

**SPEECH**

by

**PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT**

during a meeting with the new Cabinet in Kantara East, following  
their taking the Constitutional Oath.

(March 21, 1976)

I have made it a point to hold our meeting here, and to have you take the constitutional oath in this place, because Kantara East is dear to me. It is the second largest city in Sinai and it was liberated by General Fouad Ghaly in a matter of hours, thus surprising the world with our military victory and the valour of the Egyptian soldier.

I meant you to come here because, on your way to the city, you can live the battle fought by our Armed Forces with the entire nation standing firmly behind it, and you can visualize the tremendous responsibility you have to assume.

« This is a cherished part of our land. It bore, instead of Cairo, the load of destruction and evacuation. It is a great achievement to start construction in the Suez Canal area. Whenever we make a dwelling available to any citizen who was evacuated to the Delta or to the Upper Egypt, those who are living prosperously in Cairo should realise what this means.

« We are standing here right in the heart of the battleground. Taking your constitutional oath in this humble place bears deeper

significance than taking it at Abdeen or Ras El Teen Palaces. Here was our victory in the war, because we worked with the spirit of a team, and our performance was magnificent. In the light of these concepts, we want to adopt a new way of undertaking matters, inspired by this land and by the heroic battles which took place on it.

«I have many things to talk to you about. We have scored great achievements ... However, we still have much to do, and also some of our accomplishments need to be explained to the people. In my last speech, before the People's Assembly, I talked for three hours, but still I did not say everything I wanted to say. The tasks of the present stage : reorganising and laying new foundations for the State and for a new society, all these matters need hours to expound. Therefore, now I shall try to concentrate on the broad lines while in future speeches I shall concentrate on particular subjects.

«Our Constitution embodies all our achievements and the principles of the July 23rd and the May 15th Revolutions. It is the document by which we are all governed. I was able, before the end of my present term of office, to lay down the outlines for the State of Institutions, of the sovereignty of the law and of protecting the dignity of man. I hoped to accomplish all that during 1975 ... However, let us make 1976 the year for performing all tasks, since our many preoccupations have prevented us from so doing before. However, we thank God that we were able to draw the outlines of the new society and also to put the development paper into effect.

«Protecting the dignity of man is part of our heritage and our tradition. However, if for once, there was a stage during which the dignity of man was not respected, it was an accidental stage. Now, our main concern is protecting the dignity of man. The principles of our religion, as stated in our Koran, honoured man. «We proposed responsibility to heaven, earth and the mountains, yet they refused to carry it and shrank from it, and man bore it». The same ideas

were also mentioned in the Bible, as well in the old and new testaments; that God has created man in His image and imbued him with part of His spirit. Thus, honouring man and protecting his dignity is nothing new ... It is part of our tradition, heritage and faith.

«In the light of these concepts, we can set up the new structure and we can avoid conflicts. The government of this country can never be sound if we deviate from these principles. When we believed in these principles we were able to change the world's belief in us, and most important, we were able to regain our self-confidence and also to achieve victory.

«In the political field, our responsibility is enormous. Nowadays, Egypt has become a determining factor in the balance of power in the world; and I believe that this country which has given the world its first civilisation and in which the first government was established, is capable of astonishing the whole world.

«Solving the piled up problems was not hard for me. The one difficult thing for me was the prevailing hatred. We must eliminate any trace of hatred because it eats into the very foundation of the structure of the country.

«Your responsibilities are great since the ministerial post is not what is used to be in the past. The Minister's life nowadays is far from easy. Your post involves problems, plans and development. No longer the throne speeches which were full of promises not based on facts and the outcome of which was that before the July 23rd Revolution, Egypt was on the verge of a sanguinary conflict when the political parties had failed to perform their role, or to bring about prosperity for the country. They went bankrupt and could not come up with any plans for solving the country's difficulties. I want you to work in a team spirit. This is the idea

behind this new cabinet reshuffle which Mamdouh Salem proposed. The aim is that all related sectors should coordinate and cooperate.

«We are embarking on a stage in which all liberties are granted. There are no sequestrations or detention camps. We closed down the detention camps which were established for 40 years. Now, the press is a free institution, capable of providing writings and criticism. I want the press to be an authority which serves the people's interest and not the interest of individuals.

