

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S

~~TOP SECRET~~

To : The Secretary

From: NEA - Alfred L. Atherton  
INR - Harold H. Saunders

Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: 17 NOV 2003

AR 70-14 HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

Analysis of Arab-Israeli Developments  
No. 296, November 20, 1977

Reaction in the Arab world to Sadat's visit generally continues to be hostile. Iraq, Libya and the Rejectionist Palestinians appear to be promoting much of the anti-Sadat actions throughout the world which include:

- anti-Egyptian demonstrations in Tunis, Beirut, Baghdad, Algiers, Bucharest, Dacca, Karachi, New Delhi, London, Paris, Bonn, Madrid, and the sacking and burning of the Egyptian Embassy in Tripoli;
- massive demonstrations occurring in Lebanon, Iraq, and Libya;
- the unprecedented cancelling of official ceremonies marking the Muslim holy day celebration in Iraq;
- the breaking of diplomatic relations with Egypt by Qadhafi and the reported withdrawal of 15,000 Libyans from Egypt.

Most other Arab opinion also appeared to be against the visit, but attacks were not directed against Sadat personally. These remarks generally worried about the effect on Arab unity, the appearance of capitulating to the Israelis and the negative impact on the peace process. Along these lines, Arafat said that the Egyptian President's action is serious and could harm the Palestinian and Arab struggle. The Palestinian leader, however, has carefully avoided personally criticizing Sadat.

~~TOP SECRET/E~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 2 -

Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: AA-70-14 HCD  
13 NOV 2013

[REDACTED]

The Syrian government continues to be highly critical of Sadat's trip. Yesterday was called a day of mourning and for five minutes all activity in Damascus ceased. Nevertheless, the Assad regime has not let these criticisms go beyond certain limits. They have emphasized that their opposition to Sadat's trip is not personal and by no means diminishes Damascus' commitment to peace and a Geneva

[REDACTED]

Sadat has gained some Arab support. Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan and Oman have come out in favor of the trip. The Persian Gulf states have yet to comment. This appears due to their inability to be out in front of the Saudis on inter-Arab matters. The Jordanians, while mildly critical of the trip, warned the other Arabs to be "very careful" in their reactions so as not to impinge on Arab solidarity. Surprisingly, the respected Kuwaiti newspaper al-Siyasiah declared that Sadat's step is in harmony with the declared Arab stand: Those who criticize him are the ones in the next war "who would be prepared to sacrifice the Egyptian soldiers down to the last man."

Sadat still has wide support in Egypt for his trip. Millions of Egyptians crowded around television sets to watch his arrival. Coptic and Muslim religious leaders have supported him. Each Minister, including Gamasy, have declared the trip a very useful endeavor. This is an obvious move to counter the impression of dissension within the Cabinet created by the Fahmy resignation. Labor and political leaders have also publicly and enthusiastically endorsed the visit. Opposition has been confined to Fahmy, the few leftist members of Parliament, and a very few university students.

~~TOP SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 3 -

Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency

Date: HOD AR 10-14

11/13/13

In Europe and Africa, most governments and newspapers have been favorably disposed to the visit. Many governments, such as the Italian, Dutch, Danish, Belgian, Liberian and others, have openly encouraged Sadat. Nevertheless, a majority of states appear timid in their approach. The Germans, Swedes, and French, for instance, would not openly support Sadat. Moreover, according to Brussels radio, France blocked a positive statement from the EC-9.

Soviet media treatment of Sadat's visit continued to focus on the negative reactions in the Arab world. Prominent play and implicit support has been given to Syrian, Algerian, PLO and other hardline Arab remarks and to the protest demonstrations in various world capitals. At the same time, there has been no mention of positive world views, and a TASS report on preparations for Sadat's arrival negatively stressed the extraordinary security precautions and alleged that sweeping arrests had been made by Israeli security of "Arab activists."

Moreover, the relative circumspection of Soviet commentary seems to be giving way to more direct criticism of Sadat and his initiative. Moscow Radio commentator Timoshkin yesterday charged that Sadat's foreign and domestic policies were harmful to Egypt and that Sadat's trip was a sign of his weakness, not strength. The editorial went on to assert that the trip was a "concession" to Israel "harmful to the cause of all Arab peoples." A second-ranking Soviet journal, Rural Life, added the charge that Sadat was seeking a separate peace with Israel, evidence of longstanding Soviet fears that they will ultimately be excluded from the peace process.

