

**AN INTERVIEW**

granted by

**PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT**

to Mathew Heart, Director of the Western Germany

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**Question :** The situation in the Middle East is still marked by instability owing to the difficulty of reaching a solution that would end the conflict with Israel and the disputes among the Arab countries. What are the next steps considered by Egypt as regards settling the Middle East problem ?

**President :** I have explicitly announced that the forthcoming stage must be the convocation of the Geneva Conference with the participation of the Palestinians because I know the Israelis will be opposed to their participation. However, the next step should be the reaching of an overall solution, i.e. a final solution.

**Question :** Mr. President, do you think it is possible to convene the Geneva Conference at present, taking into your account the current attitude of the Soviet Union ?

**President :** I see no disagreement between our attitude and that of the Soviet Union, for the Soviets adopted the same policy we had. They may, due to recent events, have changed their attitude. Nevertheless, I am not sure this will happen. There is some kind of opposition on the part of Syria and Jordan to their partici-

pation in the Geneva Conference. Yet, generally speaking, it is inevitable that the next step leading to the overall, final solution be taken. Moreover, I do not know how our colleagues in Jordan and Syria will act. Should they refuse to attend the Geneva Conference, we would then change our policy and define it anew.

**Question :** Do you think it within your power to convince the Palestine Liberation Organisation to attend the Geneva Conference though it already seems to disagree to a certain extent on the question of finding a solution, and on the Geneva Conference itself, and about the possibility of going there united, that is with an unanimous opinion ?

**President :** Well, there is something by far more important than that, the custody imposed by the Syrians on the PLO and the Palestinians. One may also feel that something is being cooked up between the Syrians and the Jordanians at the expense of the Palestinians. Thus, let us now adopt an attitude, or rather a policy of expectation and waiting. By the way, this is a British policy.

**Question :** There is a question circulating and which is frequently proposed in Europe and America as to the modality of reaching a solution to the obvious conflict with respect to the recognition of the existence of Israel, a matter about which Egypt has often been pressured, at a time when the Palestinians are calling for the abolition of the state of Israel as it stands in its form.

**President :** Well, we have to be logical in this connection; you can never ask the Palestinians to recognise Israel without giving them something of their own, because they are denied the most elementary of human rights, and are up to this moment deprived of their right to a land of their own. Thus it is illogical to expect such recognition from them, from me or from the Syrians, for the Palestinians should first be made secure as regards their state

(nationhood), then you can deal with them in the future on this basis. Other than this, everything else is illogical and impractical.

**Question :** Mr. President, how can Europe and Western Germany contribute to the realisation of stability in the Middle East area in an attempt to reach a first peace in the political sphere ?

**President :** I had stated before that there is a problem in Europe concerning the European security. European cooperation depends on its right wing which lies in the Middle East area. Therefore, I believe that there is a European commitment; there is also the fact that no European security can be ensured without peace prevailing in this region. Last year, and for the first time, I proposed that France, which had actually assumed a leading role in this matter, participates with Great Britain in offering guarantees as well as in working out the final solution. Fortunately, Mr. Brezhnev has now agreed to their contribution in a speech he delivered before the Communist Party Conference on the 25th of last February. I shall then make the same proposition to Chancellor Schmidt, so that Germany would share in providing peace guarantees in this area.

**Question :** Do you find it necessary for Europe to play a military role in this respect, i.e. to maintain European forces in the Middle East during the process of a final solution, or do you think it better that this European participation be within a wide political framework ?

**President :** Why not both. . . Let us say that there are to be U.N. forces including Europeans. Well, yes, we do agree to this but I would like to state that these guarantees should be offered to both sides.

**Question :** I believe that providing economic stability within the scope of the efforts exerted for the realisation of peace con-

stitutes an important question to be dealt with during your visit to Western Germany.

**President :** This is true.

**Question :** What point should a particular importance be given to ? and where does this point lie ?

**President :** I shall discuss this question in detail with Chancellor Schmidt. My last tour of six Arab countries resulted in our agreement, as you all know, on the establishment of a fund for the reinforcement of our economy. We will, in addition, be supplied with experts from the International Bank. In the meantime, we had thought last year of setting up the Companies Union « tonortom » comprising America, Germany, Japan and Iran to join our Arab colleagues.

