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TEXT OF AS-SADAT'S OCTOBER ANNIVERSARY INTERVIEW

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[Interview given 6 October by President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat to Mrs Himmat Mustafa of the Egyptian television on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the October war--recorded]

[Text] [Question] History will certainly pause for a long time before the 6 October war as a turning point in the contemporary history of Egypt and the surrounding area. Recording facts and teaching them to our modern generation is a matter worthy of attention and interest. Furthermore, we should benefit from the great October victory, which in the opinion of the military establishments all over the world--East and West--was a military triumph and a historic turning point in modern warfare techniques. We are filled with pride as we forget the sad days, the humiliation and the feeling of the inability to resist defeat when the Israeli soldiers and flag were on the banks of the canal facing our forces. We even believed all the allegations the enemy made about us, as if defeat had been imposed on us forever. But let us now live the movements of our great victory with the leader of that great victory. On our national occasions, we always pause to study the course of our struggle and make it an opportunity to further clarify vision. Gentlemen, we have here the leader of victory, the man of Egypt, President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat. Happy Holiday, Mr President.

[Answer] Happy holiday to you all.

[Question] This is the first time, Mr President, you are meeting directly with the great people of Egypt, who are very proud of the October victory, in which all age groups participated. The Egyptian people are still living the moments of this victory and exploiting its results. As you have always done, Mr President, on such great national occasions, we hope that you will dot the I's in explaining all events because this will help us to further utilize our victories for the benefit of our people. With your permission, Mr President, we would like to start with the period that was lived by all age groups--the period of the post-1967 defeat--from the military standpoint.

[Answer] In the name of God, I was overwhelmed with joy in those days which are remembered and which will continue to be remembered for generations and centuries to come. They will continue to leave their impact on the world, not only on our area, or on the Middle East or the Third World, but on the whole world. People record events abroad because they always depend on the scientific method. Therefore, they are now saying that the situation in the pre-October 1973 world was completely different from that of the post-October world. World analysts admit this. The pre-October world was a world different from that of the post-October world. You are trying to take me back to the days which we experienced after the 5 June 1967 defeat. Indeed these were some of the most difficult days I have ever experienced. I might go back to the few days that preceded 5 June, specifically Friday, 2 June.

After President Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir, may his soul rest in peace, made the decision to close the Straits of Tiran in May 1967, we used to go daily to the armed forces general command, that is, from 24 or 25 May 1967 to Friday, 2 June. We went to the armed forces general command every night.

I attended all these meetings up to 2 June. Perhaps some of my brothers of the Revolution Command Council attended some of these meetings and did not attend some others. However, as far as I am concerned, I attended all these meetings, which continued, as I said, from 24 or 25 May to Friday, 2 June. Every meeting was attended by all the commanders. 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir, may his soul rest in peace, was the deputy supreme commander of the armed forces and was assuming the tasks of commander in chief of the armed forces. All chiefs of branches and commanders of formations attended the meetings, including the commander of the naval corps, the commander of the air force, the chief of intelligence, the commander of the front and the chief of staff of the front. The chief of staff of the front at that time was Marshal Ahmad Isma'il, may his soul rest in peace. The commander of the front was Lieutenant General Murtaja.

Every time we sat down with these people for the meeting at night, we were briefed about the information received, and, accordingly, the plan drawn up was reviewed every now and then. All those who attended these meetings are still alive. This is why I have asked Vice President Husni Mubarak to write the testimony of all of them when recording history and facts because they are alive and can talk, and thus we would be placing the facts before the people. Afterward, anyone who wants to analyze these facts and draw his own conclusions can do so. What I advise is using the scientific method. Matters should not be treated with emotionalism or rashness in which we would be telling stories, pointing an accusing finger at some, acquitting others. We are in a phase in which we should place all the facts before our people. After that, scientific analysis should follow. Those who will make the analysis should write down their views and there will be various opinions. In the final analysis, it will be the people who will judge the events that took place after being informed of the facts and after the scientific method is used in analyzing these facts.

[Question] All of them are alive?

[Answer] All of them are alive, thank God. All of them recorded that period at the history committee with Vice President Husni Mubarak.

On that very day, and I am talking about Friday, as the peak of events, why? Because on Friday, 2 June, we held our last meeting. On this day we went to the general headquarters and stayed up. We usually had supper late because we used to stay up late and then go home. On Friday, 2 June 1967, all commanders of the branches of the armed forces, the commander of the front, the chief of staff of the front and the intelligence director were present. When I say the commanders of the branches I also mean the air force commander and the naval force commander.

A new weapon was added to the armed forces. Prior to the October war this weapon existed only on paper because the world had not entered this stage, namely, the rocket stage. The first war in which modern technology and rockets were used was the October war. In World War II surface-to-air missiles or surface-to-surface missiles were not used in their developed state, nor were antitank missiles used in this developed manner. But our war of 1973, as I have said, had military importance for military men throughout the world in that for the first time various kinds of rockets, surface-to-air, were used. Missiles are of various types, SAM-1, SAM-2, SAM-3, SAM-6 and SAM-7. There are five types of surface-to-air missiles, and antitank missiles which have proven very effective in the missile corps.

Artillery, as known in the world, consisted of guns of various calibers. A gun was defined by its caliber which is the diameter of the barrel. This time there was no artillery with known calibers as in past wars. There was rocket artillery. This was very, very effective.

For this reason I go back to where I began. The branches of the armed forces were the air force, the naval force and the land forces, but also a fourth weapon was added, namely, rockets, which had become one of the weapons of the armed forces. Certain armies, perhaps of certain big powers, are still carrying out tests because they have not fought with such weapons up to now. We have done so, particularly during the war of attrition and after that period and then in the 1973 war.

All the branches of the armed forces were present. There was no missile commander on 2 June because the missiles were still part of the artillery corps.

All of us read in the papers today about the reaction that occurred in Israel and about the fact that the Israeli cabinet said that it will form another nationalist coalition cabinet and that all Israel is under emergency. We also had information that they were storing food.

This is similar to what happened on Thursday, 1 June, the day before the Friday I am speaking about. On Thursday, 1 June, a coalition cabinet was formed and Dayan entered it as defense minister because he was not a minister in the Eshkol cabinet. Israel formed a coalition government. Naturally Israel does not resort to forming such a cabinet except under exceptional conditions and, as they said, an emergency situation that concerns the whole country. On Thursday, 1 June, a coalition government of all parties was formed. When we met on Friday, Jamal, may God have mercy on his soul, began the meeting by saying: Friends, a coalition government was formed yesterday and Dayan entered it as defense minister. All of us know Defense Minister Dayan. Weizman, who is agriculture minister in the present cabinet, was in the army at that time. Weizman had a definite stand at that time. Eshkol was afraid of the war and was hesitant. Weizman went to Eshkol in those days. Weizman is from the bloc of the "Likud extremists." Weizman went to Eshkol, removed his rank insignia and threw them away. He then told Eshkol: "Either you go to war or I will resign and go home." In fact, the matter was not just taking away rank but a threat because all of us know that a military establishment rules Israel.

Had Eshkol not approved the war at that time, a military intervention would certainly have taken place, namely, a military coup as in other countries, and the military would have taken over power to wage the war. I am sorry to mention all these details, but they are bound to make the picture clear. On Friday, 2 June, President Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir, may God have mercy upon him, said that the coalition government had been formed with Dayan and therefore a battle would take place. The battle had been ahead of us ever since the closure of the strait during the last 10 days of May.

That was clear and we took it into consideration, particularly as far as the military was concerned. Jamal said that the government was formed yesterday and that there was a war ahead of us. This war might break out either tomorrow, Friday, 2 June, or Saturday, 3 June, or Sunday, 4 June, or Monday, 5 June, at the latest. I say this because I was present at the meeting and Jamal is dead. Facts should be placed before the people. Immediately after this, Jamal said: The first strike will be dealt against the air force. He said this to Sidqi.

[Question] Were these based on assessments or information?

[Answer] Monday. [as heard] Because from the 1956 battle, it was clear that the Israelis refused to enter the war at the request of Mollet and Eden until Ben-Gurion, the prime minister, secretly visited France. A secret meeting was held to plan for striking at the Egyptian Air Force and for putting an umbrella over Israel comprised of the British and French Air Force, because Ben-Gurion wanted to protect his country.

Furthermore, certain units of the British and French fleets in the eastern part of the Mediterranean had actually participated with Israel, for the sake of protecting it. However, some of these units attacked and shelled the Egyptian township of Rafah. [power failure announced, music played for 2 minutes]

That was not the only thing. Ben-Gurion sought their help to protect Israel's airspace with an umbrella. The British and French air forces actually provided this umbrella. Units of the British and French fleets also participated. All these are historic facts, recorded in books. They are not guesses. All this happened and is recorded. The fleet bombarded the Egyptian town of Rafah, where forces were stationed at that time. The bombardment aimed at facilitating the Israeli operation to enter Sinai.

Jamal told Sidqi [Mahmud, former air force commander] that the first strike would be against the air force. Sidqi swiftly grasped the situation and said: Your Excellency, we have thought of this and the first strike will not cause us more than 10 percent damage.

After President Jamal had explained the facts of the situation to the leaders and that the war was imminent either on Saturday or Sunday or Monday, at the latest, we started to study plans, in accordance with military customs throughout the world, including all civilized countries.

Egypt today is a civilized country. It has been civilized for 7,000 years. At that time there was a government on the banks of the Nile. The rest of the world lived in caves and in trees.

In every civilized country with military traditions, the president of the republic, the supreme commander of the armed forces, must approve the plan, in accordance with the constitution.

The commander in chief must subsequently assume the responsibility of implementing this plan. This, of course, took place on Friday night, 2 June. That day the plan was discussed completely. The northern position in the direction of Rafah was altered. In the Sinai campaign, in fact, what happened in 1956 and in 1967 was not a brilliant move on the part of the Jews. From the military viewpoint, as we have learned and as all the military men know, any Sinai campaign has rules which must be followed by any would-be conqueror. These are matters which are more military than anything else. During history all the invasions across Sinai took the same form despite the developments in the instruments of warfare.

In 1956 the Israeli forces used what is militarily called the plan of the fan. There is a base which revolves like a fan. The fighting moves from the north and sweeps Sinai. We used to carry out this operation during our maneuvers in Sinai at the military staff college. Every Egyptian Army man knows this, and it is not a mark of Israeli genius.

On 2 June Jamal ordered reinforcements for the northern side, which is the entrance. They were ordered because there were not enough forces there. The plan was approved and we had supper with him and went home.

We did not enter the command again until 5 June. This means we did not go on Saturday or on Sunday, we went on Monday. Jamal's evaluation was that the battle would be on Saturday, Sunday, or at the latest Monday. Then some sort of strategic trickery was practiced by the then U.S. President, Johnson. Johnson at that time had sold out completely to world Zionism. We all know that he was hostile to us. No one expected that this Johnson would become President because Kennedy was young and full of life. In fact, Kennedy said about him when he appointed him--but no need to say anything about this because both are dead. Kennedy did not describe him with good words but with some other words. That was said by President Kennedy, may God have mercy upon him. As I said, there is no need to repeat this because both--Johnson and Kennedy--are dead.

When he took over, Johnson had already sold out completely to the Zionists. He harassed us in 1965 and told us that he wanted to inspect our armed forces and our atomic progress and learn our strength. These were types of harassment. Then we entered into a stage of confrontation with the United States and the trickery of Johnson. Following the closure of the strait, the entire world, including the United States, was eager to understand the events in the area. Everyone was afraid of Egypt's force, above all Eshkol, Israel's prime minister. As I said, Weizman, who is now the minister of agriculture, was the air force commander. He was a pilot. He is now in charge of the settlements affairs. He is considered the most extremist member of the Likud bloc. Johnson's trickery was part of those things that took place at that time. As I said, the entire world was eager to realize the events. The entire world, including Eshkol, was against the war.

Johnson contacted Jamal and it was agreed that one of the vice presidents of the republic should go to the United States on Wednesday, 7 June, just as it was recorded. As I said, Johnson had sold out to Zionism. He contacted Israel and told them: What are you waiting for? This is because it was a test of strength between Johnson and Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir. [announced power failure and music]

Johnson was very shallow in his foreign policy. He was always conducting maneuvers in Congress. He was very shallow and his era was the worst ever to the extent that the well-known commentator, Walter Lippmann, said one day that he was leaving the United States to live in Europe because he could not live in a country with a president like Johnson. This American commentator actually did leave for Europe. Everyone knows that Johnson did not run for the presidential elections for the second term because of American public opinion.

Johnson had committed a kind of deception. He asked 'Abd an-Nasir whether an Egyptian vice president should be sent to the United States or should he send one to Egypt. 'Abd an-Nasir said: I will send you one from here and, consequently, they set Wednesday, 7 June as a date. Johnson then asked Israel to end the situation before the Egyptian vice president arrived.

Accordingly, the Israeli plan was submitted to U.S. President Johnson in the presence of American intelligence, the CIA and leaders of the Pentagon, which is the American military establishment. Johnson asked for their views and they told him that the plan was 100-percent sound. Johnson gave it his blessing and they began their attack on Monday, 5 June.

Well, I say it was a kind of deception by Johnson. However, we had prior knowledge as proved by the fact that on Friday, 2 June--and those who attended the session are all alive--'Abd an-Nasir said: The war is coming either tomorrow, Saturday, or Sunday or Monday, particularly since the coalition government had been formed with Dayan and so on.

I do not want to talk about 5 June. It is a fact that is hard to bear. However, I thank God for keeping me alive until I was able to make 5 June--which the world shares with us--a day of victory and pride after it had been a day of defeat, bitterness and pain. This is because on 5 June 1975, the entire world participated with me with the exception of one country--an Arab country. However, the entire world--including countries from the East, the West, the super and small powers and everyone, the foremost of whom were all the Arab defense ministers excluding this Arab country--participated with us to make 5 June an anniversary for the second reopening of the Suez Canal--after more than 100 years--and a day of triumph of peace, humanity and prosperity and simultaneously a day of pride for Egypt. This is because the canal was opened by the sons of Egypt and was dug by our forefathers, many of whom were martyred during the days of forced labor. The canal was nationalized by the 23 July Revolution and was opened by Khadive Isma'il. The entire world participated with me during the second reopening so as to make the day of sorrows a day of triumph of the Egyptian will.

When the Israelis were on the eastern bank of the canal until October, they were conceited to the extent that they used to say: We control half of the water and you can reopen the canal, but not before reaching an agreement with us because we control half of the water and consequently we must have half of the canal's revenues. You can not reopen the canal alone. So when my sons in the armed forces received my orders, they reopened the canal. However, my sons paid the price in blood and martyrdom. It was a heroic performance by the sons of the armed forces which included the educated, peasants, workers and every sector of the people. It was the armed forces which entered and we reopened the canal in 1975 as a symbol of the triumph of the Egyptian will. On that day I declared: I will reopen the canal and I will rehabilitate the evacuees from the canal's three towns. If Israel attacks the canal, which was still within the range of Israel's artillery, and if Israel attacks the canal or any town along the canal, I will consider this as an attack on the heart of the republic and not on towns on the frontline. Since the Israelis were on the eastern bank of the canal, they imagined that towns on the western bank of the canal were part of the frontline. The Israelis thought that they could hold these towns hostage so as to strike whenever we did anything. We evacuated the civilians so as to make it a military front. The 5 June is a triumph of the Egyptian will. I am proud of what they, who were martyred during the battle, did--whether in the crossing or in the heroic performance which dismayed the entire world, above all Israel.

