In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,

THE GLORIOUS DAYS OF OCTOBER

There are days in the lives of nations which cannot be measured in units of time, but are measured in terms of the horizons they open up, the hopes they present, the ideas they inspire and the resolutions they inflame. They are by nature but rare days which occur to the one nation once every so many years. The nations worthy of progress and prosperity are those which know how to seize the opportunity in order to forge ahead along the path opened to them to transform — by their action — fluttering hope into a live reality, to create of their glory glittering pages in the history of mankind, and not to leave it a brightly flashing moment without future.

With the aggression of 1967 the enemies of Egypt, and the enemies of liberation and progress wanted to exclude Egypt from the march of progress, and to isolate it from the entire Arab nation so as to confine it to itself and plunge it into internal problems, whether real or fabricated, leading it to forget its past, and deny its mission... Egypt whose geographic position, human potentialities, civilisational heritage and national bonds place it at
the vanguard of the world peoples who are struggling for freedom, progress, peace and prosperity.

The October War was the answer of the great people of Egypt through and by their glorious Arab nation. It was an answer on the level of Egypt whose effects went beyond our immediate cause in order to alter the position of the whole area and reflect on the position of the entire world.

As I have mentioned on a previous occasion, the world, after October 1973, is different from what it was before. After 1967, Israel became the domineering power in the area. The prevailing belief was that the Arabs could do nothing to alter this reality, and international policies were drawn up according to this concept.

The whole world was then astounded to see our Armed Forces crossing the Canal, storming the Bar-Lev line and launching the greatest tank battle in history. Meantime the Syrian forces inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, the Arabs united their word in defence of their legitimate right, with all the justice and peace-loving countries supporting the Arab cause.

The picture has changed radically and it has become incumbent upon all parties to reconsider their policy in the light of the new circumstances which were the outcome of the blood of the war dead, the sacrifices of the heroes, and the military planning and excellent political action which preceded, accompanied and succeeded the battle.

Our great people have experienced defeat, and have lived through years of bitterness and divisive anguish. The people also experienced the making of victory. But from this experience stemmed great capacities for building a happy future. The years of defeat afforded us with the opportunity to put our conscience to a severe test, in which we passed through a period of soul-searching and put all facets of the national work under the microscope of criticism. The internal conflict overwhelmed us, until some defeatist trends appeared on the horizon to cast doubt on everything and to belittle the capacities of this great people.

Allow me to remind you, in this connection that I had said, during the dark days of defeat, in my speech on the occasion of May 1, in 1971, that: «We have to make of defeat a starting point towards building a new state.» My words were not grounded on false hopes, but were based on deep faith in the people and their solidarity, their sacrifices as well as creative capabilities, and on an objective appreciation of our revolutionary experience which convinced me that by rectifying the
march of the Revolution and liquidating the negative aspects of the experience, it would become possible to build a magnificent edifice.

With the same confidence overpowering all the defeatist allegations and transcending all pessimistic estimates, and with a deep feeling of responsibility before the people who rallied around me, and together with my brother, the President of Syria, I took my decision to end the state of no-peace and no-war. I gave my orders to the Egyptian Armed Forces which were eager to receive them, following which thousands of youths including farmers, workers and intellectuals surged forward, with faith filling their hearts and sacrifice governing their actions.

The valiant fight proved to the whole world the leadership's capability in so far as good planning and accurate preparation are concerned, and the ability of the Egyptian fighter to handle modern weapons and use them effectively and with rare courage. In a matter of moments the whole of Egypt was behind the Armed Forces and all its sons were competing in sacrifices, in a spontaneous upsurge that did not fail to attract every individual. These people who are known for their love of peace, astonished friends and foes with their wonderful ability to be transformed, turn within a few moments, into a fighting people that do not hesitate to make any sacrifice in the face of any danger, a people that adopted the slogan of the Armed Forces «Victory or death».

It is a serious mistake to say that the successful crossing was a miracle, for a miracle by its nature, is a phenomenon which transcends ordinary human capacities and cannot be repeated. We must regard it as a culmination of national action whose lessons we must consider carefully and take as a model for all aspects of national action to rise to.

