



## IIPS Lecture Series 2006

### Prospects for Peace in the Middle East and the Future of Japan-Arab Relations

Lecture by His Excellency Hisham Mohamed Mostafa Badr  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of  
Egypt in Japan

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*Capitol Tokyu Hotel*

On July 3, 2006, the Institute of International Policy Studies (IIPS), with the support of the Nippon Foundation, hosted a lecture on the topic "Prospects for Peace in the Middle East and the Future of Japan-Arab Relations" delivered by His Excellency Hisham Badr, Egypt's ambassador to Japan. The venue for this event was the Capitol Tokyu Hotel in Tokyo.

Ambassador Badr commenced his lecture by presenting an overview of peace in the Middle East and then commenting on various other issues such as weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and Gaza.

Egypt harbors an inescapable sense of concern at the present state of the Middle East peace process. Moreover, Egypt believes that in order to get back on the right track for building peace in the Middle East, it will be necessary to resume peace talks and revive efforts to resolve the conflict according to United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, in line with the concept of Land for Peace.

Furthermore, in view of the plan adopted in Beirut in 2002 and reaffirmed at the Arab summit conference in Khartoum in 2006, Egypt is committed to bilateral consultation. Specifically, Egypt hopes for a peaceful resolution in which Palestine enjoys sovereignty as an independent state and coexists stably with Israel, with the requirement that various policies be implemented after acceptance by both the parties concerned, based on UN Security Council Resolution 1515.

Egypt and the international community view it as essential that these measures be put into practice promptly, and President Mubarak of Egypt is addressing the issue through daily contact with Palestinian Authority leaders such as President Abbas.

Needless to say, it is precisely this type of dialog between the two sides that represents the only means for resolving this problem. It must be recognized that the use of armed force will yield nothing and will only impede peace, and that independent unilateral action can



never resolve matters and will serve only to further aggravate terrorism. Recognizing this reality, Egypt has unswervingly backed the decision of the democratic Palestinian populace and is collaborating with the Palestinian Authority.

A flexible framework for solving problems is also vital. Although not enunciated outright, the recent implicit suggestions by Hamas that it is inclined to tacitly tolerate the existence of Israel represent an important example of this trend. Resolution of this issue will naturally be dependent on support for Palestine from the international community and Israel.

As regards the issue of Iraq, Egypt believes that the inauguration of the new Iraqi government is a cause for celebration and anticipates that this will lead to a re-establishment of public order. Egypt fervently hopes that the spread of factional fighting and armed conflict in the country will be brought under control.

Both Egypt and Japan have thus far provided copious support in response to this problem, and assistance such as medical aid from the two nations has yielded significant results. They are also achieving results in the area of employment support and in the future are also likely to figure large in issues such as electrical power, which represents a significant challenge.

Regarding the problem of terrorism, Egypt wishes to emphasize the fact that it has asserted repeatedly and consistently that terrorism is a global phenomenon, and not one that is tied to any particular region, culture, race, or religion.



For the past 20 years (since 1986), Egypt has been experiencing the effects of terrorism, and has continued to advocate the necessity of an international effort to combat terrorism and to plead the case for the United Nations General Assembly to take on a more substantive role. In the course of this initiative, Egypt convened a special high-level meeting at the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly staged in September 2005, has called attention to the need for the adoption of a comprehensive plan of action to deal with terrorism, and is securing the support of Arab states and non-aligned nations.

In order to eradicate terrorism it will of course be necessary to resolve the problems in which terrorism is rooted—such as the existence of double standards, the existence of contradictory principles, contempt for neighboring states, the existence of cultural prejudice, and the distortions brought about by globalization.

On the issue of weapons of mass destruction, Egypt has acted with firm resolve in relation to disarmament and non-proliferation of WMD. In 1990 President Mubarak



advanced the idea of establishing a non-nuclear zone, which would be devoid of any weapons of mass destruction and in particular of nuclear weapons. In the future Egypt will continue its efforts to realize this ideal.

Egypt believes that active efforts by all nations are required in order to allow the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to work meaningfully, and to this end intends to actively support IAEA activities and other initiatives. Egypt also believes that the Iranian nuclear issue constitutes a highly unusual situation and that this should not lead to violations of the rights of non-nuclear nations.

At the root of any resolution of these problems is of course the need for understanding and tolerance of different cultures. It is extremely regrettable that the recent well publicized issue of the cartoons depicting Mohammad gave rise to such misguided messages. It is imperative that such whipping up of religious and racial hatred cease absolutely. It is also vital to encourage increased dialog between different cultures in order to prevent a recurrence of such a situation.

As regards the situation in Gaza, the present state of affairs is extremely serious and continues to deteriorate. As a matter of urgency, efforts for peace must be intensified. Notably, various types of destruction (including destruction of infrastructure) that are being carried out constitute an extremely worrying state of affairs from the humanitarian point of view. Israel is clearly in contravention of agreements such as international treaties and the Geneva Conventions.



It will be necessary to restore mutual trust in order to calm this situation down. This will require an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the immediate release of detainees. Once again the parties concerned will have to clearly recognize that military aggression will not solve anything.

After making these wide-ranging observations, Ambassador Badr responded to questions from the floor. He reiterated that, in order to achieve peace in the Middle East, it is essential that there be an immediate cessation of the use of armed force and a halt to acts of violence and terrorism. He added that it will also be necessary to resume peace talks, restore peace and order in Palestine, return to the peace process, and establish an independent Palestinian state. He concluded his lecture by stating that resuming the peace process by restarting peace talks as quickly as possible, and thus giving hope to Palestine, is a matter of the utmost urgency.