PRESS CONFERENCE

held by

PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT

on the occasion of the Centenary Festival of

« Al Ahram » Newspaper.

June 13, 1976

Question: The Lebanese tragedy is making the heart of every sincere Arab bleed... What happened affirmed the truth and soundness of your vision and warning about the effects that might result from the intervention of others in the Lebanese problem...

Now, after the Syrian invasion, and the emergence of Arab unanimity from the Arab Foreign Ministers Conference calling for ceasefire and the withdrawal of the Syrian forces, what is your assessment of the meetings of the Arab League, and your view of the future in Lebanon in the light of the latest developments? What is also the opinion of those who claimed that Egypt was absent from the Lebanese arena?

President: Before answering this question I would like to seize this opportunity to address a special greeting to « Al Ahram » on the occasion of its centenary. As a matter of fact, and as the Chief-Editor had stated, this Day is a celebration for the Egyptian press in general; a Day on which one of the values we always take pride in, namely, genuineness is upheld... In the entire East, and throughout the Arab nation, Al Ahram, and all of Egypt, are proud
that, with its struggle, work and performance, Al Ahram was able to reach the age of one hundred years, exactly as it is the case with authentic Egypt, Egypt of the 7000 years of civilisation and history. In so saying, I am not being unfair to anyone or conceited, but I am saying it with pride... We should be flattered because one of our newspapers, the oldest of them all in the entire area, is now one hundred years of age... I pray God to grant you success in your struggle so that you may always continue the march and direct your efforts to the service of Egypt... Egypt which we all love and for which we sacrifice everything however precious.

As for the first question concerning events in Lebanon, you all remember that 15 months ago, in April 1975, I submitted a proposal which was finally adopted last week, namely, that the Arab League Secretary General should go to Lebanon representing all the Arabs. On that day in particular I said that fire is under the ashes and let us not fan the fire further, but nobody listened to my proposal. I also said, « take your hands off Lebanon ». Only in the meetings of last week, and 15 months later, my proposal was approved.

The Lebanese problem can be summed up in two points: First, some amendments need to be introduced into the Lebanese system... The Lebanese system had proved unable to realise the cherished prosperity for the broad base of the people... The only force capable of re-drafting this system is the Lebanese themselves... Second, there is a kind of disagreement between the viewpoints of some categories in Lebanon and the Palestinian presence... For this reason I said, « take your hands off Lebanon », by which I meant that after having done with their system, the Lebanese should sit with their Palestinian brothers in order to clarify matters and settle accounts, away from any foreign or Arab intervention... I am happy that my proposal was adopted 15 months later; meantime I really feel sad and sorry for the blood which was shed during these 15 months, and
The painful events which cannot but be described as an abominable crime not only against Lebanon, but also against all of us in the Arab nation. The voices of outbidders were heard very high claiming that Egypt stayed away from the arena. The outbidders claimed that Egypt was isolated from the scene of events; it is a tune they like to chant with occasionally. Egypt was never isolated from the scene and the best proof for this is that since that date, that is, more than 15 months ago, I sent more than 10 messages to President Franjieh asking him to stop and put an end to this dissension which the Phalangists were the first to stir up. I am fully confident that had he used his competences at the time, and had he not been biased in favour of some faction and not the other, he would have been able to put an end to this dissension. I am also fully confident, and as it was later proved, that the Phalangists would not disobey Soliman Franjieh, and had he wanted, he would have put them in their place. He could have tamed them, but the biggest catastrophe that can befall a country is when its President favours one faction and not the others. This is the origin of the whole tragedy. I had great hope in Franjieh. Had he not been biased for one faction and had they started, as I said, reformulating their own system with the Lebanese themselves, and then sat with the Arab League Secretary General and Yasser Arafat, had all this happened, 15 months of massacres and bloodshed would have been spared. Here I reiterate, this is the most atrocious crime in the history of our Arab nation; regretfully not only in the history of Lebanon, but in that of our entire Arab nation. Egypt is not staying away from the scene, but I would like to declare to the entire Arab nation that Egypt cannot get involved in such a kind of conflict unless it is fully prepared to remain to the end in order to settle matters and reach a settlement. The factor of decision is obstructed in the Lebanese problem by two matters: first, the Lebanese politicians themselves are, unfortunately, each working for his own personal inter-
est with the exception of Jumblat and some others... All the rest are acting for their own interests, regardless of the good of the country. Unfortunately this year was the election year in Lebanon; the election of the parliament and the President which further complicated matters. Second, the situation in Lebanon is in the hands of Syria because, and to be frank, all the weapons used by the two parties came from Syria as if it were one of the big powers. If such a situation is in the hand of Syria, how can anyone else interfere... Once, when the Kuwaiti Cabinet convened and decided to call for a meeting of the Arab Foreign Ministers, we found that Syria was pressuring our Palestinian brothers through its shock forces... At that time it was imposing its full trusteeship on them... Hence was the abstention of Syria and the Palestinians from attending the Arab Foreign Ministers Conference... Syria even went further to accuse Kuwait of being instigated by Egypt... It is really painful and regretful matter.

