

## DEBATES

### Thierry de Montbrial

Monsieur le Secrétaire général, je vous remercie de cet exposé très clair. Si vous me permettez de le dire, ce qui n'est pas totalement surprenant, très diplomatique - comme nos amis sont fatigués par des heures et des heures de travail, par un sommeil insuffisant et une nourriture abondante -, je voudrais mettre un petit peu de piment dans la discussion. Voilà 60 ans que la question israélo-arabe est posée. 60 ans, c'est beaucoup et il est vraisemblable que le non règlement de ce problème est, non pas la cause unique, bien entendu, de tous les maux du Moyen-Orient, mais certainement une cause importante. Alors, vous parlez de processus, etc. qui sont, en effet, très importants, mais est-ce que cela peut durer encore 20 ans ? Est-ce que cela peut durer encore 30 ans ? Quand on regarde la situation actuelle, quand on regarde les difficultés auxquelles se heurte le Président Obama, il est difficile d'être optimiste. Est-ce que vous pourriez nous dire les raisons qui vous font penser que la question pourrait être réglée, disons, pendant la durée du mandat de Barack Obama ? C'est précis.

### Amr MOUSSA

I anticipated a question like this. I do not think we can continue to negotiate for 30, 20, 10 or even five years. President Obama has been talking about two years since assuming office in January this year. The reason I believe there is a change is not only President Obama's policy. The book of political tricks has been played on us in full, and we know every stratagem. You cannot sit down without a timeframe or an agenda, and you cannot sit in front of cameras just to show that you are talking. This time I believe negotiations will have to be precise and will have to follow an agenda, and we will have to take the two-year timeframe seriously.

You heard President Bush saying in Annapolis that the Palestinian state would be established before the end of 2008. I do not think we should accept such a statement at face value. There will be no settlement and no deal if we cannot succeed, and another generation will have to deal with it, but the Palestinian question will continue to be on the agenda for however many years it takes. It is possible to have a fair solution. What is the difficulty? Why should they build settlements in Palestinian territory, and what is the justice of it?

The Goldstone Report was mandated by the Human Rights Council, was chaired by a highly respected justice and it implements international law. We were told that there would be no peace if we were to debate the Report, thus placing peace and international law at loggerheads. We are told that we either try to implement international justice or we have peace. Is this logical? How can



we accept this? That is one of the tricks. There will be no peace process and no solution if this goes on, and we will fail again.

I hope we do not fail. I hope President Obama succeeds, and that all parties concerned give him the space to move. They have not done so until now, according to my knowledge.

### **Thierry de Montbrial**

Pas l'Egypte tout de suite. On va commencer par la Russie, Monsieur Pushkov.

### **Alexei PUSHKOV**

Merci, Monsieur De Montbrial. Regarding the peace process in the Middle East and the change, at least in style and rhetoric, of US foreign policy, do you think the Nobel Peace Prize for President Obama was well deserved?

### **Amr MOUSSA**

The first statement by President Obama on an international stage was made in Prague last April, when he spoke about the zero option on nuclear weapons worldwide, and this initiative itself deserves to be commended. His speech in Cairo and his initiative in offering his hand to the Muslim world is another positive point. President Obama helped the peace process in the Middle East by demanding that settlements should stop and the two-state solution should be adopted, and that is another.

Therefore, the new trend of accepting multilateral diplomacy, working with friends and allies, and at the same time extending a hand of friendship are all good reasons for the award. This does not exclude the possibility of getting another one once he achieves what he has promised.

### **Philippe Moreau Defarges**

Monsieur le Secrétaire général, je vous ai bien entendu sur l'affaire nucléaire, enfin sur la dénucléarisation du Moyen-Orient. Moi, je vous dis, premièrement, qu'Israël ne renoncera jamais à l'arme nucléaire, et que deuxièmement, l'Iran aura l'arme nucléaire. Essayez de me convaincre que vous allez arriver à dénucléariser le Moyen-Orient. On a vraiment beaucoup de mal à vous croire.

**Amr MOUSSA**

You are right in your question, and perhaps in your comment. We have a choice. Either we succeed in establishing a Middle East that is free of nuclear weapons and getting Israel, Iran and everybody else to abide by it, or we have a regional nuclear arms race. It will not be Israel alone, as Iran is becoming involved, and I do not think Egypt will sit still either. We have to deal with both Israel and Iran, and all of us would agree that there are only two alternatives. We do not want an arms race. We want to achieve progress in the region, but this does not mean that all NPT member countries do not have the right to make peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear science.

**Thierry de Montbrial**

Je résistais à la tentation d'en rajouter une couche sur la question nucléaire. Qui a levé la main ? J'ai vu des mains se lever, là. Vous pouvez m'indiquer ? Mona, alors, à l'Egypte, maintenant.

**Amr MOUSSA**

Je suis le Secrétaire Général de la Ligue Arabe.

**Thierry de Montbrial**

Ah oui, il est le Secrétaire Général de la Ligue Arabe.

**Mona Makram-Ebeid**

Mr Secretary General, unfortunately you missed the very exciting morning session about security. Mr Meir Sheerit said that Israel is prepared to accept the Saudi Arabian initiative, because from an economic viewpoint it was better to be recognised by 22 countries rather than just one. Therefore, they are ready to accept the Saudi Arabian initiative. What is your response to that?

**Amr MOUSSA**

My response is twofold. Firstly, there is no Saudi Arabian initiative. There is an Arab initiative. Therefore, there is no talk with or commitment by Saudi Arabia except through the collective Arab initiative, so it has to be named properly. This is a collective initiative on the part of the League of Arab States, and they either accept it or refuse it in this capacity. Saudi Arabia has had nothing to do with it since 2002, except as one of the 22 Arab countries.



Secondly, if they are ready to accept our initiative, let the Prime Minister say so.

### **Thierry de Montbrial**

I would just like to add a footnote on the nuclear issue. Unfortunately, I think Philippe Moreau Defarges is right about Iran and Israel. Supposing that is the case, do you think there will be nuclear proliferation in the region, for example, in the case of Saudi Arabia or other countries?

### **Amr MOUSSA**

This is a logical development. The Middle East is home to many big, ambitious countries who cannot accept the role of playing second or third fiddle. I know for sure that if this continues and we have two nuclear states in the region, then a nuclear arms race is a possibility. However, I want to state something very clearly. Iran has not declared any military programme. The IAEA reports until now have not confirmed a military programme. It is possible, and so it is also probable. Israel is not in this category. They have a military programme, and this is the danger. This is the logic. Everybody asks, 'Why Israel and not me?' The best thing for those of us who are aware of the dangers is to tell Israel that the time has come to reconsider. Alongside making peace with the Arabs and joining the family of nations by allowing the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, Israel has to address the nuclear issue.