

# Sadat Maneuvers For Room Before Visit To U.S.

Egypt's President Anwar Sadat, on the eve of his scheduled visit to Washington on April 5-6, is maneuvering for his political existence by lining up support in Western Europe and the USSR for an expected bitter confrontation with the Carter Administration.

In addition, in a series of statements Sadat has indicated that he cannot endorse the provocative Carter conception of "peace," outlined in a scattered manner by Carter since a press conference in early March. First, Sadat said in a *Business Week* interview, published this week, that if there is no peace settlement this year, he will blame Carter, and not the Israelis. "Frankly, my people will blame the U.S., not Israel... They will blame the U.S. because it did not exert sufficient effort to reach a settlement while it could."

Then, in a televised interview with CBS, Sadat publicly castigated the Carter proposal to establish "defensible borders" for Israel outside the 1967 lines, a proposal that is unacceptable to the Arabs because it would legitimize Israeli occupation of Arab land. "It is a question of sovereignty," said Sadat.

The remarks by Sadat, who is not known for his opposition to the U.S., reflect a growing consensus within Egypt that Sadat's so-called "American connection" has not paid off. From the Egyptian military and from the left and students, tremendous pressure is building on the Egyptian leader to demonstrate that his continued pleas to the Arabs to trust in the U.S. have been worthwhile. A former editor of Egypt's largest daily newspaper *Al Ahram*, Mohamed H. Heykal, said today that the Arabs cannot rely on the U.S. to bring about peace, and said that Carter was trying to "dupe the Arabs."

On the international level, Sadat is seeking to gain allies for his expected showdown with Carter and NSC Director Zbigniew Brzezinski next week. Before coming to the U.S., Sadat is visiting both Bonn and Paris, stressing

to the Europeans the necessity to recognize the PLO in spite of U.S. and Israeli pressure. At a press conference in Bonn today, Sadat — whose economic crisis at home has pushed Egypt to the brink of total collapse — said that Europe and the Arabs must work together for a world economic revival, and called for the establishment of a Mediterranean "zone of peace." West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt responded to Sadat by adding that he would favor the convening of a Geneva Peace Conference in 1977.

In addition, Egypt and the USSR signed a trade agreement this week that represents a 14 percent increase of Egypt-Soviet trade in 1976. There are certain signs of a warming up of Egyptian-Soviet relations, indicated by Sadat's announcement that the USSR has agreed to supply Egypt with 50 Mig fighters that had been sent to the Soviet Union for repairs and new engines last year.

But the crucial question is whether Carter will continue his stated aim of forcing Sadat to accede to the demands of U.S. policy in the region, including to break Egypt's ties with the Palestine Liberation Organization. A State Department official said this week that although the demands that would be placed on Sadat might not set too well in Cairo, "We're not afraid that Sadat is going to be overthrown. He might be, but I doubt it." He said that Sadat's vehement opposition to the shape of Carter's Middle East policy was "just posturing."

"When they get behind closed doors, let their hair down, press the flesh, look at the eyeballs — then we'll know what the Egyptians really think," he said. "You have to scrape off the layer of posturing."

A West German columnist was more blunt. He noted that Sadat has been unable to discipline the PLO to follow Washington's dictates, and asked: "Do we need Sadat? The answer is no."

## Israeli Hawks Brandish Preemptive Strike Threat

Key Israeli press last week threatened Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and allied Arab states with an Israeli preemptive first strike. Ze'ev Schiff, Israel's leading military correspondent and an acknowledged conduit for the country's warhawk faction led by former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and current Defense Minister Shimon Peres, wrote in the daily *Ha'aretz*: "Israel has the moral duty

to take the initiative to attack first, from the moment that it becomes clear that Arabs are preparing to do it." Citing "Israeli intelligence reports" about Arab mobilizations, Schiff concluded, "The Arabs... court the risk of seeing themselves preempted." (See below).

Coming in the context of increased signs of National Security Council instigated terror in the region, the calls