From being the most influential Arab country under Nasser, Egypt came to be isolated and ostracized under Sadat. The factors which led to this dramatic turn forms the subject of this chapter. 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 issues. 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.

The Backdrop

In the modern history of Egypt conflicting ideas such as Egyptianism and Arabism are quite discernable. Saad Zaghlul, the father of the revolution of 1919 told the Paris Peace Conference that his country's problem was an Egyptian problem and not an Arab problem. His attention to matters Egyptian and aversion to Pan-Arabism were a reflection of the mood of the people. Soon after Egypt's independence in 1922 the revival of the pharaonic past
enjoyed official backing and appreciation among the intellectual elite. The most prominent exponents of Egyptian nationalism in this phase were Tahtawi, Taha Hussein, Tewfik al Hakim, Lutfi al Sayyed, Mustafa Kamil and others.¹

Sheikh Rifaa al Tahtawi's (1801-1873) ideas and writings greatly influenced the Egyptian nationalist movement in this phase. According to Tahtawi, patriotism is the bond which holds the social order together. According to one historian, Tahtawi's patriotism;

... is clearly and distinctively Egyptian. It is not Arab since it does not include the other Arab speaking countries, nor Muslim since it includes the ancient Egyptian of pre-Islamic times, and even the non-Muslim residents of Egypt in his own day. ²

To Lutfi al Sayyid Egypt's ancient history has created a "pharaonic core" or a distinct Egyptian personality.³ Taha Hussein


(1893-1973) a noted Egyptian author and later education minister (1950-52) wrote *The Future of Culture in Egypt* (1938) which highlights Egypt's Mediterranean identity. He looked upon Egyptian civilization as being closer to Europe than to the neighbouring Arab-Islamic civilization of which Egypt was the centre. He argued that Islam had not really Arabized Egypt, just as Christianity could not orientalize Europe. Thus, Taha Hussein, strongly argued for Egypt's association with Europe rather than to the neighbouring Arab countries.4

Mustafa Kamil believed that Egypt could be independent and strong only if there was unity, a sense of belonging to the nation and responsibility for it. This signified a patriotic spirit - "wataniyya" - which was a source of strength to Europe and the basis of its civilization. This sense of belonging emanated neither from language nor religion but from territory - Egypt as a country. Kamil tended to worship his country Egypt, and not the countrymen.5

**Egypt and the Palestine Issue**

Egyptian nationalism remained a dominant concept in the 1930's in spite of Pan-Islam or Pan-Arabism. This may be explained as the following: The national issue of Egypt's complete independence from the British occupation remained the predominant concern of

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the Egyptian elite. With the conclusion of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty, the Egyptian government gained more freedom in foreign affairs. So far, Egypt was not actively involved in the Palestine question. Now due to the growing popular pressure the government did intervene in the Palestine issue.6

Moreover, the predominance of Egyptian nationalism owed a good deal to the Wafād Party, the most vocal exponent of Egyptian nationalism. The Wafād saw Pan-Arabism as an extension of Egyptian nationalism. Therefore it advocated on various occasions (especially Makram Ebeid) a link between Egypt and its neighbouring Arab countries.7

Egyptian nationalism, however, faced a slow but steady challenge accentuated by a number of factors. Many groups like the Young Men's Muslim Association, the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Azhar, Young Egypt Party and others showed interest in Palestine affairs. This ultimately forced Egypt to take active interest in the Palestine issue. Moreover, with the establishment of Arab League in October 1945 in Cairo Egypt found itself in the forefront of the Palestine struggle. In addition the failure of the existing socio-economic order and the emergence of a new and largely dissatisfied elite paved the way for the 1952 revolution.

After the Second World War the Egyptians became fully aware of the Zionist threat in various fields in economic, political


7. Awad, n. 2, pp. 77-79.
and security perspective. Despite the apparent threat from the emergence of a zionist state in Palestine the Egyptian Premier Nuqrashi Pasha and General Muhammad Neguib were not enthusiastic about Egypt's involvement in the 1948 war. It was King Farouk who decided to send Egyptian troops to the war under pressure from Iraq and other militant Arab regimes. The Egyptian Premier even at the last moment was keen to prevent Egyptian intervention and appeared optimistic of United Nations intervention and resolution of the issue. He reassured the Egyptian military commanders that the King's decision was really more in the nature of a political demonstration.

Before Egypt formally entered the war, the Muslim Brotherhood had already dispatched their trained volunteers to the front. Besides the King's desire for Arab leadership, the public opinion in Egypt seemed to favor such an involvement. On top of this, the economic factor seemed to have finally propelled Egypt to plunge in the first (1948) Arab-Israeli conflict (AIC), for the creation of Israel would not only form a geographical obstacle to Egypt's access to its natural market in the East, but it would also pose a serious threat to the growing interests of the Egyptian capitalists in the region. Therefore, it was thought necessary to prevent the establishment of Israel. However, when Egypt failed, it led the Arabs in an economic

8. The growing threat to Egyptian exports to the Arab markets by Jewish industry and the inspiration Zionism offered to foreigners in Egypt to maintain their special status. Another reason was the Egyptian apprehension of a strong Zionist state emerging on its eastern frontier and the consequent threat it would pose to Egypt's national security and position in the region. Finally Egypt feared that Israel might close the Suez Canal. See Walid Kazziha, Palestine in the Arab Dilemma (London: 1979), p. 93; Muhammad Neguib, Egypt's Destiny (New York: 1955), p. 2.
Following its defeat, Egypt became the first Arab state to sign an armistice with Israel on February 24, 1949 which in effect meant, de facto recognition of Israel. In the wake of Egypt's defeat the Egyptians denounced Pan-Arabism and made a call to withdraw from the Arab League. Further, it strengthened the sense for Egyptianism and a desire for a policy independent of Pan-Arab issues, a policy which prevailed until mid-1950's.

Nasser's Pan-Arab Policy

The July 23, 1952 Revolution was a landmark in the history of the region; with far reaching implications, which affected the very basis of the region's politics. From the outset Nasser was keen on domestic development and was opposed to diverting Egypt's scarce resources to confrontation with Israel. After the 'Gaza

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11. In 1954, Nasser released his book, The Philosophy of the Revolution, that revealed his thinking about Egyptian identity. He conceived Egypt as circumscribed by three circles. Arab, African and Islamic. For him the Arab circle was the most important due to religion, economic interests, history and future. Regarding the Palestine issue he wrote "... Palestine was a significant, not just a peripheral factor, in galvanizing the free officers to act ...." Gamal Abdel Nasser, The Nasser, G Philosophy of the Revolution (Washington, D.C.: 1955), see also "The Egyptian Revolution", Foreign Affairs, vol. 33, no. 2, January 1955; Dekmejian, n. 10, p. 95-120; Sati el Hursi, Al Urubu Awalan (Arabism First) (Beirut: 1961); See also Elmore Jackson, Middle East Mission: The Story of a Major Bid for Peace in the Time of Nasser and Ben Gurion, (New York: Nortern, 1983).
raid' of February 28, 1955, Nasser devoted more attention to the Palestinian problem. For he believed that if the Israeli threat is not contained it would ultimately undermine Egyptian revolution. The Palestine cause enabled Nasser to promote the Pan-Arab trends in Egypt. Nasser's espousal of the Palestine cause as the "first cause of all the Arabs" gained him widespread support among the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. Thus, Egypt's return to the Arab fold was prompted by the Israeli threat. Arabism became the official ideology of Egypt with Nasser as the spokesman of the Arabs. Now Egypt declared itself willing to merge with any Arab state to confront Israel.

Prominent advocates of Egyptianism or 'Egypt first' policy like Taha Hussein, Tewfik al Hakim, Hussein Fawzi, Fikri Abaza, Mustafa Amin, and others who continued to emphasize this policy during the early phase of the revolution were pushed into the background due to Nasser's Pan-Arab policy. Thus, the protagonists of Pan-Arabism who wanted Egypt to pursue a more vigorous Palestine policy, to identify more closely with other Arab causes and to work for Arab unity under Egyptian leadership gained ascendancy during major part of Nasser's reign.

To strengthen solidarity with the Arabs, and to meet the growing threat from Israel, Nasser concluded an arms deal with the USSR in September 1955 when the West refused to supply arms to Egypt. When the West withdrew its loan offer for the Aswan Dam, Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal in July 1956. Then the West, with open backing from the UK and France, openly sided with Israel. Soon the Anglo-French attack took place on Egypt in which Israel played a leading role. It confirmed Nasser's fears that the West was using Israel to suppress the Arabs.

Apart from the Israeli threat which prompted Nasser to pursue an active Pan-Arab policy, some writers have ascribed a wider economic motive in Nasser's calculations. In fact, Nasser himself in his *The Philosophy of the Revolution* while defining the components of power speaks at length the petroleum resources of the Arabs which could be used to make the Arabs powerful in his Arab circle. Some argued that it became evident to Nasser that Egypt's economic problems were of such magnitude that they could only be solved through tapping regional resources. Oil and oil revenues were the principal attractions. To others Nasser sought to exploit Pan-Arabism in order to enhance Egypt's standing in the world and consequent eligibility for large-scale economic assistance. The union between Egypt and Syria in 1958 was a clear indication of Egypt's closer identification with Pan-Arabism. Sentiments for unity with Arab countries had never been so strong in Egypt. The formation of the UAR was the climax of Nasser's Arab policy. However the secession of Syria in September 1961 from the union proved to be a great blow to Nasser and brought in criticism from Arab quarters. Nasser reacted sharply to the criticism and re-asserted Egypt's
Arabness. He affirmed, "Arabism not Pharaonism is our political ideology".\footnote{Vatikiotis, Ibid, p. 235; see also John Waterbury, "Egypt: The Wages of Dependency", in A.L. Udovitch, ed., The Middle East: Oil, Conflict and Hope: Critical Choices for Americans (Toronto: 1976), pp. 339-40; Nasser, n. 11, pp. 67-70; R.W. Baker, Egypt's Uncertain Revolution under Nasser and Sadat (Cambridge: 1978), p. 57 and 64; A.I. Dawisha, Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy (London: 1979) pp. 12-15; Referring to Syrian charges that the Egyptians were confirmed Pharaonists' rather than Arabs', Nasser declared that all talk of Egypt's fiarawaniyya was unfounded, since it started "just because Taha Hussayn years ago expressed the opinion that the Egyptians were Pharaonists". Rejwan, n. 1, p.56; See also Ahmed Sabri, Qenna al Firaawniyya (The Mask of Pharaonism) (Cairo: 1943); Mohammed Darwazah, Urubat Misr Monzal Fathal Arbi (The Arabism of Egypt since the Arab Invasion (Cairo: 1961).}  

