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**MEETING OF
PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT
with Egyptian students in Bonn**

March 31, 1976

In the name of God, my sons and daughters,

It is indeed a happy moment for me, to meet those of you studying abroad.

I have not been away from home more than two days; yet when I see you, I can feel how you must suffer from home-sickness. I would like you to know that, thanks be to God, we are now living the most glorious period of our lives, despite the economic setbacks which have been accumulating ever since 1962. There was an overall planning, and ambitious plans, but they never found their way to execution. Consequently, our economy was shattered since the defeat of 1967, when we had to face our destiny at a time when we had no one to resort to for aid. We remained so from 1967 to 1973, a period of about 6 years, we have suffered depletion of our economy ever before 1967. But the image is not so dim that it cannot be rectified. Far from it, there are big nations like England who is enduring 10 times as bad an economic situation as ourselves. Today, thanks be to God, following my trip to 6 Arab countries, we are actually on the point of overcoming our economic problems, and of setting our economy on the right track.

In February 1975, when I was in Aswan trying to work out the disengagement with Mr. Kissinger, surprisingly enough, I was

handed a report from abroad saying that the country is on the point of facing a catastrophe in the summer of 1975. Afterwards I announced the ministerial reshuffle when Mamdouh Salem took over the Cabinet and Hosny Mubarak became the Vice-President. I was astonished and wondered what would be the catastrophe we are about to face which foreign agents rushed to communicate to the persons in power in our country. When Mr. Mamdouh Salem handed me over the report on our economy I was startled to find that we were to face, last summer, an economic catastrophe.

I then asked the Prime Minister and ministers of economy, planning and finance to study the whole matter and endeavour to find a solution. Last summer I took a long-term loan of \$ 600 million from Saudi Arabia, and \$ 500 million from Kuwait. The total sum borrowed made it feasible for us to avoid the economic catastrophe.

Ever since then, I asked all those who are responsible for the economy of the country to prepare a full report, undertaking all studies possible to find an overall solution for our economy, since I cannot keep on asking the Arabs for loans. I visited 6 Arab nations and we all agreed to establish a five-year fund, similar to that of the Marshal plan for World War II.

It is to set our economy in the right track, so as not to have the same problem year after year and allow circumstances to govern our future. I am giving you an idea of the economic aspect.

We are doing all we can to cope with high cost of living and the population explosion; for instance, the State pays L.E. 60 million as a subsidy for the loaf of bread, for oil and sugar, for all the basic commodities which are indispensable to the masses of our people, to preserve the present price rates; a good example is the loaf of bread which retained the same price over a long period of time. Apart from the previous problems, we are in fact living

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the most glorious period of our lives — on the 22nd, of last February, we concluded the second disengagement agreement in full, that enabled us to regain our oil wells and the passes, and the Israelis have withdrawn behind the passes. This was what I aimed for by the 1973 war, to drive the Israelis just behind the passes, as the arms and ammunition available to me would not have allowed for further retreat.

As my son has just said now in his speech, fear, terror, defeat and pity, which were a barrier between us and the foreigners, are now over. We were also relieved of the feelings of disruption and bitterness with the accomplishment of the second disengagement, which would lead us to a peaceful solution. We had to prove our Arab nation became a 6th power.

Thanks be to God, we achieved victory on the canal banks with the blood of your brothers; the sons of your country achieved this miracle. The Israelis, who were once filled with conceit, went back to the eastern bank and the Canal was reopened, and the world set Egypt in its proper place.

I was much touched by all those honouring aspects with which I was welcomed in Western Europe. I felt the same in the American Congress, and I was so embarrassed that I was not able to complete my speech.

We are devoting ourselves to the peaceful solution, which means the withdrawal of Israel from Sinai and the other Arab lands. Ever since 1974, I launched reconstruction everywhere, starting with the three cities of the canal, to shelter its estranged citizens; Port-Said can now accommodate a population of 50,000, a much bigger number of people than before.

I can never convey to you the feeling of deep respect which America, Britain, Germany and France hold for Egypt and its people. Egypt has regained its dignity among the world, and now its

line of policy is clear and precise and all its dimensions are well understood.

Thanks be to God that I lived to announce the rise of the revolution, the morning of July 23; and 24 years later, I handed over, in the People's Assembly, the trust completely safe and sound on a democratic basis which has never been practised before.

Now Egypt's sovereignty is recognised by all; — be confident of the position of Egypt in the world. Our call for the liberation was is being indispensable; we have also started the reconstruction battle in our country, where we wish to apply the most up-to-date technology. It is true we shall put up with many difficulties but we can be confident of the result.

