



Micah Morrison

SADAT'S GIFT

A decade later, measuring the change.

On a November evening a decade ago, Anwar Sadat boarded a plane in Egypt and flew into history. The Egyptian president knew the importance of the right sequence of events, timing, and the dramatic gesture. Four years earlier, in 1973, Sadat had shaken Israeli confidence and restored a measure of nationalist pride in Egypt by waging the battles known in the West as the Yom Kippur War. By 1975, Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy had helped secure a single step away from war with the completion of an Egyptian-Israeli disengagement accord on the Sinai Peninsula, in which the two governments agreed that the disputes between them would be resolved not "by military force but by peaceful means."

By early 1977, however, events were taking a turn for the worse. Sadat watched in dismay as Jimmy Carter busily planned for an international conference on the Arab-Israel dispute, a forum that would return the Soviets to a major role in the Middle East, set up a situation in which the more moderately inclined Arab governments would come under enormous pressure to make no concessions, and supply Israel's new conservative premier with a plausible excuse for rejecting peace talks.

So Sadat brought his message straight to Jerusalem. It is hard to recall the euphoria Sadat's visit caused. It was a move of unimagined boldness, a leap of historical faith. In Jerusalem and Cairo, it was a moment of hope. Perhaps the past did not have to be prelude to generations of endless war. Perhaps Arabs and Israelis could make a life together, build a region of peace and prosperity. Sadat in Jerusalem is still a signpost in the landscape of the

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Arab-Israel conflict, but the region it occupies is a lonely one, the road to which it points—direct negotiations, hard bargaining from positions of strength and security, mutual concessions—is one that few Middle Eastern leaders seem willing to travel down.

Ten years after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, how much has changed? What is his legacy? The peace treaty between Israel and the most powerful Arab state on its borders, achieved after sixteen months of tough negotiations, is intact. The psychological impact of a leading Arab nation, arguably the leading Arab nation, making peace with Israel has altered the terms of the debate. Many Arab states have come implicitly—if not explicitly—to accept Israel's right to exist in the region. Of course, the issue of the Palestinians and the occupied territories remains a grave dilemma, a knife pointed at the heart of Israeli democracy.

Ten years later, some of the lead players are gone from the stage. Sadat and Moshe Dayan—Israel's foreign minister during the negotiations—are

dead; Menachem Begin is in seclusion, his triumph with Egypt thwarted by the tragedy of Lebanon; Jimmy Carter, who played an invaluable role in holding the negotiations together once he realized that he would not get an international conference, has taken up a life of carpentry. Others have weathered the decade: Yasser Arafat still runs the multi-billion dollar conglomerate known as the PLO; Hafez Assad remains in power in Syria; King Hussein continues to rule Jordan. And a few of the Indians have become chiefs: Hosni Mubarak, Sadat's veep at the time, now governs an Egypt beset by economic difficulties and decay; Shimon Peres, then the Israeli opposition leader, now runs half the government.

Under a "rotation" deal worked out after the deadlocked 1984 elections, the center-left Peres shares power with the center-right Yitzhak Shamir, who in 1977 was a Begin lieutenant. The Peres half of the government, run from the foreign ministry, pushes hard for an international conference. In terms of domestic Israeli politics, Peres apparently is positioning himself as "the peace candidate" for the 1988 elections.

The Shamir half of the government, run from the prime minister's office and holding a slight edge, sticks to the Camp David approach of direct negotiations and generally takes a pessimistic view of peace talks.

With a divided Israel, an Egypt distracted by internal problems, and a PLO recently reunited with its radical offshoots, the outlook for peace is not on the surface promising. Although Jordan is trying to build support on the West Bank, and the Israelis are not standing in the way of this effort, most Palestinians in the territories are keen in their loyalty to Arafat, the man who, in their view, put the Palestinian cause on the international map. Syria remains a wild card: Assad has his hands full with internal economic problems, a militarily draining occupation of Lebanon, and the politically costly support of non-Arab Iran in its war against Arab Iraq. And, as Daniel Pipes forcefully demonstrated in the July issue of *Commentary*, it is inter-Arab rivalries, not Arab-Israel arguments, that shape Arab positions on the issue of the Palestinians and peace with Israel. The "sheer quantity of the feuding Arab participants," Pipes notes, "acts to prolong the conflict and prohibits a lasting peace."

As to the superpowers, the Soviet Union, frozen out of much of the action in the region in the 1970s, is now moving with intelligence and circumspection. It continues to aid radicals of many stripes—including Syrians, Libyans, and various PLO factions—but the financial leash is a tight one, and the clients know it. At the same time, Moscow is making soothing noises to moderates such as Jordan and Egypt, the nervous Kuwaitis, and the theocratic revolutionaries of Iran. The Soviets have benefited from Washington's disarray. For while the U.S. provided keen attention and a guiding hand during the Egypt-Israel initiative begun in 1977, in 1987 it is merely trying to keep a hand in



the game without getting it shot off.

