

Question : President Sadat, you said last summer that you would never meet with an Israeli while there was a single Israeli soldier on Egyptian soil. Now you have been to Jerusalem, and Israelis are still on your soil just a few miles from your home here in Ismailia. What changed your mind ? What made you change your stance ?

President : Well, two points, the first one is this : When we started for the Geneva Conference to make the preparations and so, and the United States submitted a paper, and then after that, it was said that the Israelis had their remarks and then another paper, a second one, called the American-Israeli paper. I found that we shall be again in the vicious circle of a word here or a word there. The Arabs don't agree to what is called Israeli whether it is American-Israeli or Israeli. The Israelis will never agree to whatever we say in the Arab world because of this barrier of psychological complexes and difficulties that have already been built for the last thirty years. Well, I found that we shall not be going to Geneva, instead we shall be quarrelling among ourselves in the Arab world, because this is an American paper or this is so and so. On the other hand, the Israelis were very

happy, because through the procedural arrangements they can have the time they are playing for. This is the first point. The second point, may be you have heard me telling my Parliament yesterday do you imagine that two weeks before we were supposed to be in battle together. Why? The Israelis started a manoeuvre in Sinai, and they declared it. Gamassy, the commander-in-chief, here is focussing and observing everything, and each side of us is alert.

Well, when they started their manoeuvres, Gamassy started his manoeuvres here on the same scale. They declared about their manoeuvres, but Gamassy did not declare. For that when I met with Ezra Weisman, the Defence Minister in Israel, and he asked me why were you going to attack us ten days before. I told him no. Why? He said there has been extra movements and so, I told him this is a manoeuvre, because you were already at that time manoeuvring in Sinai. Well, he told me the reports of our Intelligence and because also the Intelligence in Israel like my Intelligence also, are very alert, and no one wants the other to strike the first strike, so they sent reports to the Defence Minister in Israel telling that the Egyptians are preparing. To my Intelligence also the volume of the manoeuvres in Sinai was taken as something extraordinary, Well, if one error happened from any side of us, we would have entered war without want-

ing it both of us. For those two reasons I went and I was justified because I didn't know before I went that they are asked in such a condition, but I knew that whenever we bring down the barrier, psychological barrier, between us I think we can evade any error on this, and I was justified in my visit.

Question : Mr. President, from your first answer I am not exactly sure whether there was some incident or whether there was just a growing mood that made you think that this was now the time when you had to make this move and talk to the Israelis face to face in spite of your previous determination not to.

President : I have said and I shall repeat it again. I consider this a sacred mission, and as I told President Assad in Damascus two days before I visited Israel, I told him if this will be my last job as President, I shall be doing it, and after that I shall be submitting my resignation to my National Assembly, and I shall be very happy.

Question : Mr. President, the next step on this road you have embarked on now is a meeting in Cairo of the participants or the people in the Middle East conflict that you have invited now or are inviting to come to Cairo, what makes you think that the procedural issues which would have help up Geneva can be settled here ?

President : It is this. Let us start and the whole world be witness. I don't fear anything to be raised in Israel, we have agreed upon the fact that let us drop the language of war and guns and come to the civilized language round a table. Very well. I am ready to do this. And I don't fear anything at all because we shall be having the whole world as a witness.

Question : Mr. President, you say you don't want to sign a separate peace with Israel, you want a comprehensive agreement, now is that an indication that if your pre-Geneva meeting is held in Cairo, you might wind up plugging for the Arab side alone with the Israelis? Does that mean that you would negotiate on behalf of the interests of Syria and the Palestinians as you have done once before when the United States was negotiating with you for the second disengagement agreement?

President : Well, I must tell you quite frankly that I have made myself clear. I am not at all aiming at a bilateral agreement between me and Israel, or an Egyptian-Israeli settlement for the problem because it is not an Egyptian-Israeli problem, it is an Arab problem, so I shall be discussing a whole settlement this time, not a settlement with Egypt only because it would not bring peace.

Question : But you have said that if necessary you would go to Geneva alone and

I am beginning to believe that, then we are to understand that Egypt alone will negotiate all the Arab interests.

President : If everyone doesn't agree I shall be proceeding to Geneva, also for the comprehensive settlement, and whenever we reach results I shall be calling an Arab summit here and put what we have already agreed upon before them.

Question : If I might have correctly followed you, Mr. President, do you think the Palestinians will accept an agreement you have negotiated on behalf of them ?