I said that any attack on the canal or the ships in the canal, or on any town along the canal is an attack on the heart of Egypt and, therefore, I will strike against Israel's heart. Israel is aware that I have the weapons that can reach the heart of Israel. This was in 1975. But 5 June 1967 was hard, hard.

It is very very difficult. I woke up in the morning as usual. We are living in the age of the small transistor radio. Each of us had a small transistor radio next to his bed and when I switched mine on, I heard military statements and heard that Israel had launched a war. I was confident of the measures we had adopted, culminating in the session held on Friday, 2 June. As an educated military man, I can say that our plan, which was approved by the supreme commander of the armed forces, Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir, was a sound one. I woke up in the morning and began to hear the communique.

I began to hear the sound of guns and rockets while I was at the Al-Haram. I said to myself, they [the Israelis] have fallen in the trap they have set. I did not change a bit of my program for that sad, ill-omened day at all. After I got ready, I took my car and went to the armed forces headquarters in Al-'Abbasiyah. I was in Al-Haram where my house is. I took the car and while I was in Salah Salim street overlooking Nasr City, I realized the car of the Soviet ambassador was directly ahead of me. Naturally the car is known because it has the Soviet flag on it and was heading in the same direction as mine. I said to myself, the Soviet ambassador is certainly going to the armed forces command to present congratulations, because I was confident of the soundness of the action of the plan. We reached the armed forces command. The Soviet ambassador entered and I followed. The officer at the command met me and led me to the office of the commander in chief, 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir.

When I entered, I found some of the brothers there. But I did not find the Soviet ambassador in 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir's room. There is a hall next to 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir's office and it seems that they took the Soviet ambassador to the hall and Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir was there in the hall. I did not know this at first, only later when Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir came to us from the hall. I entered 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir's office. I said, good morning 'Abd al-Hakim. I said that while I was completely calm because I thought that since the Israelis had done it, well, they will be beaten. I entered and said good morning 'Abd al-Hakim. My eyes met his as I entered. He was standing behind his desk, not sitting down. He had several telephones and was constantly talking to the front. He had the telephones next to him and was holding a phone when I entered. My eyes met his. His eyes strayed briefly and he did not answer me. After one or two minutes he replied and said: Good morning Anwar. This sight alone was sufficient to cause me some kind of a shock. When I entered his office, I was happy and joyful. As I drove, I had the radio on all the time. While I was on my way from Al-Haram, I heard that we had shot down 20 or 30 planes. By the time I reached the armed forces command, I had heard that we had shot down some 70 planes. I said to myself: Naturally they will be beaten.

Truthfully I was shocked. Why? Because of the sight of 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir with his eyes straying when he answered me after a time, I sat on the couch where several of our brothers were sitting. I heard 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir completing his instructions to the front. 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir sat down. A little later I asked: What has happened, fellows? Immediately I realized from the sight of 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir that something had happened. I asked: What has happened. They said: The whole air force was hit. The Egyptian Air Force is finished.

At the 2 June meeting, Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir had addressed the air force commander by name, saying: Sidqi, the first strike will be against the air force. Moreover, anyone who goes back to the Saturday, 3 June edition of AL-AHRAM will find on page two of the foreign news column a report from England saying that Israel will wage war and that the first thing it will do is to strike at the Egyptian Air Force. This report was published on page 2 of the Saturday, 3 June, edition of AL-AHRAM, two days before the war.

[Question] What is Your Excellency's opinion on this subject?

[Answer] My opinion? Well, why am I mentioning this? I am mentioning it because it is a subject which does not need military genius. Even for people unfamiliar with military science, it was clear that the first strike would be dealt to the air force. However, I am mentioning all this for one reason only. Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir, who is now with God, said this on Friday evening, 2 June. We must tell all the facts today. The history of the war is known. It was not Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir alone who said this. No. This was the conclusion of analysts in England. Ordinary people can also analyze. In modern warfare, the first thing to be done is to deal a blow to the air force as I did in October 1973. I made the first strike against the Israeli Air Force by using 222 planes. The first air strike put Israel off balance for 4 days. Meanwhile, my forces, including tanks and armor, made the crossing. The bridges were set up, although they were bridges of World War II. The Russians had bridges which could be set up in half an hour, but they refused to send them to me until after the operation ended. I received these bridges after the end of the operations. My sons in Egypt might be happy to know that when we received the Russian bridges, we devised similar bridges here in Egypt. Our military plants and engineering corps devised similar bridges. In military parades, the Russian bridge is exhibited and is followed by a completely identical Egyptian-made bridge--a bridge which can be set up in half an hour.

However, I made the crossing in 1973 with bridges which take 6 hours to set up--bridges which the engineering corps needs 6 hours to set up under air raids. Israel was unable to put one single bridge out of commission. All that happened was that the commander of the engineering corps, Hamdi, may his soul rest in peace, died. I have named the tunnel we are now building after him, because it is located in the same place where the commander of the engineering corps died on the bridge. The commander of the engineering corps is the highest rank in the engineering corps. He was supposed to stay behind. However, none of my armed forces officers stayed behind. None, all of them were ahead of their troops. They crossed before their men. It was a truly remarkable epic.

Take Sidrak. He was a great commander. In other armies, officers and men march ahead and occupy territory, then the commanders follow. These are the military rules. This was not the case with us. Sidrak led his men in the crossing. He died in the crossing and was awarded the Sinai Star. The Sinai Star is the highest military medal in Egypt. I requested this from the People's Assembly and it approved my request. The assembly approved the law for granting this medal. This medal is granted only to those who rendered more than distinguished service. This is why most of those who received the medal are martyrs. The number of those awarded it was limited so that this military medal will retain its special value. This medal gives privileges in wages and many other things.

[Question] Mr President, on this historic occasion, I believe we would like to hear from you the story of the air strike puzzle.

[Answer] The air strike was not a puzzle. There were many errors. The first error was that, after the 1956 battle, we insisted that there should be concrete hangars at the airports to protect the air force. This is done in Israel. It is not new military theory or genius. We saw hangars every time we photographed Israeli airfields.

There were no hangars here. Our planes remained in the open. There were many errors. Defense of airports in the past followed a certain tradition. We called it the tradition of independent states. It existed both in the government and in the armed forces in Egypt. What is the story of the independent states? The air force was an independent state and the navy was an independent sovereign state.

For this reason, there were guns positioned around the airports to defend against low-flying aircraft and missiles against aircraft flying at high altitude. Fine. As we know, the missiles belong to the artillery. The guns around the airports, which are to intercept low-flying aircraft when they descend to strike at the runways with the so-called runway bombs to destroy these runways and thus prevent planes from taking off--as we know every minute counts--actually these guns existed. But why did they not fire?

In the independent states that existed in the armed forces at the time, the air force said that the guns should have been under the army general command. The artillery said they should have been under the artillery command. They did not reach a solution. No orders were issued. The Israelis struck and destroyed the runways with runway bombs. They then destroyed the planes out in the open.

There was gross negligence at the highest levels of responsibility indeed. This is part of the story. The air strike was not a puzzle. The proof is that whoever goes back to what AL-AHRAM wrote on 3 June--that is 2 days before the war--will find that on page 2 of that paper, the page on foreign news, a news report datelined London saying that Israel would enter the war and that the first thing it would do was to strike at the Egyptian Air Force.

[Question] Indeed, this is what makes it a puzzle. Because they knew about the air strike and were informed. Yet the air strike took place.

[Answer] I say there was negligence which goes up to other levels. Some unforgivable mistakes were committed by the military. During the 1973 war, I told my sons in the armed forces: Each of you should implement his plan. Do not be afraid. I support you and assume full responsibility. No one should be afraid of making mistakes. Because I am sure that any mistakes will be ordinary mistakes resulting from action taken.

Negligence was something else. I would not have allowed negligence. There were cases of negligence during the war. The persons involved were tried and executed. To me, negligence is something that cannot be accepted by the military mind even in a modest military school in Africa. Planes were put in advanced airfields in Sinai only 5 minutes flying time from Israel. The planes were put in those airfields in rows.

All it would have taken was for an Israeli pilot to hit one plane and the rest would have been burned. There were many errors. I hope none of those who are finding mistakes against the 23 July Revolution take that as an example of the revolution.

No, in 1973, Husni Mubarak performed what was more than a miracle. To put it simply and without going into detail, throughout the 17 days of the war, the air raid warning was heard only twice in Cairo, each time for 1 or 2 minutes. This was sufficient. Husni was protecting our skies from the southernmost point in Aswan to the northernmost point in Alexandria, and from the easternmost point to the westernmost point. He waged the air battles without giving the Israelis a free hand in Egyptian airspace as happened in the 5 June 1967 war. He did all this in addition to his strikes on the front.

I said previously that for the first time in military history, the air force commander tells other commanders: Commanders of the armies, do you want air force support or not. I have reserve pilots. They told him: No thank you.

This has never happened, even in World War II. There was always conflict between commanders, especially between the ground forces and the air forces and between the ground forces and the navy. They all rely on the air force. Because anyone whether on the ground or on the sea, wants air cover. When he is facing an attack, he wants to see the air force ready to protect. The air force is called on to rush support over a vast territory.

Husni Mubarak saw to it that not a single enemy plane penetrated the 180-km front or entered Egyptian air space from the southernmost point in Aswan to the northernmost point in Alexandria, and from the easternmost point to the westernmost point. Even if an enemy plane managed to penetrate to strike at our airports, it was forced to drop its bombs before reaching the airport and flee.

[Question] We are reviewing the 1967 setback. We have not yet come to the October 1973 stage on the occasion of which we are meeting with you today. However, when you refer to 1967 and point out the reasons for the setback, the greatness of the Egyptians in 1973 looms high. The present generation has experienced these events. However, there are still certain vague points concerning the period just after the setback and the background in which our people and army rebuilt themselves until we entered 1973. We would like Your Excellency to clarify these points.

[Answer] Concerning myself, I would like to tell a story about this period. The story reflects everyone's feelings at the time. As I said, I returned on 5 June when I heard that the air force was completely destroyed. [as heard] I knew why 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir was not looking straight at me when he was talking to me. I sat dumbfounded. A little later the door of the lounge leading to 'Abd al-Hakim's office opened. Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir came out. There was an argument between Jamal and 'Abd al-Hakim. 'Abd al-Hakim said: Get me the markings of one American plane. Jamal told him: Get me the tail of a single plane with U.S. markings on it and I will make an announcement. We should not blame the United States for our mistakes by saying that it was the United States that struck us. So far, the evidence shows that it was the Israelis who struck.

'Abd al-Hakim wanted to cover up what had actually happened.. He said it was the United States that struck the Egyptian airports thus provoking the severance of diplomatic relations. This way the mistake would be covered.

Jamal then turned to us. I and some of my colleagues were sitting. He said: Gentlemen, let us leave 'Abd al-Hakim to do his job. Let us go. At that time we were in 'Abd al-Hakim's room. The operations room was under 'Abd al-Hakim's office. We all left. On that day, 5 June, I returned home. I did not leave until 4 days later. On Friday, 9 June, the supreme command of the armed forces issued a statement saying that the Israelis had crossed to the west bank of the canal. Their crossing to the west bank meant that Cairo was the target. I knew from what went on 5-9 June, I knew that unfortunately our armed forces had been dealt a fatal blow and we no longer had armed forces. I remained at home 5-9 June. I only contacted 'Abd an-Nasir at his home. I ceased contacting the army command because on the evening of 5 June, I telephoned and said: What is the battle line, 'Abd al-Hakim. He said that the Israelis had reached Al-'Arish.

When he tells me this, as a military man I understand that the battle is over. There is something in military affairs called a firm base. Nobody launches an attack or anything else except from a firm base. It is called "firm base" in English. The firm base of our forces in the Sinai was Al-'Arish. If Al-'Arish falls, I do not need anyone to tell me what will happen then. This took place on the night of 5 June.

It did not happen in 1956. In 1956, Al-'Arish did not fall on the first, second or third day. It only fell after the withdrawal of all the Egyptian forces in a sound military manner, although the Jews were in front of us and the British and French behind us.

However, on 5 June disaster took place. At sunset on 5 June they were in Al-'Arish. They reached Al-'Arish from the northern door which I spoke about. It does not take a military genius to know this. Any military man knows that the northern door is the gate to Egypt. They turned round fan-wise and came to Al-'Arish. This is what made me say that at the meeting on Friday, 2 June when 'Abd an-Nasir saw that the forces were weak, he told them: Strengthen the forces with an armored brigade and another mechanized force.

Unfortunately, the plan was changed after Friday. Instead of having an armored brigade on the northern door, reinforced by a mechanized force in addition to the ground forces, that is infantry, artillery, tanks and so forth--this armored brigade and the mechanized force were withdrawn and the ground forces were left there. The result was that they were besieged by the Jews inside the fan. The Jews besieged them and continued their descent leaving our forces to be liquidated later. They reached Al-'Arish at sunset.

Everything is over. Because he tells me that Al-'Arish has fallen, I understand that the battle is over. I learned this on 5 June. I did not leave the house. Thank God, my household noticed the state I was in and left me alone. I would get out of bed, go to my study downstairs, sit there for a while and return to the bedroom. This went on for 4 days, until Friday, 9 June.

On Friday 9 June I heard a statement saying that the Israelis had reached the west bank. They were on their way to Cairo. Should we sit and wait for them to reach Cairo? No. I immediately went to the People's Assembly. At the time I was the People's Assembly speaker. I gathered the members, especially the military ones, and found that they numbered about 40. I asked each one of them to prepare 100-200 persons from his constituency to leave immediately. I created a center in the assembly to contact the members and facilitate contact between me and the members to tell them to send their people so as to begin a popular resistance and fight our battle the way any human being fights who finds the enemy attacking his country. Could I let them enter the west bank and reach Cairo? No.

I said I will go to meet the Israelis in Ash-Sharqiyah Province because since they were coming, Ash-Sharqiyah Province would be the Suez road to Cairo. They have to be in both these areas. I said we will go and fight and wage guerrilla warfare with these numbers. Let us say, for instance, that there were 300 members out of 360 and if each brought 100-200 persons, then it would be a big operation involving thousands to begin a popular resistance. This is what I thought of. Actually, on Friday I went to the People's Assembly and then left for 'Abd an-Nasir's house.