In Israel, the excitement over Sadat's arrival has been coupled with hopes that the dialogue begun by Begin and Sadat will continue. Embassy Tel Aviv noted that a return invitation for Begin to visit Cairo is being taken for granted by most political observers. Moreover, now that Sadat has broken the ice, a visit by Jordan's King Hussein is seen as feasible. (We note, however, that Hussein does not consider it viable to get out in front of the bulk of the Arab states, and in particular would not want to undertake an initiative the Syrians consider anathema.)

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 4 -

Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: AK 70-14, HCD  
11/13/13

Sadat's visit has also engendered an uncommon unanimity among Israel's various political factions, with the exception of the Communist Rakah Party. Labor Party head Peres disclosed in a radio interview that his speech to the Knesset will note the basic unity of the opposition and the government on reaching peace and stress the usefulness of direct talks with the Arabs. Thus far, there have been none of the recent opposition charges that Begin's foreign policy is not in keeping with Israel's past attitudes and practice.

The question of an appropriate Israeli response to Sadat's bold move has received increasing attention among Israel's political leaders, with most seeming to favor a significant gesture. Dovish DMC leader Amnon Rubenstein informed Embassy Tel Aviv that he had attempted, in a recent private conversation, to impress on Begin the need for Israel to rise to the occasion with a concrete concession on Israel's part. Similarly, Rabin told the press that he favored Israel's making Sadat "an offer he cannot refuse."

Begin, however, has given no indication of what gesture, if any, he is prepared to make. Rubenstein observed that Begin had been non-committal to his appeal, and the Prime Minister cautiously avoided a question in this regard during an airport interview just prior to Sadat's arrival. Begin, however, has a flair for the dramatic and, at the same time, is not inclined to give advanced hints of his thinking.

Possibly suggestive of the line Begin could take, if he so chooses, were Dayan's remarks to ABC news, in which he pointed out that Begin had recently told the Knesset that, if Sadat wishes to propose a Palestinian state, Begin would be prepared to discuss it with "no preconditions." Dayan said that this sounded as if, from Begin's standpoint, "Sadat would be free to put that on the agenda to be discussed." This would, we note, both be compatible with Israel's professed willingness to discuss any issue relating to the peace process and be a seemingly -- from the Arab perspective -- significant concession.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 5 -

Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency

Date: 1100 13 NOV 13

AR 70-14

Sadat and Begin held a short, private meeting yesterday evening soon after their arrival in Jerusalem, according to press reports. Jerusalem Radio, citing sources close to Begin and Sadat, said the two men had established an immediate rapport. The broadcast gave no details of the substance of the meeting, but noted that the Israeli Cabinet would convene this morning to discuss the "political content" of the visit.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency

Date: 13 NOV 19  
HCO AR 70-14

~~TOP SECRET~~

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Arab-Israeli:

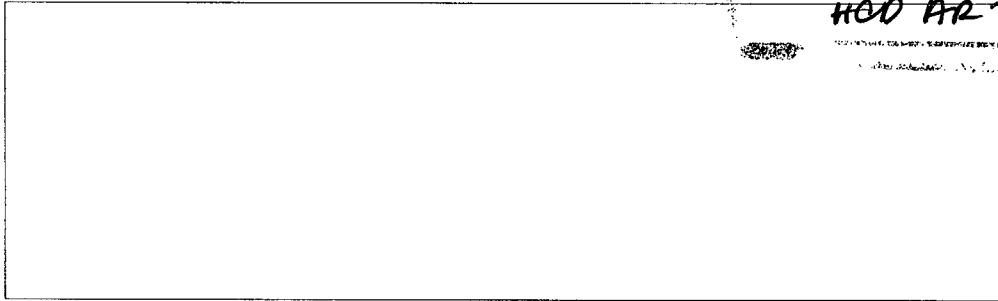
- Sadat Trip: Press reports from Israel have suggested that Sadat may extend his stay in Israel until Tuesday, in order to hold more extensive talks with Begin.
- Sadat-Palestinian Terrorism: [redacted] Palestinian terrorist organizations are likely to make an immediate effort to stage spectacular raids in an attempt to torpedo Sadat's visit to Israel. Although difficulties might arise due to the short notice, the service noted that some terrorist groups have already been planning such actions in preparation for a possible Geneva conference. Libya and Iraq are expected to support such actions.
- Fahmy-Sadat: In a conversation with Ambassador Eilts yesterday morning, Sadat was bitter over Fahmy's resignation. He stated that Fahmy had "betrayed" him and that he seems to have "joined Heikal," a critic of Sadat. A presidential aide told Ambassador Eilts that Sadat had refused to receive a call from Fahmy Friday. Meanwhile, the current Egyptian ambassador to London, Samih Anwar, appears to be the front runner to receive Fahmy's vacated post.
- Gush Emunim-Settlement Plans: The chief of the Gush Emunim's political department, Gershon Shofat, informed our Jerusalem Consulate General that the Gush will continue to press Begin's government to allow settlement of four remaining West Bank sites not previously approved. These are: Shiloh (north of Ramallah), Haris (west of Nablus), Tirza (east of Nablus), and Jericho. No other sites, however, will be targeted. Instead, efforts will be concentrated on developing existing settlements.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

