INTERVIEW

Granted by

PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT

to Reda Larry, Editor-in-chief of Saudi Newspaper «Okaz»

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Question: Your Excellency, we, the sons of the Arab nation, have been accustomed to rally to our leaders in times of ordeals in order to hear from them, in all frankness, the nature of circumstances surrounding the problems that we face, in all their international, Arab and internal dimensions as regards every state that has the honour to be affiliated to the Arab nation. Since we truly believe that at this historic stage, the Arab nation is at the cross-roads at which it will select its own way of life, in spite of the conflicting trends that endeavour to influence it and make it choose a way contrary to its wishes and aspirations, I have come to you in quest of the true vision of the nature of these problems, in your capacity as head of a big Arab state that can effectively contribute to creating events or rendering them useless against the enemies' plans. Taking this as a starting point, I hope I shall be able to convey to readers of Arabic, though «Okaz» newspaper a clear vision and a talk coming from the heart, in all sincerity and truthfulness, one based on logic and facts, and addressed to the heart and thought in our great Arab homeland. I hope your Excellency would allow me to divide my interview into two parts: First: international and Arab affairs. Second: Internal affairs in Egypt. As regards your coming visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is
there anything new in our relations or in the Arab situation that makes this trip or visit a pressing necessity at this particular time?

President: Allow me, first, to send our brothers in Saudi Arabia, through «Okaz», the greetings of the Egyptian people and my own greetings. I would like to tell them that Egypt will never forget the stand of Saudi Arabia, that of late King Faisal, God’s mercy be upon him, that of our brother King Khaled, and that of the whole family and all the Saudi people. As I said before, Egypt will never forget their stand before, during and after the battle. My visit to Saudi Arabia, and my meeting with King Khaled comes within the framework of consultations and the constant exchange of views which takes place between us even when we do not meet.

However, in these particular circumstances, I say that my visit has a special significance because it is related to the events taking place around us in the Arab nation, east and west; the international variables around us, and our major cause, namely, the occupation of our territories and Palestine.

Undoubtedly, this visit, in particular, has special significance in addition to my strong desire to acquaint King Khaled, Prince Fahd and all officials in Saudi Arabia with the situation in Egypt and the circumstances we are passing through.

Question: Egypt is facing difficulties in its talks with the Soviet Union concerning the question of re-scheduling your debts. Have you then laid down a new plan for the reimbursement of Soviet debts through some other means, rather than making a new time-table? And is this one of the objectives of your visit to Saudi Arabia?

President: Certainly, the internal economic situation in Egypt will be thoroughly discussed between brother King Khaled and myself. So far the Soviet Union is refusing to reschedule our debts.
So far the Soviet Union is also refusing to supply us with even modest military equipment. We are not asking for too much... It is enough to say that until now, and after the lapse of nearly 3 years since the October War, Egypt was not given one single weapon lost in the battle, whereas weapons are overflowing in Syria... Besides the fact that all its losses were replaced, new shipments are pouring out it since that date.

This subject neither angers nor harms us as long as all these weapons are in Syria, in an Arab country. We even welcome such a thing in any other Arab country. But why this discrimination? Is there an Arab cause in Syria while no such cause exists in Egypt? It is really a regrettable matter to which I cannot find any justification, nor any objective reason.

As regards the military debts, yes, there are interests on the military debts too... All I am asking of them is to cancel all interests on military debts... Why did not the Soviet Union repay its military debts to America after World War II, and why is it that only after the lapse of 30 years, the Soviets repaid a nominal sum... The Soviet Union is refusing to cancel or even postpone interests on military debts. As for economic debts, we had previously reached an agreement on how to repay them. The price of the factories we bought from the Soviets is repaid from their production. In this respect we were getting along very well... But as it is always the case in wars, Egypt came out of the war economically exhausted... However, it first had to initiate the process of reconstruction, and then talk about debts.

We did not demand to cease repaying debts... Not at all... We only asked them to lay down a new long-term time-table for these debts, especially the military debts, ranging from 5 to 10 years, after which we can start the repayment, as is customary... Then, all interests on military debts should be cancelled.
As regards the civilian economic debts, we are asking for a rescheduling while continuing to repay them. Though the Soviets refused to reschedule our debts, we repaid the instalment of this year as usual. The Soviets refused to make a time-table for 1975, and only concluded an agreement for 1976 alone, whereby repayment of military and civilian debts should continue.

I have not abstained from repayment, but I would like to say that we have reached a point at which the Soviet Union should take our situation into account. I have also reached the stage in which I should place the whole picture and all the bare facts of the situation before our Arab nation, and, to begin with, before our brother King Khaled.

I had asked our Prime Minister to lay down the civilian debts before the People's Assembly, while the military debts were revealed in a closed session. Nothing is to be hidden from the people, and time will certainly come when all the bare facts will be laid not only before the Egyptian people, but also before the entire Arab nation.

**Question:** The policy of axes in the pre-1967 era had led to the fragmentation of the Arab ranks. And after the victorious 1973 War, there seems to be a return to the policy of axes. So do you think there is an axis in the Arab world that can stand in the face of what is called the rejection front? And then, what exactly are the states which constitute the rejection front?

**President:** It is really a regrettable matter. Just yesterday I was watching the film of «The Longest Day» which is about the conquest of Normandy by the Allies in World War II in 1944. I have seen that there were Allies, there were the British, the Americans, the French, the Canadians, some European states such as Poland. There were pilots fighting in every direction. They all
gathered and fulfilled their objective ... Then, the battle was ended, and they came out friends.

As for us Arabs, I do not know this curse which befell us. We waged the October War, and changed the face of history economically, politically and militarily before the whole world. Without the use of the oil weapon, the military victory would have been incomplete ... The disruption and the defeatist and pessimistic spirit which prevailed in the Arab nation in a very dangerous and horrible manner, were exported to Israel ... So why are some seeking to import them again to our Arab nation by the creation of axes, and, unfortunately, for no purpose but indulge in outbiddings. Unfortunately, I have to admit that there are actually axes. The policy of axes already begun ... But who are those who call themselves the rejection front or the axes? Honestly, I do not know. Sometimes it is said the Syrians, sometimes the Libyans and at other times the Palestinians. We know that Syria is imposing its trusteeship on the Palestinians. Let us be honest. We should not compliment one another as we did long ago, for in the end it is our causes which suffer the consequences. The Syrians have imposed a trusteeship over the Palestine Liberation Organisation, contrary to the Rabat resolutions. Unfortunately, strange things are happening today, we do not know on which front or on which side stands King Kussein.

But one thing I want to say is that Egypt—and I can speak on behalf of Egypt—will not resort to a policy of axes. It will not fight one of its Arab brothers unless it is to answer and to clarify matters. We do not want to start fighting with anyone, nor to be destroyed once more. I am optimistic by nature and always have been. The Arabs still maintain their solidarity because outbidders are known in the Arab nation to be narrow-minded partisans who do not live up to the level of the responsibility of the stage we are going through.
Then I say the Arab nation is suffering new birth pains. We should live in the world of today and realise that no one can live in isolation. We should also know that upon examining one of our causes, it is necessary to take into consideration all its dimensions. We should not examine matters haphazardly or emotionally, nor with enthusiasm or outbidding.

This is the policy which Egypt adheres to and always will. Egypt has confidence in our brothers in Saudi Arabia. They fully understand our policy and are responsive to it. We have absolutely no doubt about this.

However, we do not build axes, neither shall we resort to this policy because axes have no basis and are not set up according to a clear strategy.

They are outbiddings, and are bound to vanish with time, and this is why we shall not set up other axes in retaliation.

**Question:** Your current policy, Mr. President, is based on the principle of freedom of speech and democratic dialogue. Therefore, what is wrong with hearing the viewpoint of the rejection front in order to know its true conception of our fate-determining causes?

