

Egypt

Is it a factor for peace in the Middle East?

In 1979, under the stewardship of President Jimmy Carter, Israel and Egypt signed the Camp David peace treaty, by which Israel committed itself to yield the Sinai to Egypt, together with all its material and strategic assets. The whole world hoped that this historic handshake would indeed finally bring peace and tranquility to the troubled Middle East.

What are the facts?

An implacable enemy. Egypt is Israel's most implacable enemy. It was the key player and military leader in the 1948 assault on the nascent Jewish state. Almost miraculously, Israel was able to defeat the combined Arab might. Egypt remained in occupation of the Gaza strip.

But thirsting for revenge, Egypt – together with Jordan and Syria – attacked Israel again in 1967. In a brilliant campaign that will be studied in war colleges for centuries, Israel, in six days, utterly destroyed the Arab war machine. At the end of that war, Israel stayed in possession of the vast Sinai.

Instead of licking its wounds, Egypt, after its rout in the Six Day War, almost immediately engaged in a war of attrition against Israel. That war lasted for years. Egypt never ceased in its attempt to destroy Israel. The hostility culminated once again on Yom Kippur of 1973, when the Egyptian armed forces, in coordination with Syria, once again launched a major war against Israel. Israel once again prevailed. Only urgent intervention by the United States and others brought about a truce and prevented the total annihilation of the Egyptian force.

In the 1979 Camp David peace treaty Israel yielded the Sinai to Egypt together with all the assets it had developed there. Still, Israelis of all political persuasions were almost giddy with hope and anticipation that their most implacable enemy had opted for peace. Finally, the talented people of Israel could now bring the promise and the potential of the Jewish homeland to full fruition.

A terrible disappointment. The disappointment was almost immediate. Anwar Sadat was assassinated by one of his own terrorist countrymen. He had to die, for no other reason than for having denied the Arab mantra: No peace, no negotiation, and no recognition of Israel.

Israel had envisioned its peace with Egypt as that between the United States and Canada. But that was not to

be. Right from the very beginning, travel was harshly discouraged and strictly controlled by Egypt. Trade was non-existent. Israel's ambassador to Cairo was under virtual house arrest. He was never included in any official function. The Egyptian press, tightly controlled by the government, initiated an orgy of anti-Semitic publicity, highlighted by hateful cartoons rivaling those of the "Stürmar," the notorious Nazi hate sheet. There hasn't been an Egyptian ambassador in Israel for over three years.

Egypt is no friend of the United States. It consistently

votes against our country's interest in the forums of the United Nations. In order to get Egypt to agree to the Camp David peace in 1979, the United States committed itself to aid Egypt to the tune of \$2.2 billion per year. Only about \$.9 billion of that is earmarked as "economic aid." The balance,

over \$1.3 billion, is for military aid.

Egypt has the largest armed forces in the entire Middle East, in manpower and in equipment. It has recently supplemented its navy with eleven new battle cruisers. It has placed four recent orders for F-16's, totaling 190 new planes. It has acquired 180 Hawk and 1,000 Hellfire missiles. It has already received delivery of 24 Apache helicopters and it expects to receive twelve more. The armored corps is comprised of the most modern U.S. tanks. Egypt is bordered by Libya, Sudan and Israel. It doesn't take much imagination to figure out against which of these countries all of this armament, all of this military power is directed. It's toward Israel, of course.

What does the U.S. hope to accomplish by arming this mortal enemy of Israel, which is still bent on the destruction of the Jewish state? Since Israel is the one immutable ally of the United States in the entire region, a country we can always count on, it is hard to understand why our government would be participatory in Israel's possible destruction. It makes no sense at all.

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There can be no question that Egypt is once again girding for war against Israel – either alone or with the enthusiastic collaboration of other Muslim nations. Legislation has been introduced in Congress to reduce and eventually eliminate altogether the \$1.3 billion annual military aid that Egypt receives from us. But even if that were to succeed, it may already be too late. If Egypt does indeed launch war against Israel, it could ultimately include weapons of mass destruction. It is up to the world to prevent this disaster, if it is still possible.

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