President : It is for everyone to decide for himself. I shall be doing my job, what I call a sacred mission, I shall be doing it. This is establishing peace in the area here, because this is the right moment. And as I told you I shall be submitting this to an Arab Summit here with all the Kings and Heads of State and everyone has to decide for himself before this summit.

Question : Is it possible then that if you submitted this to all the other Arab leaders, and they did not accept it, that you would end up with a de facto bilateral agreement ?

President : No. I shouldn't say this. I am a flexible man ,but I never cross the bridge until I reach it.

Question : Mr. President, when the Palestinians have been invited to come to this meeting in Cairo, does that mean the P.L.O. and if so do you have an agreement with the Israelis to sit and talk to them ?

President : Why should I have any agreement with the Israelis on this delegation or that. No. I didn't discuss this, and I am saying this before the whole world, let all the parties concerned with the two super-powers, the co-sponsors, come to prepare for Geneva, because, I repeat, and confirm the fact that without good preparation, we shall never reach anything in Geneva.

Question : «When you say all the powers do you consider the P.L.O. one of the powers ?

President : For sure. They are one of us, of the five Arab delegations that should attend such meetings. Why ? This time we are establishing peace. We are not for disengagement or a partial agreement or so.

Question : Do you know that you have left me in confusion. You said in your speech to your own people about the confronting states, and you said when someone asked you about should it be the P.L.O., the Palestinians should choose their own representatives, how would they do that. Are you inviting the P.L.O. or some unnamed Palestinian group ?

President : Why should you be like that, really ? I always mean what I say. I said all the confrontation states. So we consider the Palestinians one of us.

Question : But how about the Palestinian Liberation Organization ?

President : Why shouldn't they have their say ?

Question : I mean do you include them as one of the confronting states.

President : For sure I shall be contacting them.

Question : Do you mean only the P.L.O. ? your Foreign Minister told me only a couple of days ago that the P.L.O. could be represented and other Palestinians. Do you see it the same way ?

President : I think the P.L.O. is so broad-minded that they will solve this problem for us. I am sure of this. In spite of what is happening now : the shouting and so.

Question : What I can't see being solved now, Mr. President, is, despite your good intentions to negotiate a comprehensive agreement with Israel, not only Egypt's interests but the interests of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, If you will, and the Palestinians. I can't see the Israelis discussing that with you when they said again and again that they want to

negotiate with each party separately, only that party's interests.

President : I am sorry you are not following the whole problem. The meeting here in Cairo is for the preparation, it is not Geneva Conference, in Geneva, whatever arrangements we shall be starting there it will be agreed upon here in Cairo, for instance, they said we should have geographical commissions, Egyptian-Israeli commission, Syrian-Israeli commission, Jordan-Israeli commission, Palestinian-Egyptian-Jordanian-Israeli commission, all this will be agreed upon here in the preparation for the Geneva Conference.

Question : If I might follow up, who can you agree will represent Syria in the Syrian-Israeli commission if no Syrians come to your meeting in Cairo, Sir ?

President : You have already received my answer on this. I told you that if no one is coming, okay, I shall be dealing with whoever will come here. If he is not to come, this is his own decision, and then after that I shall be proceeding to Geneva also even if I was alone, and I shall be proceeding to Geneva for this comprehensive settlement and bring it whenever we reach results, I shall bring it back to the Arab summit for everyone to give his say.

Question : Mr. President, Let me change the subject and take you to another field which

is interesting to the whole world. In the course of your speeches you made a reference to the Israelis having to give back all the territory that they have taken and said that this is non-negotiable. You also referred to Jerusalem as something which ought to be an open city. Would you explain a little bit do you mean that Jerusalem would be a city which is not controlled or owned or held by any country ?

President : Some of my Arab colleagues thought of this, what you are already asking me now. Let me be clear. I said this before the Knesset : No Arab, either Moslem or Christian, and no Moslem in the Moslem world of seven hundred million, will agree to the Israeli sovereignty over the Arab part of Jerusalem. This is a fact. What I said about an open city I said this city symbolizes the meeting of the three religions, christianity, islam and judaism. Well, I said let it be the place where all the three religions meet together, but this must be clear, there will be no one in the Arab world, as I told you, or the Moslem world, who will agree to Israeli sovereignty over the Arab part of Jerusalem.

Question : But do you insist on Arab sovereignty or would you take some kind of trilateral or U.N. or some other...

President : For sure, Arab sovereignty, for sure.

Question : Isn't there any other arrangement ?