**President:** I never said we should not listen to the rejection front. I have hoped, and still sincerely hope, that we should all have a viewpoint. Brothers living under the same roof may disagree.

Each one is different. We are human beings not angels. Naturally, we differ, and each has his own opinion. The World War II is an example.

The remaining allies were not all in agreement with one another. Churchill was against De Gaulle; De Gaulle against Chur-
There were deep-set and violent differences between them. Then there was the Soviet Union which joined the Allies to crush Hitler, radical differences in doctrines and economic systems.

There were built-in differences and hostility in everything. Nevertheless, all the states stood together to work for a bigger objective.

However, I am not prepared to give way to blackmail by a party, or blackmail in the form of outbiddings, carried out individually.

This means that instead of having a dialogue I shall be listening to an accusation of treason.

Instead of a dialogue, I would be told that the October War was set up in advance between me, the United States and Israel.

That its results were agreed upon in advance, because some had lost and I had won.

This is weak and regrettable, I shall not give in to blackmail. I am willing to have freedom of speech and free dialogue but not when I hear that I had agreed in advance on the October War, which restored to the Arab nation its dignity and its true value and changed the political situation both militarily and politically. I prefer to keep quiet and let them say what they wish.

But there is nothing I would like better than to have free dialogue.

**Question:** There is an idea today to re-evaluate the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Eisenhower Doctrine on the basis of transferring the position of strength to the United States and
Russia, with a view to dividing the region into small states that would be unable to confront Israel.

Then there is another view today which says that the eastern front has become a line of defence to prevent Israel's control over the oil sources, rather than to liberate the territories.

What are the positive steps that you are taking to prevent this disintegration, so that the eastern front may play an effective role in liberating the territories instead of preventing Israel's control over the oil sources?

**President**: All I ask is one thing... To raise the people to the level of responsibility, and to the level of our cause, and to stop outbidding.

The solution is very simple. Considering that we all take part in the summit conferences we are all committed to one strategy.

Our method should not be one of accusation, nor of creating axes to impose a certain concept of a certain party, or to impose a certain leadership. All this could happen if given a chance.

I want to say frankly here that the Syrian and Jordanian fronts are complementary.

We would not mind at all if they unite in forming one front, in whatever form. But this should not be at the expense of the Palestinians or anyone else. There should be a clear strategy, because I have declared my own strategy clearly.

We are now going through the stage of peaceful solution, and shall continue on this path until it proves to be inapplicable, in which case we can go back again.

Before 1973 we were in the same situation, and we resorted to war.
Now we are in the stage of peace and clear strategy. The Geneva conference should be held in the presence of all parties concerned. We shall all participate on the basis of our commitment to the two principles which we laid at the summit conferences, namely, that we shall not give up one inch of the occupied territories, nor shall we accept any bargaining on the Palestinian people's rights. The Palestinians are there to expound their views, Al! this is possible. But unfortunately, there are out-biddings and attempts at dividing the Arab nation by building axes, although we shall never respond to such a policy. If the eastern front, as some people say, is preventing Israeli control over the oil sources, this is all dubious talk. We have a much bigger cause, namely the Palestinian cause and the occupied territories.

If this is said about the Eastern front, then it is said with a view to blackmailing the oil-producing countries, and to obtain a little more money. Therefore, all this is sales talk and designed for blackmail. But Egypt does not trade nor does it bargain in the most difficult moments, the Palestinians were adamant, and directed violent accusations at Egypt. However, Egypt did not lose its vision nor its prestige, because it has its own strategy. I told Yasser Arafat and the others that their cause in Egypt was in good hands, because it was not their cause alone. My future in Egypt is linked to this cause.

**Question:** Iran has various connections on the international level, and has basic interests in the Gulf region which, in many cases, conflict with Arab interests in the same region. This leads us to a difficult equation, considering the honourable stands taken by the Teheran government during the 1973 War and afterwards. This equation consists of maintaining Teheran's attitude towards the Arab cause, and, at the same time, seeking to protect our interests in the Gulf region which conflict with the Iranian view.
point. Mr. President, what type of relations can we maintain with Iran to strike a balance between the two parts of this equation?

President: I must begin by saying that I appreciate Iran's support of the Arab right, and there is nothing dubious about this particular attitude of theirs. No one can condemn it, simply because Iran is adopting an attitude similar to ours concerning the Palestinian cause and the question of occupied territories.

On the contrary, I would say the following: there should be no conflict or opposition in the Gulf region between the Iranian coast and the Arab coast. What is the method to adopt? Dialogue. I do not think that anyone would have imagined that relations would be resumed between Egypt and Iran after this long and bitter period filled with violence, and at the end of which relations were severed.

But with dialogue we were able to resume these relations.

At another stage there was the problem between Iran and Iraq which everyone believed to be a chronic problem which no one could ever solve. When they sat together and started a dialogue, they were able to solve the problem.

We are of one faith. Our interests in the region are connected. What are our interests in the region, and what are the interests on the basis of which I met with Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi?

Our interests are that no aliens should enter the Middle East region and try to change its planning, its borders or anything in it, because it is our region.

We are the peoples of this region, and it is up to us to decide what we want for it.

This is the attitude of the Shah today. Hence, my assertion that dialogue solves everything.
Question: Have the relations between you and President Assad and the Syrian Baath Party reached a stalemate? If you had been in President Assad’s position, what steps would you have taken other than those taken by the Syrian President so far?

President: You remind me of the last meeting I had with President Assad in Riyadh, at the kind invitation of our brother King Khaled and Prince Fahd last April. President Assad and myself met for about seven hours and a half in two sittings. I have repeatedly said, and it was stated even in the October Paper which was put to a referendum by the people, that I shall never forget President Assad’s stand, because he was the man who put his hand in mine in a historical stand. But I regret to say today that I was wrong in thinking that the dispute between the Party and Nasser was personal. No, the Syrian Baath Party’s dispute was with Egypt not with Nasser. It was with Egypt represented by Nasser, with Egypt represented by Sadat, with Egypt represented by anyone who will come after me. That, unfortunately, was the reason for the dispute.

What would I have done had I been in President Assad’s place? I really do not know. The head of the house is in a better position to decide what is to be done.

My actions, my messages and my policy are clear before, during and after the war. But it was different with the Baath Party. The Party came out with another opinion recently. They said I had agreed with the Americans and Israelis on the October War and its outcome.

Not for anything, but because we did not move an inch from our gains. As for emotional outbursts, outbiddings and such matters — Well, I am sad, but I’ll never forget Hafez El Assad’s honourable stand to my dying day.
But as for the Baath Party, I really feel regret. I told President Assad last April that I have nothing to do with the Party and will not deal with it.

I deal with President Hafez El Assad. This is the truth and this is our attitude towards him.

**Question**: Does your Excellency believe in the possibility of concluding another agreement on the disengagement of forces on the Egyptian front in 1976? Could such an agreement be reached in the light of the US presidential elections?

Are we always going to link the future of this region with the US presidential elections and the events connected to it?

**President**: There is no other agreement in view. During my visits to the Arab countries, before I met President Ford in Vienna last July, I told the Arab leaders that if there was going to be another step, then it would be the one I was speaking about, the second agreement that was to take place in Egypt followed by another agreement in Syria similar to the first agreement of 1974.

Because of its circumstances or biddings, Syria was afraid to conclude the agreement — they are free to do what they like.

As for Egypt, there are no other steps except the last one. That is why Egypt calls for the convening of the Geneva conference as a last step. This would be the comprehensive solution of the Palestinian cause and the occupied territories. This is Egypt's viewpoint. Concerning the US Presidential elections, why should we place our cause at the mercy of the big powers? Why should we take sides? One of us takes sides, the other accuses him, the third says no.

