

Sadat: I Do Not Want A Separate Peace

Here are portions of an interview with Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat from Der Spiegel magazine on Dec. 5.

Spiegel: Mr. President, the Arab world is split over your visit to Israel. Outrage is being expressed in some Arab capitals. Weren't you expecting such reactions?

Sadat: What's happening right now is nothing new. It's something we've gotten used to — that's our method in the Arab world, unfortunately.

Spiegel: But an Arab head of state has never before been attacked by his neighbors violently.

Sadat: Following the second Israeli-Egyptian ceasefire agreement on the Sinai the same thing happened; that campaign against us went on for an entire year . . . There's nothing about this which would make me worried. As I announced, I will carry through my initiative to its conclusion. I intend to bring about a comprehensive peace, and not merely an Egyptian-Israeli agreement — under no circumstances. I want an overall peace, which will solve the Mideast problem in its totality. In any case nothing will stop me from proceeding along my course and completing my mission — even if only Israel comes to Cairo and Geneva. . . . My people are backing me up 100 percent. Just think about the millions of people who greeted me so enthusiastically after I returned from Jerusalem. Such a thing has not even happened in the days when our revolution celebrated its victories. I will proceed along my course. And as soon as I have reached an agreement — even if only Israel and myself are represented — I will present it to the Arab Kings and Presidents at a summit conference.

Spiegel: But why didn't you discuss your intentions beforehand with other Arab countries?

Sadat: Let's look at things calmly and soberly: No politician who takes himself and his post seriously needs to get permission beforehand from outsiders when the future of his people is at stake. And besides, Arab solidarity doesn't mean that I have to seek out permission for every move I make . . . I don't dictate anything to anyone, and I won't accept the dictates of anyone else. Anyone who comes to me with such things should reread my speech in the Knesset and at the following press conference. For, my Jerusalem trip was thoroughly covered by radio, television, and satellite — there were no dark places. Whoever follows all this and then still has to ask why I didn't ask the advice of others, is a saboteur of the Arab community. . . . Only two days before my trip I was in Damascus. So much I do know: Now as before, Syria does want peace — as does the entire Arab world. . . . But each of us has just taken a different path. President Assad doesn't share my views on the ways and means by which we can achieve peace. I told him the following: "If it turns out that I made a mistake, then I am man enough to state before the Parliament that I was in error, and will offer my resignation. Then I will also say: 'Hafez el-Assad was

right, and he should now take over the helm.' " . . . But I would like to assure you that my personal relations to King Khalid and my Saudi Arabian brothers, as well as the relations between the Egyptian people and the Saudi-Arabian people, are based on genuine fraternity and full mutual understanding, no matter what happens.

Spiegel: Then there exists only a slight misunderstanding between you and Saudi Arabia?

Sadat: You can rest assured of one thing: Our relations to Saudi Arabia are in no way clouded — on the contrary, every day they are further strengthened.

Spiegel: Your opponents claim that your visit to Jerusalem is a recognition of Israel.

Sadat: I am saddened by such assertions. As if you take people for idiots! But our brains can't be just turned off — my visit to Jerusalem was in no way a recognition of Israel. Go through my Knesset speech and the press conference with Begin, as well as my discussion with the parties in the Knesset: we have recognized no one. . . .

Spiegel: Didn't you undertake your trip for a much more directly urgent reason?

Sadat: Perhaps you have heard what I said before the Parliament, namely, that we are on the brink of war, and are so because of small misestimations of the situation on both sides. . . . The nerves of our troops were so tense that afterwards the Israeli Defense Minister laughingly admitted that he had viewed our maneuvers — in response to the Israeli maneuvers — as preparations for an Egyptian attack. Any small mistake could have unleashed a catastrophe. What would have happened then? How would the United States, the Soviet Union and the rest of the world have reacted? . . .

Spiegel: Arab insiders are convinced that Israel has offered to give back the Sinai, a part of the Golan Heights and grant a special status to the West bank of the Jordan.

Sadat: By no means, we didn't so much as mention such things. We only removed the eternal doubts, the chronic mistrust and the psychological barriers. . . . No other questions were up for debate outside of the two points, "no more war," and "security for both sides."

Spiegel: In the event that Syria and the PLO reject the results of the Cairo conference, will you then terminate your negotiations with the Israelis?

Sadat: No. If Syria and the PLO reject the results, I will carry through the negotiations to their conclusion in spite of this. Then I will convene an Arab summit conference in order to have the negotiation results discussed. . . .

Spiegel: (Asks about Moscow's support of Syria and the PLO.)