The greatest appreciation of the historic days of fighting is not to laud them but to be inspired by them in order to achieve in the various national fields the success we have achieved in the military field.

Our slogan must always be that what we could do in the fighting field must be done on the same level in every other field. Fighters are the elite of this people; what they did in facing the treacherous enemy and his overwhelming weaponry, can be done in the fields of production and services, to conquer backwardness and get rid of our inherited negative trends. With our achievements we can affirm that the Egypt of October is the Egypt of the future. The October
victory was not a coincidence, it did not happen by a fluke as the enemy wants the world to believe. It was the fruit of several factors which make of it a natural and not a unique phenomenon. In this connection, I would like to mention some of these phenomena, foremost among which are the following:

1. Egyptian Patriotism:

Our people have lived on this land, building up civilisation for their own welfare and for the welfare of humanity, since seven thousand years. Since the dawn of history, they have been united as a result of which their history has been free of any regional, tribal or sectarian wars.

Egypt has been open in general to the world around it, assimilating all that is new and useful. Had it been closed upon itself it would have lived in a state of mortifying isolation, its civilisation would have passed away and become extinct as was the case with many other civilisations. However, it has been receptive to all that is new, remodelling it and reshaping it, and adding to it its own Egyptian character.

Had it not done this it would not have retained its distinguishing personality which has remained throughout the civilisational development it has lived through. We are a people with genuine origin who have made of their nation a land of peace and forgiveness. We have wielded our circumstances to the necessities of progress, away from hateful bigotry, deadly rancour and bloody conflict. That is why Egypt has been loved by all those who have lived on its land and quenched their thirst from the waters of its Nile, whatever their status.

Our country has been exposed to invasions several times in the past. But none of these invasions succeeded in obliterating its civilisation or cancelling its personality. Even those who succeeded in ruling it were either absorbed in its civilisation, blending with its people to become an integral part of them, or were expelled even if it took some time. From this great past, the Egyptian nationality has been forged, a nationality that does not know fanaticism, but practises sacrifice in defence of its land and rights and to safeguard construction and progress.

2. Arab Nationalism:

Our people believe deeply in their affiliation to the Arab nation. They know that their historic destiny is to bear the major burden, however brutal the invasion the great Arab nation is exposed to. This was the role of Egypt in the face of the
Tartars; it was its role in facing the Crusaders; and it was its role in facing the Zionist invasion as I have previously explained. But in all fairness we should stress that the Arab national feeling played a principal role in the October War. Foremost among the element’s of victory is our success in fighting Israel on two fronts. I seize this opportunity to salute once again my brother, President Hafez El Assad who had the courage to participate with me in taking the decision to fight. I also salute the brave Syrian Armed Forces and the heroic Syrian people.

The rallying of the Arab countries around the front-line countries and the moral and material support they extended in addition to employing the oil weapon in the battle, doubtless contributed in achieving victory.

The Arab Kings and Heads of State and their people supported us, and thanking them for their efforts is a duty. Perhaps one of the most important results of the October War is that Arab nationalism has transcended the confines of being a mere slogan to become a palpable, well-defined action.

The October War has raised the prestige of all Arabs. The whole world has begun to recognise Arab existence, the role of the Arabs, and is doing its best to win their friendship.

8. Achievements of the July Revolution:

Our people have changed their life style over the past 22 years since July 1952. I do not intend to review the achievements of the Revolution because I have done that in detail at the A.S.U. National Congress on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution.

More than once I have asked that this review should be studied, especially by the youths, who did not live in the period before the Revolution, in order that they may realise the real dimensions of what the Revolution has achieved. However, I do not intend to ignore the negative aspects of the experiment, but I will review them later.

What I want to emphasise is that the objective evaluation of what was done, is bound to lead us to an indisputable outcome, namely that the ultimate result was, to a great extent positive and deep.

Here I want to point out some aspects which had a direct bearing on the October War.

Through the July 23 Revolution, our people have achieved freedom not only by expelling the British occupation but also by freeing the Egyptian national will from all spheres of influence. After 70 years of occupation our people have realised the meaning of independent Egypt.
We paid a very high price for the freedom of determining our foreign policy according to our national interests, the freedom to take a decision regarding our own affairs, and in the foreground the decision of war itself. The fruit of independence was that we gained the friendship of important nations, as well as the love and respect of peoples throughout the world.

