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ADDRESS

by

PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT

at the opening session of the Congress
of the Palestinian National Council

February 28, 1971

In the name of God,

Brothers, fellows in the struggle,

I wish you to accept my thanks and apology at one and the same time. For, I thank you for your kind invitation extended to me to come here and talk to you, the representatives of the struggling Palestinian people, and the bearers of the responsibility of the struggle for the just cause which, for years now, has come to represent the framework and the very context of Arab nationalist action, and the detonating point of the general revolutionary movement of our Arab nation, thus giving Palestine, in all our lives, a greater significance than a mere name of an Arab en-

tity and rendering it, in fact, a symbol of struggle and of values, denoting the concept of rejecting the *fait accompli*, of rebelling against terrorism and oppression, and of hope under conditions sometimes shrouded in utter darkness.

On the other hand, I apologize to you because I believe that at this stage of your struggle you are faced with such tasks that nothing else should divert your attention from. Indeed, I tell you frankly that I hesitated to come here since I was solicitous about these tasks and thought it might have been better to give you every opportunity that you may have here in Cairo to think, organise and plan; the more so because I believe sincerely that you are now facing an important turning point in the history of the Palestinian struggle. You were subjected in the last few years to a variety of influences which endeavoured, covertly and overtly, to hamper your march.

You were subjected from the beginning, and since the first shot fired from the guns of your fighters, to a campaign aimed at belittling your potential abilities and robbing you of your historical opportunity.

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Later on, you were exposed to the exact opposite, and in the same proportion. In other words, you were exposed to an exaggeration of the responsibilities entrusted to you since there were many persons who wished to rid themselves of their national obligation, merely by paying you lip-service through a word of praise and laudation.

You were, then, faced with problems, the instigators of which wanted to assume revolutionary pretensions as a substitute for revolutionary commitments. Some were lured into this in good faith; while others had the necessary stamina and decisiveness to be able to differentiate, honestly and seriously, between launching a slogan and the realisation of that slogan.

Then, you were finally exposed to attempts at liquidation — attempts before which the United Arab Republic adopted a firm stand, until the increasing bloodshed among the Palestinian people was stopped.

Gamal Abdel Nasser, our leader and mentor, continued to give his heart to these attempts until his noble heart stopped beating, giving this nation the highest possible example of commitment and responsibility.

Now, and particularly these very days, you are facing, in our opinion, the most dangerous threat that you have ever encountered.

These days, you are facing the problem of the unity of the Palestinian revolutionary forces under terrible circumstances in which, apart from all attempts at liquidation, you are faced with a more dangerous attempt in view of its potential consequences which God may forbid ; namely, the attempt at confusing your thoughts and aims, your struggle and commitment, your faith and confidence in victory, God willing.

Due to all this, I was solicitous about taking even a few minutes of the time which you dedicate to the tasks which you have to tackle during this session of the Palestinian National Congress. Yet, I was swayed in favour of coming here today by the consideration that if what I will say to you may be of help in determining the nature of the current stage of our joint struggle, then the time which we will spend here together will not be a burden on your forthcoming action. Perhaps, though taking some of your time, it can diminish a great deal of your preoccupa-

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tions if we are able, together, to assert the unity of goal, of the struggle and of destiny among all honourable fighters who stand on the frontline of the Arab struggle.

I want you to note with me that I do not speak to those who fight with words, nor do I speak about them. Fighting with words is an easy matter. Whatever form it assumes, it is essentially against the revolution. Our Egyptian people have never — throughout their history — known this fighting with words, nor did they ever practise it. This is borne out by what these people have concretely given to the battle, and what they will still concretely give to it.

I want to make it clear to you and to our entire nation that we are not prepared today or tomorrow to heed anybody who may wish to tell us about the outcome of a battle which we have been through and the result of which was contrary to our expectations.

Honourable strugglers should be judged by the way they shoulder their responsibilities and the sacrifices they have made to fulfil these responsibilities. Anything else must be judged by other criteria.

Also, we say it clearly to you and to every-

body that our Egyptian front is the steadfast front which stands, with all its potentialities, in the enemy's face. It did not use its actions for political manoeuvring, nor did it absolve itself of its obligations on the battlefield. Neither did it cover up little doing with lengthy talking or the shallowness of commitments with a deluge of advice given to those who are fighting in order to relieve itself from the trouble of fighting.

If I have come to address you today, brethren, I did so in the terms of a special concept which we duly appreciate; namely, that the engagement with the enemy during the past few years was confined and limited to Egypt here on its front, and to the Palestinian Resistance there on the eastern front.

Therefore, I come to you motivated by the militant ties which bind us together and which are apt to distinguish our stance without claiming any privilege on our part.

We both « have our hands in the fire » while speaking and acting, whereas the others « have their hands in the water » while they talk but do not act; and as the Arab proverb says : « He who has his hand in the fire is unlike he who has his hand in water ».

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Brothers,

I wish to define with you here some fundamental matters; and I ask your indulgence to relieve me from speaking in detail about some questions. For, we think that through a constant and strenuous political effort we have been able to put our enemy on the defensive for the first time since a very long time. This began with Gamal Abdel Nasser's daring and courageous acceptance of the Security Council Resolution in 1967, and later of what was called afterwards the «Rogers' initiative». Gamal Abdel Nasser believed that the enemy wanted land for expansion. So, assuming his leading role and historical responsibility, Gamal undertook an extensive political move which aimed at one thing, namely, to unmask the enemy until he stands up before the whole world and openly proclaims his expansionist ambitions.

