PREFACE

After Anwar el Sadat came to power in 1970 momentous changes took place in the Egyptian foreign policy. From being a close ally of the Soviet Union under Nasser, Sadat began to slowly steer Egypt away from its close Soviet connexion to becoming a close ally of the United States. From leading the Arab world in its confrontation with Israel, Sadat ended the armed conflict and concluded peace with Israel in stages culminating in the Camp David agreements of 1978-1979. From being the most influential Arab country under Nasser, Egypt came to be isolated and ostracized under Sadat. All these significant changes took place in a matter of few years. What explained this turnabout? No doubt, a variety of factors contributed to the break with Moscow, friendship with the United States, peace with Israel, isolation from the Arabs and infitah economic policy at home. But specifically was the change due to Sadat's personality, domestic socio-economic pulls or thrust on Egypt by outside influences?

The present study is a modest attempt to explore the factors which propelled Sadat to conclude peace with Israel and analyze its implications for Egypt. There is little doubt that Sadat's peace policy has left a profound impact not only on Egypt but on the region as well. The thesis has eight chapters divided into three parts: domestic, regional and global determinants.

In order to understand the factors which propelled Sadat to effect the dramatic turnabout, an understanding of Sadat's personality, his life experiences which shaped his world view and the functioning of political structures in Egypt is essential because it was first and foremost Sadat's unique personality that gave Egypt's peace policy the shape it took. The first chapter, "Sadat's Political Orientation", makes an attempt to highlight Sadat's personality traits and style in the light of his actions.

In modern Egypt, the conflicting pulls of Egyptian nationalism and Pan-Arabism have led to great changes in its role in the area. Until mid-1950's it was Egyptian nationalism which
was predominant. The Israeli challenge since the Gaza raid convinced Nasser to pursue a vigorous Pan-Arab policy. Syria's secession from UAR and Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war with Israel raised doubts as to the wisdom of a Pan-Arab policy. It made Nasser accept the idea of an accommodation with Israel. However, Sadat signalled that he attached more importance to Egyptian affairs than Pan-Arab causes such as Palestine. By concluding Sinai-I and Sinai-II under US auspices and ignoring the PLO, Sadat indicated that Egypt would be pursuing an "Egypt First" policy disregarding its Pan-Arab commitments. Sadat's decision to visit Jerusalem and conclude a bilateral peace treaty with Israel was perhaps the best example of his determination to pursue an Egypt First policy. From being the most influential Arab country under Nasser, Egypt came to be isolated and ostracized under Sadat. This and the factors which led to the dramatic turn forms the subject of the second chapter "The Ideological Factor".

Despite Egypt's defeat at the hands of Israel in 1948, Nasser was primarily interested in the economic advancement of Egypt than in settling scores with Tel Aviv. But the Israeli military challenge pushed him to work for a strong military machine. This led to diversion of scarce resources to defence. This together with Nasser's progressive commitment to Pan-Arabism and his military intervention in Yemen brought him into head-on clash with both Israel and the US. The result was Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war which also crippled its economy. Sadat decided to put an end to Egypt's ruinous wars with Israel and opted for peace under US auspices. His relative success in the 1973 October war made him proclaim the infitah policy linked to a peaceful resolution of dispute with Israel. The economic prosperity expected under infitah continued to elude him. But he remained convinced of the efficacy of his policy which propelled him to visit Jerusalem. The military burden, the compulsions and implications of infitah and the other economic factors which pushed him to end the armed confrontation with Israel form the theme of the third chapter "The Economic Determinants".
Nasser's assertion of Palestinian rights, defiance of the West, and determination to carve for Egypt an autonomous role in regional and world affairs with Soviet help put him on a collusion course with West as well as Israel. Assured of US backing Israel dealt devastating blow to Egypt in the 1967 war and enhanced its own strategic value in the eyes of America. Israel's military superiority remained unchallenged until October 1973 when Egypt in a surprise attack crossed the Suez canal. Towards the end of the war Israel gained an upper hand, with US help. Sadat was badly shaken by the setback and this in part explains, his decision to conclude two Sinai agreements. It ultimately led him to formally end the thirty years of armed confrontation and conclude peace with Israel in 1979. This chapter focuses on how the position of relative strength which Egypt had enjoyed in the 1973 war was eroded as time passed to one of abject weakness and desperation. Sadat's shift to a diplomatic settlement with Israel against the backdrop of Egypt's diminished military strength forms the subject of the fourth chapter "The Military Compulsions".

