PRESS CONFERENCE

held by

PRESIDENT MOHAMED ANWAR EL SADAT

with the

EGYPTIAN JOURNALISTS

Jacksonville, November 4, 1975

In fact, our trip is about to end... My talks with President Ford have almost come to an end with our third and fourth meetings in Jacksonville. There only remains the address I shall deliver to the joint session of the Congress... My fifth meeting with President Ford will be just to bid him farewell and then I shall fly to England.

I believe my trip has been 100% successful with regard to the objectives we defined for it, namely, placing our relations with America in their proper perspective, contacting the American people, the President, and Congress, and initiating a new stage in a balanced policy. We should have a balanced policy in our relations with the big powers... There should be no traditional friendships, nor traditional enmities... What is important is our interests and from this point of view I think the trip has been 100% successful.

As a matter of fact, the reactions of the American people were excellent whether in the talks with President Ford which dealt with the economic aspects, or in the broad lines of our joint action in the Middle East problem. We also discussed the military
aspect... I believe everything went well and the talks were successful and fruitful... I also think we shall reach, God willing, definite results especially in the field of atomic energy for the desalination of the sea water, in addition to the economic aid to Egypt. However, the primary objective of the visit was not to ask for aid and weapons so much as it was the desire to conduct contacts with the American people in a bid to make them know and understand us, and to allow us to know them as well.

**Question** : Mr. President, today a major disagreement has taken place within the Arab bloc in the U.N., and a specific group, amongst which were the representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, announced their categorical rejection of the Egyptian proposal, while in the meantime the Palestinian party insisted on submitting its own proposal.

**President** : This is not strange or rather it was expected. We, in Egypt, are working for the interest of the cause regardless of whether it is liked by some or disliked by others. We are playing our role and everyone is entitled to act or take decisions the way he sees fit.

**Question** : You have declared that you will not concentrate on the question of weapons in the talks with President Ford, yet you have discussed it... Is there any kind of American commitment towards this question?

**President** : It is true the question of weapons was not one of the principal objectives of the visit, and we did not agree yet on anything definite in this respect... There are also no general lines that have actually been defined, but we shall go back to this question once again.

**Question** : Will a joint communiqué be released concerning the talks?
President: I think there will be a joint communiqué.

Question: Have you extended an invitation to President Ford to visit Egypt?

President: Yes, but its date is not fixed yet.

Question: What is the price of the atomic reactor and is it independent of the economic aid?

President: I think its price is more than $1,400 million, and it is independent of the aid. Most probably the joint communiqué will refer to it.

Question: What is, in your estimate, the importance of the reactor from points of view of both form and content?

President: I studied the question of the atomic reactor with technicians in the meeting of the Higher Committee for Atomic Energy in Cairo before my trip. The reactor is concerned with the desalination of the sea water only and has other significance due to the fact that atomic activities have a different kind of reactor and not one. Moreover, the desalination of the sea water is completely different and very far away from any atomic activity. The objective, certainly, is to ensure water for the cultivation of the desert land for the purpose of the new expansion in view of the fact that we are laying down our civilisational strategy until the year 2000. We cannot remain confined to this narrow valley area, therefore we need more water to cultivate the new areas included in the agricultural expansion plan, and to build new cities, God willing.

Question: To what extent has the visit succeeded in realising American detente, from the Egyptian point of view, in the final settlement of the Middle East crisis?
President: As regards final settlement in the Middle East, it was agreed, before the visit, that all the parties concerned must take part in any final settlement, and in this context, Egypt is committed to two principles with its Arab brothers, namely, no relinquishing of one inch of Arab territories, and no bargaining over the rights of the Palestine people. Within the framework of these two principles came the second disengagement.

The agreement stipulated that this is not the final solution but a step on our way to such a solution. The final settlement must be achieved in the presence of all the parties concerned. In this respect, America is, undoubtedly, of the same opinion... Being one of the supervisors or rather one of the heads of the Geneva conference, we asked the U.S. to begin preparing for the conference, and we shall wait and see what the answer of our Arab brothers will be. However, we agreed with America that there are no more steps remaining but that of the final solution.

Question: We have felt some change in the viewpoint of the American man in the street... So, do the American officials feel the necessity of being committed to these two principles, namely, complete withdrawal and the rights of the Palestine people?

President: It is evident that the American President is committed to a settlement based on justice... We have not discussed yet the full details, and of course the whole matter is up to the Geneva conference because all the parties concerned must be present in order to say their opinion. However, the American commitment is based on a just settlement.

Question: In your reference to the situation in Lebanon you always reiterate that the Lebanese themselves should sit together, and express the major settlement in the affairs of the

President: The affairs of the Lebans in our hands, is a major settlement in the affairs of the Lebanon tomorrow.

Question: We have heard the visit of the American President, Ford and the visit of our minister vis-a-vis the chances of settlement, and of course, the necessity of conditions of the Lebanese people to affirm the establishment of the Lebanese tomorrow.

President: You have touched on a very important question. You have heard the visit of the American President Ford, and in relation to the situation in Lebanon, and the necessity of the Lebanese people to affirm the establishment of the settlement of the Lebanese tomorrow.
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Why have not you, Mr. President, expressed your point of view on the question of the Lebanese majority and minority? Is this due to a feeling of embarrassment because of Egypt's reluctance to interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab country?

**President** : Certainly we never like to interfere in the affairs of others as much as we do not like anyone to interfere in our home affairs... The situation in Lebanon is in fact, two-fold. Firstly, it is very evident that there is something between the Lebanese themselves. They should sit together and discuss the Lebanese formula and see if it is suitable or if it needs to be amended. Secondly, they should sit with the Palestinians in order to settle matters and reach final settlement with regard to the future, and in order to prevent what is happening now to happen again in the future, God willing.

**Question** : You were very clear in your talks about Zionism and its connection with terrorism. However, President Ford announced today that America is adamant in its attitude vis-a-vis the question of Zionism, and that it will not miss any opportunity to foil the voting in the U.N. so that no resolution of condemnation may be adopted. Will you, Mr. President, affirm this same attitude in your address before Congress tomorrow?

**President** : Certainly in my interview with the A.B.C broadcasting station I clearly expressed my surprise at this fuss... You here are thousands of miles away and do not feel the sufferings in the area... Those who have visited this area know quite well that since the inception of Zionism in the Middle East, terrorism, expansion, and the complete disregard of the rights of the Palestine people have prevailed... It is no
shame that we differ with the Americans in this respect, for each party has its own views.

**Question**: Did you discuss the position in Lebanon with President Ford?

**President**: In my view the crisis is artificial. I have said before that following October, Arab solidarity has become a reality and nobody will be able to undermine it, neither me nor anyone else. What the Arab arena is witnessing is actually a form of nervous convulsions and political blackmail. I will not condone it, will not respond to it and will not approve of it. The Arab nation is not in a tight-spot, those who are stirring these convulsions are. It is about time we refused to respond to political blackmail from bigoted partisanship and a bigoted mentality, and it is about time we told them everything outright, without any beating about the bush.

**Question**: President, does Syria reject a second stage of withdrawal from Golan?

**President**: No, they want a withdrawal. That is why we shall pursue our efforts as long as we keep our line of progress clear and well-defined.

**Question**: This being the first visit by an Egyptian Head of State to America, has agreement reached on measures to ensure contacts and their continuity, so as not to end the impact of this visit?

**President**: This does not require an agreement, but rather a certain kind of movement on our side. As you see not a week goes by but we have visits from Americans. Such a movement must continue in the forthcoming stage.
Question: What is your analysis of the change that has occurred in the U.S. policy, since October 73 when they airfired military reinforcements to the Israelis, to the battlefield itself in Sinai, and up to October 75, when we now see this great reception and hearty welcome accorded to your visit?

President: Very definitely there has been a change. I mentioned it in my speech on the anniversary of the passing away of Abdel Nasser that I told the Soviet Union, after we met Kissinger in February 73, prior to the battle, when he met Hafez Ismail openly and not in secret, the American tone was altogether different. Kissinger's words, as communicated to me by Hafez Ismail, were that we should be practical. That we had been defeated and should not ask for the impossible. America could only operate from tangible reality. Change the reality, then change would be possible, he said: But in Kissinger's view at the time reality was not liable to change. In fact, he advised that we should suffer another setback, and a heavier one. And then there might not be any chances at all to settle the case. This is the reason why I sent for Androkov, the Minister of National Security in the Soviet Union. But he did not come and they did not reply. What happened is that I apologised and said: I am sorry, I must have gone beyond my limitations. I don't want Androkov, or anyone else. Please cancel the request.