Friday morning, 9 June: I found 'Abd an-Nasir in the study. I said: Jamal, what are you doing? I found him calmly sitting there. He was reading a paper in front of him which turned out to be his speech which he made on Friday and which he was to make on 7 June at night. I said: Jamal, what are you doing, sitting like that? He said: What do you want me to do, Anwar? I said: Get up and we will take you to upper Egypt. We will begin a popular resistance. We will resist until the last centimeter of Egyptian soil is gone. Get up and we will take you to upper Egypt. I do not want you to collapse because of the first battle. Do you want them to come and see you sitting at home? You represent the resistance and the entire country. Get up and we will take you to upper Egypt. I told him about what I had done with the People's Assembly members and that I was on my way to meet the Israelis in Ash-Sharqiyah Province or on the road to Suez. We will fight them wherever they come from.

As a matter of fact, I used to say it would be better for me to die fighting my battle instead of having them come to my house in Cairo. Thus I did what I have said.

I asked Jamal: What are you doing? He said: I am revising the speech which I will deliver at 1900 today. I said: I know that you said you will deliver a speech at 1900. Did you or did you not hear the statement issued by the command? He said: I heard it. I told him: The Jews have reached the west bank. This means that they are coming. You are taking the situation too calmly. I am telling you get up and let us take you to upper Egypt and begin a resistance. He said: They have not reached the west bank, Anwar. I told him: I heard the statement with my own ears. He said: I heard it like you and asked the command. It turns out that the nerves of the people in the command have collapsed.

What is the story? The story is that while some of our officer sons who were withdrawing from the Sinai crossed the canal at Ismailia and landed on the west bank they found the Jews had arrived on the east. [as heard] Some of our officers--who reject this talk because the fact is that the armed forces were wrong and this is not their performance because we have 1973--when one of these officers saw the Jews on the west bank before him, he became excited. He set up his mortar and opened fire on the Jews on the east bank. [as heard] The Jews quickly gave their signal. The Israeli Air Force came and struck at a paint factory in Ismailia west of the canal. By the way, this paint factory became part of the Canal University area this year and forms a landmark of the Canal University in Ismailia.

[Question] History changes?

[Answer] Yes. 'Abd an-Nasir said: Never. If you ask me, they never landed on the west bank or anything else. When I inquired I found out that an Egyptian officer of our sons became excited when he saw them on the east bank. He opened mortar fire on them. They signaled and summoned the air force which struck the factory. They intended this as a kind of retaliatory action.

He then told me: God, did you believe the story that they landed on the west bank. How? Could they come and enter the densely populated areas? He said to me, no. I said I heard the statement from the command. In fact I, like you, know that they cannot come at all into the densely populated areas in the delta. To make it easier for the people to understand we will remember that the Jews tried in the breach [meaning the Deversoir bulge] seize Suez or Ismailia or only Suez.

Despite the fact that the population of the two towns had been evacuated, the Jews could not seize them. They concentrated on Suez with a view to seizing it so as to exploit its name because the canal is international. At the time they wanted something to raise their morale. Thus they concentrated on it. Thirteen of their tanks were hit at the approaches to Suez. Two sneaked in together with one vehicle and 32 men. The people of Suez, of whom only about 5,000 were left in the town after all the others had been evacuated, got hold of them. Town fighting is not easy.

I said to him: By God, this is what I heard in the military communique. He was quite aware. He had started to be quite aware of the trick Johnson had played on him. He said to me: By God, this battle is intended for me personally, Anwar. East of the canal is the final line drawn for their advance because they do not know at all how to deal with the densely populated areas here. This line is drawn up for them because it would be sufficient for them to reach the east bank of the canal to slap me personally. They have actually slapped me. It's that simple.

All right, what will you say in the statement this evening, Jamal?

He told me: I will step down.

I stayed with him a little and then I returned to the People's Assembly. I sat in my office until he delivered the statement. Then the operation began in which all the people came out to the point where nobody could move from one place to another because the streets were filled by 2-3 million people. They marched on the People's Assembly and 'Abd an-Nasir's residence. After that and after the return of Jamal, you ask me what then so as to give an idea of how a person can take that catastrophe. I returned from the People's Assembly on the 10th. I did not go home on the night of 9-10 October because it was impossible. The clamoring millions were in the streets and they did not go away until noon the following day, the 10th. I also walked back then after 'Abd an-Nasir's return. I arrived at home, remained there and did not go out for 21 days. I did not even speak to my children. I am happy because they truly understood and respected this.

During these 21 days and just like the other 4 days from 5 to 9 June, I used to go down to my study at home and then back up to my bedroom. I was unable to analyze what had happened and why. No, I could not analyze it, truly. After 20 days of sitting there, reading was difficult so I turned to writing. Writing calmed me down. I sat down and wrote what happened so as to analyze it. Is Israel superior to us militarily? Are Israeli arms modern and ours outdated? Did any military surprises occur during the battle and our sons were unable to deal with them? These were my analyses and writings. As for the Israeli psychological propaganda, they were skilled at it. They seized the opportunity and whom did they concentrate on? On Egypt, because it is the big force. They concentrated on Egypt and as a result Dayan lost control of himself after the October war. We triumphed and did even more. As part of the psychological warfare, Dayan simply said that the Israeli soldier is invincible and that the Egyptians do not fight. He said to the effect that if you ask me to say in sequence who fought, I will say the forces which fought are: 1. The Jordanian forces and 2. Syria. Thereafter, and a long way after them, comes Egypt because it did not demonstrate performance or soldiering. This talk cost him very dearly later. God willed that on that day Dayan should say: I am sitting by the telephone waiting for the Arabs to contact me.

Dayan is fond of appearances. The propaganda referred to him as Dayan, a defense minister and Rommel's successor as the desert fox, and he personally loves such propaganda very much. He was thus sitting by the telephone. All right. This talk cost him dearly. He is finished forever. He did not make a comeback even if he is a foreign minister. Wherever he goes, the families, the daughters and wives of the soldiers who died come out. No one can have an idea of the kind of curses hurled. He is finished for good. Why?

[Question] Do you think he can forget the black Monday, the black Monday of the tanks?

[Answer] Black Monday of the tanks? He will not forget it. He will also not forget the fourth day. Monday was the third day. The fourth day was Tuesday. The battle took place on Saturday. On Tuesday he stood opposite the Egyptian front with all foreign correspondents. As usual they brought foreign correspondents to show them their victories and our disappointment. They thought this time would be the same as in the past. He stood directly before the Egyptian front and behind the Israeli forces, wept in front of the foreign correspondents and made his well-known remark: "We cannot move the Egyptians 2 inches and the road to Tel Aviv is open." He returned from the Sinai to Tel Aviv in front of the foreign correspondents to speak over the radio. Golda Meir came to him and said we have had enough demoralization; do not destroy the morale we have remaining in the country.

[Question] This is a great comparison.

[Answer] We began a new page and man began to feel psychologically at ease.

[Question] Dayan's stand now and then?

[Answer] Undoubtedly, the same thing happened when he spoke at the rallies prepared for him which he, young men and students attended. On the day of victory he said our generation expanded the Israeli border from Al-Qantarah to Al-Qunaytirah, which is a play on words. This is true. Our Al-Qantarah in the east was in their hands and Syria's Al-Qunaytirah was also in their hands. Dayan told them we have expanded to between Al-Qantarah and Al-Qunaytirah and you are the generation who must complete Israel's mission, that is, to take it from the Nile to the Euphrates. This is the reason why later I told 'Abd an-Nasir, Minister of War General Fawzi and 'Abd al-Mun'im Riyad, may God have mercy on his soul--Fawzi is still alive and Riyad died--I told them that I was going to enter Al-Qantarah. I did not imagine that 'Abd an-Nasir was going to die. I told them that when the battle begins I will go to Al-Qantarah and enter the battle in the east. This is because I wanted to say to Dayan: You cannot keep Al-Qantarah or say that your borders run from Al-Qantarah to Al-Qunaytirah. No, I was confident of this.

'Abd an-Nasir died and I became president. I was unable to fight the battle although I wanted to like any other soldier. To me there was a feeling of revenge. I could not give up revenge. The strange thing is that on 5 June 1973 the Israelis were in Al-Qantarah in the east. The battle began after well over 2 months. On 5 June I stood in our position opposite Al-Qantarah with Field Marshal Isma'il. I said to him: Isma'il, who is going to conduct the Al-Qantarah battle? He said: Fu'ad Ghali. I said: Bring him here. Fu'ad came to our position. Ours was not only a defensive position, but also a position preparing for an offensive. When I appointed Isma'il I asked him to reassess the defensive plan, insure its security and simultaneously make preparations for the attack.

The offensive and its preparations required a long time as well as many other things. All this was done and the Israelis did not perceive anything, but they perceived.... [interviewer interrupts]

[Question] They were on the other bank?

[Answer] I remained standing. I had Fu'ad Ghali brought while I was standing. Our position with the offensive preparations commanded the Sinai because we were able to observe over a distance of 10 km. We built these positions because the previous minister regrettably had neglected to build them. I consider this to be treason. Isma'il came and corrected all of this. I was standing in that position and looking at the Sinai. I was able to see 10 km. The Jews knew that on 5 June I would be on the front. When I stood at any of these sites the upper half of my body was clearly visible. The Jews would quickly move and stand up. They would see me and Fu'ad Ghali. I asked him to explain to me the battle on the ground. I told him that I was going to fight this battle as if 'Abd an-Nasir were alive. He said: Yes I know. I said: Tell me your plan which I approved some time ago. I know everything about the plan, particularly topographic representation. One stage of the plan is presenting a topographic representation of the battlefield with all the staff attending. In this representation, which is exactly the same as is what is going to happen, but on a small scale, one would ask about where he would go, what his first stages were going to be and where the battlefield is going to be.

I said to Fu'ad: Tell me here so as to be reassured about the Al-Qantarrah battle. He told me and the Jews saw me. They did not believe that my visit to the front on 5 June 1973 was to give the final orders of the plan and to hear the plans of each commander on the spot. I wanted the staff to say what you see is called so and so, the range is so and so and the time is so and so. I wanted the timing down to the minute.

[Question] That occurred at a time when no one in the world, not even in Egypt, expected that war might break out?

[Answer] Regrettably, I was not concerned about the world. What actually disturbed me here in the Arab nation were the writers and journalists who thought they were analysts. I was disturbed by their writings and the infection that came to Cairo from Beirut. The journalists began their wave of pessimism which I considered at one time to be treason, not pessimism.

Because if I said it is hopeless and wrote in my newspapers to my armed forces and people that the crossing is hopeless and we cannot achieve anything, I would be destroying the entity of a whole people. Incidentally, I regret to say that the Russians also participated in this campaign. The chief Soviet expert who was here before I expelled the Russian experts in 1972 was telling this to Ahmad Isma'il, before he too was expelled from the army. I brought Ahmad Isma'il back to the army after he had been pensioned off and expelled from the armed forces. The chief Russian expert was the last to stay here. He talked to Ahmad Isma'il. After that I expelled all the Russian experts. The chief Russian expert went to the front and to the western bank of the canal. After seeing things there, he told Ahmad Isma'il: You will need an atomic bomb to cross, nothing less than an atomic bomb. With the positions and things I see in front of me, including the Bar-Lev line, you will need an atomic bomb to cross.

This is recorded, furthermore, in order to undermine our morale to prevent us from taking any sort of action, they used in the statement which was issued after the first detente meeting in Moscow in 1972; "military relaxation" [in the Middle East]. They meant, and they do not deny it, to tell us: Beware of the battle. Do not ever enter into battle.

They had no confidence in us and they did not want to engage in a dispute with the United States if a war broke out. Simply and plainly speaking, they told us we should not go to war.

I have here--I mean with the commander of the air force and with their own signatures--the Russian assessment. According to their assessment, the Egyptian Air Force would lose 60 percent of its strength in the first strike and we would achieve a maximum of 30 percent in results. This means that if we sent 100 planes, we would lose 60 and would only score one third or less hits on the targets. Well, what did happen in 1973?

[Question] Mr President, we have not yet reached the point of the 1973 war. We want to tackle the subject from a specific standpoint according to the sequence of events, with Your Excellency's permission, if you do not mind.

[Answer] The events are all interlocked in my mind, one with the other.

[Question] We have reached the point of discussing the 1967 setback. It was a tragedy for the country and for the entire area. Did we pull ourselves together after that?

[Answer] Well, you want to take me back. Never mind. As I said, I am writing and I will write about what did happen. Why? For 21 days my wife used to go to the hospitals to visit the wounded. The truth is that in the 1967 and the 1973 wars, Egyptian women acted according to the highest standards of shouldering genuine responsibility. It did not occur to anyone that women would act with such concern. The women were in hospitals with our sons and the wounded. They also served as nurses. This was done in 1967, not just in 1973. My wife used to go out to hospitals and come back late in the day to tell me what she saw, particularly in Al-Ma'adi hospital. Our wounded officers were excited. One of our sons in Ismailia set up his mortar and began to shoot at the Israelis in the east bank. In Al-Ma'adi hospital, the wounded became hysterical every time they heard the sound of a plane. They used to run out of control and say: We want to fight. We want to die.

Every time they heard a plane, they would recall what had happened. Then they developed the feeling that they were not given a chance to fight. This brought on hysteria. They said: We want to fight. We want to die. In Al-Ma'adi hospital's psychiatric section, a tragedy involving one of these sons of ours took place. I was hearing all this and collapsing further. What has happened? I know that our sons have been like this all their lives. I am an armed forces officer to start with and I have not forgotten and will never forget that period. It is true that I stayed outside the armed forces for 29 and 1/2 years, but this does not mean that I do not know what our armed forces are like.

On the 20th day after the war, my wife told me that the tank officers who waged the 7 June battle in Sinai were at Al-Ma'adi hospital. She saw them and saw their commander. The commander of the brigade was Maj Gen Kamal Hasan 'Ali. She asked them what had happened on the seventh. My assessment was that we suffered the tragedy on 5 June--our strong base had collapsed and the operation was over.

On 7 June, there was an armored brigade in the middle of Sinai under the command of Maj Gen Kamal Hasan 'Ali. On 8 June, newspapers quoted a statement by Dayan saying that the Egyptians carried out a counteroffensive and would have succeeded in it had it not been for the intervention of the Israeli Air Force and tanks, and so forth.

Using the tactics of psychological warfare and propaganda, Israel inflated the operation to assert the efficiency of its military performance while in fact there was no military action in 1967. To be frank, no. What did happen was that we withdrew with great bitterness and disappointment and Israel did not fight at all in the 1967. Israel did not find anybody to fight because our forces were dispersed. I read what was written in those days. Of course I read on 8 June that there was a counterattack by tanks in Sinai. But my wife came and told me this. For 20 days, I stayed in a state of silence and was analyzing things. This almost consumed me from within. I died a hundred times every day.

I immediately went to the Al-Ma'adi hospital and enquired about the men of the brigade who had carried out the counterattack. The hospital officials told me they were there, including the commander and the officers. They also told me that two young officers had to be operated on because of shrapnel wounds in their heads. The officials told me that they would operate on them tomorrow and that there was nothing to worry about because the operations were minor. I said OK, but I have to come tomorrow to see the commander and the officers before they are operated on.