Egypt has never been absent from the arena, and the best proof of this is that what I proposed 15 months ago was the only solution reached now in its entirety; first, to take their hands off Lebanon; and second that the Lebanese should sit with each other and with the Palestinians... To sit among themselves in order to formulate and draft their own cause, and with the Palestinians in order to reach the most favourable formula of coexistence along with preserving the Palestinian resistance. You also remember that two months ago I presented an initiative to form an Arab force... At the time, outbidders who liked to say that Egypt was isolated, rose once again prodded by delusions and sickness believing that they were the new leaders of the Arab nation.

Now, we are back to the initiative Egypt presented two months ago, and an Arab force was formed. I am really very happy with this result. I think you know quite well my character, and that I
All the rest was for the good of the Lebanon; further complications in the hands of those caused by the big powers... anyone else and decided we found that through its shock we were to stop Israel from Syria even went through its shock, but... It is really and the best was the only hand off with each other moves in order to Palestinians in existence along remember that if an Arab force... Egypt was isolated, doing believing that presented two months very happy with character, and that I never outbid or exaggerate... Never... I really was the happiest man when I read today that Syria sat with Abu Ayyad and reached an agreement for the withdrawal of the Syrian troops. This should have happened earlier; a long time ago; a year and half ago or so... The Syrian intervention should have been stopped for the good of all parties, Syria, Lebanon and the Arab cause as a whole. For this reason I said that while reading these news I was the happiest man on earth. I could have started outbidding on such news and recount all the background of the situation... But never... Let us all collaborate to stop bloodshed, and let us celebrate such a step... Syria will withdraw and the Arab force will replace it... The Lebanese will sit at a round table... This is my answer to your second question. My view of the future is that the Lebanese should sit together, and as far as I know, they are all ready to sit at a round table with the elected President Sarkis, with a view to redrafting the Lebanese system and then to solve any problem or settle any misunderstanding between them and their Palestinian brothers. This was Egypt’s line 15 months. Egypt is no longer a country of slogans nor does it get itself involved in conflicts... It only says its word, and however long it may take, at the end we turn out to be right and correct in what we said, and only then, does everyone realise that Egypt has never been isolated, but performing its duties as no one of the other outbidders or sick and deluded leaders, had ever done. Egypt acted, and will always carry out its duties, God willing, from its solid position, and with its historical responsibility.

Question: You have previously stated that 1976 will be the year of Palestine, what then are your expectations as regards the forthcoming months? And what is the possibility of convening the Geneva Conference this year? What is Cairo’s plan to push on the representation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation at the Geneva Conference a step forward?
President: Unfortunately I regret the fact that we Arabs, myself, too, since I am an Arab, are doomed never to accomplish anything that we set out to do, and that our world be one of slogans, outbiddings, and the attempt to arouse the emotions of the ordinary man rather than his intellect. Whilst after October 6, there was definitely an operation or rebirth of Arab thought, one that would cause all those who lag behind, to remain forever backward; Egypt will never be one of those. I always hoped that one day we would be in a position to sit, we Arabs, round a table and draw up a strategy to be carried out over 100 years, just as it happened at the Zionist Basle Conference last century. 70 or 80 years ago. Hertzl held a Conference in Basle, and adopted resolutions of which no one knew anything. These resolutions were later implemented step by step. This was at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, when Zionists took advantage of World War I and obtained the Balfour Declaration which was only part of the plan designed in the 19th century at the Basle Conference. Then they waited until after 1917 and up to 1948 when their state was set up. At first, the Jewish Agency was established to pave the way for the execution of the plan formerly laid down tens of years ago, this led to the creation of the Jewish state and ultimately of the present day Israel. All that had been agreed upon and decided last century but not one of those who planned it had even mentioned it, nor had the Zionist movement plans ever drawn attention. Whereas any Arab leader whenever he utters a word, he is always questioned and asked to discuss, clarify and reveal everything behind what he said. Even if we sit round one table, we find that at the end of our meeting, very detail of what took place in it will next day be published in the newspapers. Thus, I hoped we would have learnt this lesson.

This is the way we operate in Egypt. As you may all remember, since I assumed power in 1970, I have been preparing mainly for
that we Arabs, to accomplish one of slogans, of the ordinary, for 6, there was one that would awkward; Egypt, today we would and draw up a it happened at 80 years ago, solutions of which implemented century and at the advantage of which was only the Basle Con-
trary to 1948 when was established merely laid down Jewish state and had been agreed those who planned government plans every time he utters a guess, clarify and sit round one detail of what newspapers. Thus, all remember, arising mainly for the battle and the day will come when you will get to know the whole truth about this fact. The fact that all through my term of office I had been preparing for the battle was never believed in the Arab world. Nevertheless, this did not upset me. At the same time, I categorically refused to unveil my intentions and I was obliged to follow this attitude in preservation and compliance with the high-level logic, rationalism, planning and administration that characterize our world of today. This planning or arrangement basically included a strategy regarding the Palestinian cause because, whether we willed it or not, it is the core and basis of the entire problem, and not Sinai or the Golan. That is why the Palestinian cause constituted a principal part of my planning. A proof to the fact is that there were only two, Hafez El Assad and me, who took the decision of the battle, and the third was Yasser Arafat whom I informed of the decision and what was to take place out of my belief that he, as the head of the PLO, is an indispensable aspect to the problem. No other Arab leader knew anything beforehand except Yasser Arafat. In addition, I also had definite requirements concerning the participation of Palestinians on the Egyptian front during the battle. Yasser Arafat and Abou Iad who are still alive are witnesses to this. In brief, I had defined a complete strategy in my planning before waging the battle. I tell you that I am no longer in a position to speak with anyone, as there was a time when I could not talk or deal with the Palestinians themselves since Syrian guardianship was imposed on them.

