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DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE COLL WASHINGTON DC J J CREIGHTON  
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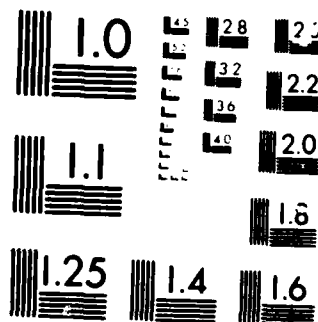
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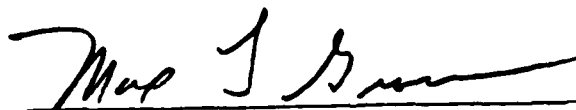
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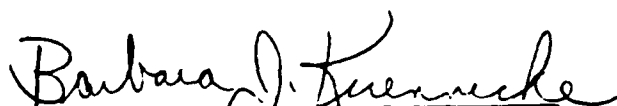
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**EGYPT'S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

by

**JOHN J. CREIGHTON**

GS-12, Department of the Army

Special Seminar Paper submitted to the Faculty of the Defense  
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## INTRODUCTION

The recent peace initiative of President Hussein of Jordan, actively supported by President Mubarak of Egypt, offers the strongest attempt to date to revive the dynamic Middle East Peace Process. Although the prospect for peace is nowhere in sight, this development represents the most significant effort since the 1978 Camp David Accords.

For the first time in many years, all of the key players in the Arab-Israeli conflict are coordinating their efforts in an attempt to revive the peace process.<sup>1</sup> This may seem like nothing new, yet interviews with the key personalities involved shows a real underlying interest in a framework for negotiations.<sup>2</sup> The problems associated with achieving this framework are many, and they will be mentioned throughout this paper. It will suffice here to say that a major problem seems to lay with the Arabs themselves. They are rarely ever in harmony. Their peace initiatives tend to move forward in spurts with each one of them working on a different timetable, agenda and constituency pressure.<sup>3</sup> This frequently results in a process that moves too fast or too slow for one or another of the parties resulting in one group becoming at odds with one of the other groups.<sup>4</sup> In the past, peace talks have been guided by an outside force (usually the United States) but this latest proposal has come from the actual parties to the conflict through their own efforts.<sup>5</sup>



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Egypt, which has always been the key Arab player in the Middle East peace process, maintains a vital role in the process today. In this paper, Egypt's current and historical role in the Middle East peace process will be examined.



## EGYPT, A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The Arab Republic of Egypt (Egypt) occupies an area approximately one million square kilometers. Geographically situated between the Eastern and Western parts of the Arab world, it possesses the Arabs' largest city in Cairo and the largest seaport in Alexandria. Egypt is home to one-third of the world's Arabs and its universities have been among the Arabs' leading educational institutions.<sup>6</sup>

Egyptian boundaries have been established for thousands of years, unlike the boundaries of the other Arab nations which were decided by the old Colonial powers. "Because of its location, Egypt has a special position. This position constantly links it with the surrounding region, and brings it, whether it likes it or not, into the arena of world conflict. Thus, Egypt cannot, even if it wants to, isolate itself."<sup>7</sup> The geographic factor has been the major consideration, historically, for Egypt's decision to pursue active regional policies rather than an isolationist position. Also, Egypt's location has been instrumental in contributing to the belief of the other Arab states that Egypt occupies the role of Arab leader.

Egypt can be divided into four major regions: Nile Valley and Delta, Western Desert, Eastern Desert, and the Sinai Peninsula. Ninety-nine percent of the population live in the Nile Valley and Delta, making this area one of the most densely populated in the world.

Egypt has a population approaching 50 million and a birth rate estimated to be four times that of the other Arab nations. The population growth rate was estimated at 2.76 percent in 1983 but food production increased at only a 2 percent rate. Each year, Egypt must import more food in order to feed its increasing population. The population explosion is considered to be Egypt's most serious social and economic problem.<sup>8</sup>

Much of Egypt's economic decline can be attributed to its 30 years of war with Israel. This is the major reason Egypt is interested in achieving peace in the Middle East. Even though Egypt and Israel have a separate peace treaty, events in the Arab world (because of Egypt's geographic and historical role) tend to affect Egypt itself. Continued tension among Arab states and between the Arab states and Israel could draw Egypt back into conflict with Israel or with its Arab brothers.

The Government of Egypt is based upon the Constitution of 1971 which delegates the majority of power to the President, who dominates a Unicameral legislative body - People's Assembly and Judiciary, although each is constitutionally independent. The President possesses virtually unrestricted power to appoint and dismiss officials, including vice-president or vice-presidents, Prime Minister, and members of the Council of Ministers, military officers, and governors of the twenty-six administrative subdivisions known as governorates.<sup>9</sup>

Under the Egyptian system, most policy, and especially foreign policy, will be determined by President Hosni Mubarak.

## MUBARAK'S LEADERSHIP

Hosni Mubarak became President of Egypt on October 6, 1981. His style of leadership contrasts markedly from that of his predecessor, Anwar Sadat.

