



# PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER, 1981

## CONDOLENCE MOTION FOR PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT

Mr. Speaker,

I move "that this House records its sincere regret at the death on 6 October 1981 of President Mohamed Anwar El Sadat and expresses to the people of the Arab Republic of Egypt profound regret and tenders its deep sympathy to his widow and family in their bereavement".

I advise the House that the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Melbourne jointly extended their deep sympathy to Madam Sadat, and to the Government and people of Egypt, and expressed their horror at the act of outrage which took his life.

The Governor-General has also expressed his deep sadness and distress over the manner and the fact of President Sadat's death. The Deputy Prime Minister represented Australia at the funeral.

Anwar Sadat was one of the architects of the movement which shaped modern Egypt, bringing it to the present level of social and economic development.

On becoming President of Egypt in 1970 he led his country both as an outstanding patriot and as a man of vision in relations between nations. It reflected his great personal courage and initiative, that he worked so hard to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East.

To embark on this process involved an acceptance of substantial risks, both domestic and international. His capacity to devote his energies singlemindedly while bringing his nation with him was itself a tribute to his greatness.

In 1977, after 30 years of continual warfare in the Middle East, President Sadat made his historic and courageous visit to Jerusalem to address the Knesset, and thus opened the path to negotiation in the quest for peace. And then in 1979, the Egyptian/Israeli peace treaty was signed. I said at the time that the world hoped that work on a comprehensive Middle East settlement would proceed in the aftermath of that treaty.

President Sadat sought peace to resolve the problems built up through mistrust and fear. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1978, jointly with the Prime Minister of Israel.

While the peace with Israel, and the stability which has ensued, is perhaps President Sadat's greatest monument, his other achievements are not less significant. He realised that the basic security of Egypt and the Middle East lay in distancing the region from wider global power struggles, and to this end he sought to diminish the impact of the Soviet Union by restricting its influence within Egypt and the area as a whole.

His pursuit of constructive and realistic domestic and foreign policies brought both to himself and Egypt a reputation for moderation, balance and constraint in the non-aligned movement.

His death is a great loss for Egypt, the Middle East and the world, not least because of the senseless and brutal violence which brought it about. To have lost a world leader of President Sadat's stature is tragic.

Not everyone, as we know, agreed with what President Sadat was doing, although everyone must surely respect him for his courage and his objectives of peace and stability and certainly no benefits will follow from what has taken place.

We can only hope and trust that President Sadat's achievements will be sustained and that his vision of a lasting and comprehensive peace settlement can be realised as a fitting tribute and memorial to him. We all mourn his death.

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