So the bad news is that ten years after the Egyptian nation recognized Israel's right to exist, the end to the Arab-Israel dispute remains out of sight. Yet there are some promising signs on the horizon. The fact that the peace treaty with Egypt has held for nearly a decade is one of those signs. The peace is "cold," true, but Hosni Mubarak and the Egyptian military recognize its value. Other Arabs have sought openings in the walls of stalemate and mistrust. Morocco, geographically peripheral yet Islamic and Arab, welcomed Shimon Peres to its shores. Jordan's King Hussein recently has engaged in a number of "secret" meetings with Israeli emissaries. Unmarked Israeli goods and services, as well as the less tangible coinage of free-flowing ideas in a democratic society, blend into the Arab states via the West Bank's "open bridges" with Jordan and by other avenues.

In the territories, there are small signs that the Palestinians may be changing their attitudes toward dealing with Israel. For the first time some Palestinian intellectuals are suggesting that an Arab slate be formed to run in the Jerusalem municipal elections in 1988. Up to now, the Palestinians have refused to become involved in Israeli politics, viewing such involvement as an acceptance of Israeli rule and legitimacy. But Palestinian political involvement could lead to a demand for full political rights, a demand Israeli democracy would find most difficult to ignore. If a Palestinian slate showed some degree of independence from the PLO (and managed to remain in the land of the living), it might introduce a new counterweight to extremist blocs in Arafat's umbrella organization, radical initiatives from Arab states, and the "we-have-nobody-to-deal-with" lobby in Jerusalem. Recent reports indicate, however, that the people behind the municipal slate idea have backed off in the face of local protests and orders from PLO bosses abroad. Still, an interesting trial balloon has gone up.

King Hussein is also seeking to build support for his own agenda by strengthening pro-Jordan groups on the West Bank. One group has applied to Jerusalem for permission to open new schools in the territories. Another is planning to lobby publicly for the idea of a confederation between the West Bank and Jordan as a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. These and other moves would be impossible without tacit Israeli cooperation. According to some reports, the king is thinking about stacking his rubber-stamp parliament with West Bankers, to bolster his claim of representing both banks of the

Jordan River. What the king does with his parliament will provide a clue to his intentions.

But perhaps the most important lesson for the peaceniks this past decade has been, simply, ten long years: peace doesn't leap, it crawls. Generations of enmity and intractable geo-strategic realities will not be undone in a U.S.

presidential term or two. Sadat's dramatic flight to Jerusalem jolted into motion a process that inched up to a peace treaty and then, apparently, stalled. But Arab attitudes toward Israel have changed a little. And the Israelis have become more weary of war and uneasy about the continuing occupation. And the Palestinians of

the territories, after twenty years of empty rhetoric, have begun to look at the PLO with more than a little skepticism.

In addition, a promising sequence of events may be falling into place. While regional moderate and pro-West elements—Egypt, Jordan, Palestinians disillusioned with the PLO—appear to

Laughable trade measures

We have argued long and loudly in this space that protectionism, in the long run, is economic folly. But two amendments in the Senate trade bill—itsself a largely protectionist document—are so illogical as to go beyond folly into an area that can only be defined as absurdity.

One amendment would add a new dimension to the argument over what constitutes an unfair trade practice—the issue of worldwide supply and demand. Under that amendment, if there is surplus worldwide capacity to produce a commodity—or if somebody's crystal ball says there will be a future surplus—governments that encourage the production of those commodities could trigger retaliation by the U.S. The other amendment zeros in on agricultural products, minerals and chemicals, and seeks to apply a similar supply-demand test as a criterion for loans by multilateral lending agencies.

Taken together, the potential impact of these amendments is sublimely ridiculous. For example:

- There's currently excess worldwide capacity to produce oil and natural gas, and the surplus is expected to remain a fact of life well into the future. Most of the surplus capacity happens to be in the OPEC countries. Even so, these amendments would seek to bar countries like Great Britain, Canada, West Germany, and Brazil from encouraging the search for any more oil and gas. If the U.S. were the target of such legislation elsewhere, America could be barred from producing new domestic reserves. Now that, we submit, is patently an absurd position for any oil-importing country, including the U.S.

- Since when does the capacity to produce an item—even excess capacity—assure that the item is readily available to consumers all over the world? Certainly price is a factor, and transportation costs, as just one example, help determine price. If

capacity were the proper yardstick, there would be no hunger in Africa, because there's plenty of worldwide grain capacity these days. It's absurd to use capacity as a determining element.

- We suggest that there might be a hypocrisy factor at work here. Much capacity to manufacture any product might well be obsolete and inefficient, and require great doses of capital to modernize (just ask domestic steelmakers about that). Yet, other countries might be kept from building modern plants by the amendments, while, presumably, the U.S. could go ahead and build. Won't our trading partners laugh the U.S. delegates right out of the GATT negotiating rooms if these amendments become law?

- Who can tell whether surpluses are temporary or permanent? Are they the result of the overhang from a recent cyclical turn-down in a particular industry? Will new capacity be needed during the next upturn? In our view the best regulator of capacity is the marketplace. Any artificial restraint on the market could only create shortages and price fluctuations—and these are hardly a laughing matter.