Sadat had a "colorful and controversial political background prior to the 1952 revolution. ... His political style was characterized by initiative, surprise moves, unexpectedness and shock treatments; he described it as one of 'electric shocks.' He also personalized his efforts by frequently using the pronoun 'my.'"10

The foreign policy pursued by President Sadat and inherited by Hosni Mubarak was basically as follows:11

1. The restoration, preferably by negotiation, of Egyptian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 (as a consequence, when Sadat's February 1971 peace plan failed, the only option left was war). Subsequently, all Egyptian territory has been returned except Tabah.

2. The termination of war with Israel, as the economic cost had become unbearable. The Camp David Accord and the Treaty of Washington accomplished this.

3. The improvement of relations with Washington, as the United States was the only country that could influence Israel.

4. The rejuvenation and modernization of the economy through the import of modern Western technology and private capital.

5. The modification of Egypt's global and regional policies in order to better pursue these objectives.

"Sadat's decision to seek better relations with the United States was influenced by his mistrust of and political hostility toward the

Soviets and by his belief that the United States would help solve Egypt's pressing economic problems."<sup>12</sup> Sadat's policies differed from those of his predecessor, Abdel Nasser, who basically advocated non-alignment and Arab unity.

President Honsi Mubarak's approach to leadership is the opposite of Anwar Sadat. Mubarak is seen as a cautious man, slow to act, with an obsession for security.<sup>13</sup> "Under President Mubarak, the main thrust of Egypt's foreign policy has been an attempt to rehabilitate the country's position in Arab, African, Islamic, and nonaligned councils without introducing a sudden or major shift in its foreign policy orientation."<sup>14</sup>

Mubarak has basically adhered to most of Sadat's policies, but he has initiated some changes too. He has maintained peace with Israel and also maintained Egypt's special relationship with the United States. Mubarak's changes include stressing Egypt's nonaligned position, allowing increased criticism of American policy in the press, curtailing attacks on the Soviet Union, and achieving progress toward normal relations with the Kremlin.

Regionally, Mubarak condemned the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. He withdrew the Egyptian Ambassador to Israel and has refused to visit Jerusalem. Mubarak has also made good progress toward normalizing relations with most of the Arab nations.<sup>15</sup>

President Mubarak is not completely free in choosing his foreign policy options. There are both internal and external constraints upon his ability and willingness to formulate bold policies.

From the beginning of his presidency, Mubarak has lacked a personal power base. Under President Sadat, Mubarak was active in the political arena because of Sadat's preoccupation with Middle East peace issues. Honsi Mubarak does not have the legitimacy of being a founding father of the 1952 revolution nor does he have a strong base in the Egyptian Army, the largest of the military branches. A long time Nasser confidant explains of Mubarak, "he is the only technocrat-president we have had. ... His experience is that of a pilot, used to depending on indicators and gauges to guide him. ... The trouble with politics is that you sometimes should react to indicators that have no hands."<sup>16</sup>

"Most Egyptian and foreign analysts agree that Mubarak inherited a heavy political legacy from Sadat, who in the last months of his rule alienated almost every segment of society - Moslem fundamentalists, Christian Copts, leftist and rightist politicians, intellectuals and businessmen."<sup>17</sup> It has only been recently that Mubarak has absolved himself from this legacy.

Mubarak's conciliatory approach in domestic politics has resulted in toleration and tacit encouragement of a free press from the left as well as the right. Institutions are now exercising more freedom than

ever before. These new freedoms have also created some problems. The militant Moslem fundamentalists are active again and there are signs that sectarian discord is surfacing.<sup>18</sup> Trotskyites and communists are also becoming active. There is also the threat of Libyan subversion being directed at the Mubarak regime. "The new activism is seen as an outgrowth of Mubarak's conciliatory approach toward the fundamentalist."<sup>19</sup> It is also seen as a reason for his caution and his obsession with security. Eventually, Mubarak will have to confront directly one of these groups in a crisis situation and only then will the real Mubarak surface.<sup>20</sup>

One of the biggest constraints on Mubarak's foreign policy is the external constraint which emanates from the huge economic and military aid (2.2 billion annually) Egypt is receiving from the United States. Egypt is a country experiencing a population explosion. At the same time, it is limited in raw materials and resources, and its industries are suffering from years of neglect because of limited resources which previously had been funneled toward the military effort against Israel. The need for American economic aid severely limits Mubarak's flexibility and maneuverability in Egypt's dealing with Israel, whose chief ally is the United States. Egypt needs massive economic assistance, and the United States is the only nation willing or able to provide it.

Mubarak's regional policies and Egypt's desire to return to the leadership role in the Arab world are hampered by poor relations with

most Arab nations, all of whom broke relations with Egypt in 1979. In Egypt's absence, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria have emerged as potential rivals for the Arab leadership role. Although President Mubarak is the chief foreign policy maker in Egypt, he is limited in the kinds of policies he can pursue by both internal and external constraints.