Then what? Once they say it is treason, next they say I sold out.
Something strange happened to me. Once in Egypt, they told me I had sold out to the Russians that I had sold the country to the Russians. I said the United States entered the war against me — I stood ten days facing the United States alone. King Faisal, God's blessings be upon him, contacted me by telephone all night when he felt that the United States was intervening. When I became certain I told him I would declare the following day the United States' intervention, because they had made an official declaration. I had been standing alone for ten days in the battle against them. Concerning the US. intervention, King Faisal's decision was, that our policy should not rely on the US elections nor on the Communist Party Conference on the 25th. of that month, which they said would adopt new policies, as they usually say.

What do I care about the Communist Party Conference in Moscow or the Presidential elections in the United States? We are concerned with our cause when we come to occupy our proper place, that is, when we become the masters of our own destiny, we will never depend on this calculation or the other. This is what happened on October 6, we did exactly as we deemed fit, irrespective of the wishes of this one or the other.

The October War took place against the wishes of both the United States and the Soviet Union—the Soviet Union made official, clear and public attempts to prevent the war in every possible way.

I maintain that we should keep our cause away from the Big Powers.

I am saying that we should be the masters of our destiny. It is only then that the Big Powers will respect us—when they find that we have one word, one common stand and one single strategy.
I am calling for the convening of the Geneva conference. I will tell them that we will not relinquish one inch of territory, that we shall not accept any bargaining on the Palestinian people's rights, that the Palestinians are here, so come, let us find a solution on this basis.

This is what I am asking for.

But, unfortunately, the outbiddings are still continuing, and as I told you, there are strange actions. The Soviet Union repeats resorting to its usual policy of setting regimes against each other. It is setting Egypt against Syria and vice versa. Syria against Iraq and Iraq against Syria. Egypt against Libya and the other way round, and so on and so forth. But we are aware of everything.

This is why I am saying that after the October War something new is born. The Arab nation must come out of it with a new mentality.

We are the only masters of our cause and our fate.

No one, however, much assistance he may extend, has the right to interfere. We are the first guardians of our interests, on our land, our fate, our country and our future.

Question: In spite of the rift between Egypt and Syria, Saudi Arabia finds itself committed to play its national role in consolidating the two sister states, Egypt and Syria, on an equal footing, with a view to safeguarding the Arab cause. Does this Saudi Arabian stand affect Egyptian strategy? Could it help to reconcile Egypt and Syria?

President: We understand the Saudi Arabian attitude well. In conformity with our principles, we do not intervene in Saudi
Arabia's affairs, and Saudi Arabia does not interfere in our affairs either. Each is in his home, and the master of the house knows what's what in his house.

Saudi Arabia's role is the role of a brother reconciling two brothers. We should all welcome this attitude.

Because whatever has happened, we are all brothers. Our role is one. We are Arabs, we are all one.

Concerning the Syrians, I do not hate them at all. At the Rabat conference, assistance was estimated at a little over one billion, and equally divided between us and Syria. I was not angry, although I have a population of 38 million while Syria only has 6 million.

I have millions of problems while Syria has none. The Soviet Union refused to reschedule our debts, but it rescheduled Syria's debts. The Soviet Union refuses to provide me with arms, yet inundated Syria with arms to an unbearable extent. And yet, I never said anything.

I am not saying this as an objection now, but in the future, certainly. Egypt should take its position, and each country should keep to its own size. This is all that I am asking from our Saudi Arabian brothers. To consider each according to his size. They are our brothers, and the role of the brothers is to seek reconciliation between his brothers.

**Question:** Immediately after the death of King Faisal, when King Khaled took the initiative to hold a meeting between you and President Assad, then when he took the initiative of the Riyadh meeting and you and President Assad met, and several agreements were reached mediating between Egypt and Syria. Why did the contradiction take place after the disengagement of forces following the Riyadh meetings?
**President:** I regret to say that this question should be posed to Syria.

We agreed on forming a committee of Vice-Presidents, and the committee actually met. Vice-President Hosni Mubarak met with Syrian Vice-President Mohamed El Ayoubi. Then before leaving for Salzburg to meet US President Ford, I visited Kuwait, Iraq, Syria and Jordan. I spoke in all frankness about everything concerning the cause. I also met Yasser Arafat in Damascus.

We agreed on forming a coordination committee that would comprise the Vice-Presidents. The unfortunate thing which people do not know about, and which I did not find out about except at the beginning of the battle, is that the Syrian Baath Party told them to cease fire two days after the war had begun, without my knowledge.

Six hours after the war had begun, the Soviet Union told me that Syria was officially requesting this. I sent to Syria to find out. 24 hours later Syria answered that this did not happen.

Then the Soviet Ambassador came to me for the second time, telling me that Syria was requesting this for the second time. Then the Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin came with the third request, affirming Syria's three requests. I was surprised. How is it that we agree on something and then what happens in effect is quite different.

There is an amusing incident which I should like to tell you about.

The first time the Geneva Conference met was in December, 1973. It was agreed that a disengagement of forces would take place. I reached this agreement with Dr. Kissinger. President
Assad knew about the agreement for Egypt and for Syria because I had informed him.

Boumediene also knew about the agreement before anything took place. He was also a witness. He had visited President Assad before Kissinger had visited me in December. We agreed that the disengagement of forces would take place before we go to Geneva. When Dr. Kissinger came he told me this was practically impossible.

The party which was to effect the disengagement of forces was the United States and not himself. He said that it was impossible before January, and that in January the disengagement of forces on the Egyptian front, would take place, immediately followed by the one on the Syrian front.

I informed President Assad of this matter before Dr. Kissinger went to him.

Dr. Kissinger went to President Assad. Do you know what his reaction was?

On this basis I accepted to go to Geneva because I am not trapped. Israel is trapped. I sent to President Assad telling him that Dr. Kissinger will not be able to effect a disengagement of forces except in January. We spoke about the convening of the Geneva Conference.

It was clear that it was in our interest to go to the Conference because we were not trapped. On the other hand, Israel feared the Conference and was trapped. On this basis I accepted to attend the Geneva Conference in December because Egypt's main strategy is that the cause should be constantly moving forwards so that the victory we achieved in the October War and the initiative which we had taken over should not stop there.
We must keep the initiative in our own hands, this initiative should always be a driving force for our cause. We should not give Israel a chance to stop us.

I was taken by surprise when I found the Baath Party sending me President Assad’s message. The message said that the Syrians were not going to Geneva, and that I too was not to attend the Conference. I asked for the reason. They said we had agreed that the disengagement of troops would take place before the Geneva Conference.

However, was the disengagement of troops my decision alone? Kissinger, after meeting me, told me he was going to meet President Assad. He said he could not effect the disengagement except in January.

It is not a question of agreement. It is clear that it was not I who changed the date, nor was it up to me to decide when to start or stop the disengagement of forces.

The third party, the United States, said that it was only possible to take this action in January, and I agreed.

Then suddenly, the Baath Party dispatched the Syrian Foreign Minister to King Faisal, God’s blessings be upon him, and to Sabbah El Salem. Saqaf, God’s blessings be upon him, came to me at dawn with a message from King Faisal. I was shocked. A few hours later, Kuwaiti Minister of State, Abdel Aziz Hussein came in with an identical message. The Syrian Foreign Minister, Abdel Halim Khaddam told them in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, that Egypt had agreed with the United States on the disengagement of forces.

All this took place in December. It was said that Egypt was going to the Geneva Conference just to declare the agreement,
and that it was taking the Conference as a façade for its declaration. It was also said that Egypt betrayed Syria, that Egypt had withdrawn from the battle and that it was conspiring with the United States.

All this was repeated to King Faisal who became very disturbed.

Syria is supposed to be a partner; it should at least speak the truth.

It should not say such blatant falsities, nor give descriptions which I myself cannot repeat because I am not in the habit of insulting like them.

