

Sadat Faces Egypt Empty-Handed

As was widely expected by informed observers prior to his arrival in the United States, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat has been thoroughly rebuffed during his stay in Washington by the Carter Administration. Sadat has received no serious commitment by the U.S. for a Geneva Mideast conference during this year nor was he able to budge Carter one inch on the Administration's insistent refusal to hold negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization. According to White House spokesman Jody Powell, no decisions on aid to Egypt, whether military or otherwise, have been made at all; but rather, several informed Washington observers say, that the Carter Administration was "disappointed" with Sadat.

The single most noteworthy fact of Sadat's trip is that the Administration did not succeed in breaking the Egyptian president's continuing support for the Palestinians and his insistence that a Geneva conference be convened in the immediate weeks or months ahead. Despite a good deal of what one source called "verbal dancing around" and moments of obsequiousness toward Carter and U.S. National Security Council head Zbigniew Brzezinski, Sadat, aware of the shaky ground he stands on internally in Egypt, strongly attacked Carter's support for Israeli "defensible borders" and the Administration's refusal to negotiate with the PLO. In his final press conference, Sadat commented that Carter is "very sweet and very alert, but (needs) some time to reflect on the whole picture."

The Egyptian President was reportedly frightened that even if a Geneva conference is convened, it might break down as a result of careless planning and set off a new war. He reportedly asked the U.S. to form a special task force to prepare for Geneva.

But this request is no more likely to be met than the others. An editorial in the April 7 *New York Times* happily comments that Sadat has no choice but to stick with the U.S. and that this "reality...will not be shattered by a polite deferral of his request" for arms and other supplies. Adding insult to injury, one of the few mooted proposals for Egypt was \$1 million allowance suggested by Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) to study Egypt's immediate needs, for which, Humphrey's office reports, no new funds will be allocated.

What Now For Sadat And Egypt?

Over the next days, the vital question will be how military, intellectual, and professional political circles in Egypt respond to Sadat's returning to Egypt empty-handed. Military layers are putting immense pressure on the President to prove that his six-year adherence to the global strategy of Washington has paid off.

Sadat's fears of an internal coup erupted in his statements to both Carter and French president Giscard d'Estaing of the "communist threat" to Africa. In an interview with the French journalist Eric Rouleau, Sadat declared that he was "very, very concerned" over the "somber Soviet maneuvers" in Zaire, the Sudan, and Egypt, and is in particular worried over "communist

subversion" in Egypt itself. While these crudely phrased complaints were meant for the ears of the Saudis as a means of squeezing liquidity from the Gulf states, the possibility that Sadat won't survive the next few weeks as President remains high. Anti-Sadat restiveness meanwhile, grows in Egypt. The deposed editor of the leftist *Al-Talia* magazine, Lutfi el-Kholy, has reportedly gone on an "offensive" to restore his position on the paper and is picking up significant support. Similarly, the leftist *Rose el-Youssef* magazine this week attacked other Egyptian papers for their criticism of Soviet Mideast diplomatic overtures. Former Nasser confidant Mohammed Hussenain Heykal drew fire from Sadat circles for his bitter attacks on the Egyptian leadership for being "duped" by Carter's previous Mideast policy statements, in an article appearing in numerous Arab-language press sources.

Sadat And The Europeans

After pulling the rug out from Sadat, Brzezinski is trying to prevent the Soviets and Europeans from establishing solid relations with the Egyptians. According to an informed Israeli source, Brzezinski regards European involvement in Egyptian affairs as a strategic threat to the U.S.

The NSC head was doubtlessly responding to Sadat's stopover in West Germany, where he and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt huddled for hours discussing the new world economic order and a shift in European Economic Community policy independent of U.S. policy. Sadat emerged from the meetings to tell reporters that "there must be a way to get the world economy out of the mess it is now in...We need a new world order." Unlike his performance in the U.S., Sadat avoided low bows to his host and stressed global, rather than narrow, Arab-Israeli issues.

According to an informed Egyptian source in Bonn, the entirety of Sadat's final West German press conference statements were authored by Schmidt. A Chase Manhattan Middle East expert told Congressional sources last week that "Egypt is beginning to look to the West Germans rather than the U.S. for aid — and we don't know what the West Germans are up to."

The Bonn Egyptian source reported that the Soviet transfer ruble is now an active subject of discussion in leading circles in Cairo.

Whatever the direction Sadat himself will now take, observers are careful to note that, in his final Paris press conference, Sadat warned that if something "concrete" does not emerge from his U.S. visit, Egypt would have recourse to "an alternative plan."