Nasser highlighted the need to regain Palestine and urged caution and patience. He was aware of Israeli military superiority. Western support to Israel, weakness of Arab armies and disunity among the Arab states. He said:

The Arab countries should not talk together and then each wait for the other to enter the battle against Israel, and let the other down as happened in 1948. If we did that again and we were defeated for a second time, it would be impossible for the Arabs to raise their heads again.\footnote{Nasser as quoted in Vatikiotis, n. 12, p. 255; See also Sylvia G. Haim, ed., Arab Nationalism:An Anthology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).}

It was Nasser's conviction that the Arabs should wait and build up their capability so as to be able to challenge Israel. He cited the example of crusades and foresaw the same end for Israel. Nasser made this point plain as follows:

We will sit and talk seriously at the meeting and it will be no shame if we come out and say that we cannot today use force ... For I would lead you to disaster if I were to proclaim that I would fight at a time when I was unable to do
so. I would not lead my country to disaster and would not gamble with its destiny. 15

After Nasser's military intervention in Yemen his Pan-Arab leadership came under scathing attack from the conservative Arab states. Even the radicals did not spare him including Syria. Nasser reacted to criticism with a sense of reality, fully conscious of Arab limitations and Israeli military superiority. 16 Nasser was reluctant to initiate military action against Israel in view of his conviction that the Arabs still lacked the requisite military capability and unity of purpose, but Arab states like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, were taunting Nasser for "hiding behind the UNEF skirt" and charged him of cowardice, dishonour and fear unworthy of an Arab leader. 17

The 1967 June War and the Revival of Egyptian Nationalism

Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war was mainly due to Nasser's commitment to Pan-Arabism. Nasser was shaken by the defeat but paid due attention to the recovery of lost lands. The war proved


16. Nasser said: "There are some (Syria) who say that we should start a war immediately, but those who say this are joking or ... we shall act only in accordance with our strength and if we will not be able to defend the (Arab) plan to divert the Jordan's tributaries we shall not carry the plan out." See Michael Breecher, Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy (London: 1974), p. 213.

17. Ibid., p. 324. See also Samuel Herlin, The Search for Peace in the Middle East: The Story of President Habib Bourguiba's Campaign for a Negotiated Peace between Israel and the Arab States (New York: 1968).
to be a turning point in Egypt's Arab policy as it aroused doubts as to the wisdom of a Pan-Arab policy. Soon after he withdrew his forces from Yemen and accepted financial aid from Saudi Arabia. Thus, Saudi Arabia became a dominant power in the area which posed a challenge to Nasser's role as Pan-Arabist.

There also arose a controversy over Egypt's identity in the wake of its defeat. The proponents of Pan-Arabism lost their faith in the concept. Arab nationalism as an ideology lost much of its appeal. As a result Egyptian nationalism reappeared with great force and gained ascendancy in Egypt. Now protagonists of Egyptian nationalism argued that Egypt should not bear the cost of AIC and instead give priority to the recovery of Sinai.

The defeat introduced yet another dimension to Arab politics. It helped the "development of a Palestine national movement free from the control of Arab governments." This posed a challenge to Nasser's pre-eminence in Arab affairs. This also signified a rejection of Nasser's Pan-Arab policy. The controversy also aroused a lively debate which tried to demonstrate the weakness of Pan-Arab ideology in the new post-war atmosphere and the fact that its predominance no longer went unchallenged. One even discerns a subtle shift in emphasis from Pan-Arabism to Egyptian nationalism. There was a growing awareness among the Egyptians on the need to rely on themselves to counter Israeli threats. The writings of Taha Hussein and Tawfik al Hakim -

the patron saints of Egyptianism regained some of their lost credibility. Arab Socialist Union's Al-Jumhuriyyah reminded the Egyptians "not to forget the pharaonic past since this is part of Egypt's personality as are the Arabic language and the Islamic religion". 19

The decision by Egypt to accept UN Security Council Resolution 242 which meant recognition of Israel was a clear indication of Nasser's desire to accept the reality of Israel. But Nasser found Israel still stubborn on the issue of withdrawal from Arab lands. Hence, Nasser's decision to launch the War of Attrition. However, he could not continue for long the war of attrition on his own, so Nasser pleaded for collective responsibility of the Arabs at Rabat in 1969, but was disappointed by their response. Soon after he accepted the Rogers plan which signified a preference for the recovery of Egyptian territory over the Palestine issue. The PLO criticised Nasser's acceptance of the Roger's plan as a "sell out". To which Nasser reacted angrily by the closure of the Cairo office of Al-Fatah.

Nasser's disillusionment with Pan-Arabism was also reflected in the appointment of Heikal as Minister of National Guidance. Heikal was expected to prepare public opinion in favor of peace and limited accommodation with Israel. Nasser's following statement sums up his concern for Egypt more than for Pan-Arab causes. In an interview he said:

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As you know, we have not been able to realize all our dreams during the last 17 years because of a variety of problems. The occupation, the 1967 aggression, etc. My dream is above all the development of the country, electricity in the villages and work for everybody. I have no personal dream. I have no personal life. There is nothing personal about me. 20

The 1967 war also resulted in a decline in Egypt's standing within the Arab hierarchy. Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab countries replaced Egypt as the vanguard of Palestine cause. Egypt became dependent on the oil revenues of these states. Egypt had no alternative but to reconcile to the new situation and play a secondary role.

For Nasser, Pan-Arabism was a political alternative and he opted for it. Consequently Egypt got involved in UAR, unity talks with Iraq, military involvement in Yemen, support to Arab liberation movements and the Palestine cause and emerged as spokesman of Arab nationalism. All this put him on a course of collusion with Saudi Arabia and other conservative Arab states. At the regional level Egypt came into conflict with Israel and internationally with the USA. The 1967 war gave a blow to Nasser's Pan-Arab policy and impetus to Egyptian nationalism. It was against this backdrop that Sadat came to power.

Sadat and Egyptianism

Nasser's acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 242, the Rogers plan and other steps had indirectly imposed many

constraints on Egyptian diplomacy. Sadat realized the constraints under which Egypt had to move. In his perception Egypt's economic crisis posed a strong challenge to the stability of his regime. He very early concluded that Egypt could not pursue several costly national goals like engaging in a struggle for leadership of the Arab world and at the same time, a costly armed struggle with Israel.

In this connection, on February 4, 1971 Sadat astonished the world by his first peace initiative. In a speech to the People's Assembly, he proposed the re-opening of Suez Canal provided Israel withdrew its forces in Sinai to the Passes. He promised to extend the ceasefire by six months instead of three. This was linked to Israel's readiness to implement UN Resolution 242. Moreover, he agreed to sign a peace agreement with Israel, through Dr. Jarring. He also agreed to restore diplomatic ties with US because of his conviction that US support is essential for an acceptable peace settlement in view of its influence over Israel.21

Through this peace initiative Sadat conceded one major point which Nasser had consistently refused - readiness to enter into a peace agreement with Israel. This was a bold and courageous but totally unexpected step. But Sadat had already alerted his countrymen when he said "... I have enough courage, when my country's interests so warrant, to come to tell you openly that I am going to do so and so."22


Sadat in an interview with Newsweek also said "if Israel returns our land under the Security Council Resolution 242, the inviolability and political independence of every state in the area including Israel (would be guaranteed) and we pledge our solemn word on this." Sadat also agreed to the presence of the Big Four Powers' troops in Sinai because of his desire to "facilitate a durable settlement". He said Nasser was opposed to this idea because the people "would not like it". "But I will take that risk. And after that, if world opinion does not understand our attitude we can then say we have done our best. It could not be our responsibility if the Israelis refuse the guarantees that are being offered." 23

Sadat was thus prepared to offer more than what Nasser did to Israel. In fact, Sadat's proposals were for an interim peace accord with Israel. Although at this stage he was not delinking the Egyptian problems from the over-all Palestine issue, Sadat was prepared for the first step in Sinai, towards an eventual Israeli withdrawal, thus indicating his priority.

Israel refused in principle to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. Sadat was disappointed by this negative Israeli reaction, but the Arab world sighed a relief over Israel's response and also the Palestinians who were naturally disturbed over Sadat's peace moves. To placate them Sadat allowed the PLO to re-open the Voice of Palestine on March 3, 1971. Thus, Sadat went further

than Nasser or any Arab leader towards peace with Israel and at the same time took steps to neutralize Arab opposition. In this connection, his decision to make Egypt a member of the Federation of Arab Republics comprising Libya and Syria was clearly a step to win Arab support. Sadat in effect was carrying on a two-pronged policy which seemed disparate and even contradictory. At home, Ali Sabri and others attacked Sadat for his peace initiative which led to their dismissal in May 1971. Also, most of Nasser's supporters were purged from ASU and government.