Also Egypt has assumed its natural place among the sister African countries which stood beside us, and severed relations with Israel.

Egypt also took a leading role in the non-alignment movement and extended the arm of friendship and co-operation to all countries, who at one time regarded us as weak, but in the light of the new realities have shown a desire to deal with us on an equal and honourable footing.

The struggle for the freedom of our national will does not end with the departure of the occupation forces; it is a daily process both exhausting and costly, yet its fruits in the long run are greater than what some imagine, could be gained from dependence.

Our nation has also realised social freedom under the Revolution. Maybe one of the greatest achievements of the Revolution is that the fundamental social changes happened on a peaceful basis. Whatever mistakes might have happened during implementation, can be forgiven, if we realise that, with these procedures, the country was rescued from a violent class struggle, which many other countries have witnessed and are still witnessing. I would not be exaggerating if I say that the Revolution has saved the country from civil war.

Social emancipation has restored to the broad masses of the Egyptian people (the farmers, and the workers) the meaning of dignity. The Egyptian fighter was not fighting for the sake of the land of his fathers and forefathers alone, but also for the sake of the society of sufficiency and justice — what has already been achieved of it and what he hopes will be achieved.

Likewise we should affirm the role played by economic and social development — for it played a basic role in the October War. It was the industrial base, agricultural production and the expansive framework of social services which supplied our Armed Forces with many of their needs. On the other hand, the public sector played a major role in bolstering our economic steadfastness in the period subsequent to the defeat and prior to the battle, by its production, its financial surplus, and its men — directors, technicians and workers — who
showed complete devotion to their work for the sake of fulfilling the needs of the people and the Armed Forces and the promotion of development despite the burden of the war effort.

In the field of social development, I would like to point out the great expansion in education which provided the Armed Forces with large numbers of qualified soldiers capable of handling modern weapons, meantime without causing a halt in production in any factory or utility.

I would also like to point out to the emancipation of woman, which made her a partner in the national struggle. She has shared in production, in services, and she has looked after wounded soldiers and the families of the war-dead with great honour.

4. The Rectification Movement of May 1971:

The corrective measures of May 1971 were fundamentally a necessity — although the intrigues of some of the centres of power expedited it — in order to put our people in a position better suited to carry the burdens of the battle, and to participate in achieving victory.

The defeat of June 1967, revealed many of the negative aspects in our life which marred the bright experiment of the Revolution.

Upon awakening from the shock of the setback, the people demanded a change and correction in many spheres. The strong desire for change was resisted by some of the centres of power who found it hard to change their way of work, and to be deprived of their authority or accept the new kind of relationship the people wanted to exist between the ruler and the people.

Although we were living through the circumstances of the setback, which imposed its own considerations and fettered our actions, though our main concern was to prepare for a new military confrontation with an enemy who is occupying our land, and is constantly threatening us; yet I found it incumbent upon us to assume the decisive attitude that could respond to the deep desires of all Egyptians, certain in the knowledge of the sound instincts of our people and in their rallying around their leadership during the battle of destiny.

It was essential that each citizen should feel responsible for the fate of his country. He should feel that his basic problems are discussed openly without any tutelage imposed upon him in secret.

It was essential that fear should be removed, that doubt should disappear, while hatred and grudges diminish. Everyone should feel secure in
his day and his morrow, safe and secure with regard to his person, his family, his opinions, his fortune and his future.

It was essential that every citizen should know that the war which he is about to embark on will not liberate his soil alone but will also entail a more honourable and prosperous life, more elevated and edifying values. It will also give him hope of more complete and full democracy which will not be fully realised except in a strong, cherished and liberated country.

Therefore the corrective measures of May 1971 did not end with the liquidation of the centres of power, but rather went on to attain their more important objectives namely: assertion of the sovereignty of law, respect for the judiciary, the establishment of the State of Institutions and the laying down of safeguards through which a citizen can know his rights and duties clearly and easily, and practice them fearlessly.

5. A Clear Vision and Definite Goal:

The decision of war is the most dangerous which can face a political leadership, or impose itself on any nation. It is the most severe test which a society can go through. Because what is brought on by war in days or months is reflected on the nation for several generations and centuries.

