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COMMUNICATION RECEIVED FROM EGYPT IN CONNECTION WITH THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

1. On 3 March 1981 the Director General received a letter dated 26 February 1981 from the Resident Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Agency enclosing the English translation of a statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Cairo, Egypt, on the occasion of the deposit by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt of its instrument of ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons[1].
2. In accordance with the request made by the Resident Representative of Egypt in his letter, the text of the attached statement is reproduced below for the information of all Members.

Statement
on the Occasion of the Deposit by the Government of the
Arab Republic of Egypt of its Instrument of
Ratification of the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Convinced that the proliferation of nuclear weapons which threatens the security of mankind must be curbed, Egypt signed and then ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Egypt was among the first countries which called for the rapid conclusion of this Treaty, and played a constructive role in the negotiations preceding its conclusion as a complement to earlier efforts which had successfully culminated in the conclusion of the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water.

[1] Reproduced in document INFCIRC/140.

Egypt's commitment by virtue of the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to refrain, in any way, from acquiring or manufacturing nuclear weapons shall not impair its inalienable right to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in conformity with the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty, which affirms the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. The stipulation of that right in the Treaty itself is, in fact, a codification of a basic human right, which can neither be waived nor impaired.

From this premise, Egypt also views with special attention the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty calling on the Parties to the Treaty, who are in a position to do so, to co-operate in contributing to the further development of the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially in the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty, with due consideration for the needs of the developing areas of the world.

Embarking on a number of construction projects of nuclear power reactors to generate electricity in order to meet its increasing energy needs so as to promote the prosperity and welfare of its people, Egypt expects from industrialized nations with a developed nuclear industry a wholehearted assistance and support. This would be in consonance with the letter and spirit of Article IV of the Treaty, in particular, since Egypt has committed itself to the application of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency as regard peaceful nuclear activities carried out within its territory, in accordance with the provisions of Article III of the Treaty.

Within the framework of the rights provided for in the Treaty for all Parties thereto, in as far as the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is concerned, Egypt wishes to refer to the provisions of Article V of the Treaty, which state that potential benefits from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to non-nuclear-weapon States Party to this Treaty. Though such applications pose presently certain difficulties, particularly in view of their detrimental environmental effects, Egypt nevertheless deems that this should not relieve the nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty from their responsibility to promote research and development of these applications, in order to overcome all the difficulties presently involved therein.

Egypt wishes to express its strong dissatisfaction at the nuclear-weapon States, in particular the two super-Powers, because of their failure to take effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament. Although it welcomes the 1972 and 1979 Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties, known as SALT I and SALT II, Egypt cannot but admit that the Treaties have failed to bring about an effective cessation of the nuclear arms race, quantitatively and qualitatively, and have even permitted the development of a new generation of weapons of mass destruction.

Moreover, in spite of the fact that more than 17 years have elapsed since the conclusion of the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, the nuclear-weapon States are alleging that various difficulties still stand in the way of a permanent ban on all nuclear weapon tests, when there is only need for a political will to achieve that end.

Consequently, Egypt avails itself of this opportunity, namely the deposit of its instruments of ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to appeal to the nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty to fulfil their obligation whereby the nuclear arms race will be stopped and nuclear disarmament achieved.

Egypt also calls upon all nuclear-weapon States to exert all possible efforts so as to achieve a permanent ban of all nuclear-weapon tests at an early date. This will bring to an end the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction, in as much as the cutoff of fissionable material for military purposes will curb the quantitative increase of nuclear weapons.

As regards the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, Egypt deems that Security Council resolution 255 of 19 June 1968 does not provide non-nuclear-weapon States with a genuine guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States. Egypt, therefore, appeals to the nuclear-weapon States to exert their effort with a view to concluding an agreement prohibiting once and for all the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against any State.

The undertaking of these steps is consistent with the letter and spirit of the basic guiding principles formulated by the General Assembly of the United Nations for the conclusion of a non-proliferation Treaty, in particular the principle of balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers, and that stipulating that the Treaty should be a step towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament and, more particularly, nuclear disarmament.

Convinced that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world shall be instrumental in enabling the Non-Proliferation Treaty to achieve its objectives and aims, Egypt has exerted great efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as well as in Africa.

In this respect, Egypt expresses its great satisfaction with the United Nations General Assembly resolution adopted by consensus at its 35th session inviting the countries of the Middle East, pending the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zone in the area, to declare solemnly their support for the achievement of this objective, that they will refrain on a reciprocal basis from producing, acquiring or possessing nuclear weapons, and to deposit their declarations with the United Nations Security Council.

In conclusion, Egypt wishes to point out that it has ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, out of strong belief that this step complies with its supreme national interests, provided the Treaty succeeds in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world, particularly in the Middle East, which should remain completely free of nuclear weapons, if it is to contribute constructively to peace, security and prosperity for its people and the world at large.