

Question : Mr. President, I might begin by saying what you have done this time ?

Answer : I am very happy really I am very happy, I think we are rewriting history, and I am quite satisfied with the results.

Question : Well, you have announced yesterday a Cairo conference. Could you tell us a bit about that, what level, for example, do you see that, a Foreign Ministers levels or something below what ?

Answer : Well I don't insist on any level, all I ask is this let us sit together in Cairo, and prepare for Geneva, why ? Geneva without good preparation, and that was my idea since I visited Carter last April, I suggested this and when Vance came to the area two times, I also proposed this, Geneva without good preparation will be a setback, we should not reach this, so let us prepare for Geneva.

The Cairo Conference will be preparation for Geneva. Whatever level they agree to, I have no objection at all.

Question : Do you think it might be at the Foreign Minister level ?

Answer : If they agree to this O.K. I have no objection at all.

Question : I think the big question, Sir, is who will represent the Palestinians at the Cairo Conference ?

Answer : We should leave this to the Palestinians and I think they can solve this problem for all of us.

Question : But you would be issuing invitations so who are you going to invite, are you going to invite the P.L.O.

Answer : I shall be sending an invitation to the P.L.O. through one of the professors that I spoke about.

Question : Have the Israelis agreed to come if the P.L.O. comes ?

Answer : I did not ask the Israelis agreement at all.

Question : But they have already agreed to come which leaves one to believe they don't think the P.L.O. will be here and that there will be West Bank Palestinians ?

Answer : After my visit to Jerusalem there is a new fact in the area, Israel should recognize this new fact and as I told then we do not want to have mines in our way towards peace, either in the preparatory stage here or in Geneva.

Question : In your speech yesterday you made reference to the militants who were in

Answer : Well, from what I learned they have agreed.

Question : Syria has not agreed, Sir.

Answer : Yes.

Question : Rejected this completely ?

Answer : Yes.

Question : Have you heard from Jordan yet ?

Answer : Not yet.

Question : Are you expecting a positive answer ?

Answer : I am waiting, really I am waiting.

Question : What happens if Jordan says no, Syria has already said no. The P.L.O. said no, will there would be a Cairo conference ?

Answer : Yes.

Question : Just Egypt and Israel.

Answer : Yes, and I shall be continuing the preparation for comprehensive settlement. The problem is not an Egyptian problem. It is an Arab problem and the problem between me and Israel is some part of it only. So, and I have declared my intentions I say I am not going for bilateral agreement or separate settlement or so, not at all. I am working towards

comprehensive settlement so I shall be doing this here in Cairo and I shall be proceeding to Geneva also and whatever results I reach in Geneva I shall be bringing here back for Arab Summit to decide.

Question : So, you will be attempting to resolve not simply problems between Israel and Egypt but also Israel and Jordan, Israel and Syria and the Palestine Organisation ?

Answer : This is quite clear. I am not speaking for anyone. Because if you say this they may come tomorrow and declare in their shooting that they don't want any representative, and they have the full right to do this. But, as I told you, my problem is a part of a big problem, so, to solve my problem we should solve the big problem, especially when we are aiming at the establishment of permanent peace here. So I shall be discussing my problem with them. In the context of the big problem, and then when we reach a settlement, as I told you, I shall be bringing it to an Arab Summit.

Question : Perhaps we should mention here and that was a boat going by I think that we are sitting almost on the Suez Canal saluting you.

Answer : Right. They know that I am here.

Question : What do you hope to accomplish in Cairo in preparation for Geneva ?

Answer : Well, first of all, let me say this quite clearly. Let all those who will attend decide for this. But if you ask me my own plan, it is : Let us prepare a paper for Geneva. Let us not go to Geneva without any guiding paper or so, lest we start differing about the procedural arrangements or so. No, let us reach a paper on which we start in Geneva.

Question : How long do you think that might take ? Do you have any idea ?

Answer : No, I don't know really. But whatever it takes, it pays.

Question : And almost the same time as the Cairo Conference will begin, there will be another conference in Tripoli, of the so-called the rejectionists. How do you feel about that ?

Answer : Nothing at all. You have heard me yesterday when I addressed my Parliament. I didn't mention anything at all about Libya or Tripoli or so. It is for them to meet or not to meet. It is for them. It doesn't I mean, cause any concern from myself.

Question : The criticism has become very very nasty. I mean, among other things, people are calling for your overthrow and your assassination. Are you concerned for your life at all, Sir ?

Answer : Not at all. If you return back to the first disengagement agreement and the second disengagement agreement, you shall find that they have attacked me more vehemently than they attack me now. This attack now which you consider vehement, no, no, it is very mild compared with the last attacks.

