

opinion/editorial

Sadat's death threatens peace

The objective that Anwar Sadat fought for during his 11-year Egyptian presidency is precisely what may be the first casualty of his death — peace.

Few leaders have had such a profound effect on world peace as Sadat has, and perhaps no single person was responsible for peace in the Middle East more than the slain Sadat.

Sadat's death is indeed sad for Egyptians, but all people who proclaim to be for peace must realize the magnitude of his passing.

Since expelling some 17,000 Soviet advisers after taking office, Sadat strove to lead his country toward a closer relationship with the United States. His clear rejection of Soviet influence in his country symbolized his determination to make Egypt an underling to no one.

With his historic trip to Israel in November 1977, Sadat gained the admiration of Israeli leaders and their people, as well as worldwide recognition.

But those who were opposed to Sadat's peace overtures with Israel vowed to kill him for what they claim was the selling out of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

With the signing of the Camp David peace accords in March 1979, Sadat declared the region was determined to seek peace, further irritating those opposed to him.

Regardless of what group was responsible for the assassination, Sadat's death leaves a vacuum in Egypt that will be impossible to fill.

Whoever follows Sadat, be it Vice President Housni Mubarak or someone else, the successor is bound to face the criticism and dissent that Sadat faced in recent months. It was just this dissent that brought Sadat to crack down on his political and religious opponents.

In a "Time" magazine article several years ago, Sadat told the story of how he almost died after falling into a rocky river gully as a child. He was asked what he was thinking about when the near tragedy occurred.

Sadat replied, "I thought if I had died, Egypt would have lost Anwar Sadat."

Now, Egypt has lost Anwar Sadat and his vision for what Egypt should be in the future could wither away.

The peace process and whether the Middle East treaty is between two countries or two men, lies in the balance.



Cross-town MX bus line to be Russian teaser

While it should not come as much of a surprise to you that the Reagan administration has come out in favor of construction of the MX missile, it might come as more of a surprise to discover how Reagan intends to deploy these weapons.

When Reagan announced the big defense package last Friday, he indicated that some of the missiles would go in previously existing missile silos, and a decision would be made on where to deploy the other MX missiles later on.

pat clark

Knowing Reagan's tight-fisted financial position on other issues, however, I suspected from the beginning that he would not just build a gaggle of missiles without knowing what he would do with them. I snooped around for a while, and found an absolutely confidential source who would fill me in on the rest of the MX package.

I met him at a taco stand on Sunday afternoon. "Psst. Hey Mac, c'mere a minute," he said. It was our prearranged password.

"You're the guy," I said definitively.
"Right," he said tersely.

"Let's get right down to cases," I said. "Has Reagan got a plan for housing the rest of the MX missiles?"

"Reagan's got a plan for everything," he said.
"Could you be more specific?" I asked.

"Of course," he said. "But let me give you a little background for this. With the Reagan plan, he wanted to accomplish two things. First, he wanted to deploy the MX

in a way that would be effective, economical enough to pass through Congress, and politically popular enough to serve the Republicans for 1984.

"But he also wanted to find a way to punish Nevada and Utah for their objection to deploying the MX in those states."

"What did he come up with?" I asked.

"It's devilishly clever. He's going to put MX missiles on school buses in major American cities and shuttle them between the downtown core and the suburbs."

"What good will that do?" I said.

"Plenty. To begin with, it gives the Defense department the shell-game missile set-up they wanted. They even have an option to drive empty buses around town as decoys to the real MX buses if they want to.

Second, Reagan can contend that everyone has to share the load equally. Of course, none of these buses will be driving by the Reagan ranch in California, but nobody needs to notice that.

The plan also allows Reagan an easy way to scrap the school busing plan, which is something he wants very

much to do. He can contend that national defense is a higher priority matter, and commandeer every school bus in the country for MX use.

"You said that Reagan also wanted to get even with Utah and Nevada," I said. "How is he going to do that?"

"Easy," said the guy. "He's going to build those holes in Utah and Nevada anyway."

"What's he going to do with them?"

The man swallowed the last of his taco.

"He's going to prove to the poor who have been axed out of the Reagan budget that they still have a role in the Reagan program."

"Could you be more specific?" I said.

"Of course. He is going to roll up all of those people, take them to Nevada and Utah, and drop them in the holes. Of course, they'll have to be moved around from time to time so that no reporters ever catch up to them. But they will be performing a very valuable government service, and we will have successfully taken them off of the welfare rolls. And that's what's going to make America great again."

Russian Bear scaring alliance apart

Helmut Kohl is a huge slab of a man who looks as if two or three lesser men might be quarried from him. As leader of the Christian Democrat coalition, he may be West German's next prime minister.

From the American point of view, that would be splendid; Kohl is deeply pro-American. He speaks movingly of the American-supplied food that saved many Germans from starvation just after World War II.

Gratitude is a fine sentiment, but it is perishable. Fewer and fewer Germans are old enough to recall the benefits Kohl speaks of. More and more Germans, though still a minority, express neutralist, pacifist, and even anti-American views.

At the moment, Helmut Schmidt's ruling Social Democrat coalition includes the loudest anti-American voices, much to Schmidt's embarrassment. If he claps a firm hand over the mouth of Egon Bahr, he risks his coalition. If he doesn't he risks offending moderate voters.

joseph sobran

For an object lesson, Schmidt can look to England's Labor Party, whose left wing has moved further to the left even after defeat by Margaret Thatcher. Its leader, Michael Foot, makes speeches likening Ronald Reagan to Adolf Hitler, and its moderates, sick of such antics, have broken off to form the new Social Democratic Party.

If it is heartening that anti-Americanism may backfire, the more disturbing fact is that it has already gone so far in most NATO countries. In the long run, the vocal left will change the tone of the alliance, with an influence out of proportion to its numbers.

The reason is simple enough: fear. Soviet military superiority first is assumed. One poll found 50 percent of all West Germans conceding first place to the Soviets, with only 10 percent deeming the U.S. more powerful.

There is a fascinating paradox here, in that the Soviet Union has been so steadily amoral in its use of force and terror that nobody bothers denouncing it any more. You may as well denounce a foraging bear, the average European feels. The Soviet Union is simply a "reality," beyond any human appeal.

The United States, by contrast, is still a part of the moral community so it becomes the sole object of moral criticism.

When we take a firm line against the Soviets, it is we, not they, who are accused of being "provocative," of baiting the bear. Why blame the Soviets? Bears will be bears. Their amorality thus becomes a moral advantage.

The current topic of anxiety is the modernization of our nuclear forces in Europe, especially through the mobilization of the neutron "bomb," actually a warhead designed for defensive use against an invading army. The real issue is that the Soviets are angry about our attempts to restore balance, and the Europeans are, naturally, but unwisely, afraid.

Yet full discussion of that threat is suppressed. Here we have another paradox, what Angelo Codevilla calls "the Damocle's sword syndrome."

It consists of "simultaneous denial of the threat's seriousness and of criticism of attempts to are against the threat, on the ground that the threat is so great and so imminent that any move could set off disaster."

The real problem is not that Europeans are ceasing to be grateful for old debts: after all, they have their own interests in a changing world. What is a problem is that many Europeans seem not to regard their own interests as including their own freedom.

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