Part of the plan is that 1976 is the Palestine year like you said in your question. I imagine that the Geneva Conference will be held, Israel will oppose the idea of the Palestinians taking part in it, so we will have to fight the battle of getting the Palestinians to participate in the Geneva Conference. In the course of our meetings, whether they will last a short or a long time, the Palestinians will enter the Conference on an equal footing. This is
what I meant by the Palestine Year, and that is why while in the United Nations, after my speech, I made a proposal and a resolution was issued with a majority of 101 votes concerning the necessity of allowing Palestine to attend any meeting concerned with the Middle East problem. This was laying the ground on an international level. Just as I laid the ground for the 1973 battle on the international, Arab and African level, as well as on the level of the non-aligned countries, I also laid the ground there in 1975 and in 1976 we will all meet in Geneva and we will fight the battle of getting the Palestinians to share in the Geneva Conference.

After that we will try to find the framework for the final solution. Why do I say framework here? Because this is the year of the presidential elections in America. Whether we like it or not, whether we agree or not, America, which is a principal party if not the main party, is busy, and will remain so till the end of the presidential elections in America, until then we can lay down the framework. By 1977 we will be ready and America will be ready after the end of the elections, so we will start dealing with the final solution.

This is what I imagined as a strategy. But, what took place in the beginning of 1975? We entered what I call a swamp, the one we made in Lebanon. We were drawn into it throughout the past period, and till now we are just beginning to get out of it. The Palestinians were occupied with that, and they have every right to be occupied, because the matter is connected with their life, existence and unfortunately, with destruction.

As for Syria our partner, one day they would say that they agreed on the Geneva Conference and they issued a statement with Gromyko when he was in Syria saying that the Geneva Conference must be held and they fixed the date. Another day, the Syrian government would say that they were not going to Geneva.

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Here is the situation and the reason why I said that this is Palestine year, because this year I am not expecting a solution. The main party, America, is busy with the elections, so it is incapable and paralysed this year. Well then, we can lay down the main framework till 1977, America will have no excuse then, we can face it and all the parties concerned with their responsibilities.

I did not want to relate that because the one who declares his policy before the microphone is either a fool or a bargainer or a seeker of applause, and I am none of those. All I want is to reach an honourable and just solution for my country and the Arab world in order to start rebuilding, because this time if we lag behind as we did in previous times, the Arab nation will never stand upright again. We must make use of everything in our age, and mainly the Arab intrinsic power must be established or else we shall be destroyed exactly like the Red Indians, and according to the plan. Unfortunately we were well on our way to that.

I am sorry to speak like that. I did not want to say all that. For instance, they said that there were secret agreements with the Americans, and that in these agreements there were things I know not what... all nonsense.

Even one of the super-states said to the Syrians and the Palestinians, here are the overt provisions in the agreement and here are the secret ones. This is nonsense. All nonsense. The strangest matter is that some one would hear something over Radio Israel, and would send to me asking: "What is the story behind that?"

Well, am I responsible for what Radio Israel says? Let it say whatever it wishes.

Of the three provisions of the second agreement which I did not declare, they claimed the existence of secret matters of my
selling the case, of selling Egypt to America and so many things such as Egypt agreeing with Israel on I do not know what...

A million tales! so at the end, I had to declare these provisions, two of which concerning Syria. The first was that America promises not to attack Syria. The second was to accomplish a disengagement on the Syrian front. The third was that in the final settlement the Palestinians must be there as a main party. I had to declare these provisions though I did not wish to, because we are working with people who can well appreciate matters, who respect us as men responsible for a state, and not merely as politicians who would just talk and issue slogans. I had to declare what I did not wish to declare; though up to this day I challenge anyone to bring me the resolutions of the Zionist Conference in Basle. No one will be able to find them though a hundred years have gone by. These resolutions are being implemented step by step. Those are the states and the people who know how to think. But, I am sorry to say, we are suffering from a curse. However, Egypt is assuming its responsibility, and perhaps the line that Egypt follows will put matters in their right position however long it may take.

Question: Mr. President, you often mentioned that the possibilities of the abortion of peaceful efforts for the restoration of the Arab right may lead to a second military confrontation with Israel. The question which now worries those who assiduously follow up the Soviet Union’s attitude as regards arms shipments that our armed forces may need, the question is: Have our armed forces the capacities to continue the victories achieved in October, taking into consideration the compensations Israel received for all its military losses in the war?