Next day, I went to the hospital and asked for the brigade commander Kamal Hasan 'Ali. I found him there with a rocket fragment in his side. I knew Kamal. I asked him: Did you wage the battle on the 7th? He said, yes, I was a commander of an armored brigade there. I said: My Son, I have been trying for the past 20 days to determine whether Israel has waged a vicious psychological war. Is this true: Were you surprised by anything? Were you unaware of the sophisticated weapons? He said: Not at all. I asked him: Was Israel's performance legendary? Not at all, he replied. I asked him: Were the Israeli tanks superior to yours? Not at all, he replied. I asked him: Was your training not good enough to qualify you for waging a battle? He said: Not at all. I listened to all these answers with astonishment. I then asked him to tell me the whole story.

He said: "I was a commander of an armored brigade in the central Sinai. I was instructed on 5, 6 and 7 June to move from posts in (Kortella) to Al-'Arish and back to central Sinai." They were aimless movements. He said: "I was carrying out these moves because the air force was hit on 5 June. I was executing every single order I received." It was clear on 7 June that our air force was completely disabled and the the Israeli Air Force was monopolizing the sky.

Despite the superiority of the Israeli Air Force and repeated air strikes for 3 days, this brigade commander had only lost 20 tanks of his brigade. Our brigade comprises 100 tanks. He lost 20, but he shot down 5 Israeli planes with his antiaircraft guns because the planes were flying low to hit the tanks. What I mean here is that Kamal shot down more planes in Sinai than our missiles did in Cairo. Every armored brigade, in addition to the 100 tanks, includes antiaircraft guns. It is considered one complete unit in every part of the world. The armored brigade is the strongest unit that can play an effective role in the battle.

I asked Brigade Commander Kamal Hasan 'Ali: "What happened?" He said; "There were no more instructions on 7 June. The tanks carried on their actions." From the military standpoint, tanks continue their actions when other forces are out of action. The tank can go into a ditch with very little of it showing. The tank can only be disabled by a direct hit. This is known to every army and our sons are fully aware of it.

He said: "I was taking up positions in my trenches. I was supposed to leave the trenches for combat at the opportune time." The tank would stay covered inside the trench with its gun pointing above the trench. He told me: "While I was in my trenches on 7 June, they confused me. They ordered me to retreat from the (Kortella) and Al-'Arish. They told me that Al-'Arish was occupied and ordered me to retreat to the central Sinai." They confused him.

From the practical standpoint, this is a military mistake. According to international standards of military professionalism, tanks are not supposed to run on their treads except in the battlefield. Huge tank transport vehicles are supposed to transport the tanks to the closest spot at the battlefield to spare the tank treads from being worn out. The orders issued to him were wrong to start with. It was a military mistake and does not need military genius to recognize. We know that tank treads should not be worn out during the trip to the battlefield or in moving from one place to another but should be saved for combat because during combat the tank might have to cover 1,000 km in hit and run tactics.

Tank treads can be damaged. Moreover, it can cover at least 1,000 km before it suffers any damage. This is why we like to keep the tank treads intact. The transport vehicles are supposed to transport the tanks to the closest possible theatre of combat and then come back, leaving the tanks behind.

He told me they confused him. "After I covered some 1,000 km on the treads, coming and going and in trenches, I received no further orders. Afterward, while my tanks were in the trenches, I was surprised by an Israeli Air Force raid and lost 20 tanks." The Israeli Air Force had been flying above his brigade since 5 June. He had 80 tanks left. He also told me: "An Israeli tank column was heading toward me. When they made the air force strike, our tanks were in their trenches. So they sent their tanks to fight a tank battle with us because in the first 3 days of the war, they had only destroyed 20 of our tanks, although they enjoyed superiority in the air. I saw the Israeli tank column heading toward me ready for combat. Since they were ready for combat, they were spread out."

According to the tank warfare tactics, each tank maintains a distance away from the others. However, they all had a specific objective and all the tanks were heading toward me. In that case, there might be an offensive from one flank, a face-to-face offensive, or a cover-up offensive. The offensive from the flank is the most important. These are tactics which our tank warfare specialists know and people all over the world know as well.

He added: "I found the Israeli tank column in front of me ready for combat. They were ready for battle. I ordered my men to take the tanks out of the trenches, to face the Israeli tanks and be ready for combat and open fire. As my tanks opened fire first, we destroyed seven Israeli tanks. The rest of the tanks of the Israeli column withdrew. We went after them."

He and his officers were deeply moved and happy. They went after the Israeli tanks while realizing that Israel had air superiority. The Israeli tanks withdrew and decided to destroy the rest of the Egyptian tanks by signalling the air force to come and destroy them. This was an example of the cooperation between the various Israeli corps and a lesson for independent states to learn. No one single corps can enter a battle independently. With a signal from a soldier in the battlefield, the air force will come to help in a couple of minutes.

In our case, all forces are under one single command. Before action, they had to acquire permission from the air force, and so forth. Of course all this changed in 1973. This is why our performance in 1973 was very remarkable.

He told me: "We destroyed seven Israeli tanks in the first action." I asked: "I have a question, Kamal. Was the fire of our tanks effective?" He said: "It was more than effective. When we fired at the Israeli tanks, we did not just score hits at them. Because of the strength of the explosives which our sons are well trained to fire, the Israeli tanks turned over and were destroyed." When our tanks opened fire, the strength of the impact turned over the Jewish tanks, which they got from the Americans.

I asked him: "Was this what really happened?"

He said: "I have here two junior second lieutenants who received shrapnel wounds in their heads. They are new in the army and graduated recently from the military college. They are trained according to the highest standard in the world. They fought the battle and received small shrapnel wounds in their heads. They shaved their heads in order to operate on them. Thank God these were not fatal wounds. I tell you these two officers were with me and were among those who fought."

I asked: "Well, Kamal, what about these Israeli claims that they suddenly started firing missiles at you, while their tank columns were attacking you?" He said: "This is part of the psychological warfare. There was talk that the Israeli tanks retreated, after which a hail of missiles pounded the Egyptian tanks. They used such tactics of psychological warfare on the Arabs to persuade them that it is hopeless for them to fight and that they are as good as dead. There were no missiles or anything of this sort. I am telling Your Excellency that my tank fire not only scored hits on the Israeli tanks but turned them over as well."

I asked: "Did they hit any of your tanks?"

He said: "Not at all, although in tank warfare, when one side opens fire, the other side returns the fire immediately because everyone has his hand on the trigger. They did not destroy any of my tanks. On the contrary, they retreated and I went after them."

I asked: "Then what?"

He said: "They requested air cover, and the air force came before we could dig trenches. We were still on the surface. The air force hit our tanks one by one and they lost no time. They hit the ammunition vehicle which we dragged behind us. When the ammunition exploded, everything nearly exploded as well. Then they hunted down our tanks one by one."

Finally, they hit his tank and he was wounded by shrapnel from one of his tank missiles, after which he lost consciousness and woke up to find himself in Al-Ma'adi hospital. Thus we did not suffer from any military incompetence, lack of training, armament, ability to maneuver, surprises, or new technology beyond us to absorb, as the philosophical Arabs in Beirut and Cairo unfortunately tried to say to demoralize the country.

I say this talk is enough to cover the period before 1973 because it explains everything I want to say or portray of that period.

[Question] Before we end our talk about the 1967 war, its history and the statements that have been or will be made by its commanders, a political and military appraisal of 1967 war will soon be prepared and made public.

[Answer] The People's Assembly committee has recently issued a decision to form an investigation commission to look into our 5 June defeat. The appraisal you are talking about exists in our armed forces.

[Question] Is it a military appraisal?

[Answer] Yes, we have it in the armed forces and it is under study by the historical committee in a military sense because this is a basic military question. We must evaluate every successful and unsuccessful battle we fight and then keep a record to serve as a lesson for military science.

[Question] We now move to the preparations for the 1973 war.

[Answer] Preparations for 1973 war were many and varied. I do not know where to begin.

[Question] The army began its reorganization, the people began calling for revenge, the war of attrition started between us and the enemy, the supreme powers imposed military relaxation on us, the world looked down on us. Then what?

[Answer] This means the beginning came before I became president. We passed through many stages from June 1967 to the death of 'Abd an-Nasir in September 1970. The first stage was that of rebuilding our armed forces because, without exaggeration, we had lost our armed forces. As 'Abd an-Nasir once said, we had no soldiers left between Suez and Cairo. There were no armed forces because the army was taken by surprise and the enemy had air superiority. The most dangerous thing is air superiority or air predominance. We say superiority when we have some arms left with which to confront the enemy, but predominance means that one party has completely destroyed the power of the other. They had this air predominance, so they seriously harmed and dispersed our armed forces.

However, we have our military traditions without which we could not have reorganized our armed forces. When the Russians supplied us with arms in June and July to reinforce a defense line west of the canal and in front of Jews on the eastern bank, our training centers were open 24 hours a day. This is an example of Egypt's power and mobility. An example of this was the building of SAM 1, 2 and 3 rocket bases, which I am going to discuss later. This is not confined to the training centers but also to the contractors, workers and Egyptian civil engineers who achieved a miracle in the real sense of the word. In 40 days they managed to build army positions worth 40 million pounds.

That is, they constructed bases worth 1 million pounds a day. All these were designed and built by Egyptian engineers and workers. These included underground aircraft hangars built without asking the Russians or anybody else to design a shelter or anything else. We implemented all these things in the most skilled way.

I can say that in the period between 1967 and the death of 'Abd an-Nasir in 1970 we passed through many stages and we corrected mistakes. At first, as I have said, we opened training centers with the aim of quickly forming a military line on the west side of the canal in front of the Jews on the east side. Behind this line we were able to be at peace while rebuilding the rest of the armed forces. The one who was in charge of rebuilding this line from Port Said in the north to Suez in the south, a distance of about 180 km, was the late Field Marshal Isma'il, may God have mercy on his soul. He was then the commander of the front. At that time we just called it the front and there was no army. It was one line stretching from Port Said in the north to south of Suez--a line 180 km long. The miracle which took place was that in less than 5 months the Russians, as I said, sent us shipments of arms in June and July and then they stopped. They said: If you can absorb what we have sent you within a year and 1/2, you will be a great state. They also treated 'Abd an-Nasir in the same fashion. Why did they have to treat us like this? They sent us arms through an airlift and a sea-bridge. Why didn't they continue their good deed? Two months after the defeat and after they sent us arms and then stopped, 'Abd an-Nasir was angry. He sent for Tito and told him: Go to the Russians and tell them that I will not accept being treated like this. I would rather die than see Israel enter the country. I will not accept this treatment of my requests meeting with silence. This was in August 1967. They had sent us arms in June and July and then stopped. Well, continue the favor and send us the arms. They said: If you absorb these arms in 1 and 1/2 years, you will be a great power, a great country. Training centers were open 24 hours a day. The arms were absorbed and introduced into the frontline on 20 November 1967. June, July, August, September and October passed. Within months and by 20 November all the weapons--the weapons which the Russians said if we could absorb within a year and 1/2 we would be a great state--were absorbed and in place along the line. I remember this date clearly because I was the speaker of the People's Assembly at that time. 'Abd an-Nasir, as the constitution requires, had to open the People's Assembly session with a speech. On the basis of the constitution, the People's Assembly session should be opened not later than the third Saturday in November. If the third Saturday comes and the president does not call the assembly to meet according to the constitution, the assembly has the right to convene even against the will of the president of the republic. This is necessary so no one can rule without the legislative authority. 'Abd an-Nasir was supposed to deliver the opening speech. I told him: Jamal, the constitutional date for convening the assembly is due. He told me: I am sorry, I cannot do it. I asked why? Are you going to abolish the assembly? He said: No. First the line of defense should be established and then I will come to open the assembly session. But, before doing that I cannot speak the way you would like me to speak. There is a line to establish and I am building my armed forces behind this line and I am continuing to resist. I have to tell the people this. But how can I say it when I don't have a line of defense? You should take this into account. I cannot open the People's Assembly session before I establish the line of defense.

The People's Assembly must be able to see, agree with and discuss this matter. Together with our brothers who are conversant with the law we agreed on the agenda of the session. As for the legal date, I had not yet completed the line of defense, namely, before Saturday, 3 September. There was still work to be done, after I had gone to the front I met with Major General Isma'il. In those days, Lieutenant General Isma'il, may God rest his soul, was a general. I asked him: 'Are you ready, Ahmad? He told me: It still remains for me to be prepared before October. I asked him: Are you sure? He told me: Definitely. We went to the secret headquarters and become acquainted with his plan. Then we went out and reviewed the line of defense--north from Port Said to the south of Suez; a distance of 180 km. I found the people in their proper positions and the arms I had received fully utilized. They had carried out the battle of Ra's al-'Ushsh with splendor, the battle of splendor that demonstrated Egypt's strength. The Ra's al-'Ushsh battle took place in July and the setback occurred in June; that is, the defeat occurred in June. In July they carried the battle of Ra's al-'Ushsh, in which the Jewish supply column proceeded under the protection of tanks on the east bank. Our sons from the special forces intercepted this column and found themselves confronting the tanks. They confronted the tanks not with their own tanks, but with their bodies. They devised the wonderful tactic of striking at the first and last tank.

[Question] Perhaps this was the first hope for the soldiers and the people?

[Answer] No, it concerned the people and raising the soldiers' morale. But as far as we are concerned, no. We know that... [sentence incomplete] After I had seen Kamal Hasan 'Ali and heard this story from him, my confidence, I know now, returned. That is, it was not easy to lose this confidence. No, this had indeed raised the morale of the armed forces. It further boosted their enthusiasm and raised their morale. They executed a tremendous tactic with their bodies. The column was advancing and they hit the first and last tank. The tanks in the middle were caught and our sons immediately fired on them from a distance of a few meters and hit them. I know some of those boys; I want to introduce them to the people. I know boys among these, Himmat, between 24 and 25 years old and incapacitated forever, because while they were in their prime of life, 22 or 23 years old, they carried out this operation and their spinal cords were severed. An injury to the spinal cord incapacitates a human for life.

[Question] Your Excellency the President, we owe it to them to at least tell the people to salute them.

[Answer] While opening the canal on 5 June, they were with me on board the 6 October destroyer, all of them. In marking any victory, I brought them with me, including those boys who worked in 1967 and not only those who worked in 1973 because they are all the sons of the armed forces. These boys are like roses; these boys of mine are like roses. They are condemned to sitting in a wheelchair.

[Question] These are the ones who raised Egypt's name high.

[Answer] I don't know these people who sit in air-conditioned places, with hot water and in ivory towers--these people who philosophize and make defeatist appeals. I was very sad--I will talk about this in the second part--when some intellectuals tried to cast doubt and got involved in writing a statement. Our sons not only fought the Ra's al-'Ushsh battle in July; they did greater things also when they sunk the destroyer Elat on 21 October. The sinking of the Elat was a splendid thing, because in the darkest hours of defeat we changed the world strategy on naval war.