**Question :** The Americans are pressuring the Germans.

**President :** I hope so, let us hope so.

**Question :** Yes, but there is only one obstacle, namely that our economy has not yet overcome the problems facing it.

**President :** It is not at all for you to say this as your country is one of the richest countries of the world.

**Question :** Mr. President, what do you think of the relations with the Republic of Western Germany, and how can these relations be improved ?

**President :** I had actually stated before that my people have great admiration for the Germans. I cannot understand why you don't realize this fact. Perhaps because you are so much preoccupied with your own problems, but you have to know that our people have admired the Germans for generations, since World War I and World War II. Despite everything, the Egyptian people have always been in support of the Germans, because of the simple fact

that you were fighting the British whom we were striving to drive out of our country. In addition, we feel a great respect for the German mentality, German technology as well as the German order and method. This is the way all the sons of our country feel for you. Thus what I will discuss with Schmidt is how we can explain this, and what practical steps can be taken to consolidate relations between our countries. There was a time when relations between us were severed, but at present diplomatic relations are back to normal. I met here former Chancellor Brandt, as I also met Mr. Scheel, at a time when he was a foreign minister, and also Mr. Gensher. I would like to seize this opportunity to place our relations in their true context.

**Question :** What will you say to the economists with whom you will meet ?

**President :** I will give them facts. I would not conceal anything whatsoever. I will inform them of the naked facts concerning our country, and all about the available potentials in it, as I will also invite them to come to visit us so that they would see things for themselves since we have nothing to hide.

**Question :** Do you have any expectation in the military sphere in Germany, in accordance with the discussions which were held in Germany concerning the manufacture of German arms and enlarging the scope of its exporting markets ? Is Egypt concerned with German weapons ?

**President :** No comment.

**Question :** How do you visualize your relations with the Soviet Union at present ?

**President :** They are quite awkward, particularly after our abrogation of the treaty, and ever since my decision whereby the Soviet experts were dismissed in 1972. Moreover, and since then

they have exerted an extremely ferocious pressure in both the military and the economic domains.

**Question :** Was it you personally, Mr. President, or your Foreign Minister who spoke of their « interference in Egypt's internal affairs. » ?

**President :** I myself have mentioned this in my speech.

**Question :** Can you clarify this point ?

**President :** It seems that our existing system based on the open-door economic policy which we adopted in 1974, and our pursuing of our own method of socialism are not approved by Brezhnev. Accordingly, he attacked us in his speech before his party in the last conference, last February. I have actually referred to this fact previously in my speech before our Parliament, before abolishing the treaty. We rejected this. Consequently, we would never kneel before anyone nor will we submit to anyone else other than God.

**Question :** A report was published in the newspapers here, as far as I know, stating that Egypt decided, as a result of the abrogation of the treaty, that the private facilities granted to the Soviet navy be also done with. Is there something to be said in this respect ?

**President :** I have no comment, but for your own knowledge, yes we did. Officially speaking, no comment.

**Question :** What about your relations with the U.S. ? Is it exactly the opposite of those with the U.S.S.R. ?

**President :** Up to this moment, it never happened that President Nixon, followed by President Ford and Henry Kissinger, went back on a word they gave me, ever. There is also a really regret-

table thing namely, that after the 1956 battle, which if you can remember, was caused by the tripartite aggression launched by Guy Mollet, France's Prime Minister and Eden of Britain together with Israel, following the nationalization of the Suez Canal, after this battle late in 1956 and at the beginning of 1957 we had requested wheat from the U.S. but they refused. The same was done following 1973 when we asked the Soviet Union to supply us with wheat but they refrained. However, the Americans sent us last year 650 thousand tons, of wheat and a million tons, this year. Thus, history is repeating itself. As for arms monopoly, we, as I told the Second Army yesterday and the day before, had to wage two battles in less than 25 years in order to break the arms monopoly. Once on the side of the Soviets and against the West in 1955, and the second time, at present, against the Soviet Union. But this is independence, and we shall always be independent, never to surrender either to the East or to the West.