President: It is quite a strange situation since prior to the ceasefire on October 22, Syria was compensated for all its losses. As President El Assad told me, for this is not a secret to be concealed from the battlefield, even prior to October 22, and the battle was due for us to have on the table with Israel.

Entering October 22, and upon leaving from Basle, with the Soviet Union as you may now know as you are supposed to have nothing old deal that was due for the war, you agreed to an airlift of war supplies. As I said: «the airlift was due for us to have then, and for us to have it».

I say: «once I say airlift to Israel, I mean it». What happened to our forces, just over 90% of our forces?...I like to tell our soldiers to the military equipment coming in «Once I call it airlift to our forces, this will come to me». This was not just an airlift, but nearly the entire equipment that remained intact.
ayers have lost 1200 tanks in the battle, yet every plane and every tank it used up was replaced even prior to the ceasefire on October 22. The same thing was done with Israel, even though its losses had exceeded those of Syria.

Entering the third year, that is since the ceasefire on October 22, and up to the present day, a bountiful current of arms is pouring from America into Israel, and a similar one into Syria from the Soviet Union. In the meantime, this is not the case with Egypt, for as you must all know the situation we have reached, a blockade is supposed to be imposed on it. That is to say, I was almost left with nothing, without spare parts and without arms except for a small deal that was concluded before the war broke out and which was due for delivery in 1973-1974. Though 1973 was the year of the war, yet, the weapons included in the deal were not sent in the airlift of which they spoke and about which one of the pressmen said: « the airlift was ton by ton. » I wish it had been so, for I would have then brought the problem of Israel in Sinai ultimately to an end. I say no, had I had half of what was carried in the American airlift to Israel, there would have been no problem, whatsoever. What happened was that we estimated a loss of 90% of our armed forces, just as it had happened in 1956, 1967, when we lost more than 90% of our army though we rebuild it up anew. Yet I would like to tell you that we came out of the battle with 85% of our military equipment intact. This is because we have a proverb saying « Once bitten by a snake, twice shy ». It means that in planning, one should be aware of the consequences to follow the action taken, and this was exactly what I did, thus bearing in mind the fact that I may come out of the battle to find no one to pay attention to me. This was what we witnessed after the October War throughout nearly three years and up to the present moment, no one offered us anything. But thanks be to God, 85% of our armed forces remained intact. I want to reassure every Egyptian first about his
army, and second about the fact that these armed forces have at present the same degree of strength they had on October 6 and even more.

**Question:** In the last interval, you, Mr. President, have exchanged messages with the Soviet leaders, do you expect any improvement in the Soviet-Egyptian relations?

**President:** I had met the Egyptian Ambassador before his departure for the Soviet Union. I will summarize what I'd like to say in a few words for this is a matter that closely concerns our country and our people. I conveyed my instructions to the Soviets, and I overtly announced them here before my people, before the Arab nation and before the world at large, namely that we are keen on having the best of relations with the Soviet Union. Thus I asked the Egyptian Ambassador to remind the Soviets of what once happened in the past when President Tito met Kruchev and told him that he had to choose either to take them as they were, or to leave them.

Again they, at present, have to take us as we are, and not as they wanted us to be. On our part, we are ready, as we are not interested in having worse relations, with anyone, neither with a superpower, nor with a minor power, nor with any human being. I acknowledge that this is not in the interest of Egypt.

Meanwhile, I shall not allow anyone to impose his will or his tutelage on Egypt. This is a basic condition.

**Question:** Since your last visit to the Arab Gulf countries, many citizens have been following up the results of the world agreements you concluded with these countries for the formation of an Arab fund in consolidation of the Egyptian economy. What are the latest reports submitted to you, Mr. President, following the setting up of this fund and do the items stated in these reports conform with the

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the agreement you concluded? Do you intend to send the Prime Minister on a new tour to the region?

President: Yes, God willing. The Prime Minister will make a tour of the region where he will visit our Arab brothers. As for the information I received concerning the establishment of this fund, they are still incomplete. That is why I cannot present them to you now for with regards to such matters, man should observe utmost precision, whilst keeping in mind the fact that we are brothers and therefore facts must be true. Facts in full are not yet at my disposal, though there might be some discouraging things to be announced. In brief, every thing will be decided upon the Prime Minister's visit, after which I will be in a position to put the whole truth of the situation before our people.

Question: During the October war, petroleum played a major role a few days after the fighting had started, and after victory had been achieved on the Egyptian front. The question is whether you believe that the petroleum role in the battle is to follow armed fighting, or should precede it so that it may achieve a victory which might spare the outbreak of a military war.

President: No doubt, I must admit that there is a new birth of Arab thought, and such a birth had to take place after the October war. I mean to say that this is the first time in which the Arabs could use the weapons in their hands, foremost amongst which is petroleum. I think that in 1970, some time after I took over, if anyone had pointed out that the Arabs could cut off their petroleum from Europe, no one would have believed him, because at the time, as you all know, our relations with almost the entire Arab nation were shattered.

No one could have ever imagined to hear or to talk of using the petroleum weapon. Here, I would like to note that we have arms, yet it is not a matter of weapons but one of capacity and timing to
put these weapons to their proper use, so that they may not be turned against us.