Since October 1967--4 months after an extremely bitter defeat--there has been a change in naval strategy. It is recorded in military history that the world strategy of naval wars has been changed by an Egyptian missile fired by a boat carrying 17 crew members at a destroyer carrying more than 300 seamen and equipped with the most modern weapons.

What is the story of the destroyer Elat? Israel possessed two big destroyers, one called Elat and the other Haifa. Elat was the flower of the Israeli fleet--not the flower, but the pride of the fleet. It had been built in England.

They did not allow anybody else to make the plans for them or accept the usual plans. No, they added new plans and introduced the missiles into their plans. This destroyer had great firepower. We always measure naval vessels on the basis of their firepower. The aircraft carrier launches planes and is used as an airbase. It is like an airfield on the ground and its power is measured by the amount of bombs and missiles these planes can carry. The battleship carries the heaviest guns and its firepower is great. The battleship is equipped with high-caliber guns capable of extreme ranges. Therefore, it has the biggest firepower. Not many battleships exist in the world today because modern destroyers are being built. The destroyer, like the battleship, is measured by its firepower. Israel equipped its destroyer with huge firepower. Israel also equipped its destroyer with missiles. It had a crew of over 300 men. It was hit by a boat carrying 17 men. This is the secret of the change in the naval strategy. From this date, naval strategy has changed. Anyone studying in a military college anywhere in the world will find that naval strategy changed from this date. There is no more need for big naval vessels. One can equip a small vessel with long-range missiles and with a crew of 17 or 20 men instead of 300 men. This small vessel can provide more firepower than the Elat. A small vessel with two missiles and a 17-man crew proved that with one missile it was possible to wipe out a destroyer with its huge and terrifying firepower and missile power and 300 officers and men.

Look at the contradiction. At the peak of defeat and bitterness we were writing world history, the military history which we wrote again in October. Let us now go back to what we were saying. I called on the late Ahmad Isma'il at the line. He was the commander of the line. No one knew about that. Ahmad Isma'il did not just come out of nowhere. He was the officer who established the first impregnable line against the Israelis from Port Said to south of Suez--some 180 km long--and he was the commander of this entire line. He is the one who carried out the Ra's al-'Ishsh operation. The destroyer Elat was attacked on his orders. All this was done by Ahmad Isma'il, who later was dismissed. The poor man was dismissed and sent home. But I brought him back.

We played a constitutional trick with regard to the convening of the People's Assembly. We agreed to call the People's Assembly on the latest date specified in the constitution to meet the next day. In this way, we issued the invitation and met the constitutional requirement, but the assembly could meet later after the line of defense had been established. This is what happened, although it was a way to get around a legal knot and this may not appeal to some legal experts. But if the law is not designed to serve the homeland and the citizens, there would be no need for law just to control us and to prevent us from ruling ourselves.

When I went to Isma'il at the time, he told me the line would not be ready before 20 November. After I had seen the line, I telephoned him and he told me that the line would definitely be ready on 21 November. I was glad. I told 'Abd an-Nasir that we could open the assembly session on 23 November, giving ourselves 21 and 22 November. I spoke to Isma'il again and he confirmed to me that the line would be ready on 21 November. I passed the information to Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir.

The People's Assembly session in 1967 began on 23 November 1967 after the establishment of the line. 'Abd an-Nasir delivered a speech in which he defined three stages. The first stage was the stage of steadfastness; the second stage was deterrence; and the third stage was liberation. The man did not admit defeat. Therefore, he had to tell the country what would happen. He set three stages; steadfastness, deterrence and liberation.

He delivered the speech. I think this is sufficient. Let us now look to the stage after 'Abd an-Nasir's death. Indeed, it was under 'Abd an-Nasir that the state of steadfastness came. The frontline, which had been one single line, was divided into two sectors and two armies. Each army had its own commander. Many changes took place. I closely followed up certain things such as graduations from our training centers for troops and arms. It was no longer one front and one line. Each army had a sector and each army had a commander. Things happened just as 'Abd an-Nasir had planned. We then began the period of deterrence and the war of attrition in September 1968. The Israelis then came up with the Naja' Hammadi affair and started hitting civilian targets. We stood fast until 1969 when we began what was called the war of attrition. This went on from 1969 to 1970 until 'Abd an-Nasir's death--I don't know--sometimes people have premonitions.

One day 'Abd an-Nasir told me to accompany him to the command headquarters. I have not entered the command headquarters since 5 June. I did not enter it because I honestly considered it a bad omen, and I did not launch the war of 1973 from there. I will never launch a war from there. I don't know--we peasants are (?superstitious) by nature. He told me: Let us go to the command headquarters. I asked: What for? He told me: I have gathered the experts and the commanders. Only 'Abd an-Nasir and myself went from the political command. The rest were military men--War Minister Muhammad Fawzi, all the military commanders at the front and the Russian experts attached to each commander. We sat for 6 hours during which we were briefed on what was called the Plan-200. I have spoken about it before. This is the defensive plan. In military science, a line of defense should exist before any offensive operation is undertaken. The line of defense, west of the canal, should be capable of repulsing any enemy operation and backing any attack we want to launch. One must think of the territory before thinking about attacking. The plan meant that we should establish a strong line of defense which the Israelis, even if they thought of crossing to the west bank of the canal, could not succeed in overrunning. The line should have been able to repulse them and then to pursue them. This was the plan. For 6 hours each commander explained the details of the plan on the map.

After each commander, the Russian expert attached to him stood up and explained and confirmed what the commander had said. At the end of the 6 hours, the commanders and the Russian experts handed 'Abd an-Nasir the complete Defensive Plan 200 and they took responsibility for nothing lacking in it. 'Abd an-Nasir asked me if I had anything to say, because he knew he was going to die. There was no one with him except myself. It was as if he was handing the plan over to me. After that he died, and I took over the office of the president.

My policy has been clear since my first day in office. I would like to state this very simply. I say that if we are not serious enough to assume responsibility and make war, manhood will disappear from Egypt and the Arab nation for many generations to come. People were aware of this before 'Abd an-Nasir died. Minister Muhammad Fawzi knew it. I had told him: Fawzi, I am the one who will attack Al-Qantarah and Ash-Sharqiyah. Make the preparations for the day of attack. I will take over the sector of Al-Qantarah and Ash-Sharqiyah. My opinion is that manhood and our existence as human beings will become extinct if we do not carry out our battle, even if we lose it.

This is what some had foolishly cast doubt on.

'Abd an-Nasir died. Before he died, we reached a decision in this hall. Perhaps some people will ask whether I prefer this place [where the interview was recorded]. Actually I do prefer it. Why? Because every fateful decision I took since the beginning of my term was issued from this hall. This hall also represents something between the village and the city. I am by nature a villager. I like village life. As I tell my colleagues, I have had my share of prison and detention--that is to say, walls. I have had my share and I want to breathe fresh air and see trees. My house in the village is simple. It is not what the clowns say about it. It is the house of an irrigation inspector. Scores of such houses exist along the Nile. I saw the house of the irrigation inspector in Asyut. It is ten times better than this house. These things are part of the stupidities.

We lived in Al-Qanatir. We spent most of the last year of 'Abd an-Nasir's life here. I used to tell 'Abd an-Nasir: By God, Jamal I will make things simple. I told him: if we were able to take 10 centimeters, and to establish ourselves in them--this is, of course, for the sake of argument--the situation on the Arab and international levels would change. The situation of our people would also change. What did I mean by this? The director of the French Strategic Studies Institute, the late General Beauvior, came to see me in Al-Qantarah after the war. He wrote this story. He wrote the fundamental strategy of this battle. I always said: Jamal, to win 10 centimeters in Sinai and to establish ourselves in them will change the entire situation and will enable us to launch any battle we want. This was the basis of the strategy of the 1973 war. It is as simple as that. We have complicated military terms, but I like to state things as simply as possible.

When 'Abd an-Nasir died, I was faced with an extraordinary situation. The country was weak and tired as a result of the past 18 years under 'Abd an-Nasir.

Himmat, perhaps I once told you that in a conversation with 'Abd an-Nasir I told him: I live on my nerves when I am with you. Why? Because he himself was living on his nerves. He did not pretend. I by nature prefer the quiet and balanced tune that is to the point. Others like a quick tune. All the time my feelings were with 'Abd an-Nasir. People have already heard me say this. I told him: Jamal, you have made us all tense. Even he thought that he had acquired this nervous tension after coming to power. He asked me about this, and I told him: No. This is your nature, since you were a lieutenant 19 years ago. I say the country emerging from an 18-year period, from a violent torrent or a quick pace. The 18 years were tantamount to very quick steps. I, by nature, cannot work in such an atmosphere. I cannot think or plan in such an atmosphere. I began to wonder why this was so. Our steps should be neither very slow nor fast. If they are slow we lose opportunities. If they are fast we become emotional and tense and unable to think calmly. This is especially true for me, who does not like a quick pace.

I found the country really weak. So the first thing I did from this hall on 20 December--that is 2 months after taking power in October--was to issue a law abolishing the sequestrations on which the centers of power were founded. A few months later, barely a year, I liquidated the centers of power themselves. My main aim, as we recall, was that I begin the battle again. After 6 months, no, I assumed the presidency in October--November, December, January and February--after the first 4 months of my presidency, I stood in the Egyptian parliament on 4 February 1971 and presented what has been called the Egyptian initiative and said: America and Israel, here is the Egyptian initiative and there is no alternative to it except war. Naturally, they did not consider my words logical and they did not believe me.

[Himmat Mustafa is heard in the background asking about the initiative] 'Abd an-Nasir had accepted the Rogers plan before he died. The Rogers plan was based on two points: first, a withdrawal and second, a 90-day cease-fire. When 'Abd an-Nasir saw the word cease-fire and when the Soviet Union had made him dizzy in Moscow during the visit which took place 2 months before his death, he accepted the Rogers plan and we began the 90-day cease-fire on 8 August 1970. The following month, on 28 September, 'Abd an-Nasir died. There was still a month and a half to go of the period covered in the initiative. The period was up in November. I assembled the National Security Council--as I convened it last Friday--and we decided to extend the 90 days by another 90 days to end on 4 February 1971. On that day I made a speech marking the end of the second 90-day period and said: This is my initiative. My initiative is that Israel should withdraw from the east bank of the canal up to behind the [Sinai] passes. In return I will open the Suez Canal and give UN representative Jarring a 6-month period to act between me and Israel to find a final solution, because, according to the first step, the Israelis were to have withdrawn behind the passes. For 6 months Jarring, the representative of the UN Secretary General, worked between me and them and at the end of the 6 months Israel was either to have withdrawn or we were to have signed an agreement on an Israeli withdrawal. Naturally, the Egyptian front is part of the entire Arab territory. The issue is an indivisible whole, in particular the Palestinian issue, because, as is known and is clear and as has even been noted by Carter recently--I am happy that he has realized this fact because it was evident even to West Europe--without solving the Palestinian question there will be no peace and no solution. The question is not Sinai or the Golan--the problem is the Palestinian question.

[Question] It was the biggest international gain for the Arabs.

[Answer] I said in the initiative that in return for an Israeli withdrawal behind the passes I would open the canal and, in order to achieve all this, I would agree to a longer period, so long as we were continuing to tackle the question of peace in order to solve the entire problem, which is that of the Arabs and Israel. I also said in the initiative that, following the Israeli withdrawal from the passes, the armed forces would immediately move from the east bank to the passes and in return for all this we would restore diplomatic relations with the United States and embark on a new phase. I was willing to do this because the United States, the Soviet Union and we the Arabs were all working in the same operation and our relations with the United States should not have remained severed. I presented this initiative 4 months after I became president and said that the only alternative to it was war.

Naturally, when Jamal accepted the initiative--although he accepted it very late--and despite the fact that it contained the word "withdrawal," Israel accepted it because it was confident that we the Arabs would always say "no, no, no, no." They were taken by surprise when 'Abd an-Nasir kept quiet for a month and a half. It was 21 days after he returned from the Soviet Union and 1 and 1/2 months after the [Rogers] initiative had been presented that he accepted the initiative.

When he called their bluff, the Israelis started in on Rogers. First of all they employed the method with which they got Rogers out of the State Department and then they brought the initiative to an end. They succeeded in convincing the United States that we in the west bank [of the Suez Canal] had moved the missiles [sawarikh]. The west bank is mine and so is the east bank. What crooked logic is this? We had moved the missiles in the west bank! What empty talk is this? What a shameless thing to say. It was just an excuse, Israel disturbed the water, because our position was strengthening. Actually, America withdrew its support for the Rogers initiative as a result of Israeli pressure. As I have told you, 4 months after I became president, I said here is the Egyptian initiative and the only alternative to it is war. When I say something, I really mean it and you can hear me. Naturally, at that time no one in the entire world or in Israel believed me. The Israelis believed that we were a dead body, that there was no hope for Egypt, none, none, none!

Well, 4 months after I became president I presented the Egyptian initiative. Before 6 months had passed I declared that 1971 would be the year of decision and that everyone must accept this. Naturally, everybody ridiculed me. The Soviet Union ridiculed me. The United States ridiculed me. The Jews ridiculed me. The Arab philosophers and the brilliant Arab analysts ridiculed me. Everybody ridiculed me. I had declared that if Israel and America did not respond to my initiative in February the battle would be unavoidable in 1971. I have described the situation I was in then and what the Soviet Union had done to me in that battle, how it had prevented the weapons from reaching me and what it had done to me. Despite all this, I said we were going to war. We entered 1972 and America ridiculed me as it never done before. They said: The year 1971 had passed, the year which you master, considered the year of decision; Likewise, the philosophers, the renegades, the agents I have here in Egypt and those who represent Russia--all of them said: The decisive year has passed and what have you done?

I really took a blow, but despite that I did not want to expose the Soviet Union. I could have told the whole story then. Anyone who reads the minutes of the meetings of the Egyptian People's Assembly of March 1972 will find me in front of the assembly slandering all those who were assailing the Soviet Union and saying: Leave the Soviet Union alone because it is supporting us and giving us weapons and because it is this and that.

Really, our people in Egypt are not only noble and have a history going back 7,500 years--no, they are the most alert and intelligent people in the world, particularly their broad base. The educated Egyptians include excellent analysts. However, regrettably all the elements of deviation come from the educated ones and not from the popular base. The broad popular base represents over 90 percent, we can say 95 percent of the population. Our people have never lost confidence in my words. When the Soviet Union told me in 1971 something to the effect "show us if you can make a decisive year with or without our approval," the gist was that it refused to send weapons. And as Brezhnev later told Ahmad Isma'il, may God bless his soul, in 1973: I have halted the weapons to As-Sadat because he is hotheaded and because he is about to involve us in an operation which would take us I know not where. I am the one who had stopped the weapons. That was a lie. At that time Brezhnev did not tell me that he had stopped the weapons. At that time he had said that there was a procedure to be followed, that the ships had been delayed and I don't know what else. But I had visited him four times in Moscow.

[Question] Therefore, if the Soviet experts had not left we would not have waged a battle?

