

S P E E C H

by

PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT

at th dinner banquet given in his honour

by President Leone in Rome

April 5, 1976

Dear friend, President Leone,

Dear friends,

The people of Italy are one of the closest peoples of the European continent to us both due to the relations that were forged and that flourished between our two peoples throughout the centuries and to the reality of the interests between the two countries and peoples as well as the horizons whereto their mutual cooperation can be extended in the future.

The Mediterranean Sea, connecting us together, is not just a geographic liaison; it was and remains the means of a civilisational interaction.

It is no coincidence that three of the most ancient human civilisations emerged along its shores namely the Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations which intermingled and enriched each other.

This linked our two peoples with ties that defied the ravages of time and which impel us to maintain this close relation, preserving and continuously adding to it.

The effects of this civilisational meeting were not only limited to the establishment of the strongest of relations between our two peoples, but also extended to the various neighbouring areas and its fruits were reaped by many nations and peoples. Just as the Egyptian civilisation had founded for man the bases of the modern state, of medicine, engineering, architecture and astronomy, so did the Roman civilisation leave for us an eternal heritage in the fields of law, literature, arts and architecture.

Had it not been for these accomplishments, the human race would not have reached the present standard of progress and prosperity.

Our forefathers fully understood their historic duty of bringing together civilisations and peoples throughout the ages. Arab scientists conserved the heritage of both civilisations, the Greek and the Roman, by translating it into Arabic at a time when this heritage could have been lost and forgotten. They later directed it once more to the European continent after having contributed a great deal to it due to their knowledge, experiences and varied civilisational wealth.

You know that we are undergoing a bitter struggle for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East area; you are also aware of the close link between its security and stability in various parts of Europe, particularly those areas lying on the Mediterranean shore. Moreover, you know that we have taken wide strides towards bringing about peace in the region, and that we have determined that peace be granted every possible opportunity regardless of challenges and impediments. I am sure you agree that this just peace can only be effected on the basis of Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, and the realisation of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people who deserve the help and support of peace-loving peoples.

for they are leading a glorious struggle against an unjust occupation which attempted in vain to distort their identity and abolish their entity. But when the overwhelming majority of peace-loving peoples and forces supported the restoration of their national rights, foremost amongst which is their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state of their own, the illegal occupation authority resorted to attacking their sacred and religious places.

On this occasion, I would like to pay tribute to the principled stand of your country lately at the Security Council while it was considering Israel's acts on the Western bank and in Gaza in violation of the principles of international law, the U.N. Charter, the Human Rights declaration, and the universal conventions adopted by the world community, to amend unjust situation in the countries suffering from foreign occupation. We all know these acts will be of no avail to Israel nor will it benefit from them, meanwhile, these actions can only make the Palestinian people more persistent in their demands for their legitimate rights, and reinforce the international society's belief in the necessity of putting an end to this occupation and removing its effects.

Today, there is no single person who is not aware that the Palestinian cause is the content and the core of the entire conflict, as well as the axis around which revolves an existence or a non-existence. That is why the solution to the problem can only reside in confronting the real causes of the Palestinian problem as a political one in the first instance concerning the right of this people to live an independent political life without anyone's belage or threat. All this is embodied in the Palestine Liberation Organisation chosen by the Palestinian people and recognised by the Arab Nation as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Therefore any party actually desirous of furthering the

wheel of progress has to start from the point of the Palestinian people's struggle and to respond to their demands.

My dear friend,

I was greatly pleased with our meeting last year. I can well remember the frank and brotherly talks we held. I am all the more certain that the talks we are conducting during this year shall be a new starting point for a deeper and a far-reaching Italian-Egyptian cooperation. As I previously mentioned to you, we are striving to enlarge the circle of understanding and exchange between our two countries and peoples in the various political, economic and cultural fields. When we look on what has been achieved in this respect up to the present day as the base where we can build and to which we can constantly contribute, we can find that there can be no limit to what our cooperation can accomplish for our common interests and mutual benefit. There are many indications to the steady growth in the commercial exchange between us. Previously Egyptian exports to Italy were estimated at less than L.E. 10 million while now they exceed L.E. 25 million. Our imports from Italy rose from L.E. 11 million to L.E. 41 million. The field is wide open to further increases in this direction.

We fully appreciate Italy's participation in the implementation of vital and important projects for Egypt, including, in particular, projects of the Canal Zone, especially the railway project, as well as its readiness to cooperate with us in projects concerning collective housing units and foodstuffs industries, as well as projects related to scientific and technical cooperation and training in the field of sea transport and others.

I should not forget to mention here the project of a railway line extending from Suez to west Alexandria which will be completed before the end of this year.

We look forward to further cooperation in various fields. Coverage of economic and telecommunication.

In reality, non-exploitation of capital, modernization of capacity in cooperation.

As I mentioned, European countries are the cause of peace and common welfare. We invite you to invite your friends and the friends of prosperity and

We look forward to further cooperation in other numerous fields. Covering the steel and petro-chemicals industries, wireless and telecommunications and tourist projects.

In realisation of all this, we endeavour to establish a sound, non-exploiting relationship that would ensure the coupling of capital, modern technology, know-how, and an enormous productive capacity in the interest of both sides and in promotion of their cooperation.

As I mentioned to you in our talks, we welcome an active European role wherein Italy can play a prominent role to serve the cause of peace and to devote its efforts for the sake of the common welfare of Italy and the Arab peoples. Allow me, my friends, to invite you to stand up in honour of President Leone, Mrs. Leone and the friendly Italian people wishing you every happiness, prosperity and peace.