ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT ANWAR EL-SADAT
TO BRITISH BUSINESSMEN
London, November 7, 1975

President Anwar El-Sadat, in this address to British businessmen, on November 7, 1975 said:

«A year and a half ago, we started a mammoth programme for reconstruction in all fields. We intend to establish an infrastructure according to the latest in technology. This includes: railroads, telephones, and water networks as well as new towns. Now we are concentrating on housing.»

«The population of Cairo is, at present, 8 million; imagine a city in Africa with a population of 8 million. We planned two new towns in the vicinity of Cairo, one in the west towards Alexandria and the second in the east towards Suez.»

President Sadat said,

«We started work a year and a half ago, and at that time the Canal cities were under the threat of Israeli guns. Despite that, we started and progressed. In the meantime, after the failure of Kissinger's first mission, I challenged the Israelis, opened the Canal, and started rehabilitation of the Canal cities. Our plans cover all civil and military fields. Some of you laid down the projects of the new Canal cities. The People's Assembly has decided that Port Said shall become a free zone like Hong Kong and Singapore.»

President Sadat, in his meeting with the heads of British firms and factories added: «We have a very good technical base which we began with the Soviets. But you are aware of the fact that the Soviets lack the most up-to-date technology, and have recently requested West-Germany and the United States to provide it to them.

«We have the technical base and the labour power. After recovering the oil wells from the Israelis, this month, we shall be self-sufficient in oil and shall even be able to export a little surplus of the January production.»

«Furthermore, we have diverse plans to re-construct the country from zero, from the infrastructure to the most up-to-date military industries.»

«Yesterday, we studied various topics with Mr. Wilson and Mr. Callaghan and military ones such as the Navy. Then there is an important subject, namely tripartite cooperation. We take your expertise and technology, from Egypt we have the technical base, the labour power and the consumer market while capital will be provided by our Arab brothers who possess the means, now that oil prices have been raised.»

«We have studied this topic with Saudi Arabia. Prince Fahd, in his recent visit to London, discussed the subject with Mr. Wilson. There are also Kuwait, Qatar and Abu Dhabi. Outside the Arab world, there is Iran.»

President Sadat added: «The old refinery in Suez that had been hit by Israelis, has been moved to Alexandria, where a new refinery has been built. The old one is still in Suez and we wish to re-operate it. Concentration, now, is on the civil sector, on cement and fertilisers, because we have to rely on agriculture for the next forty years, despite industrialisation.

«At the level of industrialisation we reached, we still meet difficulties on account of the iron curtain we raised with our own hands during the past twenty years, thus isolating ourselves from modern technology.»
The President went on to say,

«I don't want to give you a wrong picture, but we assure you that we are sincerely determined to accomplish what we seek. We always prefer joint projects. For instance, the Suemed Pipeline is costing $400 million. King Faisal proposed to offer us the sum as a loan, so that the pipeline should remain Egyptian. I refused and gave a 50% share to be jointly contributed to by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar, since the future is for joint projects. This is an example of our concept.

«We shall do everything to eliminate difficulties and to push forward the open-door policy. I don't want any of you to come and despair. We want you to be patient, so that together we may achieve what we seek.»

The President in replying to various questions by British businessmen said,

«Yesterday, we studied with Mr. Wilson the subject of the phosphate mines and how to work them. The Soviet Union presented a full study of this project, and we paid the Soviet Union for the study; we turned to the West for its execution.»

He added: «Every month we save (foreign currency) for the import of batteries which is unreasonable. We should produce a sufficient quantity. There are also the batteries we need for the sub-marines. 90% of our arms are Russian and we are obliged to use them for 16 more years. This will be a transition period until we diversify our sources of arms.»

The President replied to a question on the project for a copper and platinum factory. He said: «We are ready to implement this project and Zambia is ready to provide the raw material.» Here the Board Chairman of the Leyand Co. said that they would conduct a new study, not based on old ones.

President Sadat said that he had long talks with Mr. Lee Kwan U, the Prime Minister of Singapore and Bruno Kreisky, the Chancellor of Austria and that he was greatly interested in the plans carried out by the two countries.

The President added, we need to develop our industry in the sphere of industrialised agriculture. At present, we make use of all the Nile waters, every drop of it, since the High Dam has been constructed; yet, cultivable land has only increased by one third.

«The only way to increase the standard of living of the 38 million and the additional million every year, is that we should turn to agricultural industrialisation.»