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ANWAR AL-SADAT'S GRAND STRATEGY IN THE YOM KIPPUR WAR

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INTRODUCTION

> *No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter its operational objective.*
>
> -Carl von Clausewitz[1]

President Anwar al-Sadat utilized Egypt's military instrument to execute a brilliant political strategy in October 1973 to break the stalemate in the Arab-Israeli conflict and create conditions ultimately conducive to a settlement consistent with Egypt's interests. It is not in the movement of forces or clash of arms that one must seek the true significance of the 1973 war[2]. Sadat executed a limited war to achieve Egypt's political objective of "shaking [almost universal] belief in Israel's invincibility and Arab impotence"[3], thus moving from a "no war--no peace"[4] deadlock with Israel to opening the way for negotiation of an acceptable settlement of the Egyptian-Israeli conflict. His military commander planned a joint Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel designed--realistically--not to completely defeat Israel militarily, but to demonstrate to Israel and the rest of the world that the prevailing situation was unacceptable and that Israel's military power--the foundation of that situation--was not invincible. Though the military theater of war was limited, the political theater of war was total, and included the two world superpowers--the United States and the Soviet Union.

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[1] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, First Princeton Paperback, 1989), 579.

[2] Major-General D.K. Palit, *Return to Sinai* (Salisbury, GB: Compton Russell Ltd., 1974), 171.

[3] Henry Kissinger, "Why We Were Surprised." *Years of Upheaval*. (Boston: Little, Brown, Inc., 1982), 459.

[4] Palit, *Return to Sinai*, 28.

CONFLICT BACKGROUND

> *The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.*
>
> -Carl von Clausewitz[5]

The Middle East possesses an incredible amount of religious, ethnic, geographic, cultural, economic, historical, and ideological diversity. It has long served as a geostrategic gateway between the major civilizations of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The Middle East also has a long history of cultural and religious conflict, and, in the modern era, political instability and violence. The sovereignty of states and peoples' right to exist are threatened by neighbor states on a daily basis. These factors have a significant impact on political and military alignments throughout the region.

Conflict over territory and the quest for political and spiritual influence has shaped the region. Territorial competition has involved numerous issues, including competing claims to religious sites, vital resources (particularly water and oil), trade routes and commerce centers, geostrategic locations, and cultural homelands. Rivalries have involved various religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) as well as their political manifestations (Zionism and Islamic fundamentalism); political and economic ideologies (nationalism, pan-Arabism, socialism, and democracy); and family, clan, tribal and ethnic competition.

The roots of the Arab-Israeli dispute are in the contesting foundations of modern Zionist and Arab nationalisms. Much of this conflict centers on competing claims to religious and cultural homelands between Jews and Muslims, military control of strategic territory, existential threats to the Israeli state, and the pursuit of self-determination by the Palestinian people.

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[5] Clausewitz, *On* War, 87.

By 1973 the conflict had already erupted into major Arab-Israeli wars in 1948, 1956, and 1967. During the Six Day War of 1967, Israel seized the Sinai Peninsula (including the east bank of the Suez Canal) and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria, dramatically changing the geostrategic environment of the region. The Arabs were psychologically, politically, and militarily defeated; they believed they had been humiliated and dishonored. On 22 November 1967, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 242, primarily calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories in exchange for mutual recognition of all states' right to exist.

At the Khartoum summit in August 1967, shortly after the Six Day War, Arab leaders agreed that nothing less than the complete return of all the occupied territories would be acceptable. They took the hard-line position that until the occupied territories were returned there would be no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no peace with Israel--essentially establishing "unconditional surrender" conditions that the Israelis would never accept.

The Middle East was also an arena in which the United States and the Soviet Union competed to establish client states and project influence, and the region was significantly affected by the geopolitical dictates of the Cold War competition between the two superpowers. The Soviet Union was the principal supplier of aid and arms to Egypt and Syria. The United States supplied frontline military equipment and substantial economic assistance to Israel. Improving relations between the superpowers--détente--made both countries reluctant to invite superpower confrontation in the Middle East or anywhere else. Neither superpower thus saw it to its advantage to jeopardize its improved relations with the other by trying to break the impasse between Egypt and Israel. Essentially, the United States would not allow Israel to be defeated militarily in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Soviet Union would not allow Egypt to be defeated,

and neither wanted the conflict to escalate in such a way that they might be drawn in directly. Both superpowers, content with their improved Cold War relations since 1970, thus saw the situation in the Middle East as acceptable.