- Finally, we see the amendments as clearly discriminatory. Developing countries, by definition, are the last to install production capacity for basic commodities. Does the U.S. Senate have the right to shut them out of the industrialization process because others have installed plant and equipment before them? And how can developing countries handle their debt load if they aren't allowed to enter the economic arena?

World trade and American trade policies are serious matters. But too many aspects of the House and Senate trade bills lend themselves to parody and burlesque. We seriously urge the Senators and Representatives who will soon meet in conference to write a final bill which eliminates blatant protectionist measures. The last thing America needs is economic funny business.

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be in a period of cautious consolidation, it seems certain that both the U.S. and Israel will conduct elections in late 1988. That means that the time may be right in 1989 for a push toward regional negotiations between Israel, an independent Palestinian slate (if such a thing can be brought to life), and Jordan, or between Israel and some sort of non-PLO Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. The elections in Israel might be a test of public attitudes toward such negotiations, or toward dealing with the issue in one way or another. With the war in Lebanon over and the economy on a steady keel, Israel might soon be ready to turn its attention to its greatest challenge.

The Beltway crowd should not despair over a right-wing Israeli elec-

toral victory in these circumstances. It was, after all, the right that delivered the peace treaty with Egypt, and strong conservative leadership would help reassure a nation about to gamble with its security. From the U.S.'s own point of view, 1989 and 1990 is the time a new administration in Washington can act with the most independence, without worrying about an upcoming election.

All this is a most optimistic assessment. In the Middle East, as we have learned on countless occasions, things can go wrong in unexpectedly nasty ways. But Washington can take a number of steps at present to help bolster moderate trends and lay the groundwork for the future. It can support Jordanian efforts to build influence on the West Bank; cast a protective eye over independent Palestinian voices; and work to keep the PLO from expanding

its power in Amman, Cairo, and elsewhere. It can pressure King Hussein to enter into direct negotiations with Israel. It can devote more energy to helping halt Egypt's economic decline.

On another level, the U.S. can help Palestinian moderates by hitting the PLO where it really hurts—in their bank accounts. An international effort, spearheaded by the U.S., to pinpoint PLO businesses and money-laundering operations might shake up Chairman Arafat and the fat cats at the top of the terror empire. Exposure of the PLO's vast wealth could lead to the greater disenchantment of their most important constituency, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

That constituency is a key to the Arab-Israel dilemma. But if Washington is to address Palestinian desires, Israeli fears, and regional animosities

in a manner not marked by confusion and erratic policy shifts, it should take a page from Sadat's book and meld long-term vision with short-term pragmatism. It must seek to do today only what realistically can be done today, while guarding against a slide tomorrow into war. The U.S. should combine creativity with patience and set about exploring ways to overcome the fears and hatreds built up over generations. One way might be to create a treaty proposal for a constitutional system binding a demilitarized Palestinian area into an Israel-Palestine-Jordan confederation, a system that somehow wraps the peoples of the region into a working union, yet leaves the final decision on a Palestinian state to a generation of Arabs and Israelis that have not spent their lives wandering in the wilderness of an armed strife. □

Claudia Rosett

CORY'S LAND GRAB

Land reform will not save Philippine democracy.

Manila

The ex-dictator is shackled up in Hawaii. There's a new constitution, a newly elected congress, and the economy is growing for the first time in almost four years. Yet twenty-one months after President Marcos flew away, Philippine democracy has a bad case of the shakes. So President Aquino's government is about to try one of the all-time quack-cures of development. The Philippines is going to have a land reform.

The idea is to weed out a crop of problems that seems to grow more lush with every passing newscast. Since President Aquino took office in February 1986, there have been five military coup attempts—escalating from the bizarre occupation of the Manila Hotel last year to the violent attack this August in which Mrs. Aquino's only son was wounded and more than fifty civilians were killed. The Communist insurgents keep hauling in new recruits, and more than 24,000 guerrillas are now terrorizing the countryside and cruising into the cities

to bomb buildings and murder policemen. This summer a cabinet minister was gunned down in the street. Moslem separatists threaten the southern islands. The country owes more than \$28 billion abroad, the bureaucrats are

still reportedly raking in bribes, and the phone system works as if wired with Imelda's old shoelaces.

Mrs. Aquino has already followed a rash of prescriptions for easing these troubles. Some have been ill-advised.

She offered first a cease-fire, then amnesty, to the Communists. She has been lenient with the rebel soldiers involved in at least the first four coup attempts. On the brighter side, she has turned the Marcos cronies out of their old monopolies, and promised a freer economy, including privatization of many state-held companies—though this has been all too slow in coming. Clearly something more is needed. Thus, in a grand slam bid to promote justice, end rural misery, head off Communist recruitment and so calm the restless Philippine army, the government now plans to delegate to some tens of thousands of bureaucrats the power to chop up the farms.

This won't be the first Philippine land reform. Even Marcos gave this gimmick a whirl, when he signed a decree in 1972 for redistribution of private corn and rice lands. That plan got itself conveniently lost along the way, leaving a great many land titles in limbo. A prior land reform, promised by President Ramon Magsaysay in the 1950s, didn't get far either, because Magsaysay died in a plane crash. But then, it isn't in the nature of land



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