursue their objectives.

I'm not suggesting this morning bringing the temple down to build a new one. That is too risky, and unnecessary.

However, for the NPT regime, and other international nuclear nonproliferation efforts to continue to be relevant, adherence to these regimes must create and generate an international environment conducive to nuclear disarmament. And they must provide dividends for its parties, particularly within the context of the regime being established. In other words, NPT parties must be an energetic force behind nuclear disarmament, not only containment.

The NPT parties must ensure that the treaty is more beneficial to the state parties to the treaty than those beyond it, both in security and in developmental terms. NPT members must be assured of more precise and effective responses to their security concerns than non-NPT members. They must also be provided easier access to nuclear technology than non-NPT members, irrespective of whether the non-party has indigenous capabilities or not.

Within this overall context, one can consider additional verification measures and international assurances of nuclear fuel supply, et cetera. I believe that the NPT has fallen short on all of these counts. And I am concerned that states beyond the treaty are actually being granted preferential treatment on nuclear and weapons of mass destruction proliferation issues as a result of different trade-offs that have nothing to do with nonproliferation concerns.

Sanctioning non-state parties is not what I am leading to, but I am calling for providing real reasons for them to be responsible by recreating an invigorated international disarmament effort, and by providing dividends, be they security assurances or peaceful technology for parties who join

international regimes, and equally important, by dealing comprehensively with security concerns.

My words of caution, and I make them in trepidation, the status quo will not stand. Some states are bound to reassess their commitments or hesitate to make new ones without a change of course by the international community and more rigorous disarmament and nonproliferation efforts. Ultimately, regional and international peace and security will be jeopardized by our inaction. And I expect that when dealing with significant and substantial threats, whether real or perceived, the response by non-nuclear weapons states could basically be one of the following five options: To pursue regional nuclear weapons agreements or reciprocal bilateral nonproliferation arrangements. This would be welcome, but a short-lived development if it is not coupled with the resolution of security concerns.

Two, to refrain from engaging in any further multilateral or regional arms-control or security arrangements. And we already see this occurring in several regions.

Three, to withdraw from or freeze present multilateral commitments on nuclear nonproliferation.

Four, to raise the capacity level of other weapons of mass destruction as well as conventional weapons, given that, when determining deterrence value, one must factor in not only the destructive capacity of the weapon, but the possibility of using it on the battlefield.

And five, the pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The number of proliferation outbreaks over the past decade is alarming testimony toward the realization of one or more of these five eventualities.

Ladies and gentlemen, if I may, a few words on the Middle East region.

Our region is a poster boy for the failure of global and regional nonproliferation efforts. Like most regions, the majority of its member states are card-carrying and committed members of this salient international nonproliferation regime and regulations. In fact, every Arab country has joined NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state, and every one of them with a significant or a potential significant nuclear program has a full-scope safeguard agreement with the IAEA.

Yet very significant questions remain outstanding regarding the present state of play of nuclear nonproliferation in that region. More than a decade ago, Iraq was caught violating its safeguard in NPT obligations. And while the IAEA subsequently verified that these violations had come for all practical purposes -- had for all practical purposes ceased, the issue continued to be an important question, fueling a sense of volatility and tension in the region.

Today, its neighbor Iran, also NPT member, has questions raised about its nuclear program and the degree of its respect of its safeguard obligations. Iran argues that it operates fully within the parameters of its NPT rights and obligations and that its objective is simply to address its peaceful energy needs. Others doubt Iran's intentions and insist on curtailing its indigenous nuclear capability.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I personally believe that like any other country in the region, the acquisition by Iran of nuclear weapons will be a highly egregious act. Outstanding questions regarding its nuclear capabilities remaining unanswered and unresolved with IAEA inspectors can only fuel further suspicions and concerns.

Therefore, I support concluding agreements between international community and Iran to address uncertainties regarding its nuclear program, the tripartite European diplomatic efforts and those of the IAEA are ones that we hope will bear fruition

The question, however, is not whether Iran has the right to pursue -- further its nuclear capability within the NPT, but rather how to ensure full respect for future obligations and how to address its needs so Iran itself decides not to pursue these nuclear activities.