## EGYPT'S ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

### (Current Assessment)

President Hosni Mubarak has not placed Middle East peace as high on his list of priorities as did Anwar Sadat. Instead, Mubarak has concentrated on improving Egypt's relations with the other Arab nations. Jordan and 16 other Arab nations broke diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1979 as a result of Sadat's separate peace treaty with Israel.<sup>21</sup> Mubarak has adopted a harder line toward Israel in an attempt to reestablish relations with the other Arab nations.<sup>22</sup> He has achieved some success in accomplishing this goal. Egypt has been able to cultivate a closer relationship with some Arab countries while still remaining cordial enough with Israel so as not to interrupt the flow of military and economic aid from the United States. At the same time, Mubarak's dealings with Israel have been cool enough to project a pro-Arab image in the Arab world. Mubarak's diplomacy has been successful in gaining readmission into the 42-member Islamic Conference in January 1984 and in reestablishing diplomatic relations with Jordan in September 1984.<sup>23</sup> Also, all Arab states except Syria, Libya and South Yemen maintain interest sections in Cairo--embassies in all but name.<sup>24</sup>

The United States has welcomed Mubarak's attempt to regain the leadership position in the Arab world. Mubarak is considered a true moderate and it is hoped that Egypt's moderate position will influence other hard-line Arab states.<sup>25</sup> "A Western envoy sees Mubarak's success



this way. ... For the first time, we have a major Arab state, with a peace treaty with Israel, working inside the Arab world. This truly is a major breakthrough in the Mideast conflict. War no longer is an option. Diplomacy is."<sup>26</sup> Mubarak still adheres to the Camp David Accords and he prefers that the United States take the lead mediating a peace "that satisfies Palestinian demands for a homeland on the Israeli Occupied West Bank."<sup>27</sup>

However, Mubarak is prepared to look elsewhere if the United States fails to get results or originate new proposals. Some options available to Mubarak are:

Greater participation by Western European nations in the peace process, taking the issue directly to the United Nations and even calling an international peace conference in Geneva--a proposal long opposed by the United States but supported by the Soviet Union, which so far has been frozen out of the Mideast negotiations.<sup>28</sup>

Realistically, Egypt will have difficulty regaining its leadership role in the Arab world. Since Egypt's ouster in 1979, the Arab nations have become fragmented and new potential leaders have materialized. Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia have assumed various leadership roles. Any vigorous attempt, on the part of Egypt, to regain control could lead to an even more serious confrontation with Syria. Nevertheless, Egypt's return to favor is viewed as good for the Middle East peace process. Egypt had been prevented from playing its traditional role until King Hussein broke Arab ranks and reestablished diplomatic relations in September 1984.<sup>29</sup> Since September 1984, Egypt has been using its ties

with Jordan, the PLO, Israel, and the United States to encourage flexibility above all else in hopes that some modest act of good faith can get a genuine peace process started.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Current Peace Initiative**

Restoration of relations with Egypt and President Mubarak's calls for flexibility may have encouraged King Hussein of Jordan to appeal to the PLO for flexibility and moderation at the 17th session of the organization's parliament-in-exile, the Palestinian National Council, held in November 1984.<sup>31</sup>

King Hussein's appeal led to an agreement, signed on February 11, 1985, between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization (signed by Yasir Arafat) which outlines a framework for a joint approach to peace in the Middle East. The five peace principles are as follows:<sup>32</sup>

1. Total withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 for comprehensive peace as established in United Nations and Security Council resolutions.

2. Right of self-determination for the Palestinian people: Palestinians will exercise their inalienable right of self-determination when Jordanians and Palestinians will be able to do so within the context of the formation of the proposed confederated Arab states of Jordan and Palestine.

3. Resolution of the problem of Palestinian refugees in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

4. Resolutions of the Palestinian question in all its aspects.

5. And on this basis, peace negotiations will be conducted under the auspices of an international conference in which the five permanent

members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict will participate, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, within a joint delegation.

The key to these provisions is seen as their reference to "total withdrawal" by Israel for territories occupied in 1967 for a comprehensive peace as established in United Nations and Security Council resolutions."<sup>33</sup> Jordan's Acting Information Minister, Taher Hikmat, said at a news conference that this meant that the PLO had accepted United Nation's Resolution 242, which calls for recognition of Israel's sovereignty and borders in exchange for the return of the occupied Arab lands.<sup>34</sup> Later, the PLO Executive Committee released a statement which reaffirmed the PLO's longstanding opposition to Resolution 242. The reason for this opposition stems from the fact that Resolution 242 does not call for the creation of a Palestinian state and it only refers to the Palestinians as refugees. The United States has refused to recognize the Palestinians until they accept Resolution 242 and acknowledge Israel's right to exist.<sup>35</sup>

Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres rejected the idea of an international conference that is the cornerstone of the Jordanian plan.<sup>36</sup> Israel wants direct talks between the parties involved. Conference-type negotiations may bring outside pressures upon Israel to make concessions which it does not consider in its best interest.