They came to me in a state of shock as was expected. I told them all these were all lies. I told Saqaf and Abdel Aziz Hussein to explain the stand. I told Saqaf to tell King Faisal: You know Egypt and you know Sadat. We never shirk our national duty.

We are never led into temptation. Egypt knows well its national commitment.

I told Abdel Aziz Hussein to tell the same to Sheikh Sabah. We went to the Geneva Conference in December and they discovered that it was not a façade to declare the agreement. The disengagement only took place in January and I informed President Assad.

Since then, the situation has been clear. The Baath Party decides and I am expected to implement this decision. If I do not, then I am a traitor; I conclude agreements with the Americans and am conspiring with this one or the other.

At one time they officially told the Palestinians that the United States, King Hussein and myself had agreed to liquidate
the Palestinian cause. I want the Palestinians for once in their lives to stop complimenting and to speak the truth.

Today, King Hussein is honey to them, while Egypt has become the bitter pill. King Hussein has always been accused, among many other things, of being America’s man, Egypt rejects this behaviour.

Egypt is clear and is not hypocrite. I do not say one thing behind closed doors, and say another before the microphone.

Egypt has to say the truth to the Arab nation.

One of the questions of Okaz newspaper concerned Arab solidarity, and the areas which are being established. I seize this opportunity to speak to the Arab nation through Okaz.

Unfortunately one of the methods they are trying to use to destroy Arab solidarity is an age-old method:

— To divide ideologies, saying that one is reactionary and the other progressive.

Egypt rejects this, we will have only one ideology—we are Arabs, whether rightists, leftists, progressives, or imperialists. This is what divided us and set us against one another.

Syria obtains assistance from Saudi Arabia. Yet what does it say about the oil exporting countries behind closed doors, and what does it declare when it comes to you in Riyadh. You must be aware of all that.

I speak one language, both behind the doors as well as publicly. Our ideology is that we are Arabs. Attempts to classify us are but attempts to set us against one another, and they have become meaningless. There are ridiculous incidents which begin some-
times haphazardly, and are sometimes imposed in a mafia-like way, such as imposing a war like the Lebanese civil war, which went on for ten months.

Who is feeding the battle? The Syrian Baath Party We. should, therefore, not blame the Syrian people.

The Party gives arms to the two sides. The war could have been stopped before all this damage took place. Then why did it stop ten months later?

I know the reason. But there is no need for me to say it, because I feel it and its position in the world.

**Question**: Does your Excellency still rely on U.S. support of the Arab right, particularly after the US used the right to vote in the Security Council against the interests of the Arab nation?

**President**: I shall summarise our position as regards the United States, to clarify matters.

In the past we split up ourselves internally—with slogans, outbiddings; ideologies and all this talk. We fought against the United States and against the Soviet Union, and even against each other. Everything was mixed up.

Whether we like it or not, one of the main keys to this situation is in the hands of the United States. Why?

For a simple reason. The United States gives Israel its bread and butter, the machine gun and the plane. Had the United States not covered the deficit in Israel's balance of payments this year, Israel would have eaten bricks or would have been struck with famine.

If we ignore this fact or if any Arab politician ignores it, then
he would be misleading his people and his nation. In this case it would be better for him to stay at home.

I do not care about imperialism or colonialism. As far as my cause is concerned, if I ask the United States to give a hand and it does, then I shall welcome it.

An inferiority complex ... Will the Americans or the Soviets be able to cheat me? The Soviets were unable to, and therefore, the Americans will never be able to either.

They still have this inferiority complex which I have not.

When I sit with the Americans I agree to the points I approve of, and I say "no" to those which I do not approve of.

In March 1975, I said "no" to Dr. Kissinger on one point.

In September, when I found that everything was clear and all right, I said "yes."

I am master of my will and of my destiny.

I am not betting over the American stand. The issue is that we must live the age we are in, and the changes that take place. We should know what is surrounding us.

Without the United States as a main key, we will not be able to solve the problem. It is a simple matter. Once Israel relies on the United States it knows that it can confront all world public opinion. It rejects the Security Council resolutions, the General Assembly resolutions and what anyone else says, as long as it is supported by the United States.

What I have witnessed until today, and I would like to say this to the Arab nation, is that the United States has never failed to fulfil any of its promises to me since Dr. Kissinger contract me in November 1973.
Until this proves to be untrue, I must confer and tackle issues with the United States, because it is a main key.

The day the United States encroaches on one inch of the Arab territory, or the Palestinian people's rights which we have agreed upon, I will tell the Arab nation that the United States believes in such an idea and I do not agree.

Why should we complicate matters for ourselves? I am not betting over the US attitude.

I would like to tell the Arab nation that we should examine matters with the understanding of the age and the world, this world which has reached a level of maturity and wants to listen to mature people.

Whether we like it or not, the main key is with the United States. Whoever will come after Nixon, Ford and Kissinger and whatever the circumstances, this will be the United States position. We should always take this into account while we are working. This is what leads me to say that I do not bet on anyone. If I wanted to bet I would have betted on the Soviet Union. I do not agree to either betting on, or to putting ourselves at the mercy of any of them.

However, I see something else in front of me, and I am taking it into consideration, because it is a fact. I believe that whoever ignores this fact should leave the cause to those who understand it, so that we may not mislead our nation for another 27 years.

Question: There are accusations directed against Egypt by those who call themselves the rejection front, maintaining that it has relinquished its Arab role and the Palestine problem in order to attend to internal construction. However, your Excellency has
proposed more than once, your intention to make 1976 the Palestine Year.

How can you explain the claims of the rejection front in the light of Egypt's policy towards Palestine? What are the definite steps you have taken and will take to implement Egypt's policy?

President: This is what the rejection front says, there is only one answer to them. Let us return to my trip to the United States, my address to the General Assembly, and to the resolution which obtained 101 votes in favour of the necessity of having Palestine attend all conferences. This was basically intended for the Geneva Conference. The United Nations adopted a resolution upon my request, declared in my address when I was in the United States.

The second point — my address before the U.S. Congress. If you will remember, you will know what I said in this address. Then there was the press conference I held. However, I do not have to answer, nor do I have to defend myself because I will never put myself in a position of defence.

Why don't they think of all this because this is part of the whole.

Egypt will not put itself in a position of defence, nor in a position of outbidding.

We are prepared to hold a sound dialogue based on logic and reason with them or even with the devil if it is for our cause.

But I will not stand for humouring, party blackmail or outbiddings. All I want you to do is to look back on my trip to the United States, then answer.

Question: Concerning the Palestinian people's rights?

President: What more do you want than the resolution in the
General Assembly adopted with a 101 vote, accepting the Palestinians' right to attend all conferences held on the Palestinian cause.

**Question**: Your Excellency told Mr. Selim El Lozy that you had much to say, concerning the Palestinian cause.

**President**: Yes — indeed, much...

**Question**: Can you tell us some of it?

**President**: The coming days will show you our steps, because in Egypt we do not rely on outbiddings and competition in front of the microphone. Our method is one of action, and not one of talk. Action first, then talk.

**Question**: Egypt is accused of starting the sanguinary events in Lebanon. There are also other accusations directed to the rejection front of concocting these events. We would like to shed light, your Excellency, on who actually took part in starting these events, and as to the real motives behind all this.

**President**: The French proverb says: "Cherchez la Femme", here it is search for the "Syrian Baath Party". The Baath Party gave arms to the two sides. They know very well that I have full information about what went to the two sides. ... To the Moslems so that they could kill the Christians, and to the Christians to kill the Moslems.

The issue was not one of Moslem and Christian, and is still not until this very moment.

I hold Syria responsible for this. I also hold all the Lebanese leaders responsible, because if any of them had dispossessed himself for the interest of Lebanon, the situation would not have come to that. Unfortunately this year is marked by two events: the elections of the House of Deputies, and the Presidential elections. Each
one wanted to reach his own ends, therefore, they let their country reach this point.