Nasser believed in close cooperation with Arab countries on the Palestine issue. Towards this end he began to champion Arab nationalism and work for Arab unity. He remained convinced that only a united Arab world could speak with some weight on this issue. He worked towards the formation of UAR in 1958 and supported subsequent unity endeavours. The 1967 war severely put to test his pan-Arab policy. Unable to unite all the Arab states against Israel/West, Nasser abandoned Arab alliances and charted a lonely path but adhered to his commitment to the Palestine cause to the end. His inability to live up to Arab expectations on the Palestine issue led to a decline in Egypt's standing in the Arab world. Initially Sadat worked towards a unified Arab approach to the issue and in fact, together with Syria and assured of solid Arab backing went to war against Israel in 1973. But soon he abandoned his Arab allies and agreed on a separate peace with Israel. Outwardly, he pledged to respect collective Arab decisions but in reality he followed a go it alone policy. With little care for Arab consensus he went on to conclude a
bilateral peace treaty with Israel. The attitude of Egypt towards Arab unity and the factors influencing its role in this regard form the subject of the fifth chapter "The Arab Nexus".

Until the June 1967 war Israel had successfully cultivated abroad the image of a peace seeker and portrayed the Arabs as anti-peace. Nasser became the first major Arab leader to challenge the Israeli thesis by accepting the UN Security Council Resolution 242. He went further and welcomed the Roger's Peace Plan. Israel, by its refusal to withdraw from Arab lands in return for peace, stood and stands exposed and isolated. Sadat took a more radical step in 1971 when he agreed to sign a peace agreement. Israel again refused. After the 1973 war Sadat gradually ended the armed conflict with Israel. Through all these steps, Sadat's determination to realize full peace became known to the world and in effect, demolished Israeli propaganda against the Arabs. Instead of reciprocating the Arab desire for peace, Israel persisted in its policy of holding on to occupied Arab lands. The chapter "The Israeli Challenge" examines Egyptian peace overtures, Israeli responses and the impact of these on the peace process.

To counter the growing Israeli military threat to Egypt's national security, Nasser concluded an arms deal with the Soviet Union in 1955. Moscow agreed to supply arms to Egypt more due to the latter's role in opposing the Baghdad Pact and for its anti-imperialist stance in general together its decision to follow a non-aligned policy than due to its hostility towards Israel. To the Soviet Union, the conflict was a rather secondary factor or no factor at all than its desire to weaken attempts to encircle it with a string of hostile military alliances. Since the Israeli factor was of secondary importance to Moscow it caused frictions in their relations and the inherent contradictions came to the surface during the Sadat period. This chapter examines how the Soviet Union which was the fulcrum of Egyptian policy under Nasser, came to be viewed as Egypt's 'enemy' by Sadat who began to steer Egypt away from its close Soviet connexion as early as in 1971.
Nasser after the 1967 war decided to work for a negotiated settlement with Israel in which he saw the US role to be crucial. But the US continued to ignore Nasser's peace overtures. Sadat's entire strategy was based on American ability to persuade Israel to withdraw from Arab lands. He considered the US to be Israel's life-line and hence in a position to help secure Israeli withdrawal. Sadat always gave the example of Eisenhower's role in the Suez war. After assuming power he made many moves to please the US. Following the October war, Sadat repeatedly emphasized that 99 per cent of the cards in the conflict are with the US. He even volunteered to promote American interests and exclude Soviet influence from the area. He promised to promote regional stability by concluding peace with Israel and by concentrating on internal economic development. Sadat wanted the US to be a full partner in the search for peace. But in the Sinai agreements and at the Camp David talks, it became obvious that the US indeed became a full partner only of Israel. Sadat was hoping for a confrontation between Israel and the US but Carter had no stomach for that. Instead he decided to work with Begin. This and other issues are discussed in the chapter "The American Drive".

The concluding chapter of the thesis will highlight the implications of Sadat's peace policy in three fields: military, political and socio-economic.

My interest in Egypt began with the October 1973 war but took concrete shape during M.Phil days when I made a humble attempt to explore the factors which contributed to Egypt's break with Soviet Union under Sadat. This stimulated me to go further and probe Sadat's dramatic visit to Israel, the factors which propelled him and its implications for Egypt.

In the preparation of this thesis, I had an opportunity to visit Egypt for one year during 1985-86 under the Indo-Egyptian Cultural Exchange Programme. While in Egypt I was associated with the Cairo University's Faculty of Economics and Political Science. During my stay I had the opportunity of talking to key people who served under Nasser and Sadat, besides meeting Egyptian, Arab, American and Israeli scholars. I also made use of
the several libraries in Egypt especially Cairo University, American University, Al Ahram, the Israeli Academic Center and the Indian Embassy's Information Centre.

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