**Question :** It seems that East and West took a long time to realise this fact !

**President :** Yes, I perfectly agree with you.

**Question :** What is the forthcoming step along the road of democracy, for instance concerning the elections, will the government be formed on the basis of the majority confidence ?

**President :** This is exactly true. We will soon start with 3 platforms : the right, the left and the centre which will have their own programmes. Forthcoming elections during this year will be carried out twice : the first being the elections for the presidency to be followed by parliamentary elections later on. These platforms will submit their programmes to the people. Then the platform which will obtain a majority will eventually form the government, i.e. I mean a free democracy.

**Question :** Will this platform accordingly take over the responsibility ?

**President :** Exactly.

**Question :** Are you aspiring, Mr. President, to a new term of office as Head of State ?

**President :** Well, if you want to know my personal opinion, I am not in fact personally aspiring to a renewal of my term of office. Nevertheless, my people seem to have a different decision. But let us wait and see, for this election will not take place before the coming August. Anyway, I will be having enough time for a period of breath-taking.

**Question :** Do you call it so ? What are you intending to do during this period of breath-taking and what is the object of your visit to Austria ?

**President :** In Austria, the pattern of democracy originated by Kreisky is quite appropriate for us, as we both are small and not very rich countries like Sweden or the other rich Western states. Moreover, your socialism is in compliance with our national aspirations. In addition, I will be going there to conclude some agreements with Kreisky, to meet and hold talks with him.

**Question :** Is President Ford coming to visit you in the coming month of April ?

**President :** I do not know. I am waiting for this visit the date of which has not yet been fixed.

**Question :** How can you surmount social conflict which seems inevitable when you, on one hand, encourage individual incentive in economy from which only few people will benefit, whilst seeking to satisfy the masses' demands and aspirations on the other ?



**President :** As you all know, we have a special system of our own. You have just asked about the purpose of my visit to our friend Kreisky of Austria. It is because he has a public sector which possesses 65% and a private sector owing 35% of the total economy, while both are mixed together. We have a public sector and are determined to encourage our private sector, allowing it to constitute 30 or 35% of the Egyptian economy, since I do not think it would reach more than this. Within 20 years, the public sector capital will, as you perhaps can well imagine, become L.E. 7 billion. On the whole, we will try to promote the private sector to reach 30%.

**Question :** What if it reached more than that ?

**President :** I do not think it will, because once its share is raised to 50% and its assets amount to a few billions, the public sector's contribution will consequently be considerably increased.

**Question :** Do you think it possible that you can conciliate between the people's socialist gains and modern industrialization prerequisites, a conciliation which at times seems almost completely contradictory, a case in point is the labour law ?

**President :** Well, we have to choose a particular system of our own; we cannot deny that the farmers and workers in our country have attained an influential status under the socialist system. We always have to try, as I believe Kreisky has succeeded with his system in solving this problem. And this is actually what I am striving for. He has solved the problem and never have you heard of any strikes in Austria because there is a participation of workers with the producers. Since Austria has a particular system of socialism, I sent some of our men to be closely acquainted with it. I will discuss this point with Kriesky.

**Question :** In Germany, there are similar companies which are

either owned by the State or nationalized, for example « Volks Wagen » is a nationalized company partially owned by the people and partly by the government; there is also one of the biggest oil companies for energy which is the State's property.

**President :** This corporation has discovered petroleum in the waters of the Suez Gulf, but they did not announce this discovery, I do not know why.

**Question :** With respect to the « Volks Wagen » Company, it seems to be facing a problem as it is subjected to the danger of being put on the list of Arab boycott. A very unusual situation has been created, namely that a branch company formerly bought by the major one had, years ago, granted a license to an Israeli company, this company does not at all produce the car in question it only pays the license duties. Now the boycott tends to include the Volks Wagen Company on the list, which means that it cannot operate in any Arab country.

**President :** Was it really put on the list ?

**Question :** No, not yet. In view of this, does the Arab boycott at certain times, appear more or less disunited ?

**President :** We should not allow this to happen. I am so fond of the « Volks Wagen Company », and I wish a branch of it would be established in my country, in a free zone like Port Said, Alexandria, the Western Desert or anywhere else. I also wish the majority of the government cars be obtained from the « Volks Wagen Company », and this what I actually intend. Meanwhile, we have to achieve some results from this Arab boycott and its relations with Israel, I cannot take any action that might be against Arab aspirations.