His peace proposal undoubtedly was a clear signal that he placed primary emphasis on Egyptian affairs than on Pan-Arab issues. In one of his early speeches Sadat spoke of Egypt's contribution to the Palestine cause in contrast to what other Arabs have done. He said:

I am proud of Egypt's role in this accomplishment (Palestinian issue) for which we have been striving materially and morally, while others have contented themselves with slogans and allegations that embarrass friends, all right but do not defeat enemies.24

In a move designed to show where the new Egyptian leader's priorities lay, Sadat decreed that from September 1st 1971, Egypt would be called "The Arab Republic of Egypt" and not the UAR - a designation that Egypt had continued to use despite Syria's secession in 1961. Sadat changed the flag and national anthem, as well. In the former national anthem emphasis was laid on Pan-

Arabism but now it was on Egypt. The slow but subtle changes in Egypt's Pan-Arab policy began to attract criticism from within Egypt and the Arab world. Of course Sadat denied any deviation in Egypt's Arab policy. According to Sadat the change to new name does not signify that we have returned to isolationism, or that I am calling for isolationism. No, we have reverted to "Arab Egypt" only following the bitter struggle, during which we have carried with dignity and loyalty the heavy burden of UAR, its standard, its symbols and slogans ... We are going back to "Arab Egypt" stronger than we were at U.A.R.\textsuperscript{25}

Sadat also realized the important role US could play in a peaceful settlement. In fact after the visit to Egypt by US Secretary of State William Rogers, in May 1971 Sadat became optimistic about the role of US in getting the Egyptian territories back from Israel. In a message to President Nixon, Sadat expressed his desire to end the conflict with Israel and concentrate on Egypt's development. He recorded: "I told him (Nixon) that I was a person interested in building my country, in developing and entering the technological era, jointly with everyone else in the world."\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 103; Undoubtedly the change from UAR to ARE showed Sadat's concern for a distinctly Egyptian nationalism. It clearly showed his revulsion to Pan-Arabism which under Nasser had become a source of disunity because no successful experiment in unification of Arab states (except for a brief period with Syria) had been brought and which had led to a weakening of Egyptian nationalism over the years. See Felipe Fernandez Armesto, \textit{Sadat and his Statecraft} (London: 1983), p. 76.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, p. 233.
Some progress in his search for peace, although inconsequential, was made but this process was shattered by Egypt's conclusion of a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in 1971. The Americans became extremely suspicious of Sadat's double dealings. Sadat was in fact disappointed by Israeli negative response and Washington's vacillating attitude to his peace moves. He was also under increasing pressure from home to break the dangerous stalemate of 'no war no peace'. In a series of articles appearing in *Rose al Yussef*, Abdul Rahman el Sharkawy, novelist and social commentator, cogently expressed the Egyptian position and the rationale for war: "Stagnation can spell more danger to life and the future than anything else. The rigid situation being imposed on us is an intolerable burden on our national pride. This state of affairs also exhausts efforts, funds and potential beyond endurance and patience. There is no course other than the battle and, in this battle there can be no alternative to victory".27

In this backdrop, Sadat declared 1971 to be the "year of decision". In his Revolution Day speech on July 23, 1971 he declared that 1971 "would not end without the conflict with Israel being settled", either by peace or by war, even if the latter should cost the lives of "a million martyrs".28 He also said, "I say that this year must witness and will witness with God's

will, our practical movement towards removing the traces of the aggres­sion ... Otherwise we would permit the crisis to freeze.29 But 1971 passed without anything happening on the peace front with Israel.

Sadat had now embarked on a policy which was unequivocally a military one. He laid emphasis on Egyptian nationalism in order to prepare the people for the coming battle.30 Evidently, he set about planning with Israel. His emphasis on Egyptian nationalism was a clear sign of his disbelief in the Pan-Arab character of the coming battle.31

Sadat's main aim now was to get adequate quantities of arms from the USSR and also its political support in his battle against Israel. The removal of Ali Sabri, his intervention in Sudan on behalf of Numeiry, close ties with Libya and Saudi Arabia and covert ties with the US and his determination to follow an independent policy all brought complications in Sadat's ties with the Soviets. But the most crucial reason which strained Sadat's ties with the USSR was the growing detente between US and the USSR. All these reasons, apart from Sadat's numerous anti-Soviet steps, pursuaded the Soviets not to deliver the offensive arms to Egypt which they promised to Sadat. He was greatly disappointed by Soviet reluctance to supply the necessary weapons to Egypt. The result was Sadat's decision to expel the Soviet advisors in July 1972.

Although, Sadat was telling his people about the coming battle with Israel, there was growing desperation among the people. He encountered tremendous popular resentment and opposition to his silence and apparent inaction over the 'no war no peace' situation. Student unrest again broke out and Sadat's pacifist initiatives came under increasing attacks. Sadat recognized the growing disaffection among the students.32

31. Ibid., p. 265.
Like the 1968 student demonstrations the 1972 demonstrations were also without doubt an "authentic expression of Egyptian patriotism, spontaneous largely classless, directed neither by right or left". The students talked of "Sweet Egypt" and "Beloved Egypt". Their heroes were men like Ahmad Orabi Pasha and Saad Zaghlul, leaders of the nationalist struggle against British. 33

**The role of intellectuals in spearheading Egypt First Policy**

The student demands were generally supported by intellectuals and other sections of the society. Sharkawy of Rose el Yussef sided with the students. He identified "the demands of the student movement ... with the demands of the nation, as well as its desires". 34 Mohammed Sid Ahmad, Louis Awad, Tewfik al-Hakim, Hussein Fawzi, N euqib Mahfouz, Ahmad Bahaeddin and other prominent intellectuals supported the student demands. All these writers belonged to a group which strongly advocated an Egypt-first policy and criticised Egypt's Pan-Arabism. Louis Awad prepared a draft declaration to be signed by the above five writers to be published in Al-Ahram. It read "The student movement is basically a national movement of whose integrity there is no doubt. It was born for Egypt and aims only to free Egypt from Israeli occupation and to demand the whole of Egypt should prepare for the decisive confrontation with the Israeli enemy". The declaration ended thus:

Long Live Egypt, freed from usurpers!
Long Live the unity of high and low for the liberation of Egypt!
Long Live the great Egyptian nation!35

Sadat was disturbed at the growing challenge to his authority by the student movement blessed by leading intellectuals. He came down heavily on the writers for encouraging defeatist tendencies among students. He said:

To my mind, the top task of our writers is to warn against the build-up of Israeli military might (on one hand) and against casting doubts on Arab potential (on the other). What I fear most is that the conquest of our land might be supplemented by the conquest of our souls and minds by the enemy.36

To neutralize this threat to his legitimacy Sadat again resorted to the familiar theme of Egyptian nationalism, the need to close ranks and strengthen the domestic front and major cracks were visible from these challenges and turmoil. He pointed out:

... I may elect for our pure blood to flow on the battle field, rather than to preserve an illusory life of capitulation under 'no war no peace' conditions in which we are bound to spill our blood drop by drop, day after day ... All this means that the main burden will have to be carried, more than at any time before, by our national front ... Now more than ever before, our domestic front becomes the cornerstone - stone of liberation, for Egyptian nationalism will have to play the major role in liberation.37

37. Sadat's speech at the opening session of the National Convention of ASU held in Nasser Hall at Cairo University, MENA and Radio Cairo, July 24, 1972, Ibid, p. 240. Emphasis added.
Besides, protests from the students, the intellectuals also criticized Sadat's 'no war no peace' policy. In early 1973 Tewfik al Hakim, heading the writers union brought out a declaration which led to confrontation between Sadat and leading Egyptian intellectuals. The statement attacked Sadat for using the pretext of war to suppress students and intellectuals' freedom, and called for expression of free public opinions. They also pleaded the case of the students, pointing out that these young men could look forward to being drafted into the army for an unknown number of years to prepare for a battle which seemed to be growing more and more elusive. They said that preparation for the battle was proving an enormous drain on Egypt's resources, human and financial, and that therefore it might be worthwhile, to explore the possibility for a peaceful rather than a military solution.

In fact this stand was taken by Tewfik al Hakim, Neguib Fawzi Mahfuz and Hussein as early as in April 1972 when Al Ahram had sponsored a symposium whose central topics were Islam and Palestine. The Egyptians were shocked to learn that Al Ahram had published the comments of the participants (including Libya's Qadhafi) only on Islam while ignoring the views expressed on Palestine. According to the Egyptian critic and scholar Ghali Shukri, the reason for this "news blackout" was the stance taken in the symposium by the three

38. For full text see Shukri n. 34, pp.135-7; "The Writers group has arrived at the conclusion that its duty is to strew roses for Sadat on the road to negotiations with Israel". Amos Elon, Flight into Egypt, (New York: 1981), pp. 104-5.
writers; they had emphasized that the only solution to the
Palestinian problem was peace with Israel.\(^39\) Dr. Abdel Khader
Hatem, Minister for Information and culture asked for a meeting
with three signatories to this statement, namely Tewfik al Hakim,
Naguib Mahfuz and Tharwat Abaza. In the discussion, when asked
about "the nature of the battle which Egypt sees as necessary"
Dr. Hatem's answer astonishingly was the same as Sadat's following
the October war. He said:

The battle would in fact amount to no more
than a skirmish aimed at drawing the attention
of the world to the explosive situation in the
area and so stimulate international pressure
for a peaceful solution. He said that the
settlement which Egypt was willing to accept
would not necessarily be an immediate and complete
withdrawal within the framework of an overall
solution.\(^40\)

Sadat was angry with the writers who had urged a compromise
with Israel. He accused Tewfik al Hakim personally of defeatism
and of writing "with black hatred in his heart". Sadat said it was
tragic that a man whom Egypt had raised so high should have sunk so
low.\(^41\) The Disciplinary Committee of the A.S.U. issued three
lists of deviationists who had strayed from their basic duties as
active members of the ASU. They included writers, journalists,
engineers, doctors, artists and other literary and intellectual

39. Reven Snir, "Two Egyptian writers in the Service of Peace",

40. Mohamed Heikal, Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat

41. Ibid, p. 47; Raphael Israeli, "Sadat between Arabism and
Africanism", Middle East Review, vol. 11, no.2, December 1976,
p.60-9.
figures. Notable among the 111 listed were: Dr. Louis Awad, Mohammed Auda, Yussef Idris, Ahmad Bahaeddin, .... Surprisingly the list did not include Tewfik al Hakim and Neguib Mahfuz. Those listed were all dismissed from their jobs in government media. Sadat accused Heikal of being the brain behind the writers statement and soon a "McCarthy-like campaign was unleashed against the editor-in-chief of Al-Ahram and against Tewfik al Hakim, whom some people accused of communism." Dr. Hatem ordered radio and television to boycott their works, not even to mention their names. For in Sadat's opinion "if Israel had paid millions of pounds, it would not have been able to perform more than Egyptian pens ... Beware the Jews don't take part of your brain as they have taken part of your land."43