Gamal Abdel Nasser considered that political action, at this stage, can realise much; indeed, very much, if it could besiege the enemy in such a way that he would be obliged to proclaim his true intentions. We have pursued and are still pursuing the same task after the departure of our immortal leader.

The whole world has accepted the Security Council Resolution of 1967; and you have — as our brother, the Chairman of the Congress, has said — every right to refuse this Resolution. We knew from the beginning that Israel did not consider that this Resolution realised the most important objective underlying its aggression; namely, to achieve territorial expansion. We placed no restrictions upon our political action, except two conditions :

First : Withdrawal from all Arab lands occupied in 1967.

Second : Insisting upon the rights of the Palestinian people as stipulated in the U.N. resolutions.

Whereas the Security Council Resolution of 1967 referred to a just solution to the refugees problem, such a just solution can have no other basis except the aggregate of the U.N. resolutions which were issued in this respect since 1947 until the present day. Furthermore, imbued with revolutionary systematic thought rather than with revolutionary intoxication, we allowed ourselves freedom of movement. Our fundamental objective was to drive

Israel to the point where it will have to proclaim its true intentions and unmask its despicable ambitions.

We realised, and still do, that our war with the enemy is to be waged on several fronts and with different weapons. We rejected, and still do, any attempt to restrict our action to one front or to limit our weapons to one kind.

If fighting with arms becomes the only way open before us, we want to be in the most convenient position politically so that we may embark upon this path with the highest degree of efficiency and maximum hopes.

We believed, and we continue to believe, that the political frame in which we bear arms is of no less importance than the arms we bear, or our skill in using them.

So, the liberation of the land was the point at which we chose to take a decisive stand. Therefore, it was necessary that the enemy should reach the stage where he will have to unmask his ambitions in our land, and that the whole world becomes fully convinced of the fact that we have no alternative but to fight, since there is no one among us who can relinquish his land.

We, brothers, do not seek to mollify anyone, nor do we want anyone to mollify us; but we want all positions to be clear and brought out in the light.

We, brethren, do not want to impose a trusteeship upon anyone; but, at the same time, we do not accept trusteeship from anyone. We want our action to be joint, based on agreed upon strategy and open to political movement on the basis of absolute confidence. We must either have confidence in each other and in our aim or we don't.

Brothers,

I want to define with you some basic attitudes :

First : The United Arab Republic assumes and meets all its commitments towards the Arab struggle. It does so in conformity with the logic and necessity of its international and national obligations, because the U.A.R. is a revolution and a state at one and the same time.

Second : The United Arab Republic fought, rebuilt its army in readiness to fight, and will fight in defence of the land and the right.

Third : The United Arab Republic cannot place its necessary and legitimate fight within a concrete context except in an atmosphere of world sympathy and international understanding that will make of its fight a humanitarian cause.

Thus we want to make of our struggle a cause that concerns the whole world; this cannot be achieved except through extensive effort.

If others think that they can simply issue their orders to the world to be obeyed, or that they can impose on the world and it will yield to them, we must frankly admit that we do not belong to them. Consequently, our objective at this juncture, namely, our political objective, is a threefold one :

One : to deepen the commitment of friends.

Two : to neutralise the opponent.

Three : to isolate the enemy.

Fourth : Consequently, we believe that the Arab emotional stance towards the current issues should not defeat its own ends, through making this public; but it is required to influence the reality and interact with it.

Liberation cannot be achieved merely by passionate turmoil, or by the mere desire for it. Liberation can be realised by the containment of the enemy's reasoning, and the encirclement of his policy. In such an atmosphere, liberation can fulfil its purpose.

We do not belong to those who judge people by their words; we belong to those who want deeds to be the basis of judgement. We accept no other criterion from the comrades of our struggle; yet we concede it if those comrades of struggle apply it to us.

Fifth : I want you to be fully aware of the fact that there is no such thing as an Egyptian solution, a Palestinian solution, a Syrian solution, or a Jordanian one; there is but one solution, namely, an Arab one.

As for us, we refused an Egyptian solution that was always available to us, since we believe that there can be no partial solution to an aggression that was perpetrated against our entire nation, and was not directed against any one state in particular.

Sixth : There can probably be several strategies to be followed in our confrontation with the enemy. However, we deem it neces-

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sary and consider it vital that all these strategies should emanate from a single supreme strategy that will ensure the realisation of the Arab will.

The revolutionary Arab mind should define the necessary stages for the constant realisation of the various strategies in concatenation with the supreme Arab strategy. This is the challenge which we face now.

Seventh : We reject the narrow view according to which the Palestinian revolution is regarded as a mere reaction to what happened in 1967.

In our opinion, the Palestinian revolution — hence its value and role — is a part of a comprehensive Arab political, social and cultural awakening. Perhaps this is the root of the special tie that exists between the Egyptian revolution and the Palestinian revolution, which is a physical tie, in its Arab character and providential in its sentimental character.

Brethren,

Your presence here in Cairo will enable us to hold further meetings which, I am sure, will be useful and fruitful along the road of

joint strategic planning and the practical implementation of this strategy in its multiple aspects and the various weapons it entails.

We are facing a dangerous and complex war; it is a fierce war because of the aggressive ambitions influenced by the tendencies of the Zionist movement, on the one hand; whereas it is also extremely complex in view of the nature of the relationship between Zionism and imperialism, on the other hand.

On both counts, the confrontation requires us all to analyse matters deeply and to plan carefully because our path is long and our companionship along it is eternal, until victory and beyond victory, God willing.

May God Almighty guide your steps and peace be upon you.

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