Sadat: I am ashamed to have read in the newspapers that an Arab country is putting its destiny into foreign hands. We aren't doing this. In any case, the Arab countries would do well to let the Palestinians decide on their own destiny.

Spiegel: Can the Palestinians alter this situation by themselves?

Sadat: If the Palestinians had listened to me one year

before the October War when I recommended they form an exile government, things would be completely different now. The entire world would have recognized them, but naturally they are not in a position to do this, since Syria does not want an exile government. Syria would like a Ba'ath government for the Palestinians. This is where it stands, unfortunately. . . .

Spiegel: Can you imagine a practical solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict without Moscow?

Sadat: Since the October War the Soviet Union has sent no more arms to me, whereas Syria has received four times the amount of arms they ordered. We have not even received spare parts. The Soviets have not even respected the old, still-in-effect treaties on arms deliveries. The USSR has also refused to support our debt — all this the Soviet Union can't deny.

I have nevertheless invited the Soviet Union along with the other partners. The decision is now for Moscow to make. But if the Soviet Union participates in the negotiations or then tries to create difficulties for us, even though we who bear direct responsibility and are directly affected are able to reach agreement — then we won't accept this.

Then, if we are in agreement with the future settlement, this will go immediately into effect. A Soviet objection to it will have no effect on us. . . .

Spiegel: But all this is still far off. What time appears to you as realistic for the ending of Arab-Israeli conflict?

Sadat: 1978. The coming year is the decisive year during which the Arab-Israeli conflict will be ended once and for all.

Moscow On Sadat

The Kremlin is undergoing a "painful reevaluation" of its Mideast and Africa policy in light of recent events, says Hans Lathé, Moscow correspondent of the West German Kieler Nachrichten Dec. 8. Lathé comments that the Soviets say their policies are based on science, but when it comes to these areas they have no realistic policy at all.

Washington Observers On The Mideast

Egypt's break of diplomatic relations with Syria is having a profound effect on the entirety of Mideast politics. The following are assessments of the impact of Sadat's moves on both the international and inter-Arab level by prominent observers in Washington.

From an interview with a Washington source close to Israeli government circles.

Sadat would rather see a split in the Arab world than a comprehensive settlement. Sadat wants to assign to the Syrians the role of Soviet puppet. His thinking is that, in an overall settlement, his value to the U.S. becomes nil, while if the Syrians exist as a pro-Soviet force, then he

Pending their strategic reassessment, the Soviets have escalated their propaganda attacks on Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. The most strident yet was a Dec. 5 Tass commentary by top political observer Yuri Kornilov, excerpted below.

...It is becoming evident that the final goal of this nasty political game is a separate accord with imperialism and Zionism against the Arab peoples, an accord for which Cairo is ready to pay any price, and notably, among other concessions, to sacrifice the vital interests of three million Palestinian Arabs.

He is docilely giving in to the imperialists, who are looking to keep the PLO from participating in the settlement of the Middle East conflict, by substituting a small group of Quisling Palestinians. It exactly on these Quislings that Sadat is counting, while looking feverishly in different regions of the Middle East and beyond, and especially in the United States, for suitable candidates he could bring without difficulty on American or Israeli airplanes to the American-Israeli-Egyptian meeting planned for Cairo, and pass them off as representatives of the Palestinian people...

President Sadat is not looking to arrive at a comprehensive solution of the problem. This is a lie, a premeditated lie motivated by his will to justify to the extent possible in the eyes of the Arab world his separate actions with the aggressor. Let us call a spade a spade. It is really a matter of de facto capitulation of Cairo before imperialism, before belligerent Zionism. It is a matter of treason.

Sadat is quoted as follows:

My admiration before German militarism is indescribable. If I would try to describe it, I could not find sufficient words in Arabic to express my immense admiration and love. Hitler has stricken me, and before him I was stricken by the German military spirit.

(Tass concludes:) These declarations of Sadat are very eloquent in describing who is who in Cairo today.

becomes an invaluable ally of the U.S., and Sadat wants the U.S. behind him. So he wants to drive the Syrians into the Soviet camp, into the Rejection Front, into an extremist position.

You see, Sadat believes that U.S. policy in the Middle East is based on a deception, and a clumsy one, one which the Russians will not fall for. Vance is trying to pull in the USSR to support a Middle East settlement as a process, at the end of which process the Russians will no longer have a presence in the Middle East! Sadat thinks the Russians are not stupid enough to fall for this plan, and that the U.S.-Soviet statement has given the Russians a procedural handle by which to sabotage