Egyptian President Honsi Mubarak gave the stalled proposal a boost

by calling for direct talks between Israel and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.<sup>37</sup> Even though this proposal was rejected by PLO Chairman, Yasir Arafat, it is significant for a number of reasons:

1. It sparked a dramatic improvement in relations with Israel.<sup>38</sup>
2. It signaled the reappearance of Egypt in the center of the arena and this itself is considered a significant gain.<sup>39</sup>

With the rejection of his original peace initiative, President Mubarak urged a more active role by the United States. Mubarak asked the Reagan Administration to invite Israel and members of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the United States to lay the groundwork for direct peace talks. In urging direct talks, President Mubarak stated a willingness to hold such talks in Cairo, saying it is necessary for Israel and the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to have direct talks with or without Egypt. Mubarak also said the Palestinian delegation did not have to be comprised of PLO members.<sup>40</sup>

The Egyptian plan was initially attractive to both Israel and the United States. Its two main features were the exclusion of the PLO, along with direct Arab-Israeli talks outside the framework of a multilateral international conference. The plan called for an Arab delegation to meet with US officials first; later, Israel would be invited to join in the negotiations. The early promise of Mubarak's proposal became confused because of contradictions which arose from the PLO and Mubarak himself. President Mubarak seemed to shift position by telling reporters that the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation would

include PLO members. The PLO itself attacked the Egyptian proposal by insisting that an international conference was "the only proper framework" for an accord.<sup>41</sup> Outside pressure from other nations in the world may force the US and Israel to make concessions more favorable to the PLO.

The Mubarak peace plan has succeeded in inducing the major players back into an active though cautious role in the Middle East peace process. The United States has stated a willingness to play a more active role. The Reagan Administration had been reluctant to do so ever since its 1982 peace initiative was rejected. The American Administration still has many reservations concerning the feasibility of undertaking a new initiative, given the dissension that exists in the Arab ranks. Secretary of State George Shultz, still upset at the Arab's refusal to support his 1983 accord between Israel and Lebanon, has said that the United States will only take action when the Arabs declare that they were ready for direct talks.

President Mubarak and King Hussein have argued that the United States must be actively involved if the peace effort is going to be successful. The United States is viewed as the only nation that can influence the Israeli Government. The United States has altered its position and now believes that the time may be appropriate for active participation and that American involvement might be beneficial.<sup>42</sup> Although the current United States' position falls short

of what President Mubarak had hoped for, it is still deemed a positive and potentially valuable initiative on the part of the American Government.

## EGYPT'S PEACE ROLE HISTORICALLY

### The 1948 War

Egypt's first encounter with Israel came in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. This war resulted in a bitter defeat for the Arabs from which they have never fully recovered. Although the Arabs have always outnumbered the Israelis, they were torn by various rivalries and were not able to agree on common objectives or to organize their armies under an effective joint command. Rivalries between Arab states have existed ever since and they have consistently blocked efforts to find solutions to the Middle East peace issues. When the fighting ceased on January 7, 1949, Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a separate armistice agreement with Israel. Other Arab countries, with the exception of Iraq, followed Egypt's lead.<sup>43</sup>

During the 1948 War, Israel gained 2,500 square miles of land more than the amount of land allotted by the UN Partition Plan. Transjordan also gained 2,200 square miles by annexing the West Bank of the Jordan River, after which the state was renamed simply as Jordan. Egypt retained only 135 square miles known as the Gaza Strip which it never annexed but administered by a military administration. The most significant aspect of this war was the flight of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from territories occupied by Israel. The Palestinian issue is currently the most important concern of the Arab peace initiators.<sup>44</sup>

The armistice lines agreed to after the 1948 War were repeatedly violated by Arab commando units and resulted in retaliatory raids by the Israelis. The raids escalated and eventually led to the Egyptian-Israeli War of 1956.

### **The 1956 War**

The 1956 War did not solve any of the territorial questions left over from the 1948 War. The balance of power that had gravitated in Israel's favor was only temporary. The Soviet Union, which had become Egypt's principal supplier in the mid-1950's, began to resupply the Nasser Government. Although no permanent changes resulted from the 1956 War, there were some interesting changes in the political arena. First, the war increased Arab hostility toward Israel. For a brief period prior to a union between Egypt and Syria in 1958, which lasted 3 years, Egypt and the Arab League seemed willing to recognize the United Nations resolutions on partition and the return of the Palestinian refugees. This seemed to imply a willingness to recognize Israel's right to exist. Israel permitted only a small number of Palestinians to return before closing its borders. The Arabs, seeing no encouragement in the Israeli action, changed their position to one that advocated the total "liquidation of the Zionist aggression in Palestine."<sup>45</sup> The second significant development arising from the 1956 war was the pressure exerted by the United States upon Israel to withdraw from the Sinai. The last Israel troops did not withdraw from the Sinai until 1957 and



then only after the United States threatened economic sanctions against Israel if it did not withdraw. The conclusion of the 1956 war resulted in 10 years of uneasy peace along the borders of Israel and Egypt, her most dangerous adversary.<sup>46</sup>

The period 1948-1967 was a time of constant Arab sabre rattling and vitriolic rhetoric. There were coups d'etat and unrest in Arab nations as factions tried to determine who was responsible for the Arabs' humiliating defeats. There were no Middle East peace initiatives during this time.