The bold stand taken by Tewfik al Hakim prompted Sadat to invite the writer (who was of international reputation) in order to neutralize the growing criticism of his inaction and inept policies. Heikal acted as a mediator between Sadat and Hakim. On March 22, 1973, Al Ahram reproduced on its front page a large photograph of Sadat greeting Tewfik al Hakim.44 Shortly after this meeting with Sadat, Hakim published a book called Awdat al wai "The Return of Consciousness" This meeting was a turning point in Egyptian intellectual history as Sadat was able to convince Hakim of his anxiousness to solve Egypt's problems. In fact, soon after the meeting with Dr. Hatem on January 11, 1973, Hakim sent a letter to Sadat through Heikal in which he ended like this "I assure you Mr. President, of our confidence in your ardent nationalism, with which we have long been acquainted and our consciousness of your great love for Egypt and of the struggle which

42. Shukri, n. 34, pp. 138-9.
43. Hirst, n. 33, p. 149; Sadat is reported to have attacked the "defeatist" poets and novelists as "men of little faith who would like to recognise the facts (Israel)", Elon, n. 38, p. 103.
44. Shukri, n. 34, p. 140.
you have made on her behalf all through your life." Hakim's book strongly criticised Nasser's policies. His attack was focused primarily against Nasser's Pan-Arab adventures and his lack of concentration for Egyptian affairs. Hakim - the greatest play-writer of modern Egypt is not only known for his international reputation but is influential in shaping the mode of public opinion in Egypt. He was known as a liberal and his views were taken with seriousness both by the government and other intellectuals. For these very reasons, his attack on Nasser's policies stimulated intellectual legitimacy for Sadat's regime in its criticism of Nasser's policies. Sadat's rapprochement with the doyen of Egyptian writers opened the floodgates of criticism of Nasser and all he stood for. Sadat later awarded Tewfik al-Hakim, Egypt's highest civilian honour, the Nile Collar.

Meanwhile, the situation was getting worse due to the rapid progress towards Super Power detente. Sadat concluded that in the interest of detente the Soviets would weaken their commitment to Egypt.

The October War and Egyptianism

Sadat now opted for a limited war, or a "skirmish" as Dr. Hatem put it, for three reasons:

1) Growing unrest at home and hence growing challenge to the legitimacy of his regime.

46. Israeli, n. 22, p. 388.
47. Ibid, p. 248.
48. Sadat told Heikal later: "whatever happens now, I have done my duty. If we are defeated in the Canal crossing, well, that's our fate. But the nation won't be able to blame me. We have to defend the honour of Egypt, whatever the cost, even if crossing the Suez Canal costs us twenty thousand casualties." Heikal, n. 40, p. 50.
2) Growing detente between the Super Powers; and
3) Mounting economic cost of keeping the military and nation mobilized for war with Israel.

All this coupled with Israeli arrogance in setting up more Jewish settlements in occupied Arab lands drove Sadat towards war. Moreover, Sadat concluded that if no move is made to unfreeze the situation Israel might present the Arabs with a fait accompli. Sadat said:

... If we are unable to attain a solution ... the problem would remain pending throughout 1973 and 1974 exactly as Israel and the Americans wish ... (I reasoned) that this period might even last longer, over many years and Israel's occupation of the East side of the Canal and the rest of the Arab territories, would become a fait accompli. And then, after 25 years, or even 10 or 15, similarly to what had happened in Europe we would be facing a fait-accompli. Something of this sort took place in Europe with the agreements that were signed recently, the Oder - Neisse borders and the Berlin Agreement, which have legitimized the fait accompli under the weight of 25 years. This is what the Israelis are striving for, as Dayan's recent statement has made clear. He said that a period of 10-15 years is needed to solve the problem, so that he could impose the fait-accompli.49

Sadat enlisted the support of Syria and launched a war on October 6, 1973. Egypt was able to cross the Suez Canal with few casualties and destroyed the Bar Lev line and occupied the East Bank of the Canal. This initial victory was neutralized by an Israeli counter-crossing to the West Bank of Canal. Towards the end of the war the Egyptian armies which had crossed the Canal were virtually surrounded by the Israelis. The initial victory

49. Israeli, n. 22, p. 137.
"I can tell you frankly that with all my appreciation to what our Arab brothers have given us, I did not receive enough to meet (our) needs". In late February 1976 Sadat visited many Gulf countries and called for an "Arab Marshall Plan" to rebuild Egypt. Both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait agreed on emergency aid and more significantly on the establishment of an Arab fund to support the Egyptian economy: the Gulf Organization for the Development of Egypt (GODE). GODE was to finance new investments and offer easy loans to meet Egypt's debt repayments. Actually the whole contribution by GODE went for balance of payments support and for the restructuring of Egypt's debt. From 1973 to 1978 the total of gifts, loans and credits from Arab sources amounted to $17 billion. The Arabs wanted their money to be invested in productive fields but instead Egypt diverted it into current state expenditures. In fact this led to disputes between Egypt and OAPEC as the Egyptians actually built few of the proposed capital projects for which they sought funds.

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50. Israeli, n. 9, p. 750.
51. Hirst, n. 31, pp. 235-6; Sadat said "we have to build up a new personality, whether or not the sums (of Arab aid) are paid to us. If they are not, we shall have to find proper solutions all the same". Israeli, n. 23, p. 1345; Baker, n. 1, p. 145; Gouda Abdel Khalek, "Foreign Economic Aid and Income Distribution", in Gouda Abdel Khalek and Robert Tingor, eds, The Political Economy of Income Distribution in Egypt (New York: 1982) p. 443 and 445. According to Sheehan, Sadat despite his stature as a world statesman, knew little of managing an economy and parts of his government were dank with corruption. The Saudis upon whom Sadat was so dependent kept him on a short leash and made him beg each time he needed money. Shortly before King Faisal was assassinated in March 1975, he visited Egypt. Sadat's exchequer was almost barren and he could not repay his short-term borrowings of Euro dollars. The King wrote out a cheque for $125 million, but then it went untouched for weeks; since Sadat was above details and none of his subordinates had authority to cash it. Edward R.F. Sheehan, The Arabs Israelis and Kissinger: A Secret History of American Diplomacy in the Middle East (New York: 1976), (New York: 1976), pp. 194-6. By the end of 1974 Kuwait had given Egypt $818 million and Saudi Arabia $616 million and between 1973 and 1978 $7 billion.
Cairo by US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Rapprochement between Egypt and the US was quick with Egypt restoring its diplomatic ties with the US on November 7, 1973. Soon Kissinger, with Sadat's active cooperation, worked out an Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement on January 18, 1973. Sinai-I was denounced by most Arabs as a step towards separate peace with Israel and its logical outcome was seen would ultimately be a bilateral peace between Egypt and Israel under US auspices.

Sadat discovered a change in US approach towards the AIC and believed that Egypt needs the Western, particularly US, diplomatic and economic help to resolve Egypt's enormous problems accumulating since Nasser's period. Although Nasser wanted comprehensive peace with Israel on his own terms and his strategy would have been different from Sadat but the later was not averse to accepting a partial peace settlement and a return of the occupied Arab lands seized by Israel in stages as obvious when he accepted the Sinai-I. He in fact indicated as early as in 1971 that he was prepared to accept partial and separate steps under American auspices towards the ultimate goal of comprehensive peace. The October war enabled Sadat to pursue his peace policy towards Israel with boldness and authority. He could offer concessions to Israel after a fairly successful war. In Al-Ahram, Ahmed Bahaeddin explained:

Before the war the Arabs had no cards to play in negotiations ... they had only their memoranda and talk of legitimate rights, things that have no weight in international life. They were not fighting, moreover, it had become fixed in the world's mind that they would never fight. They talked of using oil as a weapon, but it was unconvincing. And their differences seemed more important than their shared interests. After the war all that changed.52

With the conclusion of Sinai-I, leaving aside its war partner Syria, Sadat in effect seemed to be pursuing an 'Egypt-first' policy disregarding its Pan-Arab commitments. He appeared to be reiterating the view expressed before the war that "any struggle I am engaging is solely for Egypt's interests". After Sinai-I Sadat urged the Arab oil states to lift the oil embargo even before an agreement on the Syrian front and so in March 1974 it was lifted. Sadat through this act, believed that the US would pressure Israel for a quick withdrawal and work for early resolution of conflict.

In a far reaching move Sadat very shrewdly manoeuvred at the Rabat Arab Summit in 1974 to make the PLO "the sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinians, thus putting an "end to the Arab tutelage over the Palestinians". Sadat in many speeches pointed out that the Palestine question had become too complicated and that it cannot be resolved quickly in one generation. Sadat wanted the PLO to work for its interests, because around this time the PLO had scored great diplomatic successes. Arafat was invited to address the UN General Assembly and PLO got an observer's seat at UN. In fact, more countries now recognized PLO than Israel. In other words, Sadat wanted the PLO to speak and work independently for the Palestinians and reduce the burden for Egypt. It also indicated that Egypt would be free to chalk out its own strategy for peace independently.

In May 1974 Sadat presented to the nation a National Charter, called the "October Working Paper" - the first concrete programme

55. Israeli, n. 22, p. 1036.
56. Ibid. pp. 1128-9; see also Egypt and the Palestine Question, 1948-80 (Cairo: 1980).
Sadat spoke of the need to build a new Egypt capable of shouldering its responsibilities in the post-October environment. "When we speak of new responsibilities in our lives after October, we should record that we have a rich experience behind us". The October war was projected by Sadat as the answer by the Egyptians, with the economic help of Arab states, to change the status quo Israel had imposed after the 1967 war. The point which Sadat highlighted in the paper was "Egyptian Patriotism" (al wataniyya al Misriyya).

With the October Paper Sadat resumed the process of dialogue and debate which had been first started in August 1973 on a nationwide scale. After the war the atmosphere was much more free and the press was given a fair degree of freedom. This open discussion - which involved Egyptian politicians and intellectuals - was seen by some observers as an indirect attack on the policies pursued by Nasser. One of the theme was that Egypt had given everything to the Arabs but received nothing in return.