I hold the two fully responsible and they knew it.

**Question**: Arab circles mainly believe that the recent events in Lebanon took place according to a pre-planned policy laid down by the United States to divide Lebanon into sects in order to compensate some countries for their territories lost in the 1967 war, and hence give the impression that it would be impossible for Moslems and Jews to coexist in occupied Palestine.

This belief is supported by Lebanese leaders who have actually declared that they possess this plan, it has come to their hands. What do you think of all this, and what is the nature of the role you can play to prevent the realisation of this plan?

**President**: We declared our stand in April, 10 months before the catastrophe. I said that the question was not one of Moslems and Christians. The real issue is something else. I had briefed the Arab League Secretary General on the situation before leaving for Saudi Arabia. I told him to be prepared . . . to bring together President Franjieh with Yasser Arafat because the situation was that Lebanon was complaining of the exaggerated freedom of the Palestine resistance while the Palestine resistance believed that it should have freedom of action in Lebanon.

We are all keen to safeguard the Palestinian people's rights. No one is against the Palestine resistance at all. However, no one will accept exaggerated freedom either, just as no one will accept to see Lebanon reject the presence of the Palestinians.

These are the facts we have. This is why I said, come let us tackle the problem from its very roots.
If the Lebanese believe that it is a Soviet-American plan, then why do they not declare it and take action? Considering it is they who are responsible they should take action, and not allow anyone to go beyond his limits.

I have only one opinion concerning this problem. I hold the Syrian Baath Party responsible, then the Lebanese officials. All this could have been known and prevented at the beginning.

**Question**: What do you imagine could be the reasons of the Palestinian leaders in opposing the establishment of a government-in-exile, despite the impossibility of imposing its actual entity as a state at the present stage. What part could this government play to attain actual statehood?

**President**: Over three or four years, I announced my suggestion in the Palestinian National Council. Had they listened to my advice then, following October 6, they would have obtained the recognition of at least 100 nations, consisting of the African nations that severed their relations with Israel, the Eastern Bloc and a large number of the Non-aligned nations. They would have obtained over 100 votes in favour of their recognition. The task of the Palestinians would have been easier. But Syrian trusteeship was imposed upon them. It was Syria which opposed the establishment of a Palestinian Government in exile, and not the Palestinians. Let us call things by their proper names. Let us look at the movement between Hussein and Syria and the various parties. What is going on?

It is most regrettable. I've seen many people in America, in the United Nations, I've seen West-European leaders and people in many places, persons I met and those who interviewed me; all of them, without exception, asked me the following question: Why don't the Palestinians form a government-in-exile?
As the Turks put it, the reason is No. 16. Reason No. 16 is the fact that Syria has not agreed yet, it has not agreed to their establishing a government; to be precise, the Baath Party has not agreed.

Question: In conformity with the Sinai agreement and Egypt’s commitment for a fixed period of three years, what would be Egypt’s position at present, if Syria alone, or the eastern front in its entirety was exposed to a full-scale attack from Israel? Especially that there is a possibility of such an attack looming in the political horizon.

President: Where did you get your information concerning the three years?

Question: From the agreement.

President: It is not in the agreement.

Question: It has been announced.

President: No, it has not been announced. Only Israel announced it. Do not hold me responsible for what Radio-Israel announces, as I am not prepared to reply.

What is provided in the agreement is that I should renew the mandate of the U.N.E.F. (United Nations Emergency Forces) annually. I renewed their mandate this year. I shall renew it for a further year as the term of the renewal comes before the U.S. elections. I am obliged to wait till after U.S. elections, this being one of the keys to the case.

I shall renew the U.N.E.F. for a further year from October 76 to October 77.

I am not afraid of what I do. I announce it and my people know that. As for the rest of the strategy, I had hoped it could be of the same calibre as the Basle Conference, held by Hertzl. They say what they want to say, and the part of the agreement was announced. I shall renew the U.N.E.F. for a further year from October 76 to October 77.

I am not afraid of what I do. I announce it and my people know that. As for the rest of the strategy, I had hoped it could be of the same calibre as the Basle Conference, held by Hertzl. They
sat and planned, then kept their mouth shut for about half or 3/4 of a century, until the plan began to work itself out, starting with the Balfour Declaration in 1917 then the creation of Israel in 1948, and the successive Israeli aggressions leading to the current incidents.

All this had been agreed upon 70 or 80 years ago. I am not prepared to reveal my strategy before a microphone. Unfortunately, I have no one with whom to discuss it except the Arab brothers who appreciate the importance and the value of the cause, and the fact that it should not be subjected to outbidding and political transactions.

I made my announcement, what I announced is recorded and I say what is on record, yet still you ask me questions.

Following the agreement, I sent Vice-President Hosny Mubarak to show the agreement to all the Arab countries. To Syria, in particular, he went with what was claimed to be the secret agreement. I made my announcement and he went to them (the Arab countries) and showed them the first commitment wherein America guarantees that Israel is not to attack Syria.

The second commitment was that Palestine would attend the final settlement with us, since without the Palestinians peace cannot be concluded in the Middle East, they being the core and the root of the problem. The third commitment was that America undertook to conduct a second troop disengagement, on the Golan front, like the one conducted on the Egyptian front.

These are the three commitments you claim to be secret and which he showed to them. Does this answer your question?

**Question**: The Arab nation considers that there is a contradiction between announcing the peaceful steps for the settlement
of the Palestine problem and the establishment of the early warning stations on the Mitla and Giddi passes. We wish to know, precisely, the part to be played by these stations. Are they under the kind of control that would prevent them from spying? Whose interest do these stations serve? Why are they operated by Americans that have harboured hostility towards Arabs, in general, and Palestinians, in particular, since the rise of Israel? How can Arab Egypt free itself from its commitment to the Sinai Agreement, in the event when the Arab nation, in its eastern wing, is exposed to an aggression looming in the horizon, when persons distrusted by the Arab nation are stationed on the passes. This is a condition which will obstruct, if not paralyze, the expected Egyptian movement.

President: It is regrettable that you have been fed with Baathist ideas. I refuse to reply to a question in this form, for the simple fact that it reveals Baathist reasoning. In the Saudi line of reasoning the question would be thus: What is the story of the early warning stations? To the Saudi line of reasoning I would reply: Israel had a most up-to-date station which it had set up prior to October War, in conformity with the most up-to-date technology of the age, still it did not prevent the October War.

Despite the fact that this station existed, the strategic and technical element of surprise to Israel was complete, as recognized by the entire world. Is that clear? As for the so-called contradiction, it is merely the resentment of certain parties.

Because of their station the Jews kept an eye upon us. I, therefore, resorted to the Soviet Union and said: Jews have an open eye on us. «That was prior to the '73 battle». «I want an eye on them too».

They had agreed on that with Abdel Nasser, before he died. They promised to supply it but did not do so for a year, despite the...
fact that they had fixed the term of delivery within two months, after his return from his January 1970 trip to the Soviet Union. It only came after his death when I went there and asked why it had not been delivered. They thought I was not aware of the agreements that had been concluded. They did not know that Abdel Nasser acquainted me with everything, in any operation.

Then the station arrived and when we set it up, they said, as they had informed Abdel Nasser, that it was powerful enough to monitor Sinai, Israel and right up to Syria. They also said that it should be manned only by Soviets and that Egyptians should not come near it. I agreed.

The Soviets manned the station and I asked Vice-President Hosni, who was the Commander of the Air Force at the time, and Ali Fahmi, Chief-of-staff, who was the Commander of the Rockets, to conduct investigations and tests on the station ... The result was that the power of the station turned out to be short of reaching the passes in Sinai, let alone covering Sinai, Israel and reaching Syria. Not only that, but it revealed only a small angle, whilst the Jews had a complete view of all the confrontation front before them, by means of modern technology.