«Some are trying to cast doubt on our economic system. We have done much to keep 50% of the People Assembly for the farmers and the labourers. This percentage exceeds that existing in other countries which call themselves progressive. We have completely free education, even in universities. In this respect, no country in the area around us has reached that far. In some countries, only the party's members's sons are admitted to the university. But in Egypt the admittance to universities is determined only by the grades. We believe in the inevitability of the socialist solution. We believe that equal opportunities should be given to every citizen living in this homeland.

«We have started two revolutions at the same time; a political revolution to attain independence and a social revolution with the aim of reshaping the previously stricken structure of society. Land-ownership was in the hands of the Royal family and a few individuals. The social structure in the countryside has changed since we issued the agrarian reform law three months after the July 23rd Revolution. I do not deny that there were transgressions, but they were rectified by the May 15th Revolution the purpose of which was to protect the dignity of man.

«Our economic system is clear. The public sector will remain the axis of our economy. Its capital has mounted to more than

L.E. 7 thousand million. We must give a push to the private sector. Both sectors should act efficiently. The private sector in agriculture is useful, because it provides incentives; the production supplies the farmer with his needs, while he can sell all surplus.

«In the forthcoming stage — and I am saying this particularly to the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation and the Secretary of State for we want to concentrate on agricultural industry in order to make food available and to achieve self-sufficiency in milk, meat and cheese, though not in wheat. We want to concentrate on the production of fertilizers, cement and sugar. We want to concentrate on the horizontal agricultural reform i.e. land reclamation. In this respect, the construction services are capable of playing a role by trying to reclaim the land which the farmer can then cultivate. We want to set up new cities. Water wells were found in the western desert. They are not any less important than oil wells, because wherever there is water, there will be agriculture and new cities.

« According to the Constitution we have three kinds of ownership: public, private and cooperative. We encourage the private sector as well as protect the public one which plays an important role in organising the prices. »

« Some say that our system of development is a non-capitalistic one, nor is it a socialistic one. Without using slogans or labels, I say that the most important matter is achieving the greatest possible production and also eliminating contradictions between democracy and socialism. We do not need confiscations, sequestrations or detention camps. If there is something to protect society against them we will resort to the law. We can issue legislations to face any condition. This law would be in the service of the society and not the contrary.

« I repeat, we want to reach a state of self-sufficiency in food at the earliest possible time. We want to pay more attention to

irrigation, drainage and to the good usage of irrigation water. We want to use the up-to-date technology in agriculture and to establish agricultural industry. Let us start that in the new lands.

«We are embarking on a new stage of full democratic practice following the establishment of platform. Each platform will have its own programme which will be the base of the coming elections, but within the framework of the national unity and the alliance. We do not want to leap in the dark all of a sudden. Democracy without opposition is inconceivable. We will not be impatient with the democratic practice, even if there are to be some transgressions.

Many rumours were spread to cast doubt on the honesty of the government. They are part of a conspiracy against the May 15th Revolution. This should not deter you from taking decisions and providing initiatives. Let everyone exert effort and work without shrinking from error. I do not approve of negligence, but anyone undertaking action is liable to error, and some errors can always be remedied. This is what I said to the Armed Forces before the October War.

«Many things are required from you. It is not only changing the system of agriculture, achieving self-sufficiency or setting up new cities ... These are only examples but we want a new spirit. That is why I invited you here on the battleground. This spirit is the thing that will enable us to double our production.

«Take decisions, tell the people all the facts though they be bitter. This will gain you confidence and respect. Should there be shortage in one commodity, tell that to the people and explain the reason behind it and the measures which are to be undertaken to cover the shortage.

«We want to make the State of Institutions a reality. Centralizing authority is harmful and it is a delay to rapid achievements. I myself have vested the Prime Minister with a large part of my competences.

«Try to be inspired by the spirit of this place where your sons have worked and sacrificed their lives. Those who have fought the battle are our sons, are the sons of the people's alliance; farmers, labourers and intellectuals. A peasant from Sharkia governorate, called Abdel Ati, was a soldier during the October War. He hit 23 tanks and this is considered a record in wars.

«We were going through hard economic conditions. Nevertheless, we could make available necessary finance and investments of about one billion and one hundred million dollars.

«We must have faith in our targets and adopt the team spirit and love for qualities.

«This is all I wanted to say but not all I have to say, for that would need many hours.»