President : For sure. You have asked, you Christians, you have asked for this when Jerusalem was delivered to the Caliph Omar Bin Khattab, and you know when he reached Jerusalem, the Patriarch Saphonus gave him the keys, and it is a tradition, and he asked him that no Jew should dwell here. This is history, so, let me make myself clear, the Arab part of Jerusalem should be under Arab sovereignty. Anything more than that can be negotiated between the parties concerned. I mean the Arab part in Jerusalem, and the Jewish part in Jerusalem.

Question : Mr. President, you have said in the past that it will take at least five years after reaching a settlement at Geneva, at least five years for the establishment of normal full biateral relations between Egypt and Israel ? after your trip to Israeli do you still think it would take that long ?

President : I shall say this, there is a new position here after my visit to Jerusalem, but everything in this respect should be settled on the table between all the parties concerned, and the Israelis will be one of the parties round the table.

Question : Mr. President, in the midst of all the attacks being made on you and your trip to Israel, especially by the Syrians, Iraqis, Palestinians, the Saudi Arabians have re-

mained silent. First of all, why do you think they have remained silent, and secondly have you heard from them, perhaps quietly ?

President : Well, as I said I never wanted anyone of my colleagues in the Arab to be involved, because the step that I have taken was very drastic and it needed, as you have seen, sometime for everyone to know what is behind it and recognize it. For that I didn't want to put anyone of my Arab colleagues in a critical position. I didn't inform them in the first hand before, when I made my decision.

I didn't ask them until this moment to agree or not to agree to this, because I am leaving it to them, so the Saudis they have their own idea. I didn't know what it is but our relations are on the normal and brotherly level until this moment.

Question : That's a political risk you have accepted, Sir, and courageously, but it is also a risk for your people. Saudi Arabia is one of the countries that support Egypt financially. Could your country get along without that support ?

President : How should you mention such things like that ? We are not dealing with each other in the Arab world with such a material way like you are saying. No. This is not in the relations among us as Arab brothers and Arab colleagues. We don't deal like this. The only one that deals like that is

Gaddafi. For that we never asked him and we shall never ask him anything at all. And you remember yesterday I didn't mention him at all.

Question : Excuse me, Mr. President, CBS news was told in Washington that there was a meeting in the Sinai Desert a few days ago between your own Foreign Minister and Israeli Foreign Minister Dayan. Is that true ?

President : Wrong. Why should it be like that ? I made it quite clear. I went myself to Jerusalem and I asked that the Israelis come to Cairo with all the parties concerned. Why should I act behind the scenes ? I don't fear. There has never been a meeting like this.

Question : One further question, somewhat along this line. When you talk about the meeting in Cairo that you have asked for, at what level are you thinking, foreign-minister level ?

President : It is for everyone to decide for himself.

Question : But you have some thought yourself ? What level it ought to be ?

President : I agree to whatever level they agree to.

Question : You have no suggestion to offer yourself ?

President : At all. At all.

Question : When they come here, Mr. President, what is it you expect them to do, meet together in one place in the form of a conference ?

President : Right. Round one table. It is not the old system of everyone sitting in a suite and then we shall be having a mediator between them. No. Round the table. Let us face the facts.

Question : Mr. President, you seem to have raised open diplomacy to a new height. In modern times is not there some point, however, at which quiet diplomacy has to take over ?

President : Well, as I told you, really, someone said that I am adopting a new way in diplomacy, the electric shock diplomacy, as they describe it or so, but I must tell you this. Let us work in the daylight and that is what I agree to. Why should we work in darkness ? Let us work in the daylight and before the whole world. Like my visit to Jerusalem. It was in the daylight.

Question : Did you inform the United States government, President Carter or Secretary of State Vance before you went to Jerusalem, before you announced it ?

President : Not at all. Not at all.

Question : If Henry Kissinger was still

the Secretary of State it has been suggested you would have told him.

President : Not at all. The same thing would have happened because the impact of my action will not materialize except by surprise.

Question : Do you have more surprise in store for us, Sir ?

President : I don't think so after I gave my speech yesterday before the Parliament. I have no other initiatives for the time being.

Question : Mr. President, as a result of these initiatives that you have taken, there have been some rather well-publicized threats, calls for your assassination. Do you take them seriously ?

President : Never. It has been like this since seven years when I first took power. Your people, the reports that they received after I was elected that I shall last only from four to six weeks. The British were of the same idea. This was since seven years. When we concluded together the first and second disengagement agreements, the same thing happened.

Question : Mr. President, I have to say at this point thank you very much for being the guest of « Face the Nation » programme.

President : Thank you very much.