**Sadat Attacks Nasser's Pan-Arab Policy**

The October war provided Sadat with enough legitimacy to shape the future course of Egypt under his leadership. Even though he was in power since October 1970 Sadat had lacked the legitimacy and popularity which Nasser had enjoyed. Sadat acknowledged Nasser's Arab appeal and his own inability to move and excite Arab masses. Nasser could make the Arab masses weep and laugh from the Atlantic to the Gulf. Even though Sadat had been lauded by the Egyptian media

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as "Hero of the crossing" he lacked the magnetic pull and appeal of his predecessor. Sadat simply was too small for that feat. In fact Sadat was realistic in this regard. The result was his concentration on Egypt where he calculated he could win more acclaim and admiration and to which Nasser had not paid enough attention, in his quest for an active pan-Arab policy. Sadat wrote that the achievements of July revolution under Nasser's period "either vanished altogether or turned into cold reality, deprived of all glory. The revolution was reduced to a huge, dark and terrible pit, inspiring fear and hatred but allowing no escape." Thus, Sadat highlighted the repressive nature of Nasser's rule which had left a bitter legacy.

The Debate among intellectuals

Egyptian intellectuals and journalists followed the cue from Sadat and the result was a number of books and thousands of articles in newspapers assessing the Nasser period. It produced massive material which startled the Egyptians. Hakim now openly called for a critical review of the entire Nasserist experiences. "The dossier (on the Nasser years)", wrote Hakim, "must be opened".

59. Ajami, n. 18, p. 94.
61. Baker, n. 13, p. 239.
62. Quoted in John Waterbury, "The Opening, Part III: De-Nasserization, American Universities Field Staff Reports, North East Africa Series, vol. 20, no. 4, 197, p. 3"
Hakim's book "Awadat al wai" (The Return of Consciousness) brought out before the October war now attracted wide attention and became a subject of hot discussion and was debated at many forums. It became a public sensation in Egypt. He came out with an impassioned condemnation of Nasser. In his view the entire Nasserist experiment becomes a moment of madness, a leader mesmerizes an entire nation, "expropriates its mind, creates fake victories, and wastes the bread of a poor society in pursuit of a Pan-Arabist image". Hakim was convinced that the 1952 coup d'état did not become a revolution, and denounced Nasser's dictatorship, his personality cult, arbitrary measures, the wastage of scarce resources, the futile wars with Israel, unnecessary military intervention in Yemen that had ruined Egypt and left it in a state "impossible any longer to bear". In Hakim's view with billions squandered on wars and foreign intrigues every one of Egypt's four thousand villages could have been rebuilt and brought up to the level of villages in Europe.

Hakim accuses Nasser with a lack of pragmatism and the cause lies in Nasser's personality - which was romantic, artistic and emotional character. To Hakim Nasser's character was not of a realistic, deliberate and political nature, like Nehru and Tito's - and so politics was not Nasser's cup of tea. He accused Nasser of being caught by events to the degree that he lost all room to maneuver. Thus, Nasser's policies were a set of responses. He also took Nasser to task for presiding over an undemocratic and repressive

64. Elon, n. 38, pp. 100, 103-104, 163; Auda, n. 57, pp. 83-89.
political system silencing debate and discussion so essential for progress. In this perception, Nasser became a symbol of defeat instead of becoming a fulfillment of a prophecy.

A former English literature Professor at Cairo University - Dr. Louis Awad - also joined the fray like Hakim. He was Al Ahram's literary critic and a leftist Coptic Christian. Dr. Awad wrote a famous book called "The Evolution of the Egyptian Thought", an excellent book tracing the various phases of Egypt's historical thought. More recently in 1975 he brought out another book called "The Seven Masks of Nasserism". This is a detailed but critical assessment of Nasser period. He takes exceptions to Nasser's penchant for unity schemes with the Arab states. He says "We are part of this Arab sea, but we have an identity of our own". He believes in Egypt's uniqueness as a civilization. To him Egypt should look not only east to Syria and Iraq, but north to Europe, and aspire to be a Mediterranean country. As early as in 1969 Dr. Awad had written:

Egypt resembles an iceberg only one eighth is above sea level. Seven eighths are submerged in the depths. One eighth of our lives takes place in the light of the twentieth century, seven eights in medieval darkness ... In the nineteenth century we went through pangs of birth ... but (the renaissance) was still born, and when another embryo was formed in the womb, it was aborted.65

Another interesting book published during this period is When the Guns Fall Silent, (1975) by Mohammed Sid Ahmed. In his book he

called for a policy of detente between Egypt and Israel similar to the Super Power detente. Peaceful co-existence to him was the only alternative between Egypt and Israel. He supports peace as a "mathematician" not a moralist. "The time has come to contemplate what until now we have not dared to contemplate, "detente (and peace) with Israel". He is critical of the Arabs. "We still live by the logic of tribal society". 66

Neguib Mahfouz is another important Egyptian writer who advocated an Egypt first policy. Like Hakim, he is also critical of Nasser's policies. In his book "The Man Who Lost His Shadow Twice", Mahfouz bitterly attacked Nasser's secret police. In his play Child of Pain (1970) he described the bourgeois period in Modern Egyptian History under the monarchy as an experiment that ended in still birth, and the Nasser revolution as the cause of a terrible blood bath. One of Mahfouz's characters in his famous novel Al Karnak observed, "I thought that Egypt's history began on the 23rd of July, it was only after the al-Naksa (the June 1967 setback) that I began to look for what preceded it ... I will not hide from you that I admired the resilience of the opposition and its freedom, the role that the Egyptian Judiciary played during that period. The old regime was not totally worthless, it had many intellectual elements that deserved to continue and flourish. The negation of these elements was a factor in our setback." 67

67. Neguib Mahfouz, Al Karnak (Cairo: 1974), p. 57; This novel it should be noted was written in 1971 cited in Ajami, n. 18, p. 97.
Mahfouz had played a crucial role in the 1972 student movement and the subsequent call for a realistic peace. In an interview to a Kuwaiti paper in 1975, he said peace and the building of civilization were more important than the liberation of occupied land. "We sacrifice humans and send them to die in wars. Why then do we not sacrifice land, if that sacrifice is necessary towards an even greater aim?"

Asked if he had any new vision of Egypt's problems, he said bluntly, "I have no new vision. All I know is that we must make peace .... Kallas! (enough !) let us make peace with Israel". He also said "The revolution has ruined us and we must make peace with Israel." 68

Finally he said:

With all my strength I urge that we balance our budget, starting with defence, that we forge a natural union with the Sudan and that we abandon the Arabs if they have decided to abandon us. 69

When Neguib Mahfouz publicly stated that he was ready to sacrifice land for the sake of civilization, he was viciously attacked in the Arab press ("Mahfouz sells out the Palestinians"). But in that same statement he made it very clear that by "sacrifice" he meant only those parts of Arab Palestine, as he called it, which

68. Elon, n. 38, p. 102 & 104.
were Israel proper, not those occupied in 1967 war. He was for a compromise not capitulation. 70 Two conservative editors of the popular weekly Al-Musawwar - Fikri Abaza and Salah Jawdat - wrote some of the most rabidly anti-Nasser articles. In one such article Salah Jawdat attacked Nasser and all he stood for. The following quotation reveals the intensity of bitterness of the open debate that raged. With heavy irony Salah opens:

The facade was magnificent, destroying capitalism feudalism and exploitation, fighting imperialism, strengthening the army, justice for the workers and peasants, achieving social justice generally, industrializing the country, and uniting the Arab nation from the Ocean to the Gulf. It was a brilliant facade which dazzled us .... 71

Al Akhbar, Akhbar al Youm, Akher Saa and Al Musawwar played a key role in highlighting the negative aspects of Nasser period.

Mustapha Amin's The First Year in Prison published in Cairo (1974) was perhaps the most critical of Nasser. Amin was pardoned by Sadat after having served nine years in prison on charges of spying for the US. Amin gave chilling details of torture methods to which he and others were subjected. His brother Aly Amin, was appointed as editor in Chief of Al Ahram replacing Heikal. Subsequently they were appointed as editor of Al Akhbar and Akhbar al Youm newspapers by Sadat which the Amin brothers had established in 1944.

The proliferation of books and articles on the Nasser period led one writer to say "the publication of revisionist exposes on the Nasser era reached a crescendo in 1975". 72 It was

70. Elon, n. 38, p. 134.
71. Ibid, p. 162.
at the height of this anti-Nasser campaign that Heikal was removed as editor of *Al Ahram*. Not only was Heikal a defender of Nasser and all he stood for, but he roundly criticised Sadat's acceptance of step-by-step diplomacy saying he saw no change in US policy towards Arabs. Sadat may have believed that Heikal would be a great stumbling block to his peace policy towards Israel under US auspices.

**Renewed Emphasis on Egyptian Nationalism**

Sadat now assumed that he enjoyed the necessary legitimacy to launch the peace process. But he was rudely awakened by massive strikes by students and workers on New Years day 1975. The workers demanded better pay and working conditions as Sadat's *infitah* policy had led to a rise in inflation, widened the rich-poor gap and had generated widespread social conflict. Although he had enlisted US mediation to resolve the AIC, by early 1975 very little progress had been made in that direction. The Watergate crisis which led to Nixon's resignation came as a set back to Sadat, who had placed high hopes on the US President for an early Israeli withdrawal. Sadat's strained relations with Moscow led to a weakening of Egypt's military capability and the 'no war no peace' stalemate began to haunt Sadat once again. Kissinger in March 1975 tried for yet another partial agreement between Egypt and Israel but failed because Israel demanded non-belligerency from Egypt which Sadat refused. This was a set back for Sadat who was further disturbed over the assassination of King Feisal - his strongest Arab supporter - in the same month.
After the failure of Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy in March 1975 due to Israeli intransigence Sadat who had insisted that the Suez Canal would remain closed until Israeli total withdrawal from Sinai, suddenly decided to re-open the Canal on June 5, 1975. He said: "Some expected me to react emotionally and keep the Suez Canal closed, but I shall do exactly the opposite". He also said, "re-opening the canal is a purely Egyptian problem. Clearing the canal and reconstructing the canal cities hinges solely upon decisions relating to Egypt's sovereignty and nothing else." This was Sadat's first concession to Israel's demand for a non-belligerency agreement. He finally agreed to Sinai-II in September 1975 virtually giving non-belligerency to Israel.