This tone was in February but when Kissinger came to me in 73, after the battle, he spoke on the basis of a different reality, an altogether new one. Previously he never believed us capable of changing that reality. He thought it would last and that we had to accept the reality of defeat and speak within the limitations of the possible. But when he came in 73 he spoke of peace based on justice and America's outlook was changed.
Certainly America's attitude underwent a radical change, otherwise I would not be here, in the United States, today.

**Question**: Mr. President, we want to know more details of the change in the attitude of America, following the October victory. The position appeared as though we had imposed an iron blockade on our friendship with the United States, prior to 73.

**President**: The change that has occurred is certainly a big one. At the time, the 1967 battle had not taken place yet but we were in confrontation with the United States. The esteem accorded us at present wasn't there. There was Johnson, and we all know what Johnson's attitude was.

**Question**: After your meeting with American businessmen in Houston, do you expect an actual flow of American capital to Egypt? We read here that capitalists are demanding guarantees from the U.S. Government for investments in Egypt. Some persons believe that investments will not flow to Egypt except after the stability of the Egyptian economy. We feel that there are still some misgivings. Has the position changed after you talked to them in Houston?

**President**: Even before I spoke to them and when I was in Egypt there was flow of capital. However, it all depends on our standpoint. For instance, it was we who said we wanted our economy in such and such a form. We promulgated legislations and shut out the world, cutting our contact with it. It was as though we were not living in the world. It all hinges on our readiness to receive the flow of capital and this will take some time, as I do not think this will happen as quickly as you imagine, this here being an open society as you can see.
Question: What is your opinion of the attitude of the Mayor of New York?

President: This was expected, as he is an elected mayor and has a Jewish majority. We all know New York and the centralisation of Zionism in it. He adopted this attitude for electoral considerations, and when the Governor came and asked to meet me I refused. After that, he and his electors are free to do what they saw that the «New York Times» criticised him. If they criticised him, they should call him to account. With regard to us this incident is of no importance.

Question: What is your view of Kissinger's efforts?

President: He is an honest man and a statesman and in the meantime, he is a humane person and a human being worth-knowing.

Question: Will there be contacts with the Soviet Union in the future?

President: We are in continual contact with the Soviet Union that is never interrupted.

Question: President Ford announced in one of his speeches that the U.S. still maintained its attitude of refusing to contact the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

President: I was asked the same question by the A.B.C. T.V. station. I said that I shall continue to press the point to him. The reason for my insistence is that I reproach certain politicians in the Arab region for trying to ignore the fundamentals of politicians such as ignoring that America has the upper hand in this game. Furthermore, the Palestinians, as I said before in the other station, should not be asked to recognise the State of
Israel, straight away. They are a people deprived of a nation, deprived of human rights, deprived of land and everything.

You cannot set as a prime and absolute condition their recognition of Israel. It would be better by far that we should sit and talk to them first, so that at least, their violence would subside and matters would take their natural courses. The party qualified to do this is the United States and not the Soviet Union. This is a self-evident truth. If they ignore it or attempt to ignore it, then let us see how far they can go.

**Question**: Has Dr. Kissinger suggested holding an unofficial meeting before reconvening the Geneva conference and what is your opinion Mr. President?

**President**: I haven’t discussed this matter because it was not brought up, though Kissinger did actually announce it before our arrival. On our part, we are open to any suggestion that might help to further the cause. We approve of anything as long as it will spur on the operation. In all honesty, I say that we approve of it. We are not intimidated by any clamour for we should be used to how not to be intimidated by Arab clamours. In my assessment, such an unofficial meeting, which the Palestinians can be asked to attend, is an appropriate opportunity for making contacts outside the official framework of the Geneva conference. Thus, there will be no embarrassment in contacting the Palestinians. In fact, I say that this step will facilitate contact with the Palestinians. When the time comes, we’ll speak and see about it, for why should we be afraid.

In all our movements whether officially or unofficially or by any means, we are performing our duty, Egypt’s duty, shoulder-ing Egypt’s responsibility regardless of who accepts or who refuses it.
Question: Mr. President, what about Syria and what are your expectations?

