

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

August 29, 2014

His Excellency
Dr. Nabil ElAraby
Secretary General of the League of Arab States
Cairo

Dear Mr. Secretary General:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Arab League Israeli Nuclear Capabilities resolution for consideration at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference. I place great importance on enhancing cooperation between the United States and the Arab League, and I very much welcome dialogue with the Arab states on this and other key regional security issues.

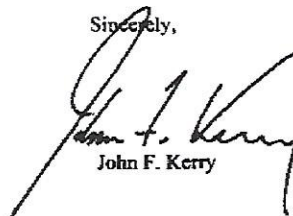
The United States supports fully the goal of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and we stand by our commitment to work with states in the region to convene a conference to discuss establishing such a zone once a consensus on all arrangements is reached among regional parties. We believe significant progress has been made through the regional consultations held to date, including in the last round of meetings held June 24-25 in Geneva. The consultations have provided a venue for clear and direct communication among regional states on the aims and security concerns that bear on a future regional weapons of mass destruction free zone. Significant conceptual differences, however, remain between the Arab states and Israel that must be bridged if a successful conference is to be held.

Compromises will be needed to clear the path for a conference acceptable to all regional parties. Decisions cannot be imposed by the United States, the other conference conveners, or the conference facilitator. All regional states must believe a process to advance a regional weapons of mass destruction free zone will advance their national interests and proceed on the basis of consensus. Israel has affirmed its readiness to attend the conference, provided its views on key issues are fairly considered. We are not far from agreement on the agenda and related arrangements, and it is still possible to hold a conference this year. We share with the facilitator and the other conveners the conviction that all of us, and all the regional States, must work harder to seize this moment, and must not be deterred by other regional challenges. I urge you to appoint a negotiator, or a small negotiating team, to engage in the kind of closely-held discussions such a sensitive topic requires.

To create an atmosphere conducive to meaningful dialogue, the Arab states should refrain from introducing the Israeli Nuclear Capabilities resolution at the September IAEA General Conference, as you did constructively in 2011 and 2012. The Israeli Nuclear Capabilities resolution is not a means to constructive discourse on regional nonproliferation and disarmament issues, and its pursuit can only delay prospects for agreement to hold the regional conference. Avoiding a divisive vote at the General Conference (where the United States would be obligated to work to defeat the resolution) would be a positive development.

I look forward to working with you and the Arab states to advance our shared goals of strengthening the nuclear nonproliferation regime, enhancing peace and security in the region, and making tangible progress toward the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. I would ask that you please circulate this letter with the member states of the Arab League.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry