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## PRESS INTERVIEW

given by

**PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT**

in Doha, Qattar

June 24, 1976

President Mohamed Anwar El Sadat gave a press interview in Doha on June 24, 1976, prior to his departure to Abu Dhabi. He delivered a short speech before the press conference wherein he said :

« I am indeed happy to address my greetings and thanks to my Qatari brothers for the fraternal and enlightened stand invariably adopted by my brother Sheikh Khalifa. A few weeks before the October battle, I was here, in Qatar, and in August, only a month before the battle, I returned to discuss with him the most serious decision adopted by the Arab nation for centuries.

« It is a pleasure for me to praise the attitude of the Qatari people, a true expression of brotherhood and solidarity, before and after the battle. As I said previously. »

The President went on to say,

« With regard to the solidarity, I wish to say that Arab solidarity is undiminished. We should not imagine things or give them more than their due. We must admit that differences are bound to arise between us, Arabs, more than is customary, among other peoples and nations.

« No state or country could undermine Arab solidarity, or what we have achieved in the glorious Ramadan (October) battle. What is taking place, now, is only natural, and unfortunately, likely to happen again, even though I wish and pray to God, now that the Ramadan battle has been won, that we should act in a manner equalling the position in which the world has placed us, that, is, as the Sixth Power in the world, and leave aside the altercations and the outbiddings. Despite all this, I have great hopes that we are heading towards a re-birth. And there is no delivery without labour and pain.

« I wish to say that Arab solidarity is flourishing, and that no one can possibly undermine it. Differences in viewpoints could crop up. But now that the last year and all its occurrences have passed, a new line is obvious to all of us, and the tone has subsided. As I said, we should give the world the impression that we are truly the Sixth power in the world.

« As for holding an Arab Summit, I heartily welcome that at any time the Arab brothers may agree upon. »

After the President concluded his short address he began replying to the questions of pressmen. The first question was on circulated reports of Soviet and American marine threats; whether these threats affected the international situation or were merely muscle-flexing by the two super powers.

To this the President replied :

« This muscle-flexing in an era of detente is truly a strange matter. In the era of detente, in our Arab region of the Middle East, there is a cold war going on between the two super powers, below the surface.

« This has led me, fifteen months ago, in Riyadh, when I met King Khaled and President el Assad, to strongly insist that we

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should study the position in Lebanon, before it deteriorated. I said : « Fire is smouldering under the ashes. » It was possible, at the time, to find a solution for it. It was not to our interest to allow struggle to spread beyond the Arab framework. Nor should we have allowed the intervention of the big powers in that matter. I proposed the formation of an Arab force, months ago, and it was turned down. But now it has been adopted, and found to be the only solution, that we should intervene between the parties and restore peace to Lebanon, after the frightful massacre which is a disgrace to all of us, Arabs.

« As I said a year ago, we should hold our hands-off Lebanon, or rather « All hands-off Lebanon ». The Arab force has been formed and a round table around which the Lebanese would meet and decide for themselves their style of life. They should also reach a reconciliation with the Palestinians and the matter should end at that.

« We should not allow the superpowers to flex their muscles, since we are not incapable of looking after ourselves. »

About a question regarding the present circumstances in Lebanon, and the Palestinian problem, President Sadat replied : « I repeat once more that we overstate matters and the circumstances in which we live since we cannot achieve peace unless Palestine takes a chair at the Geneva Conference, which, to my opinion, should convene this year.

« It is true that America will be detained because of the elections and the internal situation of the country, and we know the American President postpones taking any decision until the elections are over. This does not prevent us from uniting our efforts; for we, Arabs, do not fear Geneva, Israel does. We, Arabs, own our will power in our hands, and have won over world public opinion from the East to the West, up to America, and throughout Europe

and all over the world, for the Palestinian cause they know now that it is not the problem of refugees, but that it is a first rate political problem.

I hope the Geneva Conference convenes this year; there is still a chance for us to form the basis of the overall framework for the final solution to the problem, and America can play its role as soon as the elections are over.

America's role is a major one, since it is the sole source which supplies Israel with everything from the loaf of bread to the Phantom planes. We now know what America can do right after the elections, since we already observed their role in the disengagement, after the war.

Arrangements should be made to form the principal framework with the presence of all parties. Then, after the elections, America would be able to assume its full role with the USSR and the other parties to reach the final solution. »

Another question concerning what has been heard about the establishment of the state of Palestine in the occupied Western Jordanian bank, to which President Sadat answered, « As I said, and knew in the U.N. during my visit to America last year, I called on the General Assembly of the U.N. to adopt a decision, which was accepted by a majority of 101 votes concerning the inevitability of granting the Palestinians the right to be present in any disputes regarding the Middle East problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Palestinians can then say their word. As for my personal opinion, I have announced the necessity of establishing a Palestinian state on the Western bank and in the Ghaza strip. »

In answer to a question about President Sadat's visit to Iran, and his talks with the Shah of Iran, and the aim behind his tour in the Arab Gulf, he said :

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« My visit to the Emperor was to repay his visit, made at the beginning of 1975, and I seized this opportunity to talk over all sorts of problems — the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Middle East problem, considering that Iran and Egypt are part of the Middle East. We also discussed the Gulf so as to allow the Arab Gulf to get out of this neither hot nor cold war, and stop any power, outside the region, from displaying its power. We also discussed the bilateral relations between Iran and Egypt and I seized this opportunity to thank him from the very bottom of my heart for all what he did for us. We discussed, on the whole, the world around us, since we cannot isolate ourselves from the rest of the world.