I thank God that I lived up to this moment; our sons will be always proud to hand over the banner unblemished, and its dignity intact. We have shed our own blood and lost many lives to keep it raised up high.

Please complete your studies and come back to Egypt, since we are in full reconstruction of the country. Petroleum experts have stipulated that the desert yields as much water as it does petroleum. This means that we can transform the desert into green lands.

In the new formation of the government, we have taken into consideration the planning to build up to 2000 new cities. I call upon you to return to your homeland and participate in the construction. I convey to you all the love of your country and your fellow brothers. Egypt is very proud of you. We are different from all the peoples of the world in that we have special love for our country; the same cannot be said of foreigners for our land. Come back and take your part in the construction of your country because our generation's role is almost over now.

When President Sadat's word was over, one of the students directed the following questions to him :

Question : A certain class of people has emerged lately in Egypt; the young, for whom Egypt is struggling for their prosperity, return to their country to find peculiar matters which hinder their advancement — this has to be corrected.

President : When were you last in Egypt ? The class of people which you refer to, does not exist any more. Now, the ministers are being severely interrogated by the People's Assembly. Don't worry, there are no more exceptional measures ever since 1973 war. There were detention camps in England during the war. I thought I did say before that we have closed down detention camps ever since 1971, and for good. These camps were kept busy for a period of 40 years.

Moreover, the new authorities have already taken action; the Parliament is being under constant and thorough control; the political bodies present emphasize the fact that parties do not change on account of mere decisions, but on the grounds of established organisations.

The press, as you know, is a 4th authority; I don't believe it right for individuals to own the press.

England and Sweden now are thinking of financing the press instead of having it receive aid from outside. As for us, in order to preserve freedom of opinion in our country, we maintained a Supreme Council of the Press. 51% of the members of the Arab Socialist Union are workers, and 49% of the profits are divided accordingly on this basis.

Some exaggerations and faults occurred after removal of censorship of the press, yet I did not resume censorship nor do I intend to; I simply reshuffled the boards of directors. I shall always plead

for democracy and aim at widening the spheres of its application in my country. We can never learn unless we make mistakes and amend them, but we must never give up freedom. These matters are all permanent in our Constitution. The revolutionary legitimacy is clearly defined in our Constitution; any amendments required should be undertaken according to the Constitution and not otherwise.

Democracy is still disputable among the Arabs; foreigners consider it a grave matter, but I said that we are used to such problems. Most important of all is that we do have a certain strategy to follow, while others who argue the matter have nothing to offer but words.

What we need now is the reconstruction of our country; we have to regain our strength. We agreed during this visit, that Engineer Sultan will execute a rapid programme for reforming the telephone communications so that in September, after a period of six months, we can overcome this problem and try solve all our problems one by one. At the same time we should maintain the dialogue open for everyone in our country to decide the future of the political task. We say we have three systems of organisation — left, right, and centre — and I don't think one can find more than those three systems in any democratic country in the world.

We have started to apply these systems, bit by bit, so as not to just leap into the dark.

The battle of elections has begun yesterday; the President will be re-elected next October, so will the Council. On November 12 nomination programmes will be maintained, and those who obtain the majority of votes will have to form the government similar to the oldest democratic regimes in the world.

The press in Egypt has revealed in the past period by a false image of the Egyptian society, which it was blamed for many, in

cluding my Egyptian sons in Kuwait whom I assured that we are fields — I have no idea why people take the negative side instead not worse than any other country; bribery does not prevail in all of looking at the achievements! Yet this did not cause me to resume censorship of the press; but since those who own the authority over the press are held responsible for consequences of their accomplishments, I had to look for a new board of directors.

Question : What will be the situation if the birth-rate continues to increase yearly by a million ?

President : A million each year — we shall have to undertake all possible measures to prevent such growth.

I am a farmer, my son, and I can well understand the mentality of farmers; manpower is an important factor in their environment — it is very difficult to convince my people in Meet Abou El Kom of the contrary. Moreover, birth control in relation to our religion is rather controversial, so the immediate task is what we are doing now, building new cities and looking for new areas of land. I brought experts from all over the world, because I feel we should insure the future. You should read the report set out by our experts which asserts that the revenue of the Suez Canal this year is \$ 400 million, and for the first time, Egypt exports 8 million tons of petroleum — the German company found petroleum in our land, and by 1980 we shall have 400 million tons of petroleum, and even more, but this is not yet announced. In the western Sahara and the Delta we find natural gases; 22 foreign companies are working in this field at the moment. By the end of this year we shall be able to obtain the required quantities of fertilizers to cover our needs, and as of next year, we shall be able to export them. The capacities are available and all we need to do is to make proper use of them.