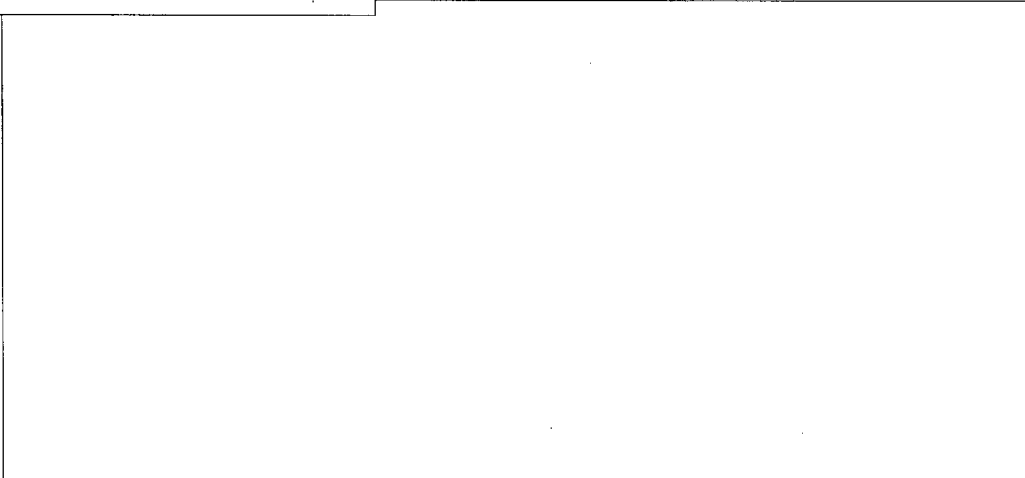
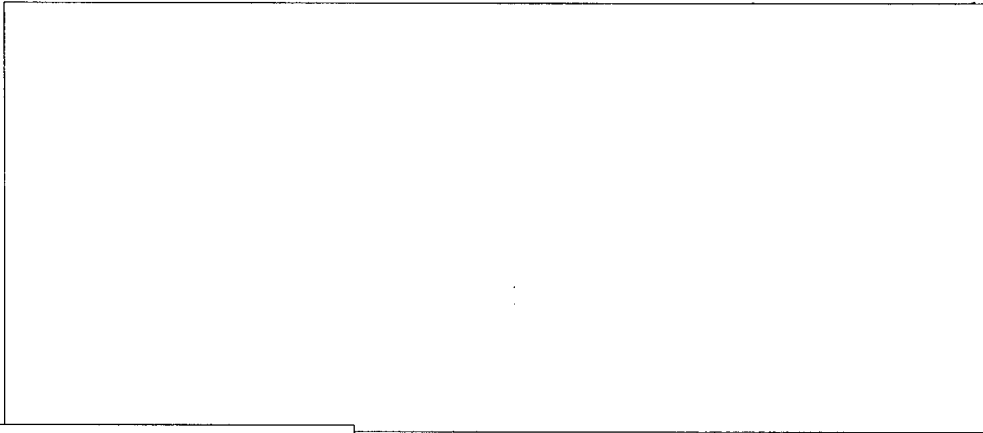
Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: 13 NOV 13

HOOD AR 70-14



Palestinians:

--Palestine Central Council (PCC): PNC Chairman Fahum announced yesterday, according to Reuter, that the PCC would hold an emergency meeting November 24 to discuss the outcome of Sadat's trip to Israel. Ways of "countering its consequences" will be the primary topic of discussion, Fahum stated.



~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

Approved for Release  
by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: 13 NOV 13

1100 AR 70-14

Lebanon:

--Lebanese Army-Syria: Lebanese Army commander Khoury reported to our Beirut Defense Attache that the Syrians had refused a request for radios and artillery ammunition for the Lebanese Army force to be dispatched to south Lebanon. Khoury regards this turndown as an indication of a lack of Syrian support for deployment of the Lebanese Army to the south and an indication that the Syrians want to see the Army rebuilt slowly so they can maintain the dominant presence in Lebanon.

~~TOP SECRET~~