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SADAT - INTERVIEWED AND ANALYZED
CORE COURSE 1 ESSAY

CHARLES E. BILLS/CLASS OF 94
COURSE 1
SEMINAR N
CDR PAUL THOMPSON/AMB BOB JOSEPH
CAPT BUD COLE

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This paper is, on the one hand, fiction in terms of the interviewer ever having had a conversation with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt - no such interview took place. The paper does, however, attempt to get inside the mind of this great statesman, and uses factual information to construct the methodology, concepts, and principles he used in international relations to pursue his national interests. Subsequent to the interview question(s), five **analyses** [in brackets] are provided to further illustrate Sadat's logic in terms of his national security strategy. For the purposes of the interview, put yourself in Cairo, Egypt on October 6, 1974...

Background

Interviewer: Mr. President, on this one-year anniversary of the October War with Israel, please take us back to the early 1970's, after the Six-Day War, and give us Egypt's view of the world, particularly the Middle East.

Sadat: After the Six-Day War in 1967, Arabs throughout the world were a defeated people. We not only lost to Israel those territories belonging to Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, but we lost our dignity and self-respect. At the same time, Israel began to think it was an invincible enemy - not only had it crushed the Arab war machine and psyche, but it had gained geographic areas to the north, east, and south which presented it with even greater security against perceived aggressors. Taking further

advantage of this, Israel had established Israeli settlements on much of the occupied territory - "digging in" if you will - clearly showing a strong will not to relinquish any of our prior lands (O'Neill 28-30).

Interviewer: Concerning Arab psyche, what was the domestic situation within Egypt in the early 1970's?

Sadat: Our economy was headed in the absolute wrong direction. We had lost critical revenues once provided by the Suez Canal. There were many student demonstrations supporting communism, and I was very much afraid of encountering a completely unstable domestic environment within Egypt before too long (Sadat 245).

Interviewer: How cordial was your relationship with the Soviet Union?

Sadat: In two words, "not very." Since the 1967 War we had been negotiating, through Soviet Union/United States diplomatic channels, for the reclamation of the occupied territories. After years of negotiations the Soviet Union had not managed to strengthen our case whatsoever, and the United States remained steadfastly behind Israel. Also, on numerous occasions I felt personally affronted by the Soviet Union - like a "pawn" which the Soviets used to better their own position vis-a-vis the United States - and that the Soviets shared none of our

seriousness in regaining the occupied territories. To complicate matters, as well as signalling an even weaker Soviet position on our behalf, the Soviet Union and the United States entered a period of detente in the early 1970's (Sadat 229-231).

[Analysis: Here we see Sadat's view of the world in the early 1970's. His people had lost their honor in the 1967 War - as well as their will to win. An Arab arch-enemy, Israel, was solidly in control of several Arab territories and Arab people. Sadat's domestic economy was on the brink of disaster. His relationship with the Soviet Union was considerably less than amorous. And the United States and Soviet Union were trying hard not to upset one another at any table of negotiations. Sadat viewed the community of these problems as significant threats to his country's, and Arab, well-being -- problems that would very quickly turn to crises and severely threaten his homeland.]

Assumptions

Interviewer: With this international and domestic backdrop, how did you view your current state of affairs during the year leading up to the October War?

Sadat: It was quite obvious that the negotiations to regain the occupied territories were at a standstill. Israel was quite pleased with its enhanced security, and we were a defeated people, too weak to conduct effective, meaningful negotiations.

The United States and the Soviet Union were enjoying newfound detente, so there was little hope for this "young married couple" to negotiate an Arab-Israeli peace settlement - at least not under the present conditions (O'Neill 30-31).

[Analysis: Sadat assumed that Egypt was, to coin a western phrase, "going nowhere fast." He could no longer hope that the art of compromise would solve Egypt's monumental problems. He determined that it was of vital national interest to act now, and act decisively, to generate a controlled crisis of his own.]

Power and Resources

Interviewer: How did you intend to use your limited power and resources at hand to alter these "present conditions" in the pursuit of your national interests?

Sadat: I knew that we were militarily weaker and could never hope to invade and completely disarm Israel. I did believe, however, that by employing certain other diplomatic, economic, and military means, I could "project my power," force Israel back to the negotiating table - this time with the Arabs carrying the "big stick" - and eventually regain the occupied territories (O'Neill 32).

[Analysis: Sadat's assessment of Arab power was most accurate. While his own actual power was very limited, in terms of military

might and resources at home, he viewed his potential power as nearly unlimited - at least sufficient to achieve limited ends. He could generate an Arab consensus in support of his initiatives, bring the formidable "oil weapon" into the battle, and surprise Israel with an unsuspected military attack (O'Neill 31).]

Objectives

Interviewer: What were your short-term and long-term objectives?

Sadat: My primary short-term objective was to break the deadlock on negotiations. I knew that, particularly with their newfound detente, the two superpowers would quickly intervene to resolve any militarily escalating situation in the Middle East. This would put us back at the bargaining table, and the Arabs would have the upper hand. Another very important short-term objective was to regain Arab, and particularly Egyptian, self-confidence and honor, both lost miserably in 1967. Other short-term goals included shattering Israel's feeling of invincibility, and showing the Soviets that Egypt was very "alive and well" - a force to be reckoned with, not a dog to be kicked (Sadat 230, 249). My long-term goal was, and remains, to regain the Israel-occupied territories (O'Neill 32).