### **The 1967 War**

The third Arab-Israeli war commenced on June 5, 1967. The six-day war substantially altered the balance of power in the Middle East. The Soviet Union broke diplomatic relations with Israel. Egypt and six Arab nations broke relations with the United States. The United Nations Security Council, on June 6, 1967, adopted a resolution calling for a cease-fire and a truce went into effect on June 10, 1967. United States President Johnson issued a five point formula for peace in the Middle East as follows:<sup>47</sup>

1. The recognized right of national life (presumably for Israel).
2. Justice for the refugees.
3. Innocent maritime passage.
4. Limits on the wasteful arms race.

5. Political independence and territorial integrity for all.

President Johnson also called for the Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territory, but he did not specify a withdrawal back to the original borders.

The Middle East situation became stalemated after the Arab meeting in Khartoum between August 29 and September 3, 1967.<sup>48</sup> The Khartoum Summit upheld earlier decisions "not to negotiate directly with Israel, not accord Israel recognition, and not to sign a peace treaty."<sup>49</sup> Israeli willingness to return Arab land might have fostered a more flexible Arab position, but Israeli actions, such as annexing East Jerusalem, only reinforced Arab beliefs about Israeli expansionist intentions. The Arab leaders did reach two other important decisions:<sup>50</sup>

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Libya agreed to extend annual grants to \$280 million to Egypt and \$100 million to Jordan to compensate them for the loss of land and revenue as a result of the June War. Secondly, an agreement was reached between Nasser and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia to disengage from the Yemeni conflict, with the date for evacuation set for December 1967. The Khartoum conference, therefore, marked Egypt's readoption of the objective of 'Arab solidarity' within the Arab core of the Middle Eastern system. ... The defeat of the Arab states in the June war increased the prestige of the guerrillas in the Arab world, by reinforcing the guerrillas' claim that they alone were capable of realizing Palestinian aspirations.<sup>51</sup>

Following the Khartoum Summit, the United Nations passed UN Resolution 242. This resolution along with the Khartoum Summit, which states the Arab position, has provided the basis of most peace initiatives to date.

UN Security Council Resolution 242, November 22, 1967, provides the following:<sup>52</sup>

1. Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in June 1967.
2. End of the State of War among states of the Middle East.
3. Acknowledgement of Sovereignty, territorial and political independence of every state in the Middle East.
4. Acknowledgement of the right of all states in the Middle East to live in peace within secure and recognized borders, free from threats or acts of force.
5. Freedom of navigation through international waters.
6. Just settlement of the refugee problem.

Resolution 242 was an attempt to bridge the gap between the Arab and Israeli positions. It was the best the two supporting superpowers could agree on. "The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war satisfied the demands of the Arab and Russians for an Israeli withdrawal."<sup>53</sup> The extent of the withdrawal was left vague enough to satisfy the United States and Israel. Most arguments after UN Resolution 242 centered around the question of whether or not the Israelis would retain any part of the Arab land if they were guaranteed a well-defined peace treaty. The Israelis, however, answered the question in June of 1967. "The Israelis removed the walls and barriers dividing the Western (Israeli) and eastern (Arab) sectors of the city and the Knesset passed legislation incorporating the Arab sector into a reunited Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. At the same time the boundaries of the municipal area of Jerusalem were greatly extended, reaching to near Bethlehem in the south and incorporating Kalandia Airport in the north."<sup>54</sup>

"Faced with Israeli effective annexation of the Arab sector, the UN General Assembly on July 4, 1967, ruled, by 99 votes to move, that the annexation was invalid and called on Israel not to take any measures to alter the status of the city."<sup>55</sup> The annexation of Jerusalem and the destruction of some Arab villages gave momentum to the rise of the Palestinian movement as did the resolutions of the Khartoum conference. The Palestinian movement and the subsequent raids into Israel intensified after Israel closed its border to returning Palestinian refugees in what seemed to be a violation of an agreement reached through the efforts of the United Nations.

Continued guerrilla raids and hijackings by the Palestinians, along with Israel's retaliatory raids into Lebanon, prompted France to call for a meeting between the "big four" (US, France, Britain, and Soviet Union) in an attempt to obtain agreement about how Resolution 242 should be implemented.<sup>56</sup> The four powers decided on a "Rhodes Style" negotiation. This was refused by the Arabs when it was suggested that this would amount to direct negotiations with the Israelis. Egyptian President Nasser publically stated his belief that a peace settlement seemed impossible and he predicted a long war of attrition in order to dislodge Israel from the occupied territories. Thus, guerrilla raids into Israeli occupied territory continued and, consequently, Israeli jets made retaliatory attacks, penetrating deep into Egyptian territory. According to General Dayan, the purpose of these missions was threefold:<sup>57</sup>

1. To force the Egyptians to respect the cease-fire.
2. To prevent any Egyptian attempts to prepare for war.
3. To weaken the regime of President Nasser.