Israel was content with its position in the wake of its overwhelming victory in the 1967 Six Day War--its territorial acquisitions greatly improved its security posture--and it accordingly sought to put off any decisions that might alter this situation for as long as possible. It was therefore in Israel's best interest to avoid concluding a formal settlement, giving up any territory, withdrawing, or making any other concessions to Egypt, Syria or Jordan. The Israelis worked to maintain the status quo by repressing the Arabs militarily, politically, and psychologically. Although Israel indicated a willingness to comply with its own interpretation of the terms of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, it continued to develop and militarize the occupied territories, and declared the Golan Heights "nonnegotiable"--which further infuriated the Arab states.

SADAT'S POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

> *...even the ultimate outcome of a war is not always to be regarded as final. The defeated state often considers the outcome merely as a transitory evil, for which a remedy may still be found in political conditions at some later date.*

> -Carl von Clausewitz[6]

Anwar al-Sadat became President of Egypt upon the death of President Nasser in September 1970, at a time of intense and competing diplomatic, political and economic pressures. His stated foremost objectives were to recover all Arab territory occupied by Israel following the

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[6] Clausewitz, *On* War, 80.

1967 war and to achieve a just, peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Sadat was willing to exhaust international diplomacy to achieve these ends, but he suspected from the outset that war ultimately would be required. Thus while exploring peace, Sadat simultaneously began to prepare for limited war.

From the perspective of diplomacy, Sadat came to believe that he needed to create a sense of crisis and alter the balance of power in the Middle East in Egypt's favor. He sought to broaden international support for the Arab cause and to strengthen Egypt's relations with third countries in order to bring additional political, diplomatic, and economic pressures to bear on Israel. Specifically, Sadat wanted to persuade Washington to use its influence with Israel, to build coalition support among the Arab countries and African nations, and to gain the support of the United Nations. He also sought to convince Arab oil producers to employ an oil embargo as a political weapon, i.e., to cut production and raise oil prices to bring international pressure on Israel to settle the conflict.

Given the military defeats in the previous Arab-Israeli wars, Sadat was also desperate to identify a theory of victory for Egypt. Honor and dignity have a pre-eminent place in both the Arab culture and the Muslim religion, and the Arab combatants were deeply humiliated and shamed by the outcome of the Six Day War. A repeat of the 1967 tragedy, he recognized, would be disastrous. Sadat recognized the importance of establishing Egypt as a credible military force in the region if he were to achieve his objectives. He thus saw victory in a limited war as the way to overcome the humiliation Arab states suffered in 1967, to restore Arab honor, and to be able to deal with Israel, the United States and the Soviet Union from a position of strength. In contemplating the next war, Sadat wrote: "First to go would be the humiliation we had endured

since the 1967 defeat; for, to cross into Sinai and hold on to any territory recaptured would restore our self-confidence."[7]

SADAT'S ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Frustrated by the lack of diplomatic progress, Sadat recognized that he had only limited time to prevent the collapse of his regime by reversing severe domestic, political, and economic deterioration. As 1971 and "the year of decision" came to a close with no action from the government, the Egyptian people expressed their dissatisfaction with the pace of progress by student rioting in Cairo and unrest among professionals and union leaders. Whether Egypt's socio-political structure could long survive the strains of "no war--no peace" was increasingly doubtful.

Sadat would need to expend great effort and increasingly scarce resources to prepare the country for war. The Egyptian economy could not indefinitely bear the staggering burden of military mobilization. The continuing loss of Suez Canal revenue was a mortal economic threat to Egypt; Israeli occupation of the east bank of the Canal made it useless to Egypt, a major blow to an economy heavily dependent on the Canal's tolls. Time became critical. Sadat could not afford another year of failure--he would probably fall. He had no alternative but to use force to restart negotiations with Israel, reopen the Suez Canal, and win over public opinion.

Détente was eroding Sadat's ability to capitalize upon superpower rivalry to obtain a settlement with Israel acceptable to Egypt. In a show of Egypt's strength and will--when the Soviet Union would not provide the offensive weapons Sadat calculated he needed for military victory--he ordered the departure of all Soviet advisors and military personnel in July 1972. He

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[7] Anwar al-Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 244.

was telling the world that he, not Moscow, spoke for Egypt. He continued relations with Moscow because he recognized it was, realistically, his only potential source for the offensive arms and training he needed. He also extended Soviet access to Egyptian maritime facilities as an incentive after the expulsions. In February 1973, the Soviets capitulated and agreed to start the long delayed flow of offensive arms rather than lose their foothold in the Middle East.