[Analysis: Here we see very clear goals and objectives, all to place Egypt and the Arab community on the progressive track of

enhanced welfare and prosperity and to regain Egyptian honor, so critical if the country was to survive future crises. Sadat viewed all short-term objectives as attainable, although certainly not without substantial risk. He determined his long-term goal of regaining the occupied territories as less viable, but certainly much desired in terms of national interest.]

Statecraft

Interviewer: What methods did you employ to meet your objectives?

Sadat: For several months at the beginning of 1973, I diplomatically "worked" the Arab countries to generate support in the Middle East and to isolate Israel from the rest of the world. I also nurtured relationships with the non-aligned countries. I had many friends in the world and I felt that, after my nine months of diplomatic efforts, I had done a very effective and persuasive job. My economic power was wielded when I was able to convince the Arab oil producers to cut back on oil production once the October War had begun. This move generated immense concern among western countries and, although the United States remained a staunch supporter of Israel, completely isolated Israel from the rest of the world. My "igniter" that lit up the Middle East, and showed the world that the Arabs were serious about their claims to the occupied territories, was our military air strike one year ago today and the follow-on hostilities that

lasted until the cease-fire of October 22. Together with my diplomatic actions and Arab economic power projection, the Arab military action brought Israel, via superpower intervention, back to the negotiations ready to pursue a negotiated settlement (O'Neill 31; Sadat 238-240, 249, 265).

[Analysis: Here we see the flawless implementation of Sadat's national security strategy. He uses diplomacy, economic power, and military force as means to obtain his primary objective - to break the deadlock on negotiations. As Mann so aptly states, these three instruments of statecraft "are interdependent and fundamentally inseparable. Together they form an interlocking trinity..." (Mann 1). Sadat used this trinity to full advantage to break the impasse on negotiations and restore honor to the Arab world.]

Outcome

Interviewer: On this anniversary of the October War, do you feel your grand strategy was effective in furthering the national interests of Egypt?

Sadat: I can say, emphatically, that my strategy regarding all short-term objectives was a complete success. The Arab-Israeli negotiations regarding the occupied territories are back on the front burner and are being vigorously pursued, now with open, vice closed, minds on both sides of the table. The Arab honor,

lost so dramatically during the Six-Day War, was regained in a matter of six hours on October 6, 1973 when our planes raided Israel (Sadat 251). Israel no longer feels like the omnipotent victor of old, and is actually taking a hard look at whether the occupied territories do indeed provide any added security - or whether they are merely attractive nuisances and catalysts for war (O'Neill 32). And the Soviets no longer have "Egypt in their pocket..." (Sadat 231). Our relations are now severely strained, but the Soviets now recognize that Egypt will not be manipulated by any state, however powerful. Regarding my long-term objective of regaining the Israeli-occupied territories, I can only say that those pursuits will continue. I have done all in my power to set the world stage for an Arab-Israeli peace settlement. I can only hope that at some point in time all Arabs, particularly my brethren in the occupied territories, may live in peace.

Lessons Learned

As stated earlier, the above interview is pure fiction - also quite obvious by the above "Sadat" jargon. However, the lessons learned as a result of President Anwar Sadat's initiative and statesmanship during the early 1970's are very real.

One obvious, up-front lesson is that "surprise attacks" remain a very potent tool in the bag of military strategists. It is clear that the Arabs had no intention of completely defeating Israel, but rather to get their feet onto their prior

territories, "hold the line," and await the diplomatic process. Yet, as it turned out the Arabs achieved "notable military success as they took advantage of Israel's lack of preparedness..." (O'Neill 32).

Another lesson for American statecraft concerns the "oversight capability" of the international diplomatic community. Even a great superpower like the United States, with its sophisticated intelligence collection program, at times may incur a breakdown in intellectual reasoning. There may be a number of causes, but paramount among them are 1) the enormous volume of information available for consumption by the statesman, 2) the number of serious issues simultaneously on the table before a statesman, and 3) the finite amount of time in one statesman's day. Surely these played a role in obscuring the fact that the Egyptian and Syrian armed forces were preparing to attack Israel in the hours before October 6, 1973 (Kissinger 465-467).

A last lesson is the importance of a strong leader in formulating national security strategy. President Anwar Sadat was a leader of men; he knew where he wanted to take Egypt and he very effectively encouraged other Arab nations to join in. He obtained a consensus, not only within Egypt, but within the Arab community - and nearly the entire world - that Israel should relinquish her occupied territories. He used all available tools of statecraft - diplomatic, economic, and military - to focus the

world on the Arab struggle, force the superpowers to intervene, and engage in effective territorial settlement negotiations. The fact that he was able to accomplish this, together with regaining his country's dignity and honor, makes him a legend in the Arab world today and one of the great statesman of his time.

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