In effect, the Israeli bombings had three effects:

1. They strengthened support for Nasser.
2. They damaged Israel's image in the outside world.
3. They caused the Soviets to increase aid to Egypt.

International concern over the bombings and the increased Soviet support for Egypt caused a resurgence of diplomatic activity designed to effect a peaceful solution to the conflict. This led to a new peace initiative by the United States Government which had the support of the four major powers. It was also given support by Egyptian President Nasser in a speech on May 1, 1970, when he said, "despite phantoms and napalm" he would keep his door open to the new American initiative.<sup>58</sup> The American peace initiative, known as the Roger's Plan, was an attempt to renew the broken cease-fire and negotiate Resolution 242. The Roger's Plan was accepted by President Nasser in a speech on July 23, 1970.<sup>59</sup> The cease-fire was to last 90 days while all the parties engaged in indirect negotiations. The talks fell through after only one session and attention turned away from the peace process and focused upon the Jordanian-Palestinian civil war which broke out in September 1970.

There had been several occasions when the Palestinians and the Jordanian Government had nearly gone to war. The Palestinians were

raiding Israeli-occupied territories and the Israelis were retaliating with raids inside Jordan. Jordan wanted the raids to cease. After agreeing to the Roger's Plan and a cease-fire with the Israelis, it was inevitable that conflict between the Government of Jordan and the PLO would develop. The hijackings of three aircraft, which were brought to Jordan by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), was the final act that caused King Hussein to take action.<sup>60</sup>

The Israeli and Egyptian peace process seemed to suffer another setback on September 27, 1970, when Egyptian President Nasser died of a heart attack. President Nasser's death ushered in the era of President Anwar Sadat and the peace process took some interesting turns, positive and negative.

After the death of President Nasser, President Sadat needed time to consolidate his power. Once he had accomplished this, he extended the cease-fire, agreed to by President Nasser, for an additional 90 days. On February 5, 1971, he again extended the cease-fire, this time for 30 days.

Shortly after President Sadat's extension of the cease-fire agreement, the United States proposed that Israel withdraw to the original boundaries between Egypt and Palestine in exchange for a guarantee of security and freedom to navigate through the Suez Canal. In return, Egypt would conclude a peace agreement recognizing Israel's

right to exist in peace and security and also ending the state of beligerence between the two.<sup>61</sup> Egypt accepted the United States proposal provided Israel would adhere to its end of the American initiative. Israel rejected the proposal, much to the embarrassment of the United States. Israel was willing to withdraw to "secure, recognized and agreed boundaries to be established in the peace agreement,"<sup>62</sup> but they were not willing to withdraw to the pre-1967 war boundaries. It was apparent that Israel did not intend to withdraw to pre-1967 boundaries and this only served to reinforce Arab beliefs that the Israelis had expansionist intentions in the Middle East. It also served to strengthen anti-Israeli sentiments within the Palestinian movement which had been gaining in size and influence anyway.

The Israeli rejection of the United States proposal was followed by an offer from President Sadat for a partial withdrawal "some distance" from the Suez Canal. This would allow the Egyptians to clear and open the Canal.<sup>63</sup>

Negotiations stalled over such issues as how far to withdraw, and length of time. The talks were eventually dropped. This left President Sadat in a weakened position. He had promised the Egyptian people that the year of 1971 would be a year of decisions. Sadat had taken a risk in his bid for peace with the Israelis.

Prior to the 1972 election, US candidates responding to the US-

Israeli lobby, promised more aircraft to Israel; those aircraft were delivered shortly after the election. The Israelis commenced to bomb suspected PLO guerrilla camps inside Lebanon. Peace was nowhere in sight despite modified positions by both Egypt and Jordan who were now willing to recognize Israel's right to exist. However, both Egypt and Jordan still espoused a belief in the "land for peace" concept of UN Resolution 242.<sup>64</sup>

Egypt's attempt toward peace with Israel continually fell upon deaf ears. Israel's unwillingness to negotiate and Washington's unwillingness or inability to grasp the significance of the Arab efforts, led to considerable unrest within the Arab camp. The 1972 Egyptian expulsion of Soviet technicians was interpreted as a last effort on the part of Sadat to appeal to the US to bring pressure upon Israel to become more flexible in their negotiations with the Arabs. 1972 was an election year and the US paid no attention to Egypt's gesture. A US veto of a UN resolution critical of Israel finally convinced the Arabs that war was the only way to peace.<sup>65</sup>

### **The 1973 War**

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on two fronts. They caught Israel by surprise and managed to advance a considerable distance before being stopped and ultimately pushed back by the Israeli forces. The Arabs did not seriously believe that they could win the



war, but they did believe such an action would reestablish a peace dialogue. There were other Arab accomplishments too. First, they laid to rest the myth of Israeli invincibility. Second, the Arabs influenced world opinion through their oil embargo which was directed toward Israel and its allies. The Arab oil embargo made its point to the oil dependent nations of the world. Neither Israel nor anyone dependent on Middle East oil would be exempt if the situation was allowed to continue. The Middle East balance of power was permanently altered as a result of the 1973 war. Third, the Arabs showed that they had cut the military technological gap between themselves and the Israelis.