[Answer] This is included in what I had in mind since I took office. I told you how I had formed my strategy and that I had simplified it for the people. I could have said this in complicated terms and it would have been difficult for the people to understand. I have told you what the basis of my strategy was. It told it also to 'Abd an-Nasir. I told him: Jamal, if we win 10 centimeters of the east bank of the canal and hold them, we will change the entire situation. The second thing in my strategy--if you ask me, and because in military and political science it happens, as happened in World War II--is that the president of the country is the supreme commander of the armed forces. This is so throughout the world. The head of state sends to the commander in chief what is called strategic guidance. What is this? This is a paper which the head of state signs and sends to the commander in chief of the armed forces telling him what the political position is, what the solutions available to us are, what the international changes around us are and what the ultimate aim of the battle is. When we go back to Churchill's war memoirs we will find that the strategic guidance went to Eisenhower. When we go back to our previous wars--in the three wars before 1973 there was no such thing. This strategic guidance given in 1973 is being kept with the military records of Marshal Isma'il. I issued this guidance in 1973 sometime before the battle, because this paper gives the commander the general strategic lines on which he will have to base his battle plans. There is another thing which the president of the republic must issue, namely, the order of battle. The combat order is issued a few days before the scheduled time of the battle. This order was issued on Tuesday, 2 October.

The people have heard me relate the story. When I signed the order, I was in Al-Jizah. When I signed the order and handed it to Field Marshal Isma'il, I told him: Ahmad, where will the ball be next Tuesday? It was Tuesday. The battle was to start on Saturday. By the following Tuesday, 3 days would have passed. I told him: Ahmad, where will the ball be next Tuesday? One base on which I had built my strategy was on what I told Ahmad. I told him: It is more honorable for us to die at the canal while fighting. The generations after us will say that we did not accept the state of no peace-no war and the disgrace, but that we fought and were defeated. Those who come after us will complete the battle. This is the worst circumstance to be in. No, I cannot just stay like this. What will be, will be. But things turned out all right. You asked me about the Russian experts. This was part of my strategy, like the thing about the 10 centimeters [in Sinai]. I will not fight a battle while there is one single Soviet expert on Egyptian territory. Why? The Soviet experts were forbidden by Russia and by us to approach the canal area. The Russians are here and the matter is clear. The Russian experts were forbidden by Russia and by us to approach the canal zone. Because this is our army. This is one thing. The second thing is that during my four visits to Moscow--in March 1971, October 1971, February 1972 and April 1972, four visits in less than one year; the minutes exist for every visit--I used to begin my talks with the three Soviet leaders by telling them: There are two points: The first point is that I did not want any Soviet soldier to fight my battle; the second point is that I do not seek a confrontation between you and the Americans, because the one who seeks a confrontation between the two superpowers, who possess destructive weapons, wants to destroy the whole world. I said this to reassure them. But they were not reassured, and they did not want to be reassured. One of the other strategic bases on which I built my battle was that no Russian expert should remain on Egyptian territory. Why? For the reason I mentioned to you. The other thing, which is most important, is that every battle we waged during the war of attrition, whether in the air or on the ground, we won it against Israel--we won the battle of the Al-Jazirah al-Khadra, we won the artillery battles which forces the Israelis to use their air force in July 1969, we won air battles against the Israelis over Ismailia.

Their Mirages were hit. They thought they were kings of the skies, everytime we won a battle against them, they would say that it was carried out by the Soviets. Strange: I was aware that the Soviets became happy when they heard this. If the battle succeeded--according to my simple calculation, the calculation of the Egyptian peasant, the sons of our country everywhere--if I succeeded, the Soviets would attribute the success to themselves; but if I failed, the Soviets would attribute the failure to me. So, why should I not fight the battle alone from the beginning? If there is to be blame, then the blame should fall on me and if there is to be success, then the success should be mine. This is one of the basis of (?my strategy).

Therefore, the decision regarding the Soviets was not new. Never. Strategically, I had decided never to start a battle--my battle with Israel--while there was a single Soviet expert on Egyptian soil.

However, this [the expulsion of Soviet experts from Egypt] could have been done in a more gentle way than it was done had they not issued the statement on lack of fighting ability and treated me the way they did--in a way in which I never want to be treated nor want to treat anyone. Where have we reached?

[Question] We have reached the date just after Your Excellency took office in 1971 and the beginning of 1972.

[Answer] In 1972, after the decisive year.

[Question] Yes.

[Answer] In 1972, I defended the Soviets while I was suppressing the bitterness and the pain. I went to them. The last visit was in 1972. My last visit to Moscow was in April 1972. They asked me to go to them. On the previous 3 visits, I insisted on going. This time they insisted that I go even if only for 24 hours. Why? It so happened that Nixon was going to visit them in 1 month to discuss the issue of detente. Nixon was going to visit Moscow for the first time. After the visit, the statement on lack of military ability was issued.

Some say that the Soviet Union has a policy. All right. Yesterday, a U.S.-Soviet statement was issued. I have been telling them always that the big powers' stand is one--the United States and the Soviet Union. There is no need to attribute to the Soviet Union stands which it does not uphold but uses for propaganda. However, the statement was issued yesterday or the day before yesterday--the statement with which the foreign ministers of the entire world agreed but which is now exciting Israel and getting on its nerves.

I have been saying so all my life but nobody believed me. After the detente, after this and after the neglect they showed and the story of the Soviet experts, which I have often explained, I issued my decision and removed the Soviet experts. Something then happened that served me in what is called strategic deception. As we have strategic guidance in which the civilian chief of state sends to the military commander in chief the complete picture and the changes and so forth and the aim of the battle, we also have strategic deception which we began as soon as we started preparing for our battle. What is strategic deception? It is a plan to make the enemy facing me believe that I am not ready for war. As simple as that. What helped me in this was the Soviet Union, without realizing it.

As part of the campaign of violence it launched against me, the Soviet Union sent word to the experts and to its agents, the agents of the Soviet Union, the Soviet left not the Egyptian left--no, the leftist agents I have here. It sent them instructions to attack, that is, to attack the regime in 1972. There was sectarian strife at the time. They said that there was sectarian strife. In the university, the agents moved among the students. I thank God that the students here have always been a sound lot. Those elements were small gangs all their lives. However, they rose up and demonstrated. This is a long story.

As part of the operation, what did the Soviet Union do? It was fighting me, not knowing that it was serving me in an indirect manner. No. It was doing me the greatest service in history and affording me the great opportunity in the strategic deception I was trying to implement. The Soviet Union leaked a paper to the Arab nation and to the West.

It leaked it to the Arab nation so that it would blame me. It leaked a paper, a report, that the missiles and the electronic equipment and all the technology Egypt had received from the Soviets collapsed after the departure of the Soviet experts and that Egypt was not ready for war.

Who grabbed this report? Israel grabbed it with everflowing happiness just as the West and the Arabs grabbed it. Everybody was convinced that I was not going to fight that I was finished. Some of the Arab nation reached the conclusion that I took the step of expelling the Soviet experts so as not to fight and so as to have an excuse for my people and the Arab nation for not being ready because I had expelled the Soviet experts.

[Question] What were your personal feelings as you were preparing for the battle and had almost set the time and while you were being attacked by all the sides on the grounds that Your Excellency was not going to start the battle?

[Answer] First, I considered it a strategic deception serving two aims. Second, I did waver a single moment. Everything I am telling you took place within very narrow circles of the intelligentsia. I called them cells at the time. As for the Egyptian worker and peasant base, the sons of the country who constituted over 95 percent of the population, they believed in their battle and in everything I said. This is why I called them intelligentsia cells. They used to come to me in 1973 or 1972 saying that everything had collapsed. They also came up with this story. They said that the situation was bad and that Egypt was finished. They wrote and sent reports to the foreign correspondents who in turn published that Egypt was finished after the exit of the experts, that there was to be no battle, that As-Sadat was not serious, that As-Sadat could do nothing and was procrastinating, and that the international situation was also bad and so on and so forth. All this was done by some intelligentsia cells. However, the basic Egyptian foundations on which I relied were firm. In those days they wondered where my self-confidence came from. They did not realize that my self-confidence came from this.

[Question] Did the articles which exaggerated and magnified things--of course, the enemy had formidable fortifications and everything--what they exaggerated was the seriousness of the confrontation with the enemy, saying that the Israeli soldier was invincible and that the crossing of the canal and destruction of the Bar-Lev line and the fortifications were impossible--did these affect our soldiers and our military plans?

[Answer] They have never affected our military plans--never. But they vexed the officers and the soldiers. The articles which appeared in AL-AHRAM enraged the officers and soldiers who took part in the battle. I told this to the author, who was the AL-AHRAM chief editor. I told him this. They came to me at the front and told me: We will accept no such thing, nor is it appropriate to write such things about the battle. What was baffling was that those who were at the front had cut out the articles and brought them to me. My children were so upset--not only those at the front, but also at Inshas airport. All the pilots brought me the articles and said to me: Have you seen the lies?

I drew the author's attention to this. He later discovered that it was a question of some imagining that they could write on policy and war. The result was their confusing policy, confusing war and confusing themselves.

They do not confuse anyone else. In other words, I was not confused at all. My sons on the front, as I have told you, had cut out the articles and kept them. When I went to them they said that such reports were not true.

The broad popular base was annoyed by the reports. It was a shame. Only those worthless people weak in spirit believed these articles, but the broad masses, the intelligentsia and all the armed forces denounced them. These articles really had no effect, as was proven by the October war.

[Question] What happened was indeed an epic despite all of the previous exaggerations. It was a massive task, but to say that it was difficult and impossible to cross the canal was something else.

[Answer] I would like to say something which I would like our people to know. As I say, it was shameful that one should write about something that was not his business and claim that he was a politician when he did not understand politics or claim to be a military man when he did not understand anything about war. When a person writes about a battle, should he not at least have had some military knowledge, even limited knowledge? What was the so-called Bar-Lev line? Why did I start the war with the confidence that I had? What was the reason? The reason was very simple. I am a politician more than a military man. But as a military man, I combine both. I know the problems of my country and of the world around us.

One day I got a book. We were in the same hall. I got a book on the battle of Normandy or, in other words, the Allies' offensive in Europe when Hitler was occupying all of Europe. I believe it was in 1944. I was a military man with some military knowledge in addition to what I had learned in other fields. I read the whole book with much enjoyment because it was a compilation of documents. It was not a story; a million stories had been written about the war in the Pacific, the Atlantic, England, France and America. A million stories had been written, but this book contained documents taken from war diaries. For every battle there is a thing called a war diary. I will talk to Al-Jamasi one day and see if he can show our people the war diary. A war diary records everything that happens every day of the battle--everything that happens, whether for us or against us, plus any change of plans--everything that happens in the 24 hours of every day.

The book I got was compiled from the war diaries of the armies of various countries. As you know, there were the Americans, the British, the French, the Dutch and many others, but of course in the main it was the British, the Americans and the French--no, the French did not assume a role for the Allies did not want to acknowledge De Gaulle's role. I mean they did not want to give De Gaulle any role or anything. Basically, these war diaries--this book--were derived from the British war accounts of Montgomery and the American diaries of the five armies which took part and of Eisenhower.

I read the book. I had some military education. I have background knowledge and I am familiar with my country's battles. During World War II, I was held in detention; so I read. What else could I do but read and follow events?

When they built the Bar-Lev line they said it was better than the old French Maginot line and the German Siegfried line. They spent over \$300 million on it. Legendary stories were told about it and they were true. It is there. I have kept many points on the line intact so that people can come and see for themselves. It was impenetrable by artillery shells or bombs. The four artillery pieces which shelled Suez and blew up our oil depots were positioned on a rear slope protected by reinforced concrete that could withstand artillery shelling. No fire could damage it or even penetrate its protective shield. Bombs weighing up to 2,000 pounds could not destroy it. Why? Because as I have told you, the artillery pieces were behind hill and were protected by reinforced concrete. So the only way was to go in and storm it. This is why they said it was impregnable, because they could not imagine that the Egyptians would go in, outflank the line and do what they did. Impossible.

When I read the book I found in it many useful lessons that we could follow. I looked at the Bar-Lev line and compared it to what Hitler called the Atlantic wall. When he occupied Europe, Hitler took up positions in anticipation of the Allied invasion of Europe and built up what was called the Atlantic wall. These are old times I am talking about. I am an old man and you are all young.

Anyone reading the papers during World War II would notice, without making any special effort, that the Atlantic wall was repeated many times every day.

Hitler erected the so-called Atlantic wall to confront any invasion.

To talk about the Bar-Lev line, well, the Jews are extremely fond of what the Germans call Blitzkrieg. All the Israeli army's training is training on Blitzkrieg warfare which was first introduced by Germany. They say that Germany burned to death 6,000 [presumably meaning 6 million] of them and so on and so forth, but they use the very methods which they say they condemn. Militarily they admire Germany very much. In fact every military man in the world should admire Germany because Germany is the mother of militarism in the world. However, anyone who thinks that Israel is a superhuman genius is mistaken. The Bar-Lev line was a carbon copy of the Atlantic wall. This was due to their admiration for German tactics first and their army creed second. In military terms when you talk about creed it does not mean you are talking about religion. In military matters when you talk about creed you are talking about military doctrine. Does one follow the Eastern doctrine representing Russia, its allies and others, or does one follow the Western doctrine which represents the United States, Britain, France and others? Each of these doctrines varies according to the types of arms of each army. The Russian Army has its own doctrine aligned with Soviet weapons and their performance. The Western doctrine is aligned with Western weapons and their performance.

Simply the Bar-Lev line was nothing but a smaller version of the Atlantic wall, in my opinion. If I were to tell this to the layman, whom would I convince? One would ask me, first what is the Atlantic wall and what do you mean a smaller version? I would have no time to explain, but it is different with my military men. This is a chance for the country to know what kind of armed forces it has. The military in Egypt have adopted both the Eastern and the Western doctrines. They visited Normandy after the war. They attended the highest institutes in Russia, Britain and the United States--the best military institutes. Therefore, we have the fruit of both doctrines. When I talk of them, they understand me immediately.

After one of the military meetings, when Al-Jamasi was only chief of operations, not chief of staff or higher, I had the book with me, so I told him: Al-Jamasi, take this book. I have marked all the useful passages. It was all clear there. I told him: The Bar-Lev line is all here but on a smaller scale. All the tactics that Germany used in resisting the Allied invasion of Normandy is here in this book and they will use them against you. You will find that the Atlantic wall had three defensive zones right on the edge of the Atlantic. The Bar-Lev line is a concrete wall right along the canal. The positions are built of more than just concrete. The chambers have double roofs, one of which is built of railroad ties taken from the Egyptian railways in the Sinai. A second concrete roof is built above these ties.

This meant that neither the artillery nor the air force or anything else would be able to penetrate it. The first line in the Atlantic wall erected by Hitler to deter the Allies, namely the reinforced concrete, coincided with the points directly on the canal, right on the canal. The Atlantic wall had a second line including reserves and alternate positions. The same thing applied to the Bar-Lev line. The third line included most of the reserves which, if approached from the front positions or the second line, would move, spread out and encircle and exterminate the enemy. Such was the German military doctrine. To know my enemy, the first thing I must do is learn the military doctrine of that enemy.