President: That is something that concerns our Syrian brothers alone and we shall act in the light of their conduct.

Question: President El Assad announced in an interview that he will extend the presence of the Emergency Forces in the Golan?

President: This is no problem, but we will leave the whole matter up to them to decide.

Question: Is there a kind of rapprochement with Libya?

President: There is no rapprochement. Relations with Libya had been deteriorating steadily and what happened is that this deterioration has been halted but nothing more.

Question: What about your visit to London?

President: As I said today I would like to meet Wilson. The Labourers had always adopted a line totally biased towards Israel. During the last period, their attitude has been less biased and there is some sort of understanding of our side of the problem. It is also an opportunity to meet Wilson especially that I have never met him before, in order to discuss this subject.

On the other hand, it will afford me a chance to meet the English people there as I had met the American people here. A third point is to discuss matters dealing with the different fields of cooperation between us, and expanding those fields of cooperation on account of the technology we require in all aspects, in reconstruction as well as in armaments.
Question: What is the possibility of a second disengagement of forces on the Golan front?

President: In fact, as I told you there in Egypt I have reached a stage of disgust. The same thing happened at the time of the first disengagement. Even before the first disengagement agreement was reached officially, the Syrian Foreign Minister went to the Arab Kings and Heads of State and handed them messages about which I talked before. The result was that King Feisal, may God have mercy upon him, and the Prince of Kuwait sent me their foreign ministers. They were terrified. However, it transpired that it was all a totally unfounded lie. They claimed that Egypt had already reached an agreement and that the fact that it had agreed to go to Geneva on Dec. 21, meant that it had reached an agreement and that it is only going to announce it publicly. Then Geneva came on the 21 but nothing happened.

The conference was convened for two or three days after which a military committee was formed, but two or three weeks later, we withdrew because I did not like the way things were going on. Later, Kissinger came on January 1974 and began his shuttle diplomacy between us and Israel until he reached the first disengagement agreement. Again what happened in March, happened again in September. At present, they are in a state of complete turmoil. They knew well in advance that there will be a disengagement agreement on the Golan as was the case in the first disengagement agreement. I had informed Hafez El-Assad of my line of action since Nov. 1973. The first time Kissinger came to me, I told Hafez El-Assad when we were on our way to the Summit Conference in Algeria on Nov, 1973 — «this is my line
and that is yours.> What I predicted happened despite the so-called war of attrition.

If matters had proceeded naturally, he might have finished before us. The same operation is being repeated now.

At present, we don't know whether the Baath party wants a disengagement agreement or not, God only knows, honestly I don't know. My concern for Hafez El Assad forces me not to divulge a great deal, but the time will come when the truth will be known. However, what concerns me at present is that our line should be as clear and as unswerving as a sword after which all the crooked and irregular lines will drop of their own accord.

Question: What is your opinion of the present Arab attitude?

President: Up to the time of this visit, I had kept a sharp eye on the Arab attitude around us. There is only one group, those who have assumed the posture of a rejection front. Of course we all know that the Baath Party has set itself up as the sole guardian of the Palestinians. This is quite obvious, so there is nothing new. Meanwhile, I say that the other faction of the Arab attitude is all right. I certainly say that nothing whatsoever can shake the Arab stand adopted on October 1973, neither partisan blackmail, nor the rejection front, nor even the nonsense which we often hear. Nobody can ever shake the Arab stand, thus we should not worry unduly with this thought.
Question: Did your visit affect the ordinary man?

President: Undoubtedly it had its effect on all levels.

Question: What are the probabilities of the Middle East case remaining alive and in the limelight and what is to prevent it from returning to the state of stagnation?

President: We have to keep up the momentum of our movement and that of the whole problem. Very possibly that while we are moving in our operation, progress may be achieved in the core itself of the problem. We, of course, will not spare a moment to spur on the core of the problem in 1976 if possible.

Congress:

Mr. President, in the presentation of the problems we had with you did they find any fault with the believers? The personal problems were presented to us. What is the core of the problem? We face the process of actually different simplicity. I believe that is required in importance or it is certain difference.

Mr. President, with all the stage in the time, it is those to be the system of the problem. That old...