The United States, probably inconvenienced most by the oil embargo, set about effecting a cease-fire through the efforts of Dr. Henry Kissinger. A series of negotiated disengagements was agreed to by Israel and Egypt on January 18, 1974.

The Israeli prewar position was weakened as a result of the Arab effort. The failure of Israel's prewar policies was seen as a reason for the war. They were also criticized for failing to foresee the war. The October war undermined Israeli confidence in their ability to hold off an Arab attack. It also emphasized Israeli dependence on US support as well as the world's dependence on Middle East oil.

Encouraged by Kissinger's efforts and US ability to influence Israeli decision-making, President Sadat took the initiative in the

reconciliation/disengagement process, but the effort progressed only to the initial stages and not beyond. Israel still occupied the Sinai, Golan Heights, the West Bank including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.<sup>66</sup>

The second disengagement agreement, signed in September 1975, called for a buffer zone and the addition of electronic listening posts, one monitored by the Egyptians, one by the Israelis, and three by United States civilians. This agreement was significant not because of the enhanced prestige it brought to US diplomacy but rather for its impact on Arab relations. The agreement was severely criticized by Arab nations, especially Syria and the PLO, "as a surrender to Israeli/American interest."<sup>67</sup> Syria began to emerge as the Arab leader among those states critical of Egypt.

### **1977 to 1985**

Egypt's most dramatic peace initiative took place on November 19, 1977, when President Sadat flew to Jerusalem and made an appeal for peace to the Israeli Knesset. It was a bold move that was greeted enthusiastically by all the world with the exception of the other Arab states. They viewed this as an Egyptian attempt to seek a separate peace agreement with Israel, causing a wider split in Arab unity. In reality, Sadat had sought a complete Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories, but the Israelis refused, offering to withdraw only from occupied Egyptian territory in return for an Israeli-Egyptian peace

treaty. President Sadat was determined not to allow his peace initiative to die. He visited the United States, and claiming that the Israelis had not responded constructively to his Jerusalem initiative, he found American politicians sympathetic. In response, President Jimmy Carter invited Israeli President Begin to visit the United States to discuss the issues that were frustrating Sadat and the other moderates in the Arab world.<sup>68</sup> The Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon in March 1978 postponed this meeting and also drove US-Israeli relations to their lowest point since the Eisenhower Administration.

Because of the deteriorating situation, President Carter invited both the Israeli and Egyptian presidents to the United States for what became known as the Camp David Summit.

The Camp David framework for peace, September 17, 1978, provided for the following:<sup>69</sup>

1. Egypt, Israel and Jordan to agree on modalities for establishing an elected self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza.
2. Egypt, Israel, and Jordan to negotiate on an agreement establishing the powers and responsibilities of the self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza.
3. After agreement, Israeli armed forces to withdraw from West Bank and Gaza, except for certain specific security-related areas.
4. During a 5-year transition period, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and West Bank/Gaza authority to negotiate the final status of the West Bank and Gaza.
5. Israel and Jordan to negotiate a peace agreement taking into account the agreement reached on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza.

6. All negotiating to be based on UN Security Council Resolution 242.

Begin and Sadat also agreed to deal with bilateral problems between their two states and to conclude a peace treaty within three months. Such a treaty would involve the establishment of normal relations between the two nations and the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai.

The Israelis had a strong interest in achieving a separate peace with Egypt while not having to give up either the West Bank or Gaza. With Egypt no longer hostile, and with Egypt representing the major portion of Arab war-making capability, the question of Middle East peace was moved from the battlefield to the diplomatic arena.

The other Arab nations were less enthusiastic. They viewed Sadat's move as selfish, thinking only of Egypt's good and not thinking about the rest of the Arab world.

As a result of the Camp David Accords and the subsequent treaty with Israel, Egypt influenced the Middle East peace process in several ways: one, the Arab concept of a comprehensive peace process was not likely to be realized. Two, the step by step negotiating process used during Nasser's time was abandoned under President Sadat. Three, Egypt's leadership role among Arab nations was terminated. Four, with the elimination of Egypt as Israel's principal military threat, the peace process moved away from the battlefield toward the diplomatic

arena. Five, the return of the Sinai has probably reduced Egypt's interest somewhat in Resolution 242's "land for peace" concept. Aside from the small Tabah area, Egypt does not have any land occupied by Israeli forces as does Jordan and Syria. The last of the Sinai was returned to Egypt on April 25, 1982.