Sadat's Worries

The following are excerpts from an interview by Le Monde reporter Eric Rouleau with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.

R: ...Mr. President, last week Mr. Carter's represen-

tative in the U.N. Security Council opposed the idea: that the word "homeland" would figure in a resolution favorable to the Egyptian delegate.

Sadat: This is a delicate problem which I prefer not to discuss publicly. Both extremist Israelis and Arabs would profit from it in order to create new difficulties.

R: Do you think you can convince President Carter to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as a valid interlocutor in the negotiations?

S: This question was discussed at length in my talks with Mr. Giscard D'Estaing. I consider an American-PLO dialogue to be not only indispensable but also of crucial value to all the parties involved, including the Israelis. That will facilitate their task, as well as our own, in the search for a definitive settlement.

R: Nevertheless, the Israelis insist that they cannot negotiate with an organization the Charter of which calls for the dismantling of their country.

S: This is only a pretext. The resolutions adopted during the recently concluded National Palestinian Congress constitute a major turn in that the PLO is now qualified to negotiate a state in the territory of the West Bank and Gaza. I know that Arafat's position will be still more relaxed if he is invited to participate in the Geneva negotiations. In any case, it is clear that these negotiations will open up the possibility of a definitive peace which all Arab representatives will support, I repeat, all of them. What more is necessary? Guarantees for the future? They will be given on both sides."

In enumerating the points of discussion with Giscard d'Estaing, President Sadat suddenly referred to developments in Africa.

S: I am very disturbed with the turn of events in Africa, in particular in Zaire. The Soviets are conducting shady maneuvers from one end of the continent to the other. As for the civil war in Zaire, from all evidence, it is not a question of an internal affair, as stated. The Katangans are supplied with perfect Soviet tanks, the T-54s and T-55s, which are just as good as the American made M-60s. We know something about these tanks since the Egyptian Army used this Soviet material during the October war. Now, these tanks did not fall from the sky. The situation is critical. I wonder where the next coup will be in Africa.

R: Do you mean Egypt?

S: Yes, since the Soviets have already begun to incite trouble in my country. But I refer specifically to Sudan where any crisis would have repercussions in Egypt. We will be directly implicated because of our common defense pact with General Numeiry. Even though the unified political direction which was recently created among Egypt, Sudan, and Syria is pointed at no specific country, it is understood that we will forbid any subversion from wherever it comes, the Soviet Union, Libya, or elsewhere.

This Means War

The following is an interview with a Harvard oil expert:

Q: How do you think Carter will handle Sadat?

A: Carter will propose a plan to Sadat that even the extreme right-wing elements in the Egyptian cabinet will not accept.

Q: Yes, but this means war.

A: Correct

Q: But this does not make any sense.

A: Tell this to Carter and to the Jewish Lobby.

Q: Why the Jewish Lobby?

A: Look who supported the Carter campaign, the Jewish Lobby. Who funds the Jewish? The oil companies. Carter has to serve his masters.

Q: What about the Saudis, how will they react? There are reports that the Saudis are putting pressure on Carter for a Geneva conference because they are afraid of the radicalization of the Persian Gulf.

A: Carter is pushing the Saudis to believe this. The real question is, what kind of radicalization you can have in the Persian Gulf? Any radicalization in the area means terrorism, which gives the pretext for U.S. military intervention in the area.

Q: This means war too.

A: I know this. Carter thinks that the only way for U.S. policies in the Middle East is war. That is the only way that Carter can keep the U.S. alliances with Saudi Arabia together.

Soviets Quicken Diplomacy For Mideast Peace

Over the past two weeks, the Soviet Union has quickened its political and economic intervention into the Middle East arena. The Soviets have sent leading officials to North Africa and the Persian Gulf and have received visiting leading representatives from the Palestine Liberation Organization, Kuwait, and Tunisia. The aim repeatedly stressed in joint communique and in prominent articles in the Soviet press has been the necessity of convening a Geneva conference, with full Palestinian movement participation.

Among the imminent results of the diplomacy could be the beginnings of a rapprochement between the Soviets

and Egypt. London's Daily Express reported this week that Arafat intends while in Moscow to mediate between the Soviet and Egyptian leaderships. On March 30, a new Egyptian-Soviet trade pact was signed, increasing the volume of bilateral trade by 14 percent over last year's levels.

A second key angle in Soviet involvement in the Mideast is the likelihood that the groundwork is being laid for the incorporation of oil-producing and other Arab countries into the planned June-July transfer ruble multilateral trade relations. Knowledgeable observers also speculated this week that the subject of just-