But Sadat denied that Sinai-II was a partial peace agreement and pointed out to his critics that if he wanted a separate peace long ago he would have concluded such and avoided so much pain, agony and misery for his people. He said, "had Egypt disregarded her duties and roles in the Arab world and had she considered her own interests, as divorced from her pan-Arab commitments, she would have had no problems now". Further in an interview to Al Anwar, Sadat denied that it was a partial settlement and highlighted the enormous sacrifices of the Egyptians to the Arab cause.

Sadat dismissed Arab and Palestinian criticism as "artificial storm" and "will soon recede". "Their ammunition is mere talk while ours of which we have plenty, is a step by step action", Sadat explained to his Arab adversaries. Sadat pointed out that Arab criticism will not deter him from his chosen path. Sadat took great pride in his success both in war and diplomacy. He was convinced that his

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74. Sadat in an interview to Bassam Fariha, the Chief Editor of Al Anwar & Al Sayyad, (Beirut) Al Anwar, June 22, 1975, Israeli vol. 3, no. 22, p. 924.
75. Ibid, p. 923.
76. Sadat in an address to the ASU leadership on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Ramadan War, Ibid, p. 1035. Sadat claimed that he had a lesson to teach his critics in "the science of diplomacy", namely, the reversal of a bargaining chip; the closed Canal had served in the past as a lever to make the world more responsive to Arab interests, now world interests hinged on the reopened canal. Raphael Israeli, Man of Defiance (London: p. 155.
77. Ibid.
peace policy was correct and that Arab criticism was uncalled for. 78

He compared Arab criticism to Sinai-II to the universal condemnation of Nasser's acceptance of the Roger's Plan. He pointed out that Nasser's decision represented the view of a majority of Egyptian masses. 79 As Sadat came under heavy fire from the radical Arabs for his yet another separate agreement he sought refuge under Egyptianism. As his position came to be challenged and questioned in the Arab world by his critics even more harshly, he sought to strengthen his image and refurbish with a renewed emphasis on Egyptian nationalism, on Egyptian sacrifices, about the ungrateful Arabs, about the need to concentrate on Egyptian problem and to ignore outside criticism which was threatening to undermine his regime from within. Sadat quickly realized this and worked hard to make his base firm and stable enough to withstand Arab attacks. It would be erroneous to assume that Sadat was acting on his own, a solitary individual who did not represent widely shared Egyptian thinking and that this decision to give up war and conclude peace did not enjoy widespread backing. It would indeed be correct to say that he appeared to have understood the Egyptian yearning for peace and normalcy. Egyptians had been fed by Nasser with many promises which remained unfulfilled. Now, they were willing to give Sadat a chance to redeem his pledge to return to peace, prosperity and above all the Egyptian desire to come back to normalcy and lead their quiet lives which had been upset by successive wars and unprecedented chaos.

One could discern a progressive "Egypt-first" policy being pursued by Sadat since he came to power more so after Sinai-II he


79. Ibid, p. 945-6. It is not difficult to discern contradictions between Sadat's public statements and what he actually accepted as for instance in Sinai-II. Sadat called his Arab critics "pygmies", "dwarfs", and "psychopaths".
emphasized on numerous occasions that he is an "Egyptian
nationalist" who is determined to solve "Egypt's problems",
even if it hurts the other Arabs and leads to an isolation
of Egypt. Thus, Egyptian nationalism was played up at the
expense of Arab nationalism.

The "Egypt-first" mood was best reflected in two
billboards: one at Cairo Radio station showed a woman
symbolising "Mother Egypt" and proclaimed "Egypt first". The other, at an army camp near Alexandria, said, "Egypt
first, Second and Last". Compared to Nasser it was Sadat
who articulated the "Egypt first" policy most effectively. Some have attributed the progressive Egyptian disengagement
under Sadat from Pan-Arabism and more emphasis on Egyptian
nationalism to Sadat's and his supporters' class background
and the constituency for which he spoke. To them this trend
has its socio-economic and political underpinnings.

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82. Israeli, n. 22, p. 1055. The Government controlled media
did everything possible to highlight Egypt's sacrifices
for the Palestine cause, and attacked the Arab millionaires,
Palestinians and Syrins who profited from the conflict. A
political and intellectual climate was prepared for an
"Egypt first" attitude as a prelude to the separation of
Egypt from its Arab environment. Sadat after the October
war reoriented Egypt's alliance system and set out to
extricate Egypt from pan-Arabism and to emphasize on "Egypt
first" approach.
The Arab Economic Factor

Sadat's decision to place primary emphasis on Egypt and attempting to promote Egyptian, rather than Pan-Arab interests was, in part due to the dramatic increase in oil price in 1973-74 that caused a fundamental shift of power and influence in the Arab World. At the same time as the financial power of Saudi Arabia was achieving first rank status, Egypt's need for financial aid became more desperate because Egypt's oil and food bill skyrocketed. A combination of these two factors fundamentally changed the Egyptian Pan-Arab policy from one of seeking dominance to one seeking help and support. Thus, Sadat could no longer hope to stamp Egypt's mark so dominantly on the Pan-Arab movement because of the emergence of oil rich Arab states and instead had to focus his attention on Egypt and its development. Thus, detente at the international level and the rise of OAPEC power at the regional level reduced the scope for Sadat and the room for manoeuver he had was much less than his predecessor. Thus, these factors also encouraged the Egypt first policy pursued by Sadat.83

Sadat was clearly not satisfied with the quantum of aid given by oil rich Arab states. In fact, Egypt's share was a paltry sum from what the OAPEC earned. In the words of Fouad Ajami: "The average citizen in Cairo ... knew about the ways of the wealthy (Arabs), knew that they had become a separate breed. Egypt's poverty at the height of Arab wealth epitomized the limits and, for many

the selfishness of Arab wealth".84

For Sadat it was most humiliating to beg from oil rich Arab countries in order to keep the Egyptian economy from collapse. Sadat expressed this feeling in numerous speeches. That Sadat had to go public to express his resentment over lack of Arab aid was a clear indication of the mood of the ordinary Egyptians. He said: "... I can tell you frankly that with all my appreciation to what our Arab brothers have given us, I did not receive enough to meet these needs ..."85

Sadat and many Egyptians believed that it was due to Egyptian sacrifice, efforts and blood that the other Arabs became rich, wealthy and influential. Common Egyptians viewed the vulgar enjoyment by Arabs as distasteful and themselves poor they thought that it was their own sweat, blood and hard labour which had made the oil Arabs rich. More and more Egyptians became convinced that after the war Egypt was not given its due share and that the harvest had gone elsewhere. Great hopes generated great expectations and as time passed despair set in motion. In his perceptive analysis Fouad Ajami has very succinctly pointed out the real concern of the Egyptians in these words:

Arab wealth challenged Egypt’s sense of self: Possessed by arriviste bedouins, it underlined the cruelty of a world that had gone awry. The imagined prosperity of yesterday had vanished, the change was not the fault of the Egyptian state, The reasons had to do with the costly wars waged by Egypt on behalf of the Arab states.86

A close scrutiny of Sadat’s speeches after the October war reveals a neat pattern in which Sadat was reminding the

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84. Ajami, n. 18, p. 130.
86. Ibid, p. 106.
Egyptians that they had shouldered more than their fair share of the collective burden, that the maintenance of a vast army was a drain on the resources of a country whose poverty and overpopu-
lation far exceeded those of any other Arab country, that the attempt to unify the Arab world under Egyptian leadership had brought little but jealousy, intrigue and ingratitude. According to Ajami "whatever his faults and shortcomings as a political operator, Sadat fully grasped Egypt's mind and fully exploited it. The weak country, its compromised capital, and patient, obedient peasantry would no longer fight and bleed for others. They had other options. Such at any rate, was the President's gamble and choice." It would not be out of place if a couple of speeches are dissected to confirm this view.

At a press conference in Kuwait Sadat answered his critics who attacked his separate peace policy. He said:

For the past 27 years, we devoted our blood, money and wealth and we have become one of the poorest countries, after we had been one of the richest. We do not resent these accusations, for we are happy of our national and historical obligations ... we share the same destiny, and we shall pursue this road of hardships and difficulties ... we have to desist from these marginal battles which have no justification whatsoever.

After pointing out Egypt's Arab commitments Sadat talks about Egypt's advance and progress.


... She has carried out her part of the Arab terrible war-experience with loyalty. She has clung to her mission despite the heavy blows she was dealt, and she never despaired or retreated. Today she is taking up her destiny and advancing. Sure of herself, of her nation, of her principles...89

Sadat in an interview to Al Siyyasa of Kuwait reminded the Arabs of Egypt's sacrifices in the wars with Israel and of their obligations towards Egypt. He said:

The Arab oil countries are under the obligation to provide aid, because we have borne the burden of four wars against Israel in the past 25 years at an estimated cost of 40 billion US dollars.90

Many Egyptian newspapers highlighted the sacrifices made by Egypt on the Arabs' behalf. Al Ahram for example made a calculation according to which since 1967 the Egyptian war expenditure had costed 16 billion Egyptian Pounds. Whereas the Arab contribution had been a paltry sum of 1.69 billion LE. No one put the matter of Arab aid to Egypt more pointedly than the Marxist writer Lutfi al Kholi, who calculated the balance of what he called petro dollars and petro-blood: "Every drop of blood split in the Sinai, on the Golan and in Palestine has been translated into an increase in the price of oil." In his accounting, mainly due to the military


sacrifices of Egypt and Syria, oil rich Arab states are earning a million dollars every seven minutes. The petro dollars and petro blood accounts must be brought to balance, he contended.\textsuperscript{91}

It was not only Sadat who attacked the Arabs for being ungrateful and resenting their imposition of views on Egypt's policies, the Egyptian newspapers also to a great extent reflected the mood of Sadat and a great majority of Egyptians who although they agreed in principle with Sadat's objective of peace, but who disliked his flamboyant style and the extremism of his method. \textit{Akhbar al Yaum} demanded in this language as to what the Arabs ultimate aim was in attacking Egypt and its policies.