All this is due to us as Arabs as well as to the adequate flexibility characterizing our move and our conscious understanding of the world events and policies surrounding us, we know how and when to start, and how and when to stop. But such a subject can never be proposed publicly in this manner or else we will be tampering with our nation's destinies.

**Question**: Mr. President, your visit to Iran will begin after two days, what is the aim of this visit? Is it related to the situation in the Middle East area and the Gulf region in particular, as well as to Iran's relations with the Arab countries?

**President**: Certainly, it has a bearing on all this. As you saw, Egypt tends to establish friendly relations with all countries. Iran had stood by our side when our relations were back to normal. Hence the close personal friendship between me and the Emperor. We could accomplish much together at the level of bilateral relations between the two countries. Iran has allocated 250 million dollars for the Port-Said free zone, an Egyptian-Iranian bank has been set up to this effect. In addition, Contracting Company has been set up and work is in progress in this concern.

At one time before the battle, I sent to El Kazzafy requesting from him 4 million tons of petroleum to be shipped over a whole year, because had I got them total quantity at once, I would not have found the tanks to keep them in, whilst over a year, I could do it, since my planning for the battle was based on a long-term battle. What happened was that the tankers transported one or two oil shipments then, for no reason, they were sent empty afterwards. When I requested the same thing from the Shah of Iran, he at once sent us 650,000 tons and said that he was ready to give us the...
the quantity we needed. The same was done by our Arab brothers who did not hesitate to offer us the rest of our needs in petroleum.

I have to acknowledge this important fact; for instance, Saudi Arabia had not only granted us a gift of 750,000 tons, but it also supplied us with more than 2 million tons. In 1976, we became for the first time an oil-exporting country of 8 million tons, and the reserves we have in the waters of the Gulf of Suez, explored and under preparation for production, will amount to one million tons in 1980.

Furthermore, there are companies operating in the Western Desert and the Delta. I think you have recently heard of the story of Kantara where oil and gas were discovered, an operation which we consider a turning point, for gas, as you may remember, was previously discovered at Abou Madi in the Delta, and out of which we manufactured fertilizers in Talkha. We had also discovered gas in the sea of Abou Kir which is used in producing fertilizers in Alexandria. It was first thought that there was only gas to be found in the Delta, but the process of discovery in West Kantara has revealed the presence of both gas and petroleum.

That is why our geologists and oil men regard this operation as a turning point. Projects in this connection, carried out in the Western Desert have not yet yielded their results. The same applies to 22 companies which will yield results in the course of this year, or rather at the end of 1976. This talk leads me to the Egyptian-Iranian cooperation. We currently have a broader and larger cooperation between Iran and the Arab countries on account of its being a sisterly country which shares the same region we live in, the confrontation of the powers conflicts surrounding us, as well as our self-assertion in our own area. It is about time not to allow anyone to draw our map for us nor to impose anything on us. Reso-
olution should emanate from us, we as owners of the land, owners of the region.

**Question**: Throughout your first term of office, pulling down the wall of defeat, the establishment of the State of Institutions and the release of freedoms were at the forefront of the enormous responsibilities you succeeded in assuming. If authority is a series of responsibilities and burdens, what are then the basic responsibilities you seek to shoulder during the forthcoming term of office?

**President**: God only knows about the next term of office. As for the first one, or the one I am in, and which will come to an end within the coming few months, I do consider it the stage of decision; if we review it together we will see that in every year there was a decision more dangerous than the one adopted in the year before it.

Believe me, I did not plan it beforehand, but I was just feeling every pulse on the street, and I acted on this basis. You remember, in December 1970, that is during the two months wherein I took over the responsibility in 1970, a law concerning the ending of sequestration was issued from here by Gamal Oteify who was then at «El Ahram». In 1971, there was the decision on the liquidation of centres of power, which was followed by concluding a Friendship Treaty with the Soviets to allay their doubts after they refused for years to conclude this treaty. In 1972, I was completely fed up, for after 1971, they intended to show me that I should not have called it the year of decision unless I took their permission. I waited, endured and defended the Soviet Union in the Parliament in February 1974. I even went so far in my defence that I was to be held responsible. Anyone who wanted to work and continue with me was welcome to do so, and anyone who did not, was free to do so, simply for the sake of the Soviet Union.
Inspite of this, they had to receive the electric shock in July 1972 when I issued the decision dismissing the Soviet experts. Came 1973, and it was the year of the war. While in 1974, it was the turn of the big idol they built up here and called socialism, never to be affected. We accepted socialism, yet the country had no capital needed at least for the process of reconstruction. It is a fact that there must be something, i.e. capital to start with, whereas the country was utterly exhausted and its blood had been completely dried up. I had formerly mentioned that we began the battle with an economy that was below zero. Thus out of my conviction that socialism is an inevitability, an inevitable solution for Egypt simply because at present, its rate of population, according to the latest statistics has reached 38 million, along with an expected increase of 70 or 80 million by 2000, as well as out of my desire to ensure an equitable opportunity for every Egyptian. But I fearlessly rejected the socialism the Soviets tended to apply in our country even though I firmly believe that we have no other solution than the socialist solution, but not in the manner they chose for us. We had to reconsider this type of socialism.