Question : So, you are not at all afraid ?

Answer : At all, at all.

Question : What about the conference in Cairo, would there be a security problem ? Do you think if General Dayan is here, for example ?

Answer : Not at all. My people are civilized. Have you seen them when they hailed me after my return ?

Question : Yes, we did. I wonder if we could take you back again to Jerusalem for a moment. You said yesterday you thought the major accomplishment was the breaking of the psychological barrier. You really feel that that is broken ?

Answer : That's right. Quite right. And it has been proved right. I said before I went to Jerusalem that this barrier is more than 70 per cent of the problem. The substance is not more than 30 per cent.

Question : You mentioned also yesterday that some manoeuvres that you were having

here brought the area close to war again. Was it really that close ?

Answer : That's right, yes. Because the Defence Minister, Ezra Weizman in Israel, he told me why were you going to fight us ten days or 15 days before. I told him never. He said there have been extraordinary movements and so, I told him it was a manoeuvre because you were at that time doing a manoeuvre in Sinai and we are alert, my people are alert, like your people, exactly. Well, he said that the reports that he received from his Intelligence said that the Egyptians are preparing a sudden attack or something like that, and they are very sensitive to this. I told him I had also the reports of my intelligence saying that you are preparing also a sudden attack. So, my theory has been proved right in trying to bring this barrier down because any day we would have entered war without aiming at it, both of us. Because of the sensitivity of the situation on both sides.

Question : What was your most memorable moment in Jerusalem ?

Answer : My most memorable moment, when I gave my speech at the Knesset, really.

Question : How did it feel to be meeting people like Moshe Dayan and Golda Meir for the first time ? What was your reaction ?

Question : It has been suggested that perhaps you and perhaps even Mr. Beigin might deserve the Nobel Prize for what you have done. Golda said I don't know about the Nobel Prize but maybe the Hollywood Oscar (laughter). What was your reaction to that ?

Answer : Well, as a matter of fact, when I met with the Labour Party who are in the opposition now, I told them that this peace process really has been started between us by me and Golda Meir because she was Prime Minister when we concluded the first disengagement agreement. So, she has her share, we shouldn't deny this. But she was annoyed because I always called her in my meetings with Television and so «The Old Lady» and for that she seized this opportunity and said «very well, I am an old lady and a grandmother, well, take this present to you as a grandfather» because of my daughter giving a child the same day I was giving my speech there.

Question : What if after all of this, there still is no peace ?

Answer : It will not be because of us, the Arabs, it will be because of the Israelis. And for that I do not fear this. I am asking for this Cairo Conference, and then after that the Geneva Conference to bring the whole public opinion in the world with us. We shall be working in the daylight like I have done my

visit to Jerusalem in the daylight. Everything was broadcast all over the world. I don't fear this at all.

Question : If, for example, that did happen, however, would you consider resigning and letting someone else try some other tactic ?

Answer : Well, I, believe me, I told El Assad, I am going to reveal something to you. Yesterday I told Hafez el Assad if this will be my last mission as a President, I shall be very proud to do it, to fulfil it and go to my National Assembly to whom I must submit my resignation. What I didn't tell, and I am telling you now, I told Hafez el Assad, I may be proved wrong, very well, be sure that I have the courage to go to my Assembly and say I have been proved wrong, here is my resignation, and please choose another President, I have this courage.

Question : At this stage of the game, Mr. President, what do you see the role of the United States ? Has it changed at all because of all this ?

Answer : Not at all. On the contrary. It is emphasized the most important thing is that the United States enjoys the Israelis' confidence and my confidence. This is very essential. It was essential in the past, and it is essential now, because we are trying to

establish permanent peace. There will be guarantees, there will be lots of points of difference. Well, the role of the United States is emphasized. It is 99 per cent, as I said, exactly.

Question : Do you think you have made it easier for President Carter ?

Answer : That's quite right. This I must tell you, yes, by my move I made it much easier for President Carter. The man is a man of his word, and he is an honest man, and really he shows the true image of the American citizen, really.

Question : Have you been pleased and surprised with the reaction of the Americans to what you have done ?

Answer : For sure, I must not exaggerate in this, but, what I feel is this, I feel that as much as I like the Americans, they like me. I feel in the heart of every American, either a man or a woman, really, I have some place. I was not astonished but I really was very proud of the reaction that I found from the American people, and as I told you many times I have expressed my gratitude. We are sitting here on the shore of the Suez Canal. Well, who helped me to open this to world navigation and also for our prosperity? I am receiving five hundred million dollars a year. It is

America. It is your administration. It is your navy, in the first place, and you have made this free to me. You didn't ask me come and pay the fees like the Soviet Union who asked to collect the expenses from the tolls. You never asked me. It was the gallant American way. As I told you, I feel I have something in the heart of every man and woman in the United States.