Only military people know this; not ordinary but knowledgeable military people know it. But we must enlighten our people and our country so that they will know both doctrines. But my children in the forces know both doctrines and thus it did not take me long to draw up plans with them. There was one thing: The Jews could not tolerate a loss of men on the Bar-Lev line. That was why they had built it in three lines so that its positions would be strong and save them from using a large number of men. When a position is strong, fewer men and weapons have to be deployed. The impregnability of the position would make it possible to deploy fewer men. That was one Jewish mistake which they copied from Germany. The second mistake was that the Jews were overconfident. They had believed that we could not storm the Bar-Lev line and that if we had wanted to storm it we would have had to storm it from the rear.

I recall--and so do my son commanders of the armed forces who can hear me now--that in February 1973 after 6 and 1/2 hours on the Ar-Raml front, I came to them and told them: I want to tell you something. The first 24 hours are the decisive ones. The side which wins in the first 24 hours wins the battle because the first 24 hours are decisive. The Jews had never imagined that even a single tank would cross over in the first 24 hours. A few soldiers and tanks from the three lines of the Bar-Lev line, which is their "Atlantic Wall," would attack whoever crosses. That was a terrible mistake in their plan--a mistake which they have recently admitted. It was a mistake in their plan and in their estimates--in what in military terms we call the estimate of the situation.

We base our military planning on our estimate of the situation. What does an evaluation of the situation involve? The estimate of the situation should cover the enemy's equipment, preparations and fortifications. It should also cover our equipment, our forces, air force and tanks. The first part of our estimation should begin with the enemy and then us. The next part of the estimation is called "the influencing factors", namely, the factors which would affect the enemy and the factors which would affect us. In the end, the plan is drawn up on the basis of the estimation.

After they had made an estimate of the situation they said publicly--they are clever military people; no one can say that Israel is poor militarily. Never; they are clever without any doubt. I am showing here how I relied on this and exploited it in strategic deception. They said that As-Sadat had only one of three possibilities. The first was that he would directly seize the goose neck [raqabat al-wizzah]. What is the goose neck? The goose neck is the area extending from Al-Qantarah east to Port Said. Why did they call it the goose neck? Because this area is actually that part of the Suez Canal from Al-Qantarah to Port Said. Near it is a fresh water canal, then comes Buhayrat al-Manzilah, a swamp. This area lies in the northern part of the west bank. On the east bank, there is a road on the east and then comes Al-Mallahah up to Port Said. What does all this mean? It means that I only have the road on the canal in the West and they have the road in the east. Al-Mallahah, which is on their side, and Al-Manzilah, which is on my side, would make it impossible for me to put up fortifications or to deploy guns and troops and the same thing would apply to them.

Why do we call this area the goose neck? Because it is 40 km long and extends from Al-Qantarah to Port Said. The neck [al-raqabah] ends at Al-Qantarah because then the desert begins.

Israel had the desert in Sinai and I had the farm land of the west bank.

So they said As-Sadat had three choices. The Israelis even said so officially before the battle. The first choice would be for him to take the goose neck--and this was indeed possible because our artillery was more powerful than theirs. The battle would thus have been confined to the 45 km from Al-Qantarah to Port Said, leaving the remaining 180-km front from there to Suez to them. The second choice would be for As-Sadat to cross with one division along a 180-km front. Naturally when I have to cross a front 180 km long with one division things do not stop here. No, we would have to establish what in military terms is known as a bridgehead. To establish a bridgehead means that I would have to cross as the allies did during their assault on Hitler's Atlantic wall. They landed with five armies. Each had a bridgehead on which the army would land and secure a line and a firm position and then advance. In our case, they said As-Sadat's second choice would be for him to bring in one division. They hoped this would happen, although they did say that even this was too big an operation for Egypt and the Egyptians could not do it and that they were in a bad shape, and so on. Why did they hope that the Egyptians would choose this option? Because along a 180-km front a division would have to establish a bridgehead to advance from, and so before it manages to advance it would be encircled completely, that is from three sides with its back to the canal. The division would thus be encircled with tanks--from the second and third lines of the Europe wall or the Bar-Lev line where the fast-moving tank reserves were positioned. These tanks would encircle the division from all sides and then gradually finish it off, killing as many as they liked and taking prisoners as they like. This would have been an ideal situation for them.

The third option, they said, was that he would cross with more than one division and more than one bridgehead. They ruled this out because that meant that the Egyptian army would have to have the ability to wage a battle requiring coordination among the various armed forces branches which only the big powers were capable of doing. What does combined arms mean? A battle involving more than one division combines the navy, the army, the air force and the air defense branch. Coordination among all these is termed a joint operation.

Only the superpowers were supposed to be capable of such coordinated action. Even these powers did not just have this type of capability. They acquired it through experience in actual combat. Only those who actually experienced it in practice are capable of it.

[Question] We did it.

[Answer] Yes, this is what I am saying. They ruled out this third option completely. This was published before the war. This third option was the one we took.

Let us compare our battle with that of Normandy. This is for those who sometimes poke their noses into matters which they do not understand. The Bar-Lev line was like the Atlantic wall. The allies landed with five armies. We crossed with five divisions, five bridgeheads. We also waged a battle involving coordination between various services--navy, air force, army and missiles. We waged that kind of battle and we experienced it. When we accomplished this the Jews were dumbfounded and they were surprised. They were totally helpless because they had imagined anything but this. They could not imagine that the 1967 hodgepodge [army] could establish five bridgeheads and advance. They said that it would be heroic if the Egyptian Army could establish just one bridgehead with one division; this would be an achievement. Not only did we do that, but we committed five divisions along the 180 km front. Each division simultaneously took its positions successfully and the confrontation began and the battles of tanks, artillery--we waged battles they never imagined.

[Question] What about the air strike?

[Answer] This was all part of the battle strategy. Here I would like to say that I advise many analysts not to get involved in things that they know absolutely nothing about. People ask me: Were you confident when you entered the battle? Yes, I had confidence in the Almighty and in myself, and I was 90 percent sure that I was going to win. I was sure that not a single soldier would retreat from the bridgeheads and this was actually the case. Even when the Israelis crossed into the bulge not a single soldier left his position in all the five divisions, absolutely no one. The five divisions remained in their positions until after after the bulge and until Israel pulled back to the passes. Why? Because Israel does not have enough men and cannot man 180 km. I can.

There are many factors. I have had military training. If I were the Israeli prime minister telling my defense minister to defend Sinai and the entire front which I have taken from the Arabs, Israel would require 20 armies and even these would not be enough because this is not an easy front. The 180 km are only part of the front, for there is also the southern Sinai. The 180 km are part of the Egyptian front that would require five armies and not just five divisions for Israel to defend.

[Question] They had forgotten that the Egyptian soldier had stormed through.

[Answer] They were surprised. Why? Because of the collapse of their theory that the only alternative I had was to carry out the goose neck operation or send a division. They thought that I would act foolishly and send a division. They excluded the possibility of more than one bridgehead and the use of five divisions never occurred to them.

They imagined that two or three divisions at the most would be used. Why two divisions? In order to assist each other. Two divisions can assist each other and defend their positions. They never imagined that there would be more than two or three divisions. I used five divisions at the same time. I won but not during the first 24 hours but with the air force strike which took only 20 minutes. I was sitting in the operations room at the time. It took only 2 hours. This room is like any other combat operations room which we see in films. The microphone announced that the Egyptian Air Force had crossed the canal. Husni Mubarak was wonderful in the air battle. From over 30 airfields and bases, the planes with twice the speed of sound would take off at the exact time--in military terminology we call this synchronization. The aircraft taking off from 30 bases in various parts of Egypt had calculated their speed and crossed the canal at the same time. Why? Because if some planes crossed before others, this would give a warning to the Jews over there. The 222 planes had to reach the canal together so as to surprise and destroy. If one squadron went first and another squadron followed 10 minutes later, this would have warned the Jews and the squadron would have been hit. No, 222 planes from all the airfields in the republic reached the canal in one wave at the same time, to the exact second. I am lost for words as to what this wave caused. Whenever I think of this, my spirits are uplifted.

Our children did not wait for the order to cross. As soon as the wave of planes arrived, they crossed the canal. They did not wait for the order to cross. They knew right away when to cross. Many things took place during the battle, not heroic things but things that demonstrate the magnificence of the Egyptian soldier and officer.

[Question] Mr President, the decision to go to war was the most serious decision in our modern history. Did you make this decision alone and how much time passed before you told anyone else? The final decision?

[Answer] As I told you the strange thing is that in 1971, 4 months after I assumed office, I spoke about the war as an alternative unless they agreed to peace. I never contradicted myself until the battle took place. I also did not respond to all the idle talk uttered at the time. As I told you, my words rest on a scientific basis and haphazard talk by someone to make me be afraid or someone writing telling me there are pipes to carry napalm to the canal. So, let there be pipes. I sent the children the night before the attack and they blocked all the pipes. However, when we reached the east bank, we found the napalm storage tanks empty and we had blocked the pipes for nothing. We actually did block the pipes. Really there were pipes to carry napalm but the tanks were empty. Because the Jews were sure that Egypt would not move. This was based on scientific calculations as I told you. We had to know Israel's ideology and then confront it. This is what makes a commander succeed in battle.

This was a basic goal if the Jews did not withdraw. Indeed, if the Jews had accepted my initiative in 1971, they would have played the dirtiest trick on us: the spirit of defeat would have remained in our hearts. When we waged the battle, we regained our self-confidence, our people regained their self-confidence, the Arabs also regained their self-confidence.

You ask me about my feeling. I never despaired; hope never left me for a moment. However, 99 percent of them did not believe me.

[Question] Did you make the decision in February [1973], Your Excellency?

[Answer] No. I made my decision as far back as the days when I submitted my initiative in February 1971. A decision in military terms passes through a number of stages. This is a vast scientific field. The decision I made in February 1971, when I announced my initiative, was that the only alternative to that initiative would be war. I knew that the Jews would not respond to the initiative. Why? Because I knew what they did before 'Abd an-Nasir's death, and I was well aware of how they turned down the Rogers plan. So there was nothing in the air. The reason I submitted my initiative was to demonstrate my good will to the world and to show that I wanted peace. I knew deep down, however, that the Jews thought we were a corpse. So, my decision dates back to those days, when, however, did it enter the phase of implementation? In 1971 and 1972 the Soviet Union gave me a hard time, so I expelled the experts. On 1 January 1973 the structure of the plan was laid down, at a time when all were saying that Egypt was finished, and that included the foreign press and some intellectuals abroad as well as Russia's agents and so on. All these said that nothing would happen, but the vast popular base was with me because they know me and I know them.

The framework of the plan was laid down on 1 January. In February, the sand plan--Sinai, every grain of sand and every hill and feature was laid out and studied at the armed forces headquarters. It took about 6 hours. The third phase took place in Sidi Maryut, in a small house, a shack--there is a picture of it and I want it included in the documents of the October war--I and Minister Isma'il [then war minister] were alone. It was in March. I told him: Isma'il, give me the final plan. We had formulated the plan the beginning of January. In February we had the sand plan. In March, I said I want the final plan, Isma'il. He said: Yes Sir. In April, Hafiz al-Asad visited me in Sidi Maryut in Burj al-'Arab. He visited me secretly. Nobody knew about this visit and no photos or anything were taken. He landed at Janaklis Airport and Marshal Isma'il brought him by plane to me in Burj al-'Arab. I said: Hafiz, I am going to war this year. What do you think? He said: I am in with you.

Well, our meetings lasted 3 days. Only two people knew about them. One was Marshal Isma'il, may God bless his soul, and the other was General al-Jamasi who was chief of operations. Ahmad Isma'il attended one or two of our meetings which otherwise were restricted to Hafiz al-Asad and myself. This was in April 1973. One day Ahmad Isma'il brought me a report by Al-Jamasi in his own handwriting, at my request, on the most suitable times for launching an offensive. Scientifically, one can know everything about every day of the year from 1 January to 31 December. With science one can know everything about every single day--things like tides, moonlight or whatever changes occur. One cannot go wrong except on very minor things but the basics are derived from seven sciences. Al-Jamasi wrote the report in his own handwriting because nobody was supposed to know about it, even if the typist was the most trustworthy. Well, Al-Jamasi is not only an officer, he is an authority on military affairs. He reported on all these things. He saw the East and the West and placed a division in the West and a division in the East. Nothing escaped him. He derived it from the seven sciences. What happens every day. This is important as far as the canal is concerned, because it has tides. Sometimes when tide is greater than 1 and 1/2 meters it is impossible to cross to the other side. On some days during the year the tide ranges between 50 centimeters to 1 and 1/2 meters.

We decided that a 50-90 centimeter tide was acceptable but 1 meter to 1 and 1/2 meters was unacceptable because the boats crossing the canal would end up away from their original destination or would completely turn around and would thus create an impossible situation. These changes in the canal are a result of its link with the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

In April, Hafiz and I sat down and read this report. In April, Hafiz and I sat down and read the report written by Al-Jamasi. The report noted that every day of the year from 1 January to 31 December natural changes occur according to the seven sciences and that there would be three periods which would be suitable for timing an offensive. The first period would be in May, the second in August and September and the third in September and October. Science dictates that matters are not in the hand of the individual and that things cannot take place at any time. This meant that the May period must start on 23 May and not before. Military science has reached such high levels. It has become one of the world's most advanced technologies.

Dates were also fixed for the August and the September and October periods. We decided to give priority to 6 October. We were still in April and we still had May, June, July, August, September and October to go. [Himmat Mustafa is heard in the background saying "the Day of Atonement"] The report, which was based on the seven sciences, included notes on events in Egypt and Israel. It indicated the dates of the Day of Atonement and Ramadan. Details of these two occasions were included in the report.

However, the factor that had to be favorable on the day chosen was the weather, making it possible for me to cross peacefully with my forces. If that were to happen the first hour would be the decisive hour.

We were still in April. Hafiz read the report and we agreed that we should let the May period go by. However, we did something during that period. I told him to go to the Soviet Union for they had not yet sent me any weapons. Brezhnev was supposed to visit the United States in May to return a visit which Nixon had made to the Soviet Union the year before.

I told Hafiz to go to the Russians because they had not sent me any weapons while I was planning for the battle. I am entering the battle without any doubt. Tell them that we might carry out the operation in May. When he went and told them that what was their response? They sent me a very small quantity of weapons, most of which were not used in the battle. Why? Because regrettably the troops were still being trained in their use.

However, I had reserves because I knew the Russians would not give me all-out support or stand by me. What I had expected actually happened. In my strategic maneuvering, I depended, as I told you, on the fact that the Israelis were extraordinary militarists. They, like us, would depend on the seven sciences. When they chose a day for the offensive they would not leave it to chance. When they set zero hour they just don't say "come, let's go." No, their knowledge is identical to ours. However, they were ahead of us in one thing: It was their senior officers who had fought in previous wars. Nothing equals combat experience. This is an established fact. Egypt is not worried now because it has experienced cadres. Egypt's sons have fought in wars and have war experience.