Sadat believed the passivity of the superpowers would have to be transformed into active pressure against Israel. The Soviet Union, however, was only willing to support diplomatic or political actions. Sadat thus reasoned that the United States was the key because of the leverage it derived from Israeli dependence on it for economic aid and military assistance. His ultimate goal thus became to spark a diplomatic revolution, to move Egypt from the Soviet to the American camp--aligning Egypt with the only superpower that he believed could influence Israel and the Middle East to the benefit of the Arab world.

Sadat's expectations for an immediate political solution were low, however, and he became increasingly convinced that near-term peaceful change was unlikely. Six years of unsuccessful diplomacy had passed since the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 242, requiring Israel to vacate occupied territories in return for Arab recognition of Israel, and it was hoped, attain peace in the Middle East. Sadat had generated an unprecedented degree of genuine Arab solidarity; Iraqis, Jordanians, Saudis, Moroccans, Syrians, Kuwaitis, Algerians, Tunisians and Sudanese all offered support in some way to his cause. He now worked to forge this support into a cohesive political force that would support him no matter what. He was equally successful wooing African and non-aligned third-world countries, as evidenced by the fact that most states in Sub-Saharan Africa severed relations with Israel, and the majority of Third world nations supported the Arab position during the Yom Kippur War.

In view of the international and domestic political realities and time pressures, Sadat became convinced that a resumption of hostilities was the only way to resolve the current impasse. Convinced that he had exhausted his diplomatic options, Sadat recommended war to his cabinet. "From the day I took office on President Nasser's death, I knew I would have to fight,"[8] Sadat told students in a speech at Alexandria University seven months after the war. He had concluded that the United States (or anybody else) would not break the deadlock in the Middle East if Egypt did not take military action.

Sadat decided that achieving his political objectives required a limited military operation sufficient to spark an international crisis that would raise the prospect of a superpower confrontation and thereby directly engage the United States and the Soviet Union in resolution of the larger conflict on terms acceptable to Egypt. He rejected both a full-blown offensive and intensifying the on-again off-again, limited military operations Egypt had conducted from 1968-1970. The latter had proven ineffective. Both would impose too great a strain on Egypt's armed forces and failing economy, and almost certainly would require time Sadat believed he did not have.

Sadat was convinced he could achieve his political objectives and change the entire situation in the Middle East simply by retaking and holding a portion of the Sinai. Such an operation, limited though it would be, would be enough to shatter the almost universal assumption of Israeli military superiority and to restore Arab self-respect and self-confidence. This, Sadat presumed, would enable the Egyptians to reengage in peace negotiations in a much stronger position, and raise sufficient concern on the part of Washington and Moscow that the United States would be

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[8] The Insight Team of the London *Sunday* Times, "Sadat Decides on War," Chapter 3 in *The Yom Kippur War*, (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1974), 46.

compelled to pressure Israel to accept a settlement satisfactory to the Arabs. Such a victory would also, and not coincidentally, firmly reestablish Egypt as the preeminent Arab power in the Middle East.

Sadat did not articulate precisely how such a limited military operation would produce his objectives. He was probably correct that even a limited Arab military victory would undercut Israel's overweening military self-confidence, at least to some degree in the short term. However, he does not appear to have thought through why a limited Egyptian military victory, Israel's attendant loss of confidence in the IDF, or one more war between their client states would be of sufficient gravity to provoke a possible confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nor did he identify exactly what in this turn of events would cause Washington to abandon its virtually unconditional support for Israel and weigh-in on Egypt's behalf in resumed peace negotiations. Sadat may have simply taken it for granted that all of this would inevitably occur as a result of renewed fighting and the shock of an Arab military victory, no matter how limited. More likely, he believed he simply had no alternative. The changes in the thinking of the United States and the Soviet Union he needed to attain his overarching political objectives were clear. Since a limited military offensive was the only untried course of action left, and time was running out, he appears to have invested in it all hope for achieving those changes.

CAMPAIGN EXECUTION AND EVALUATION

Either you can change the facts and consequently our perceptions will naturally change with regard to a solution, or you can't change the facts, in which case solutions other than the ones you are offering will have to be found to suit your circumstance… I'm certainly not asking Sadat to change the military situation. If he tries that, Israel will win once again and more so than in 1967.