What do our detractors want, do they want the Egyptian people \textellipsis to impoverish themselves even more, that the peasants and workers should be deprived of their most elementary need just so that those who throw stones at us can sit in their cafes, ply us with wise counsols and draw up our battle plans for us? Let those who wish to fight come to Sinai, bring their arms and their men with them. Egypt will welcome them.\textsuperscript{92}

Rose el Youssef asked

after more than a quarter century of Egypt's leadership of the Arab nationalist movement -- who would have imagined that there would come a day when the Egyptian people returned to those bewildering questions: are they an Arab people or an Egyptian one only? And if they are an Arab people, why do the other Arab peoples treat them as if they were Egyptian only? And if our people are Egyptian only, why do they accept their responsibility as an Arab people? And if they


accept their responsibility as an Arab people, why don't the other Arab peoples acknowledge the Arab character of the battle? And if the other Arab peoples don't acknowledge the Arab character of the battle, why don't the Egyptian people acknowledge only its Egyptian character -- and accept a unilateral solution?93

That Sadat no longer aspired to stamp Egypt's mark so dominantly on the pan-Arab movement as Nasser did in 50's and 60's became apparent during the 1975-76 Lebanese civil war, when the other Arab states asked Egypt to send troops as part of a deterrent force to help bring order in that hopeless and chaotic country. Sadat rejected Arab request and instead volunteered to send weapons.94

Sadat's Road to Jerusalem

Sadat on several occasions had revealed his ideas/views on Israel and had called for recognition of reality but until late 1976 was hesitant and treaded a slow course not to offend the Arabs and risk a complete break. Two factors pushed Sadat towards greater accommodation towards Israel. Firstly, the slow

93. Ibid, p. 252.

94. Israeli; n. 22, p. 1376. He said "... I am prepared to provide such a force with all its needs and weapons, but do not ask me for troops ... Ask other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Tunisia, and any other country and we shall supply to them and to Sarkis all the weapons they need". Ibid.
progress towards peace since Sinai-II. Secondly, the January 1977 food riots which compelled Sadat to seriously search for peace.

The election of President Carter and his emphasis from the very outset on a comprehensive peace coupled with favourable statements on the Palestinian question raised Sadat’s hope for an early settlement with Israel. But the election of Likud party under Begin to power in Israel in May, 1977 and its open refusal to withdraw from Arab lands upset Sadat’s plans. Moreover, due to the Israeli refusal to sit with PLO, and Syria’s hardline policy and Carter’s insistence on Arab consensus, the Geneva Peace Conference had become a non-starter. The Super Power Joint Statement of October 1st 1977 and Carter’s retreat subsequently from this statement under Israeli pressure had virtually buried GPC. Moreover, due to his strained ties with Moscow, the military balance of power had drastically changed in favour of Israel and Sadat may have feared a pre-emptive strike from Israel. All these factors together with his liking for dramatizing the issues, Sadat visited Jerusalem in November 1977. It appears Sadat believed that Israel would reciprocate with an equal grand gesture in terms of Israeli withdrawal. Obviously the Arab countries launched a fierce attack against Sadat for his yet another go-it-alone step which undermined all previous Arab resolutions on a united approach towards Israel.

Compared to the vehement denunciation of Sadat’s peace initiative in the Arab world, the Egyptians welcomed Sadat’s visit
to Jerusalem. The Egyptian masses were genuinely yearning for peace after 30 years of confrontation involving four major wars in which unprecedented sacrifices were made by them which had resulted in decline in standard of living and led to poverty. Besides this natural desire for peace and hence their hope for a better future and economic progress and prosperity, Sadat had shrewdly prepared the ground for his peace initiative. Since the October war he had been consistently reminding Egyptians of the huge sacrifices Egypt had made for the Palestine cause. Through the mass media which is virtually under state control the Egyptian people had been told to expect a better future once peace is established with Israel. Sadat exploited that deepening strain of Egyptian nationalism which necessarily took an anti-Arab form. 95

Sadat's task was made all the more simple because among the population with a high illiteracy rate he encountered little resistance to his peace policy. He had not only blamed the Palestine cause as being responsible for Egypt's poverty and backwardness or the entire economic difficulties which Egypt was undergoing he now held the view that the Arabs and PLO by attacking him are actually aiming at further depriving the Egyptians of the fruits of peace. Sadat was proud of saying that he never consulted any Arab leader. He only consulted his foreign minister Ismail Fahmy who not only opposed and denounced it but resigned in protest. The Deputy foreign Minister Mohammed Riad also resigned in protest. Sadat was not deterred by this resignation nor the violent Arab opposition. According to Walid Kazziha:

Sadat did not misjudge the reaction of his people. The grounds were already prepared for taking such a step without provoking any significant hostility. By the time, Sadat returned from his trip, the Egyptian street, almost to a man, was in support of his action. The country appeared as if it had resigned its right to decide on a major national issue to one man. 96

Sadat despite his rousing welcome by the Egyptians always feared that the Pan-Arab sentiments, and groups belonging to this ideology may undermine his peace initiative, launched a vigorous media campaign with the slogan "Egypt first, Egypt always". The main theme was that the Egyptians had made enormous sacrifices for the Pan-Arab causes and for the Palestine issue over the last 30 years. These sacrifices, the argument continued were only met with criticism by countries like Iraq, Syria, Libya, South Yemen, Algeria and the PLO who have contributed in a meagre way to the struggle compared to Egypt. Sadat now told the Egyptians that they would have to muster some more courage and have patience till 1980 when he said Egypt would produce sufficient food for all at reasonable prices and that their difficulties would end soon. 97

The Prime Minister and other ministers followed Sadat in the campaign. The Prime Minister Mamduh Salem affirmed that the government would be able to cope with all the problems that have accumulated as a result of its wars with Israel which had been a heavy drain on the nation's scarce resources and which had hampered individual initiative. He said Sadat's peace initiative "was

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96. Kazziha, n. 8, p. 102-3.

intended to bring such a just peace to the area as would further development and put a limit on military spending and loss of life. We are all working for Egypt to make up for lost time and the world is extending assistance for the accomplishment of the development projects".98

After Sadat's visit to Jerusalem not only the Egyptian masses came out in his support but most of the better informed in the society also came to approve of Sadat's peace policy. According to Kazziha, "some hailed Sadat as the maker of peace and recorded an endless list of benefits which they imagined Egypt was about to enjoy".99 In an empirical survey of a sample of students drawn from the westernized, higher section of the elites on whom Sadat came to rely for his support, respondents orientation towards the Arab-Islamic world was weak. Although a high percentage of them believed Egypt to be part of the Arab-world, few thought of her in chiefly Arab-Islamic terms, while a majority subordinated her Arab identity to a distinctive Egyptian 'Pharaonic' or even "Mediterranean" identity. Majority of them saw themselves as "Egyptian" and only few as Arabs. Many Egyptians with European ancestry preferred a "Pharaonic" identity for Egypt. "The lukewarm Arabism of the group seems quite compatible with the disengagement from Pan-Arabism and inter-Arab entanglements pursued by Sadat".100 In the field of foreign

policy most of the respondents supported Sadat's approach but with qualifications. Most interesting feature was few wanted to prolong the Arab-Israeli conflict: only 7.9% rejected the idea of peace with Israel; only about one in five were prepared to take risks for the Palestinian cause; only one in ten opposed Sadat's trip to Jerusalem and most believed that Egypt should rely on Americans in the search for peace with Israel. On the other hand, responses suggested considerable unease over the particular strategy pursued by Sadat to reach a peace settlement, a significant 31.5 had misgivings over Sadat's trip to Jerusalem; less than a third favored a separate peace; only 27.5% accepted the claim that only psychological barriers separated Egyptians and Israelis; only 23.9% believed Egypt could do without the Arabs; and only a quarter rejected the suggestion that Sadat should coordinate his negotiations strategy more with the other Arab states. At the global level less than a quarter blamed Sadat for the break with Moscow; less than 4% favoured a pro-Soviet policy and a majority favoured non-alignment and only 3.6% of the respondents favoured Sadat's strongly pro-US policy.

As for Sadat's own standing, a majority of 59.6% gave Sadat very good or good marks as President and only 12.8% poor marks. When asked to rank ten Egyptian leaders in order of their esteem for them, respondents ranked Sadat third, behind Saad Zaghulul and Mustafa Kamil. A majority of 54.5% thought Nasser had achieved some important advances for Egypt and agreed that his excessive ambitions had exceeded her capabilities. Only 8.2% thought he was a great leader and 37.3% believed he ruined Egypt.101

Response from Intellectuals

How did the majority of Egyptian thinkers and intellectuals view Sadat's peace policy. Their views usually tended to reinforce those which were highlighted by the official sources. In fact most leading intellectuals expressed themselves "in the same manner as did the apologists for the regime and government officials. Their starting point was to claim that the initiative was based on a realistic reading of the international and regional political situations". 102

Tewfik al Hakim strongly defended and supported Sadat's peace initiative in the French press while on a visit to Paris in December 1977. Hakim had always held that the Palestinian question could be solved only through direct dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israelis. "For the intermediaries always think of their own interests and selfish ends". He explained that his strong support for Sadat's peace initiative stems from his strong belief that it is the right way to a solution of the complex issue of just peace in the area. To him Sadat's initiative is based on a realistic and logical basis after having rejected the complex of imaginary leadership and rhetoric championship. Hakim appealed to Sadat to end "Egypt's mortgage" which began since 1948. The leaders from King Farouk have mortgaged Egypt its present and future, in return for a case themselves refuse to solve and left Egypt pay for the mortgage instalments with the blood of its own sons in continuous wars. He said:

I wish President Sadat would not hesitate with all the restrictive and obstructionist rifts round him, to advance with his usual courage and break the mortgage. Many people will follow suit and generous Egypt will not hesitate then to extend a helping hand to every sister country to secure an equally just peace. 103

Hakim's strong support to Sadat led to his name being blacklisted by a Palestinian organization, involved in the assassination of Yussef Sebai, editor of Al Ahram in 1978. Said Hakim "I could have opted out of these exhausting fights. But I have quarreled for years, with strangers and with friends. Otherwise I would not have been myself". 104

