

PRESS CONFERENCE

held by

PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT

with Danish Journalists

April 25, 1976

Question : What are the next steps in the solution of the Middle East crisis as conceived by Egypt at present ?

President : I would first like to say that I am really happy and pleased to meet the Prime Minister of Denmark, this being the first time for him to visit Egypt. We had previously received the Queen of Denmark, but She was then, the Princess of Denmark and being then the Speaker for the National Assembly, I did not have the opportunity to talk to her. I must seize this opportunity to state that I consider this visit an important point in the development of relations between our two countries; I welcome any personal relations between us and the government and people of Denmark at all levels. I also seize this opportunity to extend an invitation to Queen Margret of Denmark to visit Egypt.

As for your question, I believe the appropriate step now is to resume the Geneva Conference. We seek peace, a lasting peace in the area, the only place in which this peace can be achieved is Geneva for one simple reason, namely, that all the concerned parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation, will be present at the Conference. I must say that the whole problem, in the first place, is the Palestinian problem and not that of Sinai or

the Golan Heights. Therefore, I firmly believe that Geneva is the most suitable place where we can meet and work for achieving a lasting peace.

Question : Mr. President, you are described as a man of peace. What then are you ready to offer in return for peace, and what do you ask of the other side ?

President : I do not ask for anything in return for peace. However, I believe that, first of all, we all must agree that occupying the land of others by force is absolutely rejected according to the U.N. Charter, and by world public opinion, because we are no longer living in an age where the law of the jungle prevails. Consequently, what we are asking for is the withdrawal of Israel from all the territories occupied during the 1967 aggression. Following this step, it will be feasible to achieve peace.

Question : What is the kind of solution you expect from the Palestinian point of view, in any future settlement ? And, what is the area you find suitable for the State of Palestine to be established thereon ?

President : Well, I must not speak in the name of the Palestinians, for they must speak for themselves. However, from my point of view, the Palestinian state must be established on the Western Bank of the River Jordan and the Gaza sector, including the strip of land between them. I believe such a step will be the key to achieving a lasting peace and reaching the settlement we strive for. If it is possible to achieve this, I think the state of belligerency which has lasted for 27 years between the Arabs and Israelis, can be officially terminated with guarantees from the Security Council, or the big powers, or from any other states desirous to offer such guarantees for Israelis and Arabs alike.

Question : Does this mean that the ultimate solution, in your

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opinion, necessitates the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the Western Bank and in the Gaza Sector ?

President : This will pave the way for achieving a lasting peace and a permanent solution, because the problem is a very difficult, complicated and many sided one, with psychological as well as other aspects. So, I think that in order to achieve peace, we must, first and foremost officially terminate the state of war which lasted for 27 years and still does. We must terminate it before the whole world and the Security Council, and then we can begin establishing the State of Palestine on the Western Bank of the River Jordan and the Gaza Sector. Following this, peace will depend mainly on the behaviour of both parties.

Question : Mr. President, in support of what you said, would you accept Israel as a permanent state in the Middle East ?

President : Actually, it is a *fait accompli*, and I really wonder why you ask me such a question. When we accepted the Security Council resolution No. 242, it included commitments for the Arabs and Israelis alike, to abide by, and a recognition of Israel.

Question : Have you found a striking change in the outlook of European states particularly in their readiness to have a direct part in the political aspect of the solution ?

President : I even found more than that in Germany. For instance during my talks with Chancellor Schmidt, he expressed West Germany's readiness to take part in the political aspects of the guarantees but not in the military ones, since they may include the need to dispatch some forces to stand on the borders between the Arabs and Israelis whenever necessary.

You remember that last year I asked France and Britain to take part in providing guarantees; and during the Soviet Communist Party Congress which convened last February, Brezhnev agreed

to the participation of France and Britain in the solution. Then, later we added West Germany; and on our part, we welcome any western State ready to participate in assuming responsibility.