Before 23 May, I directed the newspapers to carry hot news. There were also Koranic recitations about Al-Jihad, maneuvers on the front and so on and so forth. The Israelis also took these activities seriously. Israel knew, just as I knew, that an offensive was possible on 23 May because that day was right militarily, scientifically and fit in with all of my calculations. But I launched the campaign 5 days earlier.

Dayan declared at the time: As-Sadat has done this to us twice. Each time we had to spend \$10 million on general mobilization just for nothing. Dayan did not say anything. He did not say that when As-Sadat heats up the situation, this is the most suitable time for Egypt and for Egypt's military men, who understand Israel, and that there might be an attack. Had I done this at any other time of the year, he would not have minded. Why? Because he knew that I would be beaten if I had chosen the day in accordance with my calculations based on the seven sciences.

However, he saw me acting before the right time. When he calculated scientifically and militarily that there was a possibility, he acted right away. He acted twice, once during the May period. I said that we must use these periods for strategic deception. Once was in May and the other time was in August. Before the fixed date, I used to heat up the situation by publishing Koranic verses in the newspapers. The chief editor of AL-AHRAM refused to do this, as I once said, because he wanted me to explain what was going on, but I had no time to explain to anybody, especially since he claimed knowledge in both political and military affairs. He did not publish these verses in AL-AHRAM but the other newspapers published them. Israel was aware of this because it read the papers. When they felt the situation was heating up, they acted. In May they spent \$10 million on general mobilization. In August too they spent \$10 million on mobilization. In neither case did I attack and the days which were suitable for attack passed. When October came and they felt that there might be an attack, Dayan told them: No, we had to spend \$10 million each time. No. Twice was enough.

In my strategic maneuvering, I took into account their military efficiency and their understanding of military science. It was no longer a question of taking chances or a matter of the center, the right flank or the left flank. No it is a very complicated matter.

[Question] Mr President, of course, we should not miss the opportunity here to ask about the effect of the war on the two superpowers and our Arab world--the effect of victory.

[Answer] There isn't much time. I have been speaking for 3 hours already.

[Question] Mr President, the occasion is more important than time.

[Answer] The people will get bored and tired.

[Question] No, Mr President.

[Answer] Regarding the effects of the war, as I have said, I will again simply say...
[interrupted by interviewer]

[Question] There are very many details about the war which Your Excellency can discuss but we are being brief.

[Answer] I am happy about one thing. I will stop going into detail at this point. The military men can talk to you about the details of the battle. However, I am happy about one thing. Dayan had said in the first months after the 1967 defeat that he was sitting by the telephone waiting for me to ask him about the conditions of surrender. Dayan repeated this in Sinai. On the fourth day and in front of all the foreign correspondents he cried like a child. He admitted in front of everybody that the road to Tel Aviv was open and Israel could not make the Egyptians budge one inch. Indeed, as I have said, despite the bulge, none of my soldiers budged one inch backward. Never. The bulge ended and they moved to the east bank. It is then that I began reducing my soldiers in Sinai.

What put Israel back on its feet and saved it from leaving the road to Tel Aviv open, as Dayan had said in front of all the world newsmen? There were two things. First of all, the United States entered the war on the side of Israel and sent equipment to Al-'Arish, behind the front, on my soil and in my country.

[Question] Had Israel asked for help?

[Answer] Right. It had asked for help. I have told this story before. I said that their appeal was: "Save Israel, aid Israel. We need 400 tanks immediately because we lost that many tanks on the Egyptian front." Of course, the United States officially recorded this appeal. When did they make this appeal? It was on the fourth day, Tuesday, 10 [as heard] October. On Thursday, 4 [as heard] October, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban was in the United States. He attended the General Assembly meeting in September and then left [presumably for New York] because of the Jewish appeal fund in the United States. Kissinger was the secretary of state at the time. Rogers had gone and Kissinger assumed the post of secretary of state. Kissinger sent for Abba Eban to meet with him. Eban called on Kissinger in his office on 4 October, 2 days before the battle. At the time in 1973, Kissinger had met twice with Hafiz Isma'il, our national security adviser, in Paris. I announced the visit at the time. It was not a secret visit.

Hafiz Isma'il discussed with Kissinger the question of settlement and expressed our opinion on peace and a peaceful settlement. Kissinger told Hafiz Isma'il very frankly: "You talk as though you were the victors. The world deals with facts. You have been defeated. Speak one language and then the United States will be able to extend aid to you. But let us be practical. You are talking as though you were the victors. You must know that facts should influence all actions. We cannot perform miracles for you as long as you are in your present position. You must change the status quo."

Hafiz Isma'il asked: "How can we change it?" Kissinger answered: "Through a military battle. If the position is not changed militarily, I cannot do anything. I wish you to convey some advice from me to As-Sadat. I have not seen him and do not know him." Our relations with the United States were severed at that time. Kissinger told Isma'il: "I have not seen As-Sadat and do not know him. But I feel that the man wants to conduct a dialog and wants to build his country. Give him some advice from me. Tell him: Do not try to change the military situation because another defeat of the 1967 type would do away with any hope for a peaceful or any other settlement. Nobody would be able to speak to Israel."

This conversation took place in just such frankness. When did this happen? It happened in February and April 1973. We now come to 4 October 1973. Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban made his speech at the General Assembly in September. In October he went on a tour to collect funds. On 4 October, Kissinger asked to see him. He met with Kissinger at his office in the U.S. State Department. Kissinger told him: "You are the victors now and the Arabs are the vanquished. The initiative must come from you to preserve the dignity of these people." There was a possibility then. Kissinger had at that time concluded deals on the Vietnam operation, international detente and U.S. relations with China. Following the few deals he concluded at that time, he was described as the international magician. He was at that time finished with the intricate Vietnamese (?problem). Kissinger told Eban: "Let the initiative come from you. There is a man in Egypt who, we feel, wants to hold a dialog and turn his attention to building. You must offer something yourselves."

On 4 October, Abba Eban answered in all simplicity: "Why should we offer anything? Egypt and the Arabs will not have political or military strength for the next 50 years. They are a corpse. We know the Arabs. Let us deal with them. Leave us alone and do not interfere."

Eban left and the war broke out 2 days later. This aroused the pity of Kissinger, who, as he told me, sought God's help for Egypt and for the East and thought that the entire issue was over. He felt that Israel would get on its high horse again. This was on Thursday. On Tuesday, 10 October, Dayan said what he said. You ask what has the October war done. Today we can see the nervousness and madness in Israel. There is an unnatural kind of madness in Israel now. Why this madness? It is because the Israelis never believed the day would come when the Arabs would be able to fight and absorb the technology of the first rocket and electronic war in Arab history. This has been recorded.

As I have said, the 10 centimeters on the east bank changed everything. These were not just 10 centimeters--they were 15-20 km. After the second disengagement, it was possible for the Arab nation to restore its position and regain confidence in itself. Arab militarism, Egyptian militarism in particular, was able to regain confidence in itself. The world is now listening to us because we are now speaking the language of the age and because we have absorbed the technology of the age. All our analyses and actions are based on the technology of the age. All soldiers who participated in the military battle, as I have already said, absorbed this technology. What I have to say about military science could fill volumes. This is the highest military technology and one of the most complicated sciences in the world. I say that we absorbed all this. After all this, I do not say no, no, no as we had been doing for the past 25 years.

I say no to what I must say no to and yes to what I can say yes to. We now speak with the logic of the age and in accordance with the analysis of the age in which we live. The whole situation has now changed in West Europe, the United States and the East bloc, despite the fact that the Soviet Union is adopting the stand it is adopting. The Soviet Union had used a satellite to photograph our battle from its beginning. I sent and asked for a copy but it refused to give me one. It photographed the real battle, not a maneuver. No. It photographed it through the satellite because it had known about the start of the battle from President Hafiz al-Asad, as Hafiz and I had agreed.

The battle restored our self-confidence. It is not only a question of the Palestinian people's problem. No. We must say that the Palestinian problem was about to become nothing more than a museum. Every visitor to the museum would utter a few words saying there is no power and no strength save in God and the matter would be forgotten. The battle did much to revive the Palestinian issue because it touched on the core of the matter. The core of the matter, the core of our problem is the Palestinian issue.

We will start with De Gaulle. De Gaulle predicted this and said as much to Abba Eban. This too is among the memories of the battle. Before the 1967 battle, before 1967, Abba Eban met with De Gaulle in France. De Gaulle was president of France at the time. De Gaulle had drawn up a political line at the time. He said: We will renounce and stand against the state which begins the attack.

When Abba Eban went to him with recordings of Ash-Shuqayri's speeches in which Ash-Shuqayri said: We will drive them into the sea, etc., De Gaulle told Eban: "Listen, leave this aside. I would like to tell you something."

If you begin the attack, we will denounce you and will not stand by you. If Egypt begins the attack, we will denounce Egypt and will not stand on its side. However, I would like to tell you something." De Gaulle then told Abba Eban: "If you began the attack, the Palestinian issue, which is about to become a memory, would be completely revived." These words were published then and De Gaulle's prediction came true because the Palestinian issue is now in its proper place--that is, it is the core of the problem and not a subsidiary issue or an issue on which the United Nations issues an annual resolution and which is forgotten after the General Assembly ends.

For 20 years the United States had been approving resolutions. The United States approved resolutions in 20 UN sessions, but the Palestinian issue was gradually on the wane. Now, thank God, the Palestinian issue has been revived. If the October battle had anything to do with this, the credit goes to the Fatah organization, which began its activities on 1 January 1965, 2 years before the 1967 battle and at the time when the Palestinian issue was being paid only lipservice by the Arabs. Some of the Arab regimes used it to attack other regimes, saying: You are a traitor to the basic battle of the Arabs, you are so and so.

No. If the October battle did anything in this respect, then the Fatah movement, which began on 1 January 1965 in Syria, must get credit for keeping the issue alive. The 1967 defeat then took place. It did not kill the issue. No, on the contrary, it unified the feelings and gave Fatah and the other organizations a change to fill the vacuum at a time when the Arab armies were rebuilding themselves.

If the October battle is to get any credit in this regard, then credit must also go to Fatah.

[Question] Mr President, at the beginning of this interview you remarked that Israel is now (?behaving) like it did on 2 June 1967. What did Your Excellency mean exactly?

[Answer] Actually it was not 2 June, but 1 June to be exact. It was 4 days before the battle, on 1 June, Thursday, when (?suddenly) the Israeli cabinet was changed and a national unity cabinet was formed. This is despite the fact that there was a severe struggle among the parties. However, when they find there is a threat to Israel, they unite. A coalition cabinet was formed among odd partners. The Likud, the Alinement and the other factions in Israel who can never get together. However, when their country is exposed to danger, all of them unite. When they get together, there must be something [word indistinct], especially since Dayan was then a defense minister. Today Dayan [words indistinct] and Weizman is the agriculture minister [as heard, presumably referring to Sharon]. He was there at that time. He is now talking about settlements and so forth. Israel must today be trying to mobilize public opinion (?in the country) for possibilities which it may undertake. What are these possibilities? We must all be on a level of alertness and responsibility.

[Question] Mr President, on this historic day, 6 October and as we conclude this historical talk by Your Excellency, we ask you to throw more light on the latest stage reached by our cause, which will be solved, God willing, after the great victory.

[Answer] As the people know and as all my sons have read, Vice President Husni Mubarak was supposed to begin yesterday--today is Monday--he was supposed to begin on Sunday a trip to the Arab countries and Iran in order to convey to them a picture of the situation, as has been done customarily by us. He was delayed for 1 day.

No. It is better that I start from the beginning. Last Friday, I called the National Security Council to meet after the Friday prayers. We sat for 6 hours. That was on the basis of a report I had received about President Carter's meeting with our foreign minister, Isma'il Fahmi. For 6 hours we discussed the report and the matters contained in it and all the alternatives. We expressed our view regarding that. It was inevitable that I should inform my Arab brothers of Egypt's view. Why? Because they share our fate and everything. What did we decide? I asked the vice president to go to our Arab brothers, the kings and presidents, to brief them. At the same time we wrote our answer and sent it with the (?special envoy) who had brought Isma'il Fahmi's letter. Immediately after the council meeting, we put our views in writing and gave it to the envoy who took it to the United States on Sunday. Vice President Mubarak was supposed to leave on Sunday to visit the Arab kings and heads of state. At dawn on Sunday, something happened. We received an urgent letter from Isma'il Fahmi, containing some additions and the latest positions and the latest developments in the situation.

The envoy, our envoy to Isma'il Fahmi has already left. He left after the meeting to the National Security Council carrying all clear instructions regarding our position. We delayed Husni's departure a bit because I thought there might be something new in the new message. The new message arrived yesterday, Sunday, in the evening and not in the morning when it was supposed to arrive. I saw nothing new in it to make me summon the National Security Council again to reassess the situation and reissue whatever was necessary to Isma'il Fahmi. True, I found that there were some developments, but they did not necessitate [a National Security Council meeting] because they did not affect the core of what we had discussed and because what we discussed covered all that. This is why on Monday Vice President Husni Mubarak began the visits to the Arab kings and heads of states and to Iran to brief them on the views of the Egyptian National Security Council.

On Monday, I received our brother, Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the PLO. We held a lengthy meeting. After this interview I will complete the session. I acquainted him with all the details of the situation. During my meeting with him, before the taping of the interview, King Khalid contacted us. Husni had by then arrived [there]. We talked, then I came for the interview. I will resume my meeting with our brother Yasir 'Arafat after the interview.

What I can say is that in the instructions sent to the foreign minister in New York, I asked him to request an urgent meeting with President Carter which, God willing, will take place tomorrow, the 4th [of October], that is, if President Carter will be ready. I do not know, but as far as I know the 4th would be the date. At any rate he will ask for a date to be fixed because it is an urgent message from me. He will convey the contents of our message to President Carter which is related to the reconvening of the Geneva conference, the form of the Geneva conference as far as the Arabs are concerned, the PLO position in our view and what we recommend and insist as a minimum in this connection and all the topics raised by the foreign minister in the message he sent us after his meeting with President Carter.

I prefer not to make any disclosures now, although much of the gist of the message will become known to the Arab leaders in the coming 2 days, but I prefer that we work in quiet diplomacy and not in the manner of the current Israeli emotionalism-- such as the talk about a state of emergency, a coalition government and so on.

[Question] When there is nervousness there, it means there is successes here, thank God. We thank the president for this patriotic, historic and important interview, on the dearest occasion to the people of Egypt, the interview with the man who made the decision. Many happy returns.

[Answer] Many happy returns to you and our people in their victories and construction based above all on love and on the discard of rancor. Let us look ahead and never look back. Let our building process be based on the citizen's security and on Egypt's prosperity and position in the world, serving the Egyptians. I pray Almighty God to grant us success in achieving what we all aspire to. Thank you.