The resumé of my talks in Iran with the Shah, revealed that it is high time for us to be masters of the destiny of our own region, so that nothing could be imposed upon us by any super power from outside, and the decision should be ours.

It was natural for me to follow up my visit to Shah of Iran, by coming to my brothers in the Gulf so that we can study matters, and put forward the picture of what we discussed, and also discuss our present situation and the future in the light of the experiences we have had. »

Replying to a question concerning the Riyadh meeting of today between the Prime Ministers of Egypt, Syria, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and the differences to be discussed, President Sadat replied, :

« It is a most painful subject, indeed. The difference started on the first day of the October War. As you heard all over the world, I was suprised, when six hours after the start of the battle, that is, at 8 a.m. of October 6, the Soviet Ambassador informed me that Syria had asked for a cease-fire and that he was conveying this claim officially from the three Soviet leaders. I asked him if these

were instructions. He replied that they were not; only an official message from the three Soviet leaders. I naturally told him that, as regards Egypt, there will be no cease-fire until we achieve the aims of the battle. But that I will communicate with my comrade, President El Assad. I did cable him and received a reply. President el Assad may have denied this.

When the Soviet Ambassador returned the next day and repeated his claim, I told him that what he had said was not true and showed him the cable from President el Assad. It was then that the difference broke out.

« Then came the cease-fire and we all know the story of the cease-fire. After 17 days of fighting, ten days of which I stood alone against America, I said that I could not fight America. I can fight Israel and have prepared myself for that but not America.

« In my message I said that I was willing to bear the full responsibility before the Arab nation and my people, since I could not allow the destruction of the Egyptian Armed Forces and the devastation of Egypt.

When the cease-fire came, it was said that I was responsible for the cease-fire, but that Syria had intended to go on fighting.

« We all know that from the third day Syria withdrew, and that starting from the third day I confronted the Israeli and the U.S. forces for ten consecutive days. This is a third point of difference.

When we agreed to go to Geneva, Syria refused to go, despite the fact that the party to be embarrassed about going to Geneva should be Israel and not us, Arabs, since we have the option to say « yes » or « no ». We said we were going as we had given our word, and since it would serve our cause.

The day they said no, I was surprised to hear of the Syrian

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Foreign Minister visiting the Gulf Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and all our brothers to communicate a distorted story, implying that Egypt had deserted the battle.

These happenings were in November 1973, only a month after the battle. It was said that Egypt had deserted the battle and all of the things you heard during the past ten years; that Egypt had come to terms with America, that she had sold out herself to America, that she was insisting to go to Geneva in November because she had reached an understanding that will only be announced in Geneva.

We didn't go to Geneva and no agreement was announced. The disengagement was only effected in November.

This, President El Assad knows, and as Syria knows officially, had been agreed upon with Kissinger, as regards Egypt and Syria, and with regard to the line for Syria and the line for Egypt, after the first disengagement agreement.

Then last year we heard all of those things about Egypt's desertion of the battle, Egypt and America etc. etc. But after some months, Syria concluded a disengagement agreement, too. What then was the use of all that talk ?

Egypt observes the principle of keeping up the momentum of the cause, so that it does not stagnate. This is why we are constantly moving; and why we called for a second disengagement.

It had been previously agreed that the second disengagement should be carried out like the first, that it should start on the Sinai front and then in the Golan Heights. But President El Assad and our friends in Syria, instead of accomplishing this, began to attack Egypt. We heard what I have related, things to which we should have not stooped.

« Egypt is faced with a historic responsibility. What Egypt has suffered was beyond human endurance, for the sake of the Arab nation. But that Egypt should be accused of having deserted the battle, of having sold itself, that the Egyptian Army had etc. etc. that the cause etc. etc. . . . I believe that by now, it is very clear to you that Egypt has abided by its obligations and maintains a steadfast attitude even towards the Lebanese problem.

Fifteen months ago, we proposed the solution. At the end of fifteen months, after the frightful massacres, the ruin and the devastation, they found no better solution than what had been proposed by Egypt, the formation of an Arab force and leaving the Lebanese to decide the fate of their country. After the fifteen months they revert to what I had suggested.

Let us consider another problem. President El Assad renewed the United Nations Emergency Forces mandate from May 30 to November 30, a period of six months. In my view this renewal is not for six months, but for a year.

« We all know that the front in Golan is not suitable for operations in the month of November, he therefore has to renew for a further six months, and consequently the renewal amounts to a whole year.

In Egypt, I renewed for a year and in return obtained for Egypt the passes, oil, as well as the most up-to-date early warning station which I could not obtain from the Soviets. What I had was an out-dated one which the Soviet Union would not sell me, and therefore I asked it to withdraw the station. We fought our war without it.

We obtained all this and I hoped that Syria would get as much and this is what I worked for.

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In short, what I wish to say is that after Ramadan 10 (October 6) the world considered us as the sixth power in the world. We should not drop this standard, even amongst ourselves. Words such as « treachery » and « deception » should not be said indiscriminately. This talk was repeated, over and over for 10 months, and at the end it was proved that there was neither treachery nor deception.

But there should be reason and careful thought by which to address the world in the language it understands, and not the one we force it to hear. »