

# The Debate with the Arab League on the Gulf as a WMDFZ

## The Letter of the Secretary-General of the Arab League to the Secretary-General of the GCC

### Objecting to the Gulf WMD Free Zone Project

Dated 29/06/2005

Ref. 4422-5 (Confidential)

HE Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Attiyah

Secretary General, GCC



Dear Sir,

In view of the serious changes and developments which are being witnessed by the international community, and the efforts exerted by international actors and several powers to rearrange matters in the region, and also the efforts on the part of these actors and powers to change the security vision in the region to make it comply with the priorities and interests of these powers, some international and regional research institutions have contacted the Secretariat General of the Arab League to ask about its viewpoint on, and role in, the efforts currently being exerted to pose what they called an initiative to establish a region free of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in the Gulf region. This region will comprise the GCC states and Iran, and probably other countries.

This has prompted the Arab League to follow up this issue, especially as meetings were held in research institutions and centers in the Gulf region (with support from international institutions as we have understood) to study the idea in full and the possibilities of implementing it. These meetings were attended by officials from Arab states which were described as concerned countries. I have surmised that my duty obliges me to write to you on this issue, which requires cautious handling in view of

its repercussions with respect to regional and Arab security should what has been conveyed to us be true. I will briefly discuss this in the following points:

Firstly, this project, if it achieves any success, represents a process to undermine collective Arab efforts that have been exerted to stipulate a draft covenant to make the entire Middle East region free of all WMD. It also confuses Arab efforts on the international scene to implement this initiative. Arab countries have succeeded in obtaining international support for these efforts. International resolutions have been passed as regards these efforts. This represents an international recognition of the fact that the security of the region, especially with respect to WMD, is integral and indivisible, and that dealing with this question in the Middle East region must take place in the context of a comprehensive regional vision of security and stability, not via selective dealing, whether on the basis of a sub-regionalism that lacks strategic depth, or in a selective manner that corroborates the possession of nuclear weapons by one state - Israel. This will rescue Israel from the political siege represented by the principle of founding a region free of WMD in the entire Middle East.

Secondly, Arab countries have succeeded in the conferences held to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the UN, in including in the resolutions a reference to the fact that Israel is the only state in the region that has not signed the NPT treaty. They have demanded that Israel must sign the treaty, and that its nuclear installations should be subject to the system of comprehensive safeguard agreements of the IAEA. This is an implicit admission of the fact that the major flaw in this sphere in the region stems from the refusal of Israel to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; this is a fact that impedes achieving regional security and stability and it has been clearly expressed in the Arab summit meetings and the meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs.

Thirdly, the Iranian nuclear issue is being dealt with on the basis of an American-European understanding, and through the ongoing negotiations between Iran and Germany, France and Britain. It is also tackled by the intervention of the IAEA with some Russian proposals. Not only this, but there is increasing Israeli pressure to intervene by different means in the Iranian nuclear issue motivated by the claim of protecting Israeli security and maintaining its nuclear supremacy.

Fourthly, the attempt to launch the idea of founding a region free of WMD in the Gulf region gives the impression that Gulf security is not linked to achieving security in the Middle East and consequently Gulf is not affected by the acquisition of Israel of nuclear weapons. There is a reference to the fact that the call of the Gulf States for the necessity of signing the relevant treaties by Israel is a call that falls in the framework of the Arabic discourse of solidarity only; it does not express a regional security necessity.

Fifthly, these ideas are consistent with other international efforts and ideas that have been promoted in the last years. They call for viewing the security of the Gulf States as opposed to the idea of the interrelation of collective Arab security. These ideas refer to the fact that the security of the Gulf States is linked only to threats and dangers coming from the east. Hence it is not linked to the dangers of Israeli nuclear weapons, or even the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is a call whose aim is to deal with the security of this important part of the Arab World in separation from the rest of the Arab

collective efforts. If these employ in their logic real challenges and dangers, then they represent falsehood masquerading as right. The security of the Gulf remains in several aspects an integral part of the security as a whole; it is threatened by the threats and challenges facing the whole region.

Sixthly, the allegation (which we have heard from non-Arab states with policies known for their bias towards nuclearized Israel and its protection) that says that establishing a region free of WMD in the Gulf is a first stage or step. It can be built on to free the entire Middle East, including Israel, from these weapons. However, this is a defective simplification; it is a deceitful argument, which refutes an essential issue touching the heart of security in the Arab World. It entwines many dangers and confuses concepts and promises, which are not expected to be realized.

In the light of this, Israel will singularly acquire nuclear weapons and realize its desire to maintain and establish its military supremacy, which reaches out to all the inhabitants of the region. In light of the above, I surmised that I must address you at an early stage. This issue requires us to have a frank discussion in the context of the Arab League. It also requires deliberation on the dangers pertinent to regional security, especially as regards WMD. As you may well know, this is a very sensitive issue, with many twists and it has a relation with global policies, which are unconcerned with regional or Arab security except when their self-interests are hanging in the balance.

On its part the Secretariat General is following up on this issue-whose roots are actually found in some international diplomatic missions - in order to prepare to preserve the totality of the sensitive and critical security interests of the Arabs. For all this, I request that you inform the GCC of this matter in the method you deem appropriate.

Respectfully,  
Amr Mousa  
Secretary-General.

Source: Al Hayat, January 2, 2006.