Question : What do you think President Carter should be doing ? Now, however, specifically ?

Answer : Going straight to the heart of the problem. This is the core of my manoeuvre : Let us drop all procedural arrangements and differing on a word here or a word there or so. Let us go straight ahead to the heart of the problem, the crux of the problem, and this is the substance, the 30 per cent.

Question : By that do you mean that he should begin to attempt to persuade the Israelis to drop the procedural issues ?

Answer : This may happen, but I am much more concerned and what I want President Carter to do is this : Let us complete this preparatory meeting that I have asked and must have been a surprise for him. I didn't tell him. I didn't tell any one beforehand.

Question : You didn't tell even the United States about it ?

Answer : No, no. I don't tell anyone beforehand about my decisions. For that they have their real percussion. They have called it as ...

Question : Bomb shells of Sadat ?

Answer : No, they call it the electric shocks.

Question : What is going to happen now ? What is your time-table for the future ? How do you see things unfolding ?

Answer : I hope that this Cairo meeting which will be a preparatory stage for the Geneva Conference, convenes starting next Saturday. I hope, as I told you, that we shall be drafting a guiding paper for us and then after that go to Geneva, and start drafting a peace treaty or peace agreement and with all the guarantees and with everything and establish peace once and for all in this area.

Question : Mr. President, you have talked to some extent about how you arrived at the decision to go to Jerusalem, but you haven't given us really all the details. How did that come about ?

Answer : It happened like this, when I found that we shall be starting again to continue being lost in this vicious circle, because a word here and a word there, an American paper, an American-Israeli paper, I said very

well, this cannot continue and by this we shall not be solving the problem in another 20 years. So, I started thinking. My first initiative that no one knew about was this. I was going to call the Five Big Powers, President Carter, Brezhnev, d'Estaing, Callahan, Hua Kuo-Feng, to Jerusalem just for a day or two and sit with the parties concerned. I also thought of the confrontation States, I was thinking but I knew that most of them will not be coming, but I was going to invite them in Jerusalem and seat all the confrontation states including Israel with the Five Big Powers to draft the paper I told you about, the guidelines to Geneva, in a day or two, because Heads of State can't start negotiations from a to z, and then after that we proceed immediately to Geneva and sit with this guiding paper that we have agreed upon between us and Israel with the Five Big Powers, start in Geneva and put this peace agreement or peace treaty, but I found this, they are all of them heads of state, I can't be sure that all of them will be coming. My notice was a very short notice. At the same time, you know, every Bairam prayer, I pray the Bairam prayers since 73 in Sinai here, in Kantara-east. Well, I intended this year and said I shall be praying in al Aqsa Mosque. This is one of our most sacred places in the Moslem world. So, it was until the Bairam, it was a very short notice. I didn't think any head of state, in spite of the fact.

that all of them, I think, are friends and would have welcomed the idea, but the time was short. So, I diverted the whole thing and for also a very important reason : I said this meeting of the Five Big Powers will not bring the psychological barrier down between me and Israel. So, I preferred the second thought of going myself, praying in Al Aqsa Mosque, giving a speech in the Knesset, and some people thought it was a slip of the tongue when I said in my Parliament that I am ready to go to the end of the world and to the Knesset. They thought it was a slip of the tongue. No.

Question : Or perhaps even a little propaganda ?

Answer : Or a little propaganda for local consumption or world-wide consumption or so. But no, as I told you, that there has been deep thinking. The first initiative that I told you about of the Big Powers, and then after that the second initiative that I fulfilled, and, as a I told you, my main aim was let us bring down this barrier of psychological problems and difficulties and differences. Let us bring it down once and for ever ?

Question : For the psychological barrier may be down, but for the other thirty per cent. It still looks like it is going to be very difficult.

Answer : Yes, for sure. They will be very tough. I know.

Question : Did you sense that there will be some flexibility on the other side ?

Answer : They should adopt this. Or, the people will throw stones on them. I have seen the Israelis, and I am sure that I have convinced them of my sincere wish and I adopted also whatever they asked for and let the October War be the last war. And let us discuss the security issue for both sides. I said very well. I agreed to this. I raised them the slogans for the next move, I declared this in Israel, I came here in my Parliament and confirmed this before my Parliament and my people.

Question : Do you feel the Middle East will ever be the same again ?

Answer : Not at all. Never, like the October War. The world after the October War is not the world before the October War. The Middle East after my initiative in Jerusalem will never be the Middle East that was before, will never be like the last thirty years, never again I am sure.

Question : Thank you very much, Mr. President.