Question: Do not the Russians possess all of the things the Americans possess?

President: They do. But the Soviet Union is in the habit of giving me the most elementary equipment they had begun with. They must also be manned by Russians and Egyptians are not to draw near them. I accepted and said that this was better than nothing.

So I told them to sell me the old station, as my officers had seen it. Russia imagines that unless it supplies us (with technology) we cannot get it elsewhere. We do get it; we know what is in the
West and what is in the East. Our sons have been educated both in the Staff Academies of the US, Britain and the Soviet Union. You have seen their performance in October '73. Go see the Bar-Lev Line and read the statements of the Jews, particularly, on the Gap. This year they stated that they had named the Gap the «Valley of Death» Israel says this, not I.

When I issued the decision for the withdrawal of Russian experts in 1972, for the reasons you have learned, I asked them to leave the station even though it was not worth much, and withdraw their troops. They replied that they would withdraw it along with the troops and so I wished them a pleasant journey. I was not prepared to have Russian units in Egypt getting their instructions from Moscow.

Then we entered war and were watched by the Israeli warning station, while we could not watch them, ourselves. Still we achieved the element of surprise, in full, a fact recognized by friend and foe ... Was it not?

Thus the Baathist line of reasoning that claims the station is manned by Americans is the height of prevarication and arrogance. What does the agreement provide?

It provides that the station should be sold to Egypt and manned by Egyptians. When Ford agreed to sell me a station similar to the one set up by Israel, so that my children would not stand blind to what is before them, as was the case in 1973, and despite which they performed a miracle; when Ford agreed to sell me the station to become Egyptian and be manned by Egyptians, I said:

«Since you agreed to give me the station, I invite you to come and stand as witness between us, as I don't trust them, nor will ever do so.»
In what form? Technicians, both from ours and from theirs, as civilians. This is provided in the text of the agreement and I am addressing my Saudi brothers and not the Baath Party and its line of reasoning, since they use slanderous expressions; basic item in the agreement provides that the day Egypt asks for the withdrawal of these people they will be withdrawn, at once, and without discussion. The agreement is here for reference.

But then the Americans said that the same right to withdraw their personnel whenever they want to, should also apply to them, and I agreed.

The only item in this connection says that the day Egypt wants this personnel, civilian personnel, withdrawn, America will withdraw them without discussion. The agreement between Prime Minister Mamdouh Salem and Kissinger was signed; it was printed and published. They deliberately distort facts. How can they do that, with an official document?

The second matter is that it was America that sought the right to withdraw its personnel for itself. They said that at any time when something is about to happen, that something is wrong and that their safety is endangered, they would withdraw them.

How can this station be for espionage when it existed before '73? To any one who thinks so, we would say: Stop distorting facts, exaggerating and reverting positions. To whose benefit are the words said about Egypt?

**Question**: To what extent has the policy of diversification of the sources of arms succeeded in Egypt? Taking into consideration that there are military theories that claim the re-equipment of any army takes a long time, may be years, before the new arms are properly assimilated. What are the steps taken so that the Egyptian Army would assimilate the diversification of its new
arms, especially that we are racing against time to reach the
standard imposed upon us, internationally?

President: This is not an easy question to answer, for fear of
revealing our cards. All I can do is to ease your mind on the fact
that the decision of the diversification of arms has succeeded. Over
two years have passed since the war, and Russia has not yet re-
placed our arms, as it did with Syria, replacing double the quantity
lost by Syria in the war. But nothing has been replaced for me.
Still, militarily, I am standing on my feet, and over 90% of my
arms are Russian. They deny me spare parts, refuse to overhaul
the engines and everything else. I wish to assure you that I am
standing on my feet, but cannot give any more details.

Question: Following the '73 War, France of Georges Pompis-
dou, sympathised with the Arab nation on account of the activities
of the then French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert, and took effec-
tive steps in offering to provide the production of Arab arms
in exchange of energy resources. This was far sightedness, on be-
half of Mr. Jobert in viewing France's long-range policy, concerning
French security being linked with Arab countries, on account of
their being neighbourly Mediterranean countries. We believe that
the idea of industrialization has disappeared, with the disappear-
ance of Jobert from the political scene, under American pres-
sure. What do you think of this?

President: There is something I wish to correct. It is true
that France understood the Arab position, at the time of Pompidou,
this was a continuation of the policy started by General De
Gaulle. But at the time of Pompidou we got only limited aid from
France. Since the decision for embargo on arms to the region was
applied on us, as well as to the Israelis.

The decision for lifting the embargo, adopted by Mr. Giscard
d'Estaing, and I wish to say that Giscard d'Estaing's age is the
golden age of Franco-Arab relations has enabled us to apply the
decision for the diversification of arms. But best of all, we can es-
cape the blockade on modern technology imposed by the super
powers. Since the modern technology possessed by the two super
powers, only is available to us in France and Britain, but more in
the France of Giscard d’Estaing.

Question : The five wars waged by the Arab nation against
Israel were fought with foreign arms on both sides, and considering
the circumstances the Arab nation met in securing the quantities
and qualities of (required) arms, as well as their effect on the
course of these battles, there emerged the idea for establishing
arms industry within the Arab nation. It is obvious, however, that
this industry requires the existence of expertise and skills, so that
production reaches the level of arms production in other countries.
In the event of the impossibility to secure the necessary informa-
tion and expertise, it is difficult to bring that industry to the
necessary standard. What are the stage-by-stage steps to be taken
by this industry, until we could rely completely on our own pro-
duction of arms ?

President : This is a general question on which I wish to say
one thing : that we do not lack expertise, the necessary base of
the capacities. They are available, and Arms Industrialization
Authority has started, thanks to my brother, King Khaled and
all the brothers in Saudi Arabia, Abou Dhabi and Qatar. It is not
advisable to talk much in this connection, but I assure you
that everything is progressing satisfactorily. In my forthcoming
meeting with King Khaled all this will be discussed at length. You
can rest assured that we are serious and things are turning as
we want them to.

Question : What is your view of the part of the major powers
in the present confrontation between Algeria and Morocco in the
Arab North-West Africa, and the confrontation that has taken place, in Lebanon, the consequences of which will remain for a long time in the history of our Arab nation, could we call what is going on in Angola as a semi-confrontation between America and Russia, connected to what is taking place in our Arab territories, particularly in view of the part played by the O.A.U. between group of Arab countries and the Black Continent.

**President**: Here I wish to state some facts:

First: I deny the responsibility of the super powers in Lebanon, even though I do not find it unlikely. Above all, I place the responsibility on the Syrian Baath Party and the Lebanese leaders themselves.

But Angola is different. It is true that it is a confrontation between the two camps. With regard to the Sahara, our principal concern, Vice-President Hosni Mobarak and I, was to devote all our efforts not to lose control over the struggle, so that it does not turn to a struggle where the super powers would interfere.

We are categorically opposed to the involvement of the super powers, and in Angola there is a struggle where they are taking part. To prove that we have one strategy and one set of principles; despite the fact that the Angolan Liberation Front had an office in Cairo, before it obtained its independence, because Russia and the Cubans are in Angola, we refrained from recognizing it, until it was recognized by the Organisation of African Unity. We recognized Angola’s independence from Portugal, but not the government, except after it was recognized by the Organisation of African Unity.

Why? Because we are against the intervention of the Soviet Union and Cuba, on one side, and America and South Africa, on the other.
We condemn the two sides and condemn intervention from the two sides. The purpose of Vice-President Hosny's trip to Algeria and Morocco was restricted to keeping the dispute between the two parties. We not only opposed internationalisation, but even Arab intervention, where some Arab countries would have sided with one party and some with the other. This assignment was fixed on bringing together the two. My son, Saud el Feisal, attended with Hosni for the same purpose, and called on me on his way back. We want the two parties to sit together, like brothers. This is our view.

