Thus, we accepted the Rogers' initiative, in 1970, and thus was our positive reply to what Ambassador Jar-Ring asked us, in regard to the peace obligations, in February, 1971.

To all this, I added another initiative, which I offered, and according to which I suggested reopening the Suez Canal to world navigation for Israel's undertaking the implementation of the first phase of total withdrawal.

This was not a partial solution for the problem of occupation of the Egyptian territory; nor was it a solution separating the necessity of withdrawal from all the Egyptian lands, and the necessity of withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied after June 5, 1967. What I offered was a first step on the road to a total and comprehensive solution.

These steps, on our part, led to a number of results:

First: The question of the occupied territory has become the crux of the whole cause — whether Israel will withdraw or not, preliminary to peace.

Second: As it has been evident that Israel does not want to withdraw because it wants expansion and not peace, we were sure that its attitude will be unveiled to the whole world, which will lead to its complete isolation from the world community that does not have a road for security except in peace based on justice, the illegality of acquiring land through invasion and the illegitimacy of using force as a method of international conduct.

Third: The United States had to choose either to stand with us and with the international community and its principles, or with Israel and complete international isolation.

With our previous knowledge of the intentions of the United States and the destructive influences which adversely affect its policy towards the Middle East in particular, we wanted the U.S. to decide by itself and for itself while the world remains witness to see and judge.

The U.S. experimented; and though we were very impatient with some of its experiments, we preferred to take the position of wait and see in order to obtain the full result — and it was a brand new evidence of the whole stance. The U.S. set aside the Security Council Resolution and we waited. Then U.S. overstepped the role of the U.N. Secretary-General and his special envoy to the region and we waited.

The United States ignored the role of the Big Four and the responsibility they bear of implementing the Security Council Resolution, and we
waited. The United States confined its efforts to the first stage of withdrawal in return for the opening of the Suez Canal, and once more we waited, with utmost patience and determination.

U.S. Secretary of State, William Rogers came to Cairo. I explained to him my initiative, in detail, and with all frankness, so that there would be no scope for its mis-interpretation. The initiative I proposed comprises the following points:

First: A first stage of withdrawal, in implementation of the Security Council Resolution, in return for the opening of the Suez Canal to international navigation.

Second: There must be a clear connection between the first step I proposed and the comprehensive solution provided for in the Security Council Resolution.

Third: Withdrawal, as we conceive of it, does not mean withdrawal from the Egyptian territories alone, but from all the Arab territories occupied after June 5, 1967.

Fourth: Egyptian forces must cross to the east bank of the Suez Canal, in realisation of Egyptian sovereignty over Egyptian soil.

Fifth: Ceasefire, in accordance with the agreements of this initiative, must not exceed six months. If it does, then it will mean accepting a permanent ceasefire, or rather new armistice lines in the middle of Sinai.

I explained all these points frankly to Mr. Rogers when he visited me here in Cairo.

The U.S. Secretary of State went to Israel and, two days later, he sent his Under-Secretary over to me carrying the remarks of the other party. I reiterated the basic principles for Egypt and may be I should add, before your gathering that when the U.S. Secretary met me he told me literally: I have nothing to ask you at all, demands fall on the other side.

Then we did not hear from the U.S. for quite a while until I received an official message from the U.S. President Nixon and from his Secretary of State, William Rogers, enquiring whether my position has changed in the wake of the Egyptian-Soviet agreement. My reply was that Egyptian policy was worked out in Cairo and nowhere else and that my position—based on the principles which I had declared and outlined—had not changed.

Contact ceased, once again, for more than 60 days. But we were following what was going on. It seemed, for a while, that the United
States was trying to pressure Israel but it appeared, immediately afterwards, that it was Israel which exercised pressure on the U.S. While American pressure on Israel seemed frail, the Israeli pressure on the U.S. was tremendous; and some of the situations which we saw actually incredible. It seemed that Israel, the tiny hireling of the super-power, namely, the United States, had established a turn about. It seemed that Israel was the superpower and the United States of America was the tiny hireling which reduced itself to liability and a mere sponge.

This was quite incredible. For how could a superpower tolerate being treated in such a way by a small party which depends on it in everything right from the loaf of bread to the Phantom plane.

But actually the question was far more complicated. The Zionist pressure on the United States is not the whole question for, over and above, the United States considers, Israel as its tool in accomplishing its interests, as visualised by the U.S. in this part of the world.

Our present attitude is decisively determined along the following lines:

First: The whole world now knows what we want and what the other party wants. We desire peace while they wish to expand. In other words, we want a solution, while they want war since this is the only consequence of expansionist claims.

Second: We are not prepared to cede the ultimate solution we are desirous of, for an agreement concerning the Suez Canal. What we are speaking about is a comprehensive solution in accordance with the Security Council Resolution, and what it means as regards the two principles: complete withdrawal and the Palestinian people’s legitimate rights.

Third: We still accept the Security Council Resolution. As for the initiative I declared in this same place, it still stands, in the sense in which it was proposed and not in any other sense.

Fourth: In order to ensure this and so that there may be no confusion there is one necessary and indispensable condition before any other step is taken: Israel must give a positive answer to what Ambassador Jarring asked it on February 8, 1971. Without Israel’s positive answer, first and foremost, there is no scope for discussion or further probing.

Fifth: We are fully prepared to shoulder all our responsibilities and the consequences of whatever position we may take. We consider the liberation of our Arab territories under Israeli occupation our first main and only duty in these circumstances, whatever the difficulties or sacrifices may be.