That being said, if -- even if -- an agreement here is reached, it will not prevent the Middle East region -- excuse me, it will not prevent the Middle East regional problems or concerns from being raised by one side or the other in the future. If, very soon, one does not deal with the Middle East region environment that fuels proliferation efforts, and mark my words, if we continue on the problem-management rather than the problem-solving mode, we will only face a larger nuclear proliferation problem in the region later.

The third case study for the Middle East proliferation is that of Israel. The only state in the region that refuses to join the NPT or apply full-scope safeguards to its facilities. It argues -- it insists on continuing a policy of nuclear weapons ambiguity, even though the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement over a quarter of a century ago essentially put to rest the alleged possibility of a serious existential Arab threat, and the developments in Iraq over the last few years have further diminished any such threats from the region.

Israel's unsafe guarded nuclear facilities will continue to be a source of serious concern in the Middle East. Its program must be included as the region deals with its proliferation concerns. There cannot be any exceptions or double standards.

Ladies and gentlemen, hyperboles aside, if nuclear nonproliferation concerns in the Middle East continue, with the emergence of a nuclear-weapon state, this will have a fundamental effect on the security paradigm in the region. In the absence of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, it's not a matter of whether but when one of the four eventualities I mentioned will occur.

When the NPT entered into force in 1970, the nuclear nonproliferation concerns in the Middle East were a fraction of what we are witnessing today. Today, the question is how many nuclear-capable states are there in the region, and how many more will we have in the future?

The only rational approach to dealing with nonproliferation concerns in the Middle East is to seize the opportunities that exist today with a decrease of the threat perceptions vis-a-vis Israel, the changing perceptions facing Iran by embarking on steps towards initiating negotiations on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East as has been proposed both in 1974 and 1990 by Egypt.

It is noteworthy that with respect to the nuclear free-zone proposal, it remains the only nonproliferation proposal accepted by the whole region and that one that was ingrained in the wider context of weapons of mass destruction in Security Council resolutions 687 on Iraq.

It has been argued that it is not logical to expect that such a zone be established before an Arab-Israeli peace is created. The full-fledged creation may actually require that, but the conception does not need to wait until then. Frankly, I do not think we can afford to further procrastinate because the development of nuclear programs in the region has actually been inversely proportional to the peace in the region. Secondly, Iranian nuclear programs and the debate around them do not actually relate to the Middle East peace process and may be fueled by completely different anxieties or opportunities.

And frankly, all of the proliferation concerns over the last few decades, be they nuclear, weapons of mass destruction or even conventional weapons have been driven by an arms race that can only be exacerbated by any state in the region remaining outside the NPT or by a party to the treaty acting in a questionable fashion.

Full assurances of non-militarization of nuclear programs in the region would thus be contingent on eliminating the confidence deficit, not merely reducing it. The security concerns of Arab countries, of Israel and of Iran have to be addressed if we are to preempt further nuclear nonproliferation in the Middle East.

This entails a commitment to deal with security as an indivisible whole when addressing the region's -- regional state's threat perceptions. Therefore, several suggestions could be considered useful in my opinion if appropriately timed.

And they are:

To convene a regional security conference including international members to discuss and deal with security concerns in the region; that the Security Council hold meetings on how to take measures to fulfill Article 4 of Resolution 687; that the U.N. review the experts' group study on effective and verifiable measures which would facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East adopted by the General Assembly back in 1990; that the IAEA analyze and study the experiences of establishing such zones and the lessons that can be applied to the Middle East; and that the IAEA review the South African denuclearization experience and submit a report on what measures will be required for previously unsafeguarded nuclear material to become credibly non-nuclear -- previously unsafeguarded nuclear programs to become credibly non-nuclear, as well as what regional measures will be required to assure credible verification, given the level of distrust, as well as measures to ensure the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Ladies and gentlemen, many of the conclusions I drew for the Middle East region apply to other regions as well. Many apply globally. It is time, I believe, that we all realize that selective or limited solutions to global and regional proliferation concerns will not be met with success. If nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation are not pursued in good faith, comprehensively and with one set of standards applicable to all, whatever is left of the credibility of the multinational nonproliferation regime itself will be brought into question. If we do not rekindle the quest for nuclear disarmament and

global nonproliferation 20 years from now, we may not even have today's partial successes to brag about. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

END.