It is on this basis that the socialist gains were maintained, no one would affect or cause harm to the gains of farmers and workers, nor can anyone ever do so. We have equal opportunities, free education and a grade average for joining the university. Whilst those who claim that we wasted our socialist gains, are the ones who limit eligibility for university to an elite of party members. Here in Egypt, anyone who gets a good grade, is eligible for university. Socialist gains still exist, but the content of our socialism had to be reshaped. Consequently we declared the October Paper in October 1974 and we re-opened the Suez Canal in 1975.

I then thought that I had nothing before me except to complete the operation of constitutional institutions, and that of the political
organisations which will lead, whether we like it or not, to the creation of multiple parties. Thus I thought I had one year left, the rest of 1975 and 1976, to get all this done then I could hand over the trust to the people and lead a normal life afterwards. But in 1976 I was stunned with the blockade imposed on me. I could understand it as an Eastern bloc blockade, or in other words; no weapons and no spare parts. We can easily account for this attitude on the part of those countries, party to the Eastern bloc, since they cannot disobey the orders of the Soviet Union. What I could not understand is the reluctance of India, a non-aligned country, which refused to supply us with spare parts on account of the Soviets’ refusal. It is then a question of blockade with far-reaching aims. Therefore, I could not wait to have my arms, after a year or so, become scrap. Accordingly, I took my decision of abrogating the Treaty and cancelling the marine facilities granted to the Soviets, and I resolved to have clear cut black and white relations with them. As I told our Ambassador, if they accept us as we are, we will be more than close friends and if not, that is if they try to manipulate us, we are sorry to refuse.

In each of my six years of office, starting with the two months of 1970 and up to the current year, there had always been a decision. That is why I call it the stage of decision, for all these matters had to be decided in order to guide the country along the proper path with everything it includes: the freedom of the press, the sovereignty of law, the State of Institutions and the re-building of Egypt with science and faith.

Question: What do you think, Mr. President, of the experiment of the three organisations? Will the activities of these organisations be questioned from time to time, and how much freedom are these organisations given in carrying out their activities?

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tion Movement, as I had previously mentioned, was to seek to
achieve the sixth principle of the July 1952 Revolution, namely,
setting up a sound democratic life.

The entire people did not want the Arab Socialist Union and
democratic practice through the ASU. They felt that they could
not carry out a decision-making role in the country through this
organisation. It became necessary to effect a change. This is
why I issued a paper providing for the development of this orga-
nisation in 1974. I refrained from doing so before then because
before 1973 and the October War, I could not give freedom of
speech to the press nor begin the process of rebuilding political
organisations. This was because of the situation we were in, and
I was facing great difficulties at home. However, these reasons
never make me go back on my word at any moment. After the war
had ended and the first agreement on the disengagement of forces
had been effected, complete freedom was directly granted to the
press. This had not happened in Egypt over the past forty years.
Then there were attempts at realising the sixth principle, the only
remaining principle of the July 1952 Revolution which had not been
implemented namely, the establishment of a sound democratic life.

Following discussions held openly before the country and the
people, we discovered that any organisations in any country were
either rightist, moderate or leftist. What were we to do, invent
something new? We finally opted for the Arab Socialist Union
and the three organisations. They had a good opportunity coming:
in one year two elections were to take place. Presidential and Peo-
ple's Assembly elections. Each organisation was to lay down its
programme and meet the people. They were to work openly and
no longer clandestinely.

We fear nothing since nothing is hidden, nor are we trying
to conceal anything from the people. This is why we wanted to
handle all issues frankly and openly.
I have no observations to make in this regard. I have nothing to say except that I am there if any of these organisations feel that they cannot operate freely or if they are facing any problems. I am ready to hear what they have to say because the President of the Republic does not belong to any of these organisations, he is for Egypt. As I stated in the 1971 Permanent Constitution, our first Permanent Constitution after the July 1952 Revolution, the President of the Republic is like a father observing from up above. We saw what happened to Lebanon when the Lebanese President sided with one faction, the entire country went up into flames. The President of the Republic should never take sides. He should supervise from the top the national unity and the inevitability of the socialist solution without glorifying socialism or fearing it.

The third point is social security. Lutfy El Kholy, at a meeting at Abdine, gave a somewhat controversial description of national unity, the inevitability of the socialist solution and social security. By socialist security I mean that we have five categories in the alliance and three organisations. Class differences are inevitable, but I am eliminating bloody or violent clashes between classes and using only dialogue as an alternative. The definition of social security is very simple: none of the five categories of the alliance nor the classes have the right to impose their will on the others under a certain dictatorship or slogan. This is what I mean when speaking about social security. The definition of national unity is known of course, and there is no need for me to clarify it; the definition of the inevitability of the socialist solution is also known to one and all, it is clear that no one should argue the 50% given to the workers and farmers. No one should question free education. In fact when we amend our Constitution we should stipulate that the State is responsible for every Egyptian citizen and should ensure his life, in sickness, old age and death. Dr Aisha Rateb, Minister for Social Affairs, is seeking to implement all this and I hope she will succeed.