-Henry Kissinger[9]

Sadat's conclusion that a limited military victory in the Sinai was the appropriate instrument for achieving his objectives was predicated on his accurate assessment of his own and Israel's centers of gravity. He believed Israel's critical center of gravity was its firm belief in its military superiority, if not invincibility, and in Arab military impotence--beliefs shared for the most part by the United States, the Soviet Union, and virtually everyone else, including most Arab states. Sadat understood that military strength was the foundation of Israel's security doctrine, which sought to intimidate Arab states into believing that resistance was futile and that they accordingly should acquiesce in the status quo, i.e., Israeli occupation of the Sinai and the Golan Heights as security buffer zones. (By August 1973 Israel had indeed concluded it had achieved a fait accompli on its own terms in this respect, and that a formal peace was not only unnecessary but could be detrimental to the situation it was trying to preserve.[10])

Sadat correctly identified the source of Israel's military prowess and its concomitant sense of superiority--and thus its *concrete* center of gravity--as the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), at the time widely regarded as one of the most innovative and effective military forces in the world. He rightly recognized that his own center of gravity--indeed the center of gravity for most of the

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[9] Mohammad Abdel Gahni El-Gamasy, *The October War*, (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1993), 176.

[10] El-Gamasy, *The October War*, 184.

Arab world--was the absence of confidence in Arab armed forces, compounded by the armed forces' related lack of confidence in themselves. Thus, his concrete center of gravity, like Israel's, was his own military force.

Sadat and his armed forces commander, General Ahmed Ismail, believed that an Egyptian military operation that regained and successfully held even a small portion of the Sinai, and that inflicted heavy human and materiel losses on the IDF, would amount to a significant military defeat for the Israelis. This, they were convinced, would shatter Israel's unquestioned confidence in its military forces, and thus its security doctrine, and at the same time would dramatically increase Arab confidence in Egypt's armed forces as well as those forces' confidence in themselves. To buttress that confidence prior to the operation and to improve their chances for success, Sadat and Ismail took steps to convince Egyptian forces that war was inevitable and to boost their faith in their arms. Most importantly, they obtained up-to-date Soviet weapons systems (such as the Sagger anti-tank missile), and intensified training and exercises.

To attack Israel's center of gravity, Ismail devised a plan whose objective was to cross the Suez Canal, breach the Israel's Bar Lev defense line, and consolidate a defensible foothold on the canal's eastern bank. A number of key assumptions about each side's strengths and vulnerabilities shaped his proposal. The IDF enjoyed the basic advantages of a defensive system based on a water obstacle, comprised of fortified defensive installations and available, though at least initially limited, armored and mechanized infantry reinforcements. Israel also possessed overwhelming air superiority, would not hesitate to launch a pre-emptive strike if it concluded an attack was imminent (as it had done in 1967), and could count on immediate and extensive American assistance in the form of military materiel.

Ismail assumed at the same time, however, that Israel was vulnerable in several crucial respects. Confident of its military ability to deter Arab aggression, Israel underestimated Arab military capability and would not believe the Egyptians could successfully cross the Canal and breach the Bar Lev Line; there were thus only limited IDF forces to cover and, at the outset, reinforce an extended front. Also, Israel was dependent on extended lines of communication in the Sinai. More important, the Israeli public was very sensitive to and would not tolerate excessive manpower losses, which, if they occurred, would influence Israel's subsequent course of action. Ismail understood that Israel's greatest vulnerability, however, was the IDF's dependency on mobilization to bring its normally small regular forces up to fighting strength, which was costly in terms of both time and money.

Ismail developed a plan that he was confident would overcome each of Israel's advantages and exploit its vulnerabilities in detail. He proposed an operation to establish five bridgeheads, ten to fifteen kilometers deep along virtually the entire eastern bank of the Canal. The assault would be supported by heliborne troop strikes on IDF lines of communication deep in the Sinai, and by air strikes on various military targets, including the IDF's control network and counter-electronic warfare capability. Such a broad-based attack, Ismail assumed, would conceal Egypt's true objective, surprise the IDF, delay and confuse its reaction on land, compel it to respond over a broad front, and offset its ability to concentrate its limited Sinai forces. Complete surprise was essential to preclude an Israeli preemptive strike and deprive it of sufficient time to mobilize its reserve forces before the conflict began. Surprise would also give Egyptian forces the initiative to impose a fight on the IDF before it was ready, and the upper hand for the first twenty-four hours of the conflict, time enough to consolidate defensive positions and prepare to

repel the certain IDF counterattack. If this could be achieved, Ismail believed the war would effectively be over.

