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Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadar

E.V Badolato

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It is not at all clear, after reading this overview of late 19th and early 20th century literature, that the naval profession today has as good a grasp of these questions and their possible answers as did their predecessors. Two generations ago and, indeed, ten, naval thinkers may have understood their business better than they did their circumstances. Today's officers and thinkers sometimes seem to know their circumstances better than their heritage.

Despite its misleading title, Geoffrey Till's book should be part of every naval officer's library. This volume admirably and economically sets the context for the enduring debates concerning the objectives and methods of naval warfare, though not in terms particularly specific to the nuclear age. If an officer has time or inclination to read only one survey of great ideas, men, and books relevant to the naval service, this for now should be that one.

Heikal, Mohamed. *Autumn of Fury: The Assassination of Sadat*. New York: Random House, 1983. 290pp. \$17.95

As the former editor of the powerful Cairo daily *Al Ahram*, cabinet minister, and close confidant to President Sadat, Mohamed Hassanein Heikal had an unusual opportunity in his latest book, *Autumn of Fury*, to write the background story about the events leading up to Sadat's assassination. His previous efforts such as *Road to Ramadan* and *The Sphinx and the Commissar* demonstrated his insider knowledge and astute observations of Middle East politics. But those who expect the same quality of effort as in his previous works will be disappointed.

The emphasis of *Autumn of Fury* is on the interesting contention that the plot against Sadat was far different from those which killed President Kennedy and his brother Robert and

attempted to kill the Pope and President Reagan. Instead of being the actions of a single crazed individual, Heikal argues that Sadat's death was the logical result of mainstream movements within Egyptian society.

To support this thesis, Heikal presents a historical overview of the role of the Moslem Brotherhood and the Coptic church from their origins to their involvement in present-day Egyptian affairs. Heikal has a great deal of personal interest in the activity of these groups in the fall of 1981. At that time, shortly before the assassination, Sadat had to resort to massive arrests of Christian and Muslim extremists as well as prominent members of the political opposition. Among those arrested was Heikal, supposedly because he had taken funds from the Coptic Pope Shenouda III to organize an anti-Sadat press campaign. Despite his imprisonment, Heikal disavows

any attempt to get even through his book. Unfortunately, his obvious bitterness spills over into a spiteful attack aimed at destroying Sadat's reputation. In fact, *Autumn of Fury* was considered to be so potentially disruptive by the Egyptian government that it has been banned in Egypt.

Heikal leaves few areas of Sadat's life unscathed. He dwells at length on Sadat's black Sudanese mother and how she left him a life-long racial inferiority complex. Heikal's deep resentment of Sadat's humble beginnings and lack of high-level education is readily apparent, and he presents Sadat as a comic figure dwarfed by Nasser during their early days in the Free Officers Movement. Laid bare also is the post-1973 corruption brought about by the *infitah* or "open door" economic policy which Sadat used to lure Western businesses and return to a free market system. Many of Sadat's associates and family, particularly Osman Ahmed Osman, Egypt's richest and most flamboyant "fat cat," are alleged to have gained hundreds of millions of dollars at government expense.

While his personal vendetta may disappoint some of his old readers, he does provide some useful insight into the inner workings of Moslem fundamentalist groups such as the *Takfir wal Hijira* (Repentance and Holy Flight) which assassinated Sadat. He points out that this group's objective was to disrupt Sadat's efforts towards normalization of relations with Israel and the Western-

ization of Egyptian culture. Details on a fundamentalist group such as the *Takfir wal Hijira* are hard to obtain and *Autumn of Fury* provides a very useful backdrop.

Another area which will be of interest to readers is the charge that Sadat squandered Egypt's strategic position and advantage by signing the Camp David agreement. This, he claims, neutralized Egypt militarily, isolated it politically from the rest of the Arab world, and turned the once-powerful country into a mere vassal of the United States. However, Heikal feels that under President Mubarak the Egyptians are slowly feeling their way back to their former leadership role in the Middle East.

Autumn of Fury is a flawed book, but it has an important message. It is not vintage Heikal but worth reading because it provides an opportunity to learn how an influential Egyptian, albeit outside the government, views the harsh realities of Sadat's rule and the future of our relations with Egypt.

E.V. BADOLATO
Colonel, US Marine Corps

Leiken, Robert S. *Soviet Strategy in Latin America*. New York: Praeger, 1982. 124pp. \$6.95

Author Robert Leiken's *Soviet Strategy in Latin America* is a most timely and authoritative book on one of the world's hot spots. Leiken provides a scholarly and realistic view of Soviet activity in Latin America, with emphasis on Central America and the Caribbean, since the 1959 Cuban Revolution.