Quoting the Koran, I would ask you. We pray to God that He is the Creator, He is the Holiness and He is the Provider. We pray to God that He is the Provider.

Our honours, Our future.

Proclaim. Who is it that has built the mosque?
hope she will be able to do so as soon as possible. This was a brief review of the past six years.

**Question**: As an old colleague, the Egyptian press had the honour of your participation and is now honoured by meeting with you. What would you like the Egyptian press to be like? What role do you think it should assume and what are the methods it should adopt? What do you expect of the Egyptian press in the future?

**President**: A thorny path... a thorny path... I would first like to say that the word is the most holy message. God said in the Holy Koran: ..taught with the pen, taught man what he did not know. In another verse, He says: Never. By the pen and that which they write. We should, first begin by giving an understanding of the holiness of the pen before speaking about the role and tasks of the press. Every journalist and author here should stop and think: what is the holiness of the pen? I was hurt in the last stage before and also after the War, perhaps more before the war, because after the war freedom was given to the press: freedom which had been absent for the past forty years. At one time there was a great inclination towards criticism in every form until everything became confident that this was a true freedom and not one in appearance alone. Everything went back to normal once more. You ask me what are the duties of the press? Having spoken about the holiness of the pen let us come to the second point, namely, the individual building up the individual. Man is very honourable God said:

*Our honour is the trust over the skies, the earth and the mountains. We praise he who bears it and have mercy on him.*

**It is man who bears it. This is the value of man to the Creator. He is the bearer of the trust and one of His most honourable creations. We want to build up man in our country from childhood. The press could play a basic role there, this comes about after*
we understand the value of the pen. Then we come to man, and afterwards to the stage through which our people are passing. The press must live this stage, because the press to day is owned by the people. 51% of the press belongs to the Arab Socialist Union and 49% to the editors and workers. I do not recall anyone of you complaining that the ASU interfered either closely or from far in the editing of any paper. I do not think the ASU interfered at all following the freedom of speech given to the press.

Ownership is only symbolic, the press is owned by the people. This is a new experiment after the hardships we suffered in the last period and what we are seeing in the world today. I gave you the example recently of the press in England and in Sweden. Governments are searching for a means to help the press not to become influenced by its opinion, because the press today is no longer a profession but a large industry with exorbitant expenses. At the end, if we leave it in this way it does not gain anything or else its owner resorts to an advertising company which sells to the paper its advertisement and the paper falls under its domination as we know, or ends up in expressing the viewpoint of the company. Perhaps the owner of the paper would not find the means to finance it, and therefore the paper would express any viewpoint.

Both England and Sweden, among the most refined of nations, are today seeking a way to save their press. They help it through the state without interfering in its affairs.

We made a new experiment, namely ownership of the press by the people. The 51% means that the people own the press. Can any of you say that the ASU even interfered in the editing of a paper after granting the press freedom of speech? We even said the press is the fourth authority in the state and in our society and experiment the success of which we should all seek to achieve.
I said we should begin with the pen, then by building up man then the stage through which our country is passing. Why did you give me trouble before 1973, because most of the writers did not live with me the stage before 1973 at all. I can give some justification to this, because we were torn then, and most of all myself. You will agree with me when I tell you my story now. Six years have passed and I am relating the events of the past six years.

I was the one who was most torn among you, but the press is committed in such circumstances or in the stages which the struggle of a people undergoes, or the historic juncture through which the life of a people passes. The press should always try to uphold the values of a society and not to destroy them, in the sense that no one should write or even accuse in his writing a spirit of defeat, servility or surrender. Would you say in the press that it was impossible to wage a war, in all frankness. Alright then what other alternative would we have had?

If the October War had not taken place, as I said our economy was finished in 1973, in 1974 we would not have found a loaf of bread to eat, in 1975 the Jews sitting on the eastern bank would have said we have begun the Exodus from the east, therefore we will take the eastern bank. Then they would have said the Dakahlia is also the course taken by the caravans in olden times, from Dekerness to Palestine. First the Sharkia then the Dakahlia then they would have taken whatever they wished and we would have come to an end. This was the only alternative otherwise there would be no trace of us left as a people and a nation in this region. This is why I am saying we should never fall backwards again because if we do our fate is known. The press should live the historic juncture of every period of its nation. I would have imagined at that time that the press would have stood on my side and called for the necessity of waging a war, not to say the contrary. Some went further and said
that if the Arabs were to be defeated once more this would mean that the Arab nation would come to an end once and for all. This is precisely what Israel says. We, as Arabs, have taken one defeat after the other and we still exist. But Israel will no longer exist after one defeat. Israel was completely defeated on the fourth day in Sinai and it sent an official SOS to the US. Dayan stood before the foreign correspondents in Sinai crying on the fourth day. He said we were going to the TV to inform the Israeli government of the situation, to tell them that they could not move the Egyptians one inch. Then the gap took place. They said it was the Valley of Death and they took off since there were 400 tanks.