In the world of today in particular with its modern lightning wars, complex relations, the varied balances of power, the swift succession of action, and reaction and, the value of seconds and moments in the midst of the dense dust of the battle, a decision of war should be weighed very carefully and precisely. Complete clarity of vision, determination, wide knowledge of military, political, economic and psychological aspects, both local and international should all be clear in mind.

All these elements have no less an effect on the outcome of war, than the decision of starting the war itself.

The Arab nation has been dragged to war with Israel several times during the last 25 years, without any calculations based on realities, or definition of exact goals to be achieved by the war and all its contingencies. Therefore what happened each time to the Arab nation was inevitable, as it was also inevitable that the Arab soldier should be deprived of a real confrontation with the Israeli soldier on the battle-field.

If we recall the 25 years of Arab-Israeli confrontation we can realise that the general Arab
thinking was dominated by strong uncertainties which took the form of several manifestations; irresponsible underestimation of the enemy's might and the power of those who support him to magnified exaggeration of the enemy's power and awe thereof, raging conflicts between the different regimes and currents in the Arab world which used the confrontation with Israel as a subterfuge to clash with each other.

The confrontation with Israel was a source of continuous debates instead of real careful study and planning, and the sacred Palestine cause was turned from a cause of destiny for the Arab nation, to just an item in a series of accusations which each Arab regime or party charged the other with.

In this feverish atmosphere all possibility for a carefully studied long-term Arab strategy to face Israel was shattered time and again.

It was an open field for biddings and outbiddings, for incitement and shirking of responsibility while the price was paid by the Palestinian refugees suffering under the yoke of occupation, and by the Arab nation at large.

The outcome of such a condition was to place the initiative permanently in Israel's hands in the political, military and information spheres, and it is we who were always taken by surprise.

Israel was free to fight us at the time it selected, within the framework of the political circumstances it designed, and amid the world's psychological atmosphere it created, while we did nothing but dance to Israel's tune and move into the traps set up for us.

Today we have the right to say that our method of movement which reached its climax on October 6, proves that we have learnt our lesson and have been able to calculate events, draw up plans and take the initiative both politically and militarily, for the first time since the establishment of Israel.

We also have the right to say that by our method of movement we have managed to transcend the level of provocations and traps, rise above biddings and bargains, and wage, for the first time, a military battle accompanied by a comprehensive vision of all its combat, political and psychological requirements.

For the first time, we knew exactly what we wanted and we were well aware of what contingencies would confront us on the battlefield or the political arena or even the sphere of international conflict. All these were basic conditions so as to
avail our valiant Armed Forces of the opportunity which they were longing for: to launch the battle and achieve victory.

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It may also be our right to point out here to the significance of the clarity of vision, independence of will, and determination to achieve the goal—this time it is due to the circumstances through which our struggle is passing at present after my delineation of the circumstances of the period that preceded the October War.

Our battle is not over yet, despite the fact that our struggle is taking new forms every day.

We have before us one of the most critical stages of political and military struggle charged with numerous contingents. We should face this stage with all the force with which we faced the war decision and the preparations for it; as to what I have mentioned of minute calculations, not to come down to the level of side battles or to allow provocations of verbal outbiddings to affect the strength of our determination to attain our ultimate aims through a path we know to be difficult.

Before the war we heard so many campaigns of defeat and despair. We will not pay heed to the tunes of doubt which cannot come up to the level of our achievement and the tasks which we are still tackling; tunes which have evaporated under the sun of Great October.

These voices, despite their endeavours to find positions for outbidding, emanate—in fact—from the same spirit of despair on which they lived during the years of the setback.

Such voices are not yet capable of assimilating the outcome of victory or of perceiving the wide horizons opened by October before the potentialities of this nation, so that they can affect events and reach the limit of wresting all their legitimate rights.

We should always be ready to lend our ears to every honourable voice and every useful endeavour.

As for the leaderships which had the honour of shouldering the responsibility with us in all the Arab countries, they are still standing firmly united about the ultimate objectives; we shall not allow any power that looks backwards and emanate from the previous spirit of weakness and the same behaviour of despair.