Neguib Mahfouz is another important Egyptian writer who supported Sadat's peace initiative. After the peace treaty was signed with Israel, Mahfouz said: "It is a good feeling for a writer to know that he was somewhat ahead of the politicians and perhaps even influenced them a little". 105 Mahfouz has no hesitations

103. Al Ahram, December 20, 1977, p. 3; Al Ahram January 29, 1977; Hirst, n. 27, p. 252; Al Ahram, March 3, 1978; for full text of Hakim's article, see Saaded din Ibrahim, ed.; Urubat Misr, Hawar al Sabanat (Egypt's Arabism: Dialogue in the Seventies) (Cairo: Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, 1978); p. 109. For Hakim's other articles on this issue see pp. 111-3, 117-8; 123-4 and 128-9; For response by other Egyptian intellectuals like Dr. Abdel Azim Ramadan, Dr. Yusuf Idris, Dr. Ibrahim ali Salah, Mohamed Ahmed Faragali, Dr. Milad Hanna and Bint al es Shatai, see Ibid, pp. 110-128. Hakim in Al Ahram argued that "Egypt will not have peace of mind, will not have stability and will not be able to feed its hungry except through one path ... neutrality". 3 March 1978. See also Ibrahim Karawan", Egypt and the Western Alliance: The Politics of Westomania in Steven Spiegal, ed., The Middle East and the Western Alliance (London: 1982) pp. 163-81.


regarding the peace with Israel: "I am among the supporters of peace and those who preach in its favor; peace is one of the names of the Lord may he be blessed; peace is a goal and purpose, and it is a gift from God which we must use as a guiding light".106

Dr. Hussein Fawzi, a prominent Egyptian writer fervently supported Sadat's accommodation with Israel. Although Mahfouz, Yussef Idris and many other renowned Egyptian writers refused to visit Israel, Dr. Fawzi visited Israel and took part in seminars and meetings. He is one of the staunchest supporters of peace with Israel. He became the first Egyptian writer who called for a two-way exchange of books, scholars and other intellectual exchanges. Fawzi says, "They (the Israelis) read our books because they want to live with us" and urged the Egyptians to do likewise.107

Dr. Yussef Idris another famous novelist who like Hakim supported Sadat's peace initiative and declared:

I support Sadat's Egyptian, popular and peaceful initiative, a stand which may not be understood by our Arab brethren ... we in Egypt do not have the means of rejection or war. Rejection requires a strong economy which would enable you to say 'no' without dying of hunger, or prostituting your women and daughters for a handful of bread.108

106. Reuen Snir, n. 39, p. 44.


Although he advocated an end to the runious wars with Israel, Dr. Idris attacked Sadat's separate peace agreement. According to him the peace treaty led to the "Israelization of Egypt. (Because) instead of one beleaguered ghetto in the the Middle East, we now have two, Israel and Egypt". Unlike Dr. Fawzi, Idris has refused to visit Israel. He says "No, I can't go. Not until you (Israelis) bring justice to the Palestinian people". When he was reminded that Sadat went to Israel, Dr. Idris replied "of course, Sadat doesn't have to ask anybody. He is a dictator. But I am a writer. Don't you see? A writer stands for reelection every day of the year. I can't go to Israel just like that. I must be able to take my readers with me. And they won't go as long as you rule over a million Palestinians against their will".109

Dr. Louis Awad, a former University Professor, journalist and an outstanding coptic thinker, in an article entitled 'A Left-Wing vision concerning the Peace initiative' rationalised his endorsement of Sadat's move by using the argument of the impossible. He claimed that a radical solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict could only be achieved through armed struggle. He asserted, however, that such a course of action would have necessarily led to the Vietnamisation of the region. But in view of the fact that none of the Arab regimes, including Egypt, were ready to take a risk of that kind, then the only option open to them was to adopt peaceful means. Thus, the political solution was given priority over the military one. In other words, since it was impossible in Awad's perception, for the area to take a radical Vietnam-like solution, Sadat, "therefore, had no alternative but to take the

other extreme step, of going to Israel, hat in hand, ready to recognise Israel thereby hoping to get the occupied lands back."

Tahseen Basheer is another important figure who supported Sadat's peace policy and called for an Egypt first policy. He worked in the Foreign Ministry, later became official spokesman for Sadat and served as Ambassador to Arab League and Canada. He studied in the US. Basheer is a diplomat, scholar litterateur. In Basheer's perception Egyptian intellectuals played a significant part in moulding the people's attitude towards Israel from a confrontationist stand towards accommodation and peaceful co-existence. He says Egyptians had become war weary particularly due to military conscription. This was especially true among students who tried to escape from draft and it revealed the depth of resentment against compulsory military training and prolonged wars. Most of the Egyptians became convinced that war is futile particularly when US remained the backbone of Israel. Many Egyptians felt that the Arabs want to fight to the last Egyptian. In Basheer's view Sadat realized that Arabs are more interested in keeping their money in US banks than genuinely helping Egypt's problems. He believes that the role of Egypt is to give a model to the Arabs and if a policy of moderation succeeds then peace will be more durable.

Fikry Makram Ebeid, one of the top leaders in the National Democratic Party founded by Sadat, said that wars with Israel cost 58 billion dollars and with that money every single village in Egypt

110. Kazziha, n. 8, p. 104.

could have been reconstructed. He stressed "We love the Palesti-
nians but what are they really doing for themselves? What are  
the other Arabs ready to do for them. Of the one hundred and sixty  
seven thousand Palestinians who have died in the wars, one hundred  
seven thousand Palestinians were killed by Arabs in Jordan or Lebanon  
(by Syria)". \(^{112}\)

Sadat by visiting Jerusalem and working to end armed  
confrontation with Israel he was not leading but following a substan-
tial majority of Egyptian people. He was accommodating the common  
man, weary of war and sacrifice. More significantly he was responding  
to the calls by leading intellectuals and literary figures for an  
end to long wars. According to Prof. Bernard Lewis, Sadat "gave  
expression to a desire which had existed and had been gaining in  
strength for a long time. To this policy he himself was a compara-
tively late convert". \(^{113}\)

Among the other Egyptian writers who advocated an Egypt-
first policy were Dr. Hussein Mounis, Mahmud Abdel Moneim, Zaki  
Nequib Mahmud, Gamal Hamdan, Dr. Nemat Ahmed Fouod and others. All  
these writers extensively wrote in the newspapers, magazines and  
appeared on TV and radio besides their books and participating in  
lectures, seminars and discussions highlighting an Egypt-first  
policy.

As the Israeli position hardened on the question of full  
Israeli withdrawal Sadat was under growing domestic pressure from

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\(^{112}\) Ibid, p. 133; K. Zuhayri, "Another view of Arabism of Egypt",  

\(^{113}\) Ibid, p. 133 and 170; Also Zaki Saleh, Misr Wa Masalaata al  
Qawmiyya (Bahar fi Urubat Misr) Egypt and the National  
Problem: Discussion of Egypt's Arabism (Cairo: 1983).
the Egyptian people. He told the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Siyashah that his people were putting pressure on him "to proceed in a way that will guarantee Egypt's regional interests while ignoring the Arab cause". Moreover in the Peoples Assembly, an important supporter of Sadat told the Egyptian foreign minister Muhammed Ibrahim Kamel that "if you don't get Arab support for Egypt's efforts for a comprehensive settlement come to us in Parliament and we are prepared to give you a mandate to conclude a separate peace with Israel". 114

Sadat by visiting Jerusalem had set in motion a process which neither he, nor the Arabs could stop as he was trying to catch up with the Egyptians themselves. He pointed out that his people's yearning for peace is much greater.

There are some who blame me for my thundering initiative; why? Because normally in politics some one rides on a horse and expects the others to follow him. But I am riding a rocket. And all the Knights of politics are panting behind me.

They beg me for an opportunity to get their breath back. But I know that my Egyptian people are out ahead of me ... Indeed, it is they who are urging me onwards, faster and faster. The world sees me racing and can't catch up with them.

Our people repeat five words that mean everything: let's have done with it: 115

The assassination of Yussef Sebai, Chief Editor of Al Ahram and former Minister of Culture and Information in Nicosia provoked

114. October Magazine (Cairo), December 11, 1977; Hirst, n. 33, p. 289.

unprecedented feelings of hate against the Palestinians. Egypt blamed the PLO for the murder. This incident had a deep impact on the Egyptian masses against the Palestinians and the government controlled media made best use of it towards its strategy to emphasize the Egypt first policy. Most newspapers and magazines carried on for a long time articles, editorials and interviews against the Palestinians and on the wider issue of Arab opposition to Sadat's peace policy. It must be pointed out that Sebai had very strongly supported Sadat's peace initiative and had gone to Jerusalem along with Sadat.

By now neither Sadat nor the Egyptians were devoid of Arab sentiments but after the Sebai incident the Egyptian public opinion certainly became "Egypt first" and "Arab second". The intense media campaign since the October war which emphasized the sacrifices made by the Egyptians for the Palestine cause had resulted in the waning of support to the PLO. The Sebai incident increased support to Sadat's peace policy of reconciliation with Israel. According to Saad eddin Ibrahim by 1978 only 18 per cent of Egyptians supported the PLO strategy of armed confrontation supportive of Sadat's approach. Sadat who had bitterly attacked Arafat for joining hands with the rejectionists now appeared to drop the PLO completely and in fact the Palestinian cause now occupied less of a priority for Sadat. PLO's attacks against Israelis in March 1978 was branded as "Palestinian terrorism" aimed at Sadat's peace policy. Sadat promptly broke once again with the Arab world in a public denunciation of the Palestinian attack on Israeli civilians. Soon the Israelis launched a massive invasion and occupied Southern Lebanon. According to Kamel, Sadat was in fact pleased over the Israeli response. Kamel was astonished to hear Sadat saying "Did the Israelis teach them (Palestinians) a lesson."

Despite Israeli invasion of Lebanon Sadat went ahead in his peace drive and finally signed the Camp David accords in September 1978 and later the bilateral peace treaty with Israel in March 1979. With this "Egypt's revolt against Arabism" under Sadat was complete. This led to Egypt's boycott by most Arab countries and as its isolation mounted, Sadat and the official media again emphasized Egyptian nationalism or "Egypt first" policy.


*Compared to 55 percent in 1974, while 77 percent were