This is the battle of my life, the one I always wanted to enter 400 tanks and more than 10,000 soldiers, none were going to return. I asked Dr. Kissinger on 11 and 12 December 1973 what was the position of the US. The US made me withdraw from the war because it fought me for ten days. I became scared for my country. I do not fight the US and destroy my armed forces and my industries, bridges and barrages, because the fighting was going to lead to all this.

I can fight Israel but not the U.S. When I told Kissinger on 11 and 12 December that I would not allow a pocket, although it was a TV battle, he said the US army was going to fight us because it was not going to permit the Soviet arms to achieve victory over it once again. Do you know what happened after the gap? I said it was a T.V. battle with no basis, considering that I had five fully equipped divisions on the eastern bank and they did not move one inch as Dayan said. In fact, when we delineated the line after they left, we found that the Third Army who were standing behind the Israelis had taken a few kilometres more.

I did not feel I had the press with me in that battle. Some tried to cast doubt and returned to the old defeatist spirit after the gap.
I was saying that this was a TV battle. Even General Beaufre who was invited by « Al Ahram » here and who held a very long meeting with me — God’s peace be upon him — told me not to worry at all about the pocket in the west. It was he who called it a TV battle. I said I was not at all worried, the proof was that here I was sitting calmly and that I was fully prepared.

In spite of all this the press, at this historic juncture, should have sought for a means to lift the morale of the people and strengthen the spirit of solidarity. As I said our people are genuine and solid and they also have faith. They should have done what people usually do in moments of despair, whenever there is a depression in the world. Economic theories say that in times of a depression one should resort to one’s capital. Keep your assets big so that when the depression goes you may still find yourself in a strong position. When we find ourselves passing through a crisis, we should resort to our capital — genuineness, solidity and faith. We should strengthen these elements and not destroy them. This is the duty of the press. This is the third point following the pen and after building up the individual. The third point is that we live every stage with our people, because the press today is owned by the people. It neither expresses individual nor an emotional opinion, it expresses public opinion according to the political system chosen by the people to practice democracy, whether by means of the three organisations or two or four organisations.

It is up to the people to choose in the end.

I reproach the press for one thing. I was imprisoned for thirty-one months in a cell two metres wide by one and a half metres long. I had to do something, otherwise I would have exploded.

Before being imprisoned, there I was struggling, working politically and experiencing life with all its dimensions, and suddenly I
found myself cooped up in a cell. No one can really know what it's like unless they try it. It was then that I had the opportunity of looking into our press, and I found out that it was a treasure from the point of view that it was a key to culture for every individual who wants to educate himself and who had ambition. Our press today is extremely light. Whenever there is a news' item or a reportage, there is not sufficient effort made to support it by facts for our youth.

I want to teach our youth and vanguards the message of the pen when they are young, instead of importing the rift there is now in Beirut for example. All our lives we have had a spirit of genuineness, solidity and faith. For thousands of years, we never submitted the will of the Egyptian people to any foreign invader. The only country in which all foreign invasions were absorbed was Egypt, the country of seven thousand years. These facts should be communicated to our youth and sons. The press could play a very big role in giving them the key to our culture, particularly since there are great men living amongst us who have taken part in forming our consciousness like Tewfik Hakim. I was truly moved when I was sitting reading in the cell. He went to Paris when he was young, and Paris, as you know, for a young man coming from a closed eastern society is the gay city. When he wrote his book « A Bird From the East » you will find written on the second or third page that he stood in front of a statue and found written beneath it « Great sufferings make great nations ». This young man was not at all attracted by the Folies Bergères. These are the feelings and the depth given to him by the seven thousand years. Any other young man would have written that you will find so and so in this or the other boulevard.

We are in need of this kind of heritage. Taha Hussein in one of his books on the Prophet, « Ala Hamesh El Sira », says people will see you in the way you see yourself, if you honour yourself they will
You know what an opportunity of treasure from every individual is. Our press today is a reportage, facts for our reportage.

As the message of the future there is now the spirit of genuine, never submitted reader. The only country was Egypt, the communication every big role in there are great forming our concern. When I was sitting in Paris, and Antwerp, among Eastern society from the East that he stood in great sufferings all attracted by depth given to man would have her boulevard.

Mussain in one of his days if people will yourself they will honour you, if you demean yourself they will demean you. In these simple words you can perceive a great heritage.

Our youth and sons today are lost because the press is light-weight. The item is correct, to this I have no objection, but it should be supported by culture, by a background giving each individual the opportunity to learn. If we take into consideration the holiness of the pen here, if we guide the individual, build him up and preserve his dignity, and if we live every juncture of our life and benefit from the great men who have taught us, I believe that the press would offer a great deal. There is no need for me to enter into details because I am speaking in general terms.

It gives me pleasure to have had this meeting with you, and I would like to repeat that this is an anniversary for the entire Egyptian press. We are pleased and proud to say that in Egypt, the country of genuineness, solidity and faith, there is also genuineness in thought, culture and in the press, the proof is that the oldest paper in the Arab world is the Egyptian paper « Al Ahram ».

God guide your steps so that you may fulfil your mission.