Accordingly, Ismail implemented extensive, and ultimately extremely effective deception measures. Not only did these measures cloak and misrepresent Egypt's military preparations, they also induced Israel to incur the excessive costs of mobilization twice in response to false alarms, and lulled it into misinterpreting Egypt's true intentions and thereby failing to mobilize in time once it concluded hostilities were imminent. Part and parcel of this effort was the timing of the operation. Ismail directed a careful study of Israel's political calendar and religious holidays to determine when it would be least ready for war. The Egyptians chose Yom Kippur because it is one of Israel's most sacred holidays during which media broadcasting is severely limited, impairing the IDF's ability to mobilize quickly. Yom Kippur offered the additional benefit of taking place (in 1973) during Ramadan, a period of fasting and often limited rigorous physical activity for Muslims. The Egyptians apparently overlooked the fact that virtually all Israelis spend Yom Kippur at home, which greatly facilitated the IDF's alternative call-up procedures. That made little difference in the end, however. Egypt's deception measures had been so effective that Israeli intelligence did not conclude an attack was imminent and the IDF did not begin mobilization until the night before the attack occurred. This was too late to field reserve forces to thwart the Egyptian assault, and thus the first twenty-four hours of the conflict in the Sinai belonged to Egypt, just as Ismail had intended.

Ismail understood that the success of the entire operation depended as well on depriving Israel of its air supremacy. He sought to accomplish this by establishing a comprehensive tactical air defense umbrella over the Canal that extended fifteen kilometers into the Sinai. Based on an interlocking surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, it was comprised in part of state-of-the-art

mobile SA-6 and shoulder-launched SA-7 missiles provided by the Soviet Union--missiles against which the Israelis had no experience. As long as Egyptian forces operated under cover of the SAM network, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) would find it extremely difficult, if not prohibitively expensive, to attack them. The extent of this constraint and the vulnerability of forces operating beyond it would be displayed graphically on October 13, when Egyptian forces attempted to advance beyond the SAM cover and lost over 500 armored vehicles at the hands of the IDF and IAF as a result.

To enhance prospects for success, Sadat and Ismail sought to convince Syria to join Egypt in a joint strategic operation involving a simultaneous surprise attack in the Golan Heights. Syrian President Assad--whose primary objective was simply to recover the Golan, territory he "lost" as Syrian Defense Minister during the 1967 war--agreed. Senior Egyptian and Syrian staff officers worked closely in the summer of 1973 to agree on timing propitious for both countries and to develop mechanisms to coordinate their joint assaults (Operation Badr), particularly their initial air strikes.

Although there is no clear evidence, Sadat must have assumed that the Golan Heights was strategically more important to Israel than the Sinai. The Golan dominates the Hula and Jordan River Valleys and Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee), and thus controls the sources of Israel's most critical natural resource--water. In responding to simultaneous attacks, the IDF's first priority accordingly would be the Syrian assault on the Golan. This would presumably diminish at least the initial IDF response to Egypt's attack in the Sinai as well as dilute the air and ground strength the IDF could bring to bear there throughout the conflict, thereby improving the likelihood that Egyptian forces would prevail.

Cooperation with Syria exposed Egypt to a vulnerability apparently not appreciated by Sadat at the time, however. Called upon midway through the conflict to extend their assault in the Sinai beyond their SAM air defense cover to relieve pressure on Syrian forces that IDF counter attacks had pushed back almost to Damascus, Egyptian forces would pay an exorbitant price for Syria's cooperation, as noted above. Whether or to what extent these losses contributed to the Egyptians' inability to repel the IDF's cross-canal counter attack on October 14-15 is unclear. The question may be moot, however, since that counter-attack and the consequent threat of an almost unprecedented defeat of Egypt--and Soviet arms--provoked precisely the superpower intervention Sadat was seeking in order to halt the conflict and achieve Egypt's political objectives. On balance, Syria's cooperation must be considered an asset. It almost certainly contributed to Sadat's achievement of his limited military victory--the IDF's priority was indeed Syria's attack on the Golan--and of his ultimate political aims, though probably not entirely in the manner Sadat intended.