**Question:** With regard to the internal position in Egypt, being moved by the deeply rooted faith of the various Arab peoples, with their diverse ideologies that the consequences of what takes place inside Egypt will spread all over the Arab nation, I am entitled to inquire as to what is going on in Egypt and affecting us, both positively and negatively.

Let us start from the healthy aspect that appeared in Egyptian papers and then was carried by the foreign press, on calling to account responsible authorities on their transgressions in the authority vested in them by the people, during the present stage, and the subsequent embezzlement and the smuggling of funds.

As an Arab I have a right to ask whether guarantees have been secured for the Egyptian people to prevent the recurrence of such transgressions, serving the interest of the Authority, as well as incidents that would discredit the great history of Egypt. Furthermore, what are the guarantees given to Arab nations who pay the consolidation fund, to ensure that Arab funds are devoted to the purposes they were intended for?

**President:** That is a good question, as in the future these things might discredit you. You are my partners. Cross out the
word 'embezzlement' as Abdel Nasser has never been guilty of this crime. He has not appropriated the property of any one, or state funds. He has not smuggled anything out of the country. It is a great shame to say that. The Government statement has been released and submitted to the Socialist Prosecutor. He called on me yesterday and said that all was in order and no embezzlement had been committed.

You should change this world 'embezzlement' for the sake of the relations between us, as you cannot conceive the bitterness of the people over this story. Despite the unanimous agreement of the people that change is necessary and the errors have been committed, still there was bitterness at the manner in which this operation was conducted, and which distorted our image abroad, both in the outside world and with our Arab brothers, concerning Abdel Nasser.

Abdel Nasser was not like that. This is why I ask you to change the wording of the question.

On the internal position, the question should be brief. For instance, what is the internal position in Egypt? And I would reply: We are about to take the final step in the realisation of the principles of the July 23 Revolution.

The July 23 Revolution has 6 principles. Five of them have been executed. Only one principle — Sound Democracy — has not yet been executed.

The sixth principle is establishing a sound democratic life. What is our view of sound democratic life? There should be diversity of views in a country, through a national coalition, believing in national unity and social peace. So that no one class would impose itself on the other classes, and the socialist solution derived from our actual lives. This is what is going on at present.
What is taking place now, are the final touches for the establishment of a 100% sound democratic life for an exemplary state ruled by institutions and not by an individual, or individuals, where small and big submit to the sovereignty of law, and where freedom and securities are guaranteed and where the dignity of man which was honoured by God Himself is safeguard.

Finally, this is a state with a collaborating society, in the sense that every man, in the land of Egypt, will be ensured against disease, incapacity, old age and death, in addition to other reforms taking place in Egypt at present.

**Question:** Following what has been published in certain Arab countries concerning the investigations with Leftist organisations, it was proved that there was an alliance between these organisations and the Moslem Brotherhood Organisation.

The Moslem Brotherhood had a bitter experience with the Revolution, prior to your investiture.

Do you still believe that the Moslem Brotherhood has political ambitions for government, especially taking into account that at the present political stage they are connected with the extreme Leftist current?

**President:** There again, I wish to make a correction. I can never positively claim that Communism or Marxism are allied to the Moslem Brotherhood.

Here in Egypt, there are Marxists and Moslem Brothers. But I cannot say that there is an alliance between them which troubles me in any way.

We are now engaged in re-shaping political life upon a truly democratic concept. The Platforms Committee will have completed all this by March, and you will hear what this Committee has
decided upon, which will be discussed; then the democratic picture by the people will appear. That picture will replace all this since it will cover all these activities.

**Question**: You have adopted a decision for the formation of an Ad Hoc History Committee which will re-write Egypt's modern history, including the July 23 Revolution, in both its positive and negative aspects.

This Committee has collected the historic testimonials and documents which shed light on this important stage which had its effect on an Arab level.

The Arab nation is entitled to know these facts. Why did you prohibit their publication?

**President**: Vice-President Hosni Mubarak who is Chairman of this Committee will not publish any of the facts until the whole picture is completed.

For instance, the Committee investigating the reasons for the '67 set-back has completed a considerable part of its assignment. Other sub-committees are assigned to record the facts of the history of Egypt from 1919. The Committee will not publish anything until it convenes to decide on what may be and what may not be made public whilst safeguarding national interests. You recall the Israeli Agranat Committee formed for investigating the causes of their defeat. Part of their findings were made public, while the essential and the basic part was not. But we shall publish. Only what involves the high national interests, has to be submitted to the Committee for advice, on what to publish and what not to, since the work of this Committee needs to be made available to the people and the Arab nation.

**Question**: What is the part played by the Egyptian Right in
political life? Would you allow the rise of a right wing platform in the Arab Socialist Union?

President: I do not classify Egyptians, but consider them as one family. May be some persons regard the word «family» as backward, still I insist that Egyptians are but one family. If the people, through the Committee of the Future of Political Action in Egypt, desire to have a right wing platform, well and good. Everything depends on the will of the people. I have one family before me and regard them all, equally. But I say, «Stop» to whoever commits an error.

Question: You announced that in Egypt there is an inclination to rebuild the political and economic structures, as an expression of the democratic trend in Egypt, following the May 15 Rectification Revolution. This gives the impression of the failure of the Egyptian experiment, through the political and economic institutions, in the past stage, both on account of these institutions not representing the reality in the social set-up of the Egyptian people, and the failure of practical application, under these institutions, especially that you granted the Egyptian people the right to self-expression, by deciding on the new political picture they desire.

Here, a question occurs to me which I address to Mohamed Anwar el Sadat, the son of the Egyptian village, and not to President Anwar el Sadat, on his viewpoint concerning the political form that would serve the Egyptian Man in the land of Egypt.

President: I wish to correct this concept. The experiment was not all wrong, nor was the Rectification Revolution for the purpose of starting a new experiment, separate from the July 23 Revolution. On the contrary, its purpose was rectifying the course of the July 23 Revolution, as the centres of power were exploited, and
some persons took advantage of their positions in imposing conditions in no ways consistent with the principles of the Revolution. What has happened was rectification of the course.

Suffice it to remember that the experiment ousted the British after 75 years of occupation, and that Gamal Abdel Nasser regained control of the greatest stronghold of monopoly and foreign domination, namely, the Suez Canal.

It is enough that we should remember the experiment was responsible for the Egyptianisation of the Egyptian economy, for the first time on January 1, 1957 in the wake of the 1956 Tripartite Aggression, when before that in the past, our entire economy was in the hands of foreigners.

On January 1, 1957 all the Egyptian economy, without exception returned. Apart from Bank Misr and the Bank of Cairo, all the banks in Egypt were foreign. They were Egyptianised along with the rest of our economy.

The High Dam is a mammoth achievement. The struggle for it was the struggle for independence.

We cannot forget all these achievements and say that the experiment has been a failure.

There have been transgressions in the experiment, principally the growth of centres of power, resulting from the concentration of power, in one hand. The second error emanated from the continuation of the 'exceptional measures' imposed by all revolution as a means of self-protection, at the beginning.

There has been a transgression in this, since they were maintained for a long time. The time for their annulment should have been 1956, the day when we won the battle over the Suez Canal by
the withdrawal of foreigners and the defeat of the 3 powers: Britain, France and Israel.

That was the opportune time to have started what I started in the Rectification Revolution of 1971. However, the experiment as a whole was not a failure. There have been transgressions by the centres of power, and (exceptional) measures had been imposed on the people without justification or necessity.

The political form that can serve the Egyptian Man, I cannot suggest at present, since there is a Platform Committee busy working on it.

I like the view to emanate from the people and not to be voiced by me. I have my concept and when the committee completes its work, I shall address the people and the Arab nation, God willing.