The June 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Israeli forces caused President Mubarak to become actively involved in the peace process for the first time. Mubarak, angered by the invasion, withdrew the Egyptian ambassador to Israel. Mubarak did not want to break Egypt's treaty with Israel or interrupt the flow of US aid to Egypt. Yet, he wanted to take action against Israel. Mubarak embarked upon a strong diplomatic effort designed to mobilize world opinion against the Israeli invasion. Believing that the US is the only nation that can influence Israeli decision-making, Mubarak also attempted to direct world opinion toward the Reagan Administration. Mubarak's efforts led to the joint French-Egyptian initiative. This initiative called for a cease-fire and an Israeli withdrawal. It is difficult to measure the effect this initiative had upon Israel's decision-making. It was important because Mubarak displayed Egypt's solidarity with their Arab brothers.<sup>70</sup> Since the invasion of Lebanon, Egyptian and Israeli relations have remained cool. The Egyptian ambassador has not returned to Israel. President Mubarak has stated three criteria that the Israelis must meet before normal relations can be restored:<sup>71</sup>

1. Withdrawal from Lebanon. (The Israelis have done this.)
2. Settlement of the Palestinian issue.
3. Settlement of the Tabah question - one square kilometer of the Tabah enclave on the Egyptian/Israeli border north of the Gulf of Aqaba, which is still occupied by Israel.

Egypt's contribution to the peace process since 1982 has centered around improving relations with the other Arab states, the PLO and occasional dialogue with the Israelis. Egyptian efforts have been relatively low key until the 1985 initiative. The value of Egypt as a go-between is now recognized by the Arab nations and the PLO. In this context, Egypt has served and continues to serve the Middle East peace process well.

## CONCLUSIONS

Historically, Egypt has been the most salient player in the Middle East peace process. During the presidency of Anwar Sadat, Middle East peace topped Egypt's list of priorities. Thirty years of war with Israel plus Sadat's neglect of internal issues created serious social and economic problems. Hosni Mubarak inherited Anwar Sadat's foreign policy and his domestic problems as well.

Possibly because of the problems that confronted him when he became President, Mubarak has not given the peace process the importance that Sadat did. Instead, he has concentrated on improving Egyptian relations with the other Arab nations and upon improving domestic social conditions. Mubarak has actively ventured into the peace process on only two major occasions, in 1982 and 1985.

Some critics argue that both of these efforts were motivated by concerns other than a genuine interest in Middle East peace. In 1982, the motivating force was Israel's invasion of Lebanon, and in 1985, it was speculated to be a desire for additional US economic aid beyond the 2.2 billion dollars Mubarak is already receiving. Mubarak most certainly has an interest in achieving peace in the Middle East. Because of Egypt's special position in the Middle East, anything which occurs between the Arab nations and Israel will affect Egypt. However, Mubarak's actions thus far make it difficult to discern the depth of his

commitment to the Middle East peace process. It appears that he will not be as eager as was Anwar Sadat. Mubarak, considered a true moderate, has been joined by King Hussein of Jordan, another moderate, in the latest peace initiative. Two moderates working within the Arab world is viewed as an encouraging turn of events. But Egypt's traditional role as leader of the Arab nations has been challenged from Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria. These dissenters, particularly Syria, have put forth strong resistance to Egypt and to the peace process as well. Therefore, for the moment, Egypt will continue to fill the role of a mediator between all nations involved in the peace process. The Mubarak government will continue efforts to mobilize world opinion in an attempt to bring world pressure to bear upon the US and Israel, hoping to force them to become more flexible in their dealings with the Arab nations. The role of mediator and mobilizer of world opinion appears to be the current and future major contributions of Egypt to the peace process.

Egypt's support should not be taken for granted. Forces are at work within Egypt that could have serious consequences for Middle East peace. Economic/population problems are causing increasing unrest within Egypt. Political activism, including opposition politics, is also on the rise. "The US suffers genuine and mounting problems with its image among ordinary Egyptians and with the government as well."<sup>72</sup> There are two reasons for this:



Egyptian frustration over what is strongly perceived as Washington's unwillingness to do anything to move Israel toward a settlement of the Palestinian issue, and malaise among intellectuals over this proud nation's deepening dependence on the United States. ... In addition, there is a conviction shared by more Egyptians that the relationship with the United States had become captive to the whims of the Israel lobby in Washington and subject to Israeli dictates.<sup>73</sup>

The fragmentation beginning to appear in Egypt parallels that of the other Arab nations. In Casablanca, on August 10, 1985, Arab leaders would only acknowledge that they had listened to King Hussein and the PLO and that they hoped anything the two did would be in accord with the Arab peace plan unanimously approved at the 1982 Fez Summit. Arab fragmentation, rivalries for Arab leadership, internal unrest, and increased terrorist attempts to undermine peace efforts make Middle East peace in the near term unlikely.

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