

S P E E C H

by

PRESIDENT ANWAR EL SADAT

to the delegation of parliament members
from the Federal Republic of Germany

May 25th, 1976

« It gives me great pleasure to seize this opportunity to convey all my thanks and gratitude, as well as the gratitude of the people of Egypt to Germany for the valuable aid presented to us for reconstruction. I assure you that the people and the government of Egypt will always work sincerely and powerfully to achieve peace in this area. »

Following that, the President answered the questions and queries of the members of the Federal Republic of Germany's parliamentary delegation.

To a question about the chances of ending the Lebanese crisis, the President said : « As I have mentioned before, the problem of Lebanon is a great tragedy. Our opinion has always been to leave the solution of the problem to the Lebanese themselves. The problem has two sides. The first is that the Lebanese should agree on their method and system of government, since the old system is no longer fit. No one should interfere in that, for the Lebanese own the country and are responsible for establishing their government. The second side of the problem is the relations between Lebanon and the Palestinian resistance. This also concerns both

of them only. No external interference should occur. We have seen how the Syrian interference drove Lebanon to the terrible bloodshed taking place today without any results, and it is improbable that they will arrive at anything through this method. »

A question was asked about Vice-President Hosny Mubarak's visit to the People's Republic of China. The President answered :

« The Vice-President's visit to China occurred after we contacted China, when the Soviet Union imposed a ban on the sending of weapons and spare-parts to Egypt. We asked China to give them to us and they agreed to send spare-parts and motors for the MIGs. When we tried to pay for them, they said that they were not merchants of weapons. This happened at a time when India refused to give us what we needed because the Soviet Union prevented it, or did not agree that India should send us anything. This was the beginning of our relations with China. Whilst establishing relations with China, we are also establishing balanced relations with all the world, and with whoever wants to cooperate or establish friendship with us. However, we completely refuse to enter the game of super-powers, west, east and the likes. We will always keep balanced relations on equal footing with everyone. »

The President was asked about the peaceful endeavours of Egypt to solve the Middle East problem, and about whether there was any possibility for resuming the peace talks. The President answered :

« First of all, I would like to convey our thanks to our friend who asked the question for the kind words he said about me. I want him to be sure that our people here are great admirers of German mentality, performance and technology. I am not exaggerating when I say that our people's admiration for the Germans is daily increasing. »

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« As for the question, we started the October 1973 war after Israel and America had refused the peace initiative which I proposed in 1971 in order to avoid armed conflict and war. They refused, so we were forced to begin. During the battle, when I gave my October 16th speech in the People's Assembly, we were in the heat of the battle and I proposed the idea of the peace conference in Geneva in order to reach a solution. Since the ceasefire, I and all the Egyptian people are working to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict by peaceful means. I took risks to achieve that aim, for instance, when I reopened the Suez Canal after Israel had refused our agreement in March 1975, I made the evacuees return and I started a programme for rebuilding, the programme in which you are helping. I think that through the Geneva Conference, we would actually be able to reach a solution, and guarantee the withdrawal of Israel to the 1967 lines and the realization of the hopes and the legitimate interest of the people of Palestine. In this respect, I want to assure the brother who asked the question and our friends in Germany that we are exerting every possible effort. Geneva is the most proper place for that, and in spite of the delay, we have not lost hope and we will always remain committed to realize a peaceful settlement in Geneva. I would like to add one thing, by my very nature I am always optimistic and I tell you, you can be optimistic too. »

In answering a question about the help and the aid given by the Federal Republic of Germany to Egypt, the President said :

« Indeed we are very happy with the help given to us by Federal Germany, and with the appreciation we felt from the responsible authorities and the German people, namely the President of the Republic and Chancellor Schmidt. But if you ask me what I feel, I would say that I hope the help will increase in quantity and quality. »

In answering a question about the conciliation conference between Egypt and Syria, the President said :

« Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have tried to hold a four-state conference in Riyadh on the level of the Prime Ministers of Egypt, Syria, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Two days ago, the Kuwaiti and the Saudi Foreign Ministers visited me in Cairo and from here they travelled directly to Damascus. Efforts are still being exerted. Such a conference is useful especially at this stage during which we notice many movements around us, and by that I mean foreign movements. As for Egypt, we are open-minded and open-hearted. In this respect, we do not have any complexes at all. But I want to tell them that the disputes are mainly tactical and not strategic. We should not give them more weight than they deserve. As to strategy, we all agree on the aims, we, Syria and all the Arab nation. But in tactics, naturally, differences occur. Therefore, I would like it to be known that whatever happens, the dispute is limited and the Arab solidarity is all right. »

A question was asked about the social activities of Mrs. Sadat. The President said : « Certainly my wife was extremely happy with her two visits to Germany. On the first visit she was by herself, and on the second with me. She is very much concerned about the handicapped because of our wounded in 1967 and 1973 wars. In this respect, I think that Germany can offer much. She is busy with projects. I do not know if you have seen her project in my province, I mean the province I grew up in, Menufia. She is also concerned with raising the standard of living of Egyptian women through work in various fields in the different governorates, such as ready-made clothes and the various activities aiming at raising the standard of life of women and girls. In this respect, also, Germany offered and can offer much. »

In answering a question about the difference between the debts

of armament and the debts concerning the economic projects, the President said :

« Certainly, there should be a difference between the economic debts and those of armaments. But regrettably, with the Soviet Union we are paying both and till this very day, in spite of the fact that until this moment the Soviet Union has not paid for the debts of armaments of the Second World War. I certainly agree that there should be a difference between the two kinds because such a matter represents a heavy pressure on the economies of countries, especially of developing ones. »

The President was asked a question about the possibility of increasing German help to Egypt and whether it will lead to promoting the development, the progress and the construction in Egypt more than in the past. The President answered :

« Certainly, the bulk of the German aid will help hasten development. We have actually started the programmes for that development, and laid down a plan which includes all the projects. We also have the necessary cadres because we have more than seven universities from which engineers and doctors graduate. In all professions we have great cadres some of whom we export to the Arab world and Africa. Certainly, the German aid in particular is of special importance because it will give a good push to all the programmes of rebuilding. »

At the end of the meeting, the President said : « It gives me great pleasure to once more express my joy to the Speaker for the Bundstag for our meeting, and to the distinguished delegates accompanying her. I wish them to carry to Germany the greetings of the people of Egypt and their love and admiration for the German people.

« I think that we have started a new era in our relations, one in which we should endeavour to exchange visits on all levels. This is vital for us in order to resume together the path we started. Once more I assure the speaker of the Bundstag and the friends, the members of the delegation, that the people of Egypt heartily greet and welcome the German people. I also want to congratulate the Bundstag on its speaker because she managed to conduct the meeting in an excellent way which I myself would have been incapable of over the ten years I spent as a speaker for the People's Assembly in Egypt. »

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