

Anwar Sadat's trip to Israel was dramatic and historic. Because of it there is new hope for peace in the long-troubled Middle East. The world's attention now is focused on Middle Eastern leaders who bear the burden of carrying through with peace initiatives. On this page, the Daily Nebraskan examines Sadat's trip and his leadership. On the facing editorial page, columnist Jimmy Breslin takes a look at what happened behind the scenes to bring Sadat to Israel. The phenomena has been called "Cronkite diplomacy." To Walter Cronkite, it was just part of the job.

op/ed

Middle East: Peace?

Barriers still block peace path

By Ghassan El-Eid

Sadat's dramatic decision to go to Israel is a courageous step. It is a demonstration of the man's desperate efforts to establish peace and is undoubtedly a gesture of good will.

However, his decision was risky with incalculable results. By going to Israel, Sadat was not only gambling his political career, but also his life.

However, the self-imposed and highly crucial question arises: How much did Sadat's trip contribute toward peaceful settlement in the Middle East?

It is becoming apparent that the nations in the Middle East are in favor of a peace. Among the positive repercussions of Sadat's initiative has been a no-peace, no-war situation. For the first time this process was done peacefully. It is also an initiation of a good momentum towards the desirable peace settlement.

Sadat's visit laid the foundation of direct dialogue in the Middle East. Although Egypt was the only Arab state in this dialogue, Sadat assured western reporters that he expects Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinians to show later in Geneva to discuss a permanent peace treaty. Meanwhile, the joint Egypt-Israeli communique

The author who submitted this guest opinion is a senior from Lebanon majoring in architecture. The article has been edited for clarity and because of space limitations.

emphasized "the successful negotiations leading to the signing of peace treaties in Geneva with all Arab states." For the first time, though for a certain period, the super powers' (United States and Soviets) role was secondary and their political dominance ceased to exist.

Among the negative repercussions was the further split in the Arab world. This is crucial because a peace treaty is meaningful only as long as it includes all the conflicting parties. While Sadat was perceived as a peace hero in most of the West, some Arab regimes considered him a traitor.

So far Israel is the winner. It got Egyptian recognition as a state and the assurance of permanent peace. In return, Egypt got nothing besides Begin's invitation to Sadat "to come to Jerusalem and pray whenever you want." Obviously, there have to be significant Israeli concessions. So far the Israeli government's attitude has been disappointing.

Israel has to recognize the existence of the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights in a homeland.

The Israeli fear of a Palestinian entity is not justified since the entity will only be allowed to keep "police and self defense forces" and would have to accept an international peace keeping force on its border.

The Arabs are now as powerful as they were in 1973 while Israel is 180 percent stronger. In addition, guarantees will be issued to insure Israel's security, among them is a mutual U.S.-Israeli defense pact.

As the Egyptian ambassador to the UN puts it, "Let us have a fifth battle for peace."



Sadat looms big as leader by acting decisively

Washington—The world today has few political leaders of stature. Statesmen are even more scarce.

That's why Anwar Sadat, sudden and swift, stands tall in the world and bears the unmistakable dimensions of leadership. The Egyptian president didn't do it with an ultimatum or by massing troops on a border. He did it by shrewd use of a newly powerful tool—the media.



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After all, what power does Egypt have? Virtually all its 40 million people, by world standards, live in poverty. Its weak economy only disables its diseased fiscal system.

True, Egypt has the respect of the Arab world because of its proud history, scholars and thinkers. It also has provided the cannon fodder for the wars with Israel and, in that sense, is a fulcrum in the Middle East. Yet, on paper, Egypt seemed unlikely to suddenly put a world leader on stage. But it has.

Sadat looms big against the pallid leaders of richer and more powerful nations. The West in particular has abused

its executive offices to the point that current occupants look pale.

Difficult for Carter

Given the diminished station of the American presidency, it is difficult for Jimmy Carter to stand tall. A man named James Callaghan is prime minister of Great Britain, and a fellow named Helmut Schmidt is No. 1 in West Germany.

Giscard d'Estaing is half DeGaulle's size. Who is running Italy these days? I doubt whether five Americans in a 100 can name the premier of Japan.

None of these "leaders" can move the world because all must answer to proliferating constituencies. Crises are handled therapeutically by bureaucrats and technocrats rather than by decisive action.

Sadat took command. If nations stall on Geneva, he goes to Israel and then calls a conference in Cairo. If other Arab states or the Soviets won't come, he'll hold the Cairo meeting anyway. Sadat says, don't worry, Syria will have to come around—even after Cairo—and the Palestinian Liberation Organization is more broad-minded than people think.

Barrier broken

The psychological barrier between Arabs and Israelis is broken. Ironically, Sadat, an Arab, might bring peace to Israel.

A leader makes things happen. Sadat forced Israel into urgent decision-making on its borders and resolution of the chronic Palestinian problem. American Jewish leaders prod President Carter to end the "unseemly delay," as Rabbi Joseph Sternstein put it, in responding to Sadat. Now Carter prods other Arab states to do the same.

An authentic leader must be courageous. Sadat strode into the den of Judea. He rode in an open car in Cairo's streets when the timorous were sure he would be assassinated by Arab radicals.

Publicly bawled out

Instead of being conciliatory to those who opposed his initiative, he bawled them out publicly.

Finally, a leader must have the support of his people. Sadat is cheered by the Egyptians he commands. He has grudging respect from leaders of Arab nations richer than his and those still hostile to Israel. The big, bad Soviet bear is cornered by Sadat.

Now Sadat tells the nations who would meet in Cairo that they must sit around one table to avoid the protocol foolery of diplomatic teams scurrying from one bargaining room to another. He invokes God to bring peace to the Middle East.

Sadat leads a poor nation, but he is big in the world.

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