**Question :** Let us move to Lebanon. A colleague who came

from Beirut states that he can never get to know how a people can commit suicide; who is benefitting from the events in Lebanon ?

**President :** Who benefits from the current events in Lebanon ? I am so deeply sorry to say that I place the entire responsibility for what is happening in Lebanon on the Lebanese leaders headed by Frenjeh who is an intimate friend of mine. They are to be held responsible, for they should have stopped all this the moment it started. Syrian interference has culminated in providing both conflicting sides with weapons to fight against each other, and Syria is still going on with this attempt. The Lebanese leaders though knowing well the Syrian attitude, Syrian tactics and manoeuvres, have unfortunately accepted its intervention except for only one who is Kamal Jumblat who was audacious enough to declare bare facts untwisted. While the others were lacking the courage to do the same. That is why when we heard that the problem is related to Frenjeh's post and whose term of office comes to an end in the coming September, so is mine, we have to pause and inquire : « Is President Frenjeh's post worth all this, is it worth the devastation of Lebanon ? » It is quite a distressing question. I repeat that the Lebanese leaders, starting with Frenjeh, are definitely responsible.

**Question :** Can you regard the interference of the military leaders, made easier by the commander of Beirut district, as a means of bringing about a settlement of this problem ?

**President :** This might perhaps lead to certain results, it has started since 10 days or more ago, and is still in force.

**Question :** Why could not the Arab world help to overcome this calamity ?

**President :** It is because Syria is supplying the opposing parties with arms so how can we bring this calamity to a stop, or do anything about it. Assume that both Egypt and Saudi Arabia

could have had a role to play in this respect, how could it be done at a time when Syria is carrying ammunitions across the borders to both conflicting sides, whilst exercising its influence on the Lebanese leaders who seek the realisation of their personal aims, not for the sake of the Lebanese cause, but in their own personal interest. Unfortunately, these are the actual facts of the situation in Lebanon.

**Question :** It seems that there are other Arab countries involved in Lebanon ?

**President :** Yes, there are countries which pay money, send arms and, in fact, interfere in the affairs of the Palestine Liberation Organisation itself.

**Question :** How can you describe relations with Libya these days ?

**President :** I had previously described our relation with Libya as being deteriorated. For my part, I tried to stop this deterioration and maintain normal relations. But Ghadafi seems to reject this fact, for he sent a group of his men to Egypt to assassinate one of the members of his Revolution Command Council who came to Egypt as a political refugee, and is still devising plots against us. He accordingly has to stand the effects and consequences of his actions.

**Question :** Would you permit me, Mr. President, to ask a personal question, what do you, personally, expect from your visit to Germany ?

**President :** A lot. In fact, I expect much. First I hope to meet the German people and to make their acquaintance, for my wife had so often spoken of you when she visited you last year, and also because I love Germans, and was once discharged from the army,

put in a detention camp and later imprisoned just because of you, because I had and will always feel admiration for the Germans. Therefore, I want, in the first place, to meet the German people. Secondly I am desirous to confer with Chancellor Schmidt about whom Dr. Kissinger spoke a great deal and in very favourable terms. Thirdly : I wish to give Chancellor Schmidt a real picture of what is happening in our region, in addition to the fact that I am looking forward to the fulfilment of a large-scale cooperation on a bilateral basis between our two countries; your technology and mental capacities are highly esteemed in our country and have been for a long time. When we discuss together the international situation, there will then be something to be discussed with Chancellor Schmidt but which I can't declare at present.

**Question :** It is a secret then ? ! I had actually touched upon the problem and wrote a story about it. I was astonished to find the field of your direct meeting with the German people to be extremely limited, since you will meet all the leaders, the political and the economic leaders.

**President :** This is the difficulty of it, as I know that my visit will be relatively short, while I wish to meet the German people.

**Question :** Will this meeting take place in the Alps or in another place ?

**President :** It will be in Munich for example.

**Question :** Did you visit Germany before ?

**President :** Yes, I had visited it in 1956.