It is incumbent upon us to keep our faith intact until such time when we can prove to all these people that what they thought impossible is actually
within our power. We shall prove that when they were raising their voices in dissension, they were — serving the enemy unwittingly and were being led astray by his propaganda.

Today, as we are passing through another critical stage we hear the same voices which are trying to paralyse the will of this nation and to deprive it of its freedom of action.

Having proved ourselves on the field of honour and having shed of the blood, sweat and effort of our people what defies all outbiddings, and having taken the decisions which they would have shied away from confronting; having done all this, we have no need for lessons from those who think with their voices or emotions alone.

We shall not allow the voices raised in confusion to obstruct our clarity of vision. Likewise we shall not allow this nation to forfeit its chance of reaping the fruit of its great October achievements, nor to be diverted from the course of serious action, which deeply feels its historic responsibility, to mazes and labyrinths which lead to nowhere.

The old illusion that the Arabs, in any conflict or confrontation are the weaker, should disappear forever. Such an illusion has disappeared from the minds of our people and the minds of the over-whelming majority in the Arab nation, and we now have the self-confidence which enables us to confront all contingencies and challenges.

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The effects of the glorious October War on our life, the life of the area, and international relations as a whole ... are much more than to be numbered here and now. After the lapse of these months their effects still reveal new things every day. There is no doubt that the scope will be spacious before this generation and the coming generations to assimilate the effects of this glorious page in our life and to study all its aspects.

But it is enough here to point out the direct effects which are at hand and which we can easily see.

This war has finally halted the expansionist Zionist tide which has been gaining more lands and victories almost once in every generation for nearly a century now, when the first waves of Zionist immigrants started to flow uninterrupted into Palestine.

With the termination of Israel's dream on which it had pinned its hopes of continual expansion, and gambled on the permanent deficiency of
the Arabs and continual widening of the gap between
the Israeli and the Arab society, a comprehensive
process for self-revision has started in Israel itself,
to revise the future of those springboards on which
the Zionist belief and the then predominant image
of the country's future — until the eve of the war
— was built.

Yes, even until the eve of war, all the official
programmes of the Israeli parties were based on
gaining more forms of expansion, annexing new
territories and building cities and settlements, im-
agining that Arab resistance had faded away and
that the Arabs, despite their voices of protest, have
yielded to the fait accompli imposed on them, as
had happened more than once before.

The world outlook towards our area has under-
gone a radical change.

The latent elements of Arab strength with re-
gard to the world, were a theoretical eventuality,
while they viewed Israel as the effective power
capable of forming the course of history in the area
and of designing its future. But the October War
released Arab potentialities as an established fact
not as a remote possibility, and the world started
to doubt the pretexts on which Israel had built its
special position in the world, and with the West-
ern world in particular. Nowadays any national
authority in any Arab country has begun to ex-
perience a new dignity, treated by the world on an
equal footing, taking into consideration what we
have proven in the field of honour by way of our
readiness to sacrifice, and what we have achieved
in times of peril by our ability to stand together.

The Arab world is no longer a booty which
the powerful quarrel over, nor an area whose dest-
tiny is drawn up in remote capitals. The Arab world
has become a powerful party speaking for itself by
itself.

Now we see those on whose doors we knocked
receiving no answer, coming to knock at our door,
and those who shrugged whenever we spoke of our
problems trying hard to understand us.

This may be one of the deepest significances
of the October War.

The October War was the first war which we
started on our own initiative, away from the fear
of Israel's domination, the inclinations of foreign
countries and considerations of the international
balance of power.

We have succeeded in breaking these shackles
and have proved that we can choose freely and im-
pose our will as far as issues of our country are concerned.

The opportunity which the Arab world has been seeking since its renaissance in the modern age, is now at hand and it only has to grasp its value and significance, to hold on to and rise to the level of its exigencies.

All views are unanimous that the Great Ramadan (October) should be a springboard for a new phase of national action with which we can push forward to progress along the same lines and with the same rates we achieved in the magnificent battle. This would not be attained if we separate cause from effect. We should apprehend the aspects of power which made victory possible so as to consolidate and deepen them, and to find out the points of shortcomings and deficiency so as to liquidate them with the spirit of the Great Ramadan (October).

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