While the benefits of the limited war strategy were clear to Sadat, there is little evidence that Egypt conducted an extensive assessment of the costs and risks it entailed, in marked contrast to Ismail's detailed strategy and preparations for conducting the conflict. Although both Sadat and Ismail spoke at times of an extended war, both had been informed that existing food and other supplies were insufficient for a sustained conflict, and Ismail had indicated that Soviet materiel support would be limited. Moreover, while they fully expected and prepared for an IDF counterattack on their Sinai bridgeheads, they apparently did not consider less conventional IDF responses, such as its counterattack across the Canal, despite its reputation for innovation and daring. Given the stakes, losing the war appears to have been almost unthinkable to Sadat,

except to acknowledge that "the Egyptian people would be unforgiving of a situation they would find impossible to bear."[11]

Sadat's military strategy proved especially effective, at least for the first week of the war. Although Ismail's deception operations did not produce complete surprise, they provided Egyptian forces the time they needed to cross the Canal, overwhelm the IDF forces occupying the Bar Lev Line, consolidate their positions, and defeat the IDF counterattacks under their SAM air defense cover. Syria's simultaneous attack in the Golan Heights contributed to the Egyptians' success as well by occupying the bulk of IDF/IAF forces. Ismail's October 13 attack to relieve pressure on the Syrians, though very costly, confirmed the soundness of his limited plan.

One could argue, however, that there were two significant flaws in the Egyptian strategy. Sadat's assumption that the United States and the Soviet Union would automatically be drawn directly into the conflict by virtue of a limited Egyptian military victory over Israel proved inaccurate. At least, that is, until the IDF threatened to inflict a much greater defeat on Egypt-- and Soviet arms--than it had experienced in its previous wars with Israel. Sadat's and Ismail's failure to anticipate the IDF's counterattack across the Canal that led to this situation was the second significant flaw in their strategy. Flawed as it may have been in these respects, the strategy nonetheless achieved its intended outcomes generally in the manner that Sadat intended--apparently as a direct result of events attributable to the second flaw. Sadat took a limited risk and won his political objectives. But, he may have succeeded only because Kissinger was right when he warned Sadat's national security advisor in early 1973 that if Sadat tried to "change the military situation… Israel will win once again and more so than in 1967"--a situation as it turned

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[11] El-Gamasy, *The October War*, 187.

out that Moscow was willing to intervene in to prevent, and that Washington was therefore not prepared to accept.

CONCLUSION

> *The object in war is a better state of peace—even if only from your own point of view. Hence it is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you desire.*
>
> -B. H. Liddell Hart[12]

The Egyptian offensive set the stage for Sadat to achieve every one of the political and strategic objectives he had set for himself when he decided that there was no alternative but a limited war. He achieved his limited military objective: he established and successfully defended a foothold in the Sinai. This "victory" ultimately transformed the psychological basis of the stalemated negotiations and prodded the United States into pressuring Israel to relinquish the Sinai. Politically, Sadat's "spark" succeeded in setting in motion the chain reaction he wanted in the Middle East. From the diversity and disunity of Arab politics, unity and effective Egyptian leadership emerged almost overnight. Arabs had rarely been as united as they were in the aftermath of Operation Badr, because from Egypt's success they were able to reclaim some measure of the lost pride and honor that they had vainly sought for nearly twenty-five years. Until 6 October 1973 all their hopes of regaining lost territories had seemed equally forlorn: the disinterest of the superpowers and the dark shadow of Israel's "invincible" army combined to paint for them a gloomy picture of the future, one of helpless impotence and acquiescence in Israel's arrogant plans for Jewish "resettlement" in their territories. Sadat's Yom Kippur War

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[12] B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1967), 338.

forced the Arab-Israeli conflict to the top of the superpowers' list of priority crises and induced

them to resolve Egypt's claims in a manner completely consistent with its national interest.

These results were not immediate however. It took time, and the bite of the Sadat-inspired

Arab oil embargo--the cutback in Arab oil production ultimately led Japan and the European

community to endorse the Arab demands--before the United States compelled Israel to withdraw

from the Sinai. More significant for the prospects of Middle East peace, Sadat's limited war and

related diplomatic offensive led to his historic trip to Jerusalem in 1977, the Camp David

Accords in 1978, and the first peace treaty between an Arab state and Israel in 1979.

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