Question : What is the situation concerning the relations between Egypt and the Soviet Union at present ? What are your expectations with regard to the development of the Egyptian — Chinese relations which were recently consolidated as a result of the visit paid by the Egyptian Vice-President Hosni Mubarak to China ?

President : I received the Vice-President who had just returned from his visit to China, a visit during which he carried on negotiations and concluded some agreements. The whole issue does not bear any kind of alignment. For example, I paid a visit to the United States last November, then I visited the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Austria. On the other hand, Hosni Mubarak, the Vice-President, paid a visit to China. . . So, can this be called an alignment on our part with each one of these states ? No. . . What I would like to say is that we are seeking to establish the best of relations with all the world states. We do not want to create a traditional enmity or traditional friendship with any particular state.

The whole matter depends mainly on the behaviour of each state towards us, and naturally, our response will be according to this behaviour.

The Chinese have recently shown a clear understanding of our need for spare parts for the Soviet weapons we possess, hence our approval to send a delegation headed by the Vice-President, to China. On the other hand, many states extended their hands to us in help, not only China. . . It was an encouraging gesture on the part of China, especially that China is one of the five big powers with the rights of veto in the Security Council. . . We are

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not at all seeking the enmity of the Soviet Union; and when I present the draft law for abrogating the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Egypt and the Soviet Union to the People's Assembly, I explained that the latter did not fulfil the commitments stipulated by the treaty. . . Consequently I found myself in a very awkward situation.

You have lived with us for a few days, and have found that Egypt is the key to peace or war in the Middle East and the entire Arab World. The situation we were faced with was as follows : the United States replaced all the weapons Israel lost during the War, even before the ceasefire on October 22, 1973. . . The Soviet Union compensated Syria for its losses before October 22, 1973. . . As for Egypt, the most important party to the dispute, it did not obtain anything from the Soviet Union until now, neither the weapons lost during the War, nor any new weapons such as those sent to Israel by the United States or given by the Soviet Union to Syria. Nevertheless, I am seeking and working for peace.

Question : What about the military protocol you concluded with China ?

President : As I told you before, I met with the Vice-President just before coming here. All our agreements with any state are mainly founded on equal participation. The protocol I shall review after my meeting with you, includes supplying us with the necessary spare parts and carrying out overhauls for all the weapons. Such operations were supposed to take place in the Soviet Union, but they refused to undertake the overhauling of our weapons in 1975 and 1976. Their refusal only meant that all these weapons were to be considered useless.

Question : What is Egypt's attitude vis-à-vis the Lebanese crisis ?

President : Believe me I have done my utmost in this respect. I sent messages to both the Lebanese President and government asking them what I can offer to the Lebanese people. Unfortunately, there are certain factors that made them leave my messages unanswered. I proposed forming an Arab force to go to Lebanon and supervise the implementation of the ceasefire into effect, and creating the opportunity for the solution of the problem as a whole; but this proposal was not carried out because of the interference of other elements in the problem.

The situation in Lebanon, as I explained a year ago, an explanation to which the whole world now agrees, is very simple for I said : « Hands off Lebanon ». The Lebanese must solve their own problems by themselves, and they are capable of doing this. This was also the conclusion the envoys of the United States and France reached after one year of relentless efforts, and after all these sorrowful events and bloodshed.

Question : How do you visualise the role of Denmark in solving the Middle East problem ?

President : Following the visit paid by the Danish Prime Minister to Egypt, and after the talks he concluded with Premier Mamduh Salem and with me today, I can say that we have become friends. Consequently, we shall try together to exert our utmost efforts to reach a settlement for the Middle East problem.

Peace in this problem is very essential for us as well as for you, since the Middle East is the right wing of European Security. Therefore, I can see that Denmark could play a very significant role through the European Common Market. If Denmark will be able to assume such a role, it is most welcome. However, since I know you have close relations with Israel, and I think you have established some relations with us, and know us much better than before, you can really play an important role in this respect.