**Question:** It has been noticed, that the subject of the High Dam has been dropped from discussion by the Egyptian press for quite a while, without the discussion reaching the actual part of the High Dam, and its failure to realise the economic purpose for which it was constructed. Logical reasoning in this subject leads us to estimate the extent of the sacrifices offered by the Egyptian people, both on account of the persecution of the scientists who opposed the building of the High Dam, and the enormous expenditures involved which in truth constitute a considerable portion of Egypt’s indebtedness to the Soviet Union.

I feel it is the right of the Egyptian people to reduce the size of their indebtedness by charging it on those who were responsible for it, without any benefit being derived from it. Also Mr. President, (tell me about) the arms and not being able to use them.
President: I wish to make certain corrections here, as the question in this form is injurious to Egypt and I do not desire that anything injurious should come from you. Ask me «What is the story of the High Dam?» and I will reply to you.

The High Dam shall continue to represent our most glorious political and rehabilitation battle.

It is the most glorious political battle from the point of view of the fact that we defied America, Britain and the entire West and built it. The Soviets helped us, but the Egyptian effort was basic.

In reply to all these discussions I will tell you to go and see the old Aswan Dam. It consists of a wall held up by props with 180 cu. metres of storage water behind it. Only a little explosion and water becomes the most effective means for washing the dams before it. Remember what we did with the Israeli sand rampart? We used water which nobody thought of. The highest known pressure is the pressure of water.

Had a small bomb exploded, behind that wall, it would have meant that Egypt would not be cultivated until the dam would be repaired and that would have meant — FAMINE.

This is from the strategic angle. A small bomb could have annihilated Egypt's economy, since it is based on agriculture. Now, the High Dam is a mountain, even an atomic bomb cannot move it. It is a mountain constructed on a rock basis. The Nile basin in this part is formed of granite rock on which we constructed a granite mountain with a very broad base. On top there is the street we walk on. But the atomic bomb, from the strategic point of view, is something else which will conclude all these discussions.
We must pay a price for freedom. But some were harmed by our freedom. And there were the rancorous and the resentful. They came up and talked.

The High Dam has many advantages. In 1913 the Egyptian population was not over 10 million or 8 million. That year no flood came from Central Africa and Ethiopia, in August. Half of Egypt’s lands were not cultivated. But we were only 8 or 9 million, and the people did not feel the consequences of lack of flood.

In 1972 also no flood came. Had half Egypt’s land been left uncultivated — we now cultivate the land three times a year and still do not have enough — had this happened in 1972, what enormous loss Egypt would have sustained on account of the damaged crops and the price of the imported foodstuffs. The amount would have risen to almost 4 times the cost of the High Dam.

The High Dam is, therefore, a successful project. All this is in addition to the electric power generation.

But every project in the world has side-effects, even if it has advantages that no one can deny. This was included in the High Dam report, before it was even constructed.

After the Dam was completed the High Dam Authority stayed on and now the research unit has been restored to deal with its side-effects on the Nile course.

But I say that the High Dam yielded its value in one year—1972, without taking electricity into account.

Question: What about the second part of the question?

President: Which is?

Question: Can we call the Soviet Union to account?
President: No. What about? In the season of 1972, alone, we obtained the price of the Dam 4 times over. How? It was discovered that we had stored the waters of three floods behind the Dam.

The Dam stores the waters of 7 floods. Up to 1972, we had stored three floods, so we released the water of one and irrigated country and cultivated our crops. In the years 1973, 1974 and 1975, the floods were normal and the Dam now is about to be filled.

Consequently, there are no threats menacing the country, neither strategic from the military angle, menacing the entity of the country, nor the threat of famine on account of no flood.

Question: The economic open door policy, pursued by Arab Egypt, calls for two things: to release the grip of red-tape that dominates the fate of the Egyptian economy, and to reconcile state intervention, necessitated to protect consumers and citizens of limited income, on the one hand, with the policy of free economy and incentives for profit necessary for private investment of foreign capital, on the other. Could you further comment, on this, Mr. President?

President: I could say the following: Egypt was drained of all the blood in its veins. In my meeting with the National Security Council on Ramadan 4, six days before the battle, I had set this before them. Our veins were completely drained of blood, but we did not die, we were not stricken with paralysis or incapacitated.

All that is required at present, is restoring blood to Egypt's dried up veins. Why has the blood drained? This needs a long explanation: Egypt's obligation towards the Arab nation, towards its security, errors we committed and need to admit. No human is infallible; we are only human. The policies we adopted were erroneous at times. They did not yield the return expected of them because of many factors. One principal factor is Egypt's Arab
responsibility, since the debt that is exhausting me at present is the one to the Soviet Union.

As for red tape, it does exist in Egypt and will stay on for some time, despite all the laws we promulgated for pulling down the iron curtain we put up of our own free will, through the pursuance of unsound practices during the previous interval. All that curtain has been pulled down. The laws have been altered by the people's representatives in the People's Assembly. But in small circles this practice still lingers, since it has been in application for the past 20 years. One cannot come and say that it is to cease, finally, within a year.

But I say that when blood is restored to the veins of Egypt, it will be the ideal place for investment, there being full guarantees at present.

I could ask a consortium of banks to give me a loan against the Suez Canal which was yielded a most stunning income, far bigger and more serious than we could imagine. The oil that has been restored to me. I am grateful to King Feisal, God have mercy upon his soul and King Khaled, long life to him, for lending me oil.

Thank God, this year I am not borrowing any more. This year I shall begin to export. First I will return the quantities we borrowed and the rest we will export. In other words, there are tremendous problems, and not just red-tape.

There are frightful hardships all around, but the hope and the basis for the future exist.

What is the basis? It is the Suez Canal and oil. No one can deny that. There is agriculture; our industry may be a little backward compared to what is abroad, but it produces refrigerators and TV sets for the people. Instead of buying all this, we produce them locally... The hope is great, God willing.
But I must admit that the task requires mighty efforts, aid and understanding from our Arab brothers — but not gratuitous aid. I am in favour of loans and joint projects but against gratuitous aid. Yet if any of our Arab brothers desire to offer aid, they are welcome to do so. We would accept it from them. But what I am interested in are loans and joint projects.

**Question:** It is often repeated that the role of platforms in Egypt is merely to absorb reactions in the absence of opposition, whereas the actual part of political action is not for the platforms, but for the ruling majority. Could you tell me whether you intend to form a party for your self or not?

**President:** Once again, I cannot encroach on the work of the Committee for the Future of Political Action in Egypt.

I will tell you a thing: I have always believed in and which you may have known about me, that I am in the final year of my term.

Throughout the past five years, you must have attested that I always say what I mean and mean what I say.

When at present I say «sound democratic life» I mean that exactly and not «absorption» of anything.

It was I who had said in the ASU Development Paper that the Socialist Union, in its present form, is no longer acceptable.

It was I who had launched the Development Paper upon the basis of which discussions were held in the country. They are now being concluded by the present committee.

As for the majority rule, that is a normal thing. When a sound democratic life is established, whose view should rule, if not that of the majority of the people? It is a normal thing and one of the mainstays of democracy.
Question: This is why I asked if there is going to be a party representing the majority.

President: That is a sure thing. There must be diversified views; there must be a majority party. I imagine that the word «party» is unlikely. Still, this is to be kept off the record since I am waiting for the Platforms Committee, I am waiting to know what the people want, and then I shall speak. But in democracy, all must submit to the rule of the people. When the majority of the people desire a thing, the rest must execute it.

Question: I thank you, Mr. President, for granting me this opportunity. We welcome you to our journalistic establishment, in your second home, the Saudi Kingdom, and wish you a happy trip.

President: I thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet the Saudi brothers in your paper. Once again I express the gratitude of the people of Egypt and myself for all, the Saudi ruler, government and people have done for Egypt.