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CAMP DAVID 25TH  
ANNIVERSARY FORUM

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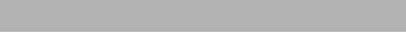


WOODROW WILSON  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2003

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# CAMP DAVID 25TH ANNIVERSARY FORUM

WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2003

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All photos by William Fitz-Patrick





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<b>Participants</b>	<b>Title at the time of negotiations</b>
Jimmy Carter	U.S. President
Walter Mondale	U.S. Vice President
William Quandt	U.S. National Security Council
Elyakim Rubinstein	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel
Zbigniew Brzezinski	U.S. National Security Adviser to the President
Aharon Barak	Attorney General and Supreme Court Member-Designate, Israel
Harold Saunders	U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs
Hamilton Jordan	U.S. Chief of Staff to the President
Jody Powell	U.S. Press Secretary to the President
Samuel Lewis	U.S. Ambassador to Israel
Hermann Eilts	U.S. Ambassador to Egypt
Osama el-Baz	Foreign Policy Adviser to the President of Egypt (by videoconference from Cairo)
Boutros Boutros-Ghali	Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Egypt (by recorded message from Paris via CNN)
<b>Master of Ceremonies</b>	
Lee Hamilton	Director, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (former Member of Congress)



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### MORNING SESSION

**Lee Hamilton:** Good morning to all of you. I think there'll be a few more people coming in yet, but I think we should begin. I'm Lee Hamilton. I'm the president of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars – not running for any office!

**President Carter:** I know you're not.

**Lee Hamilton:** I'm very, very pleased to welcome each of you this morning to this 25th anniversary retrospective on the Camp David Accords. It's an historic event sponsored by The Carter Center, and may I say how very pleased we have been to work with the executive director, John Hardman, who is here, and other members of the Carter Center staff in putting this together.

It is my very distinct pleasure to welcome to the Wilson Center Jimmy Carter, 39th president of the United States and Nobel laureate, as well as a remarkably distinguished panel of men whose talent, hard work, and commitment to peace made the Camp David Accords a reality.

I will introduce each of today's participants, along with their title at the time of the negotiations.

From the Carter administration, we are honored to welcome Walter Mondale, vice president of the United States; Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser; Bill Quandt, staff member of the National Security Council; Hal Saunders, assistant secretary of state for Middle East affairs; Hermann Eilts, U.S. ambassador to Egypt; Sam Lewis, U.S. ambassador to Israel; Hamilton Jordan, White House chief of staff; and Jody Powell, White House press secretary.

From the Israeli delegation, we're honored to welcome Aharon Barak, who was attorney general and member-designate of the Supreme Court, and Ely Rubinstein, who was assistant director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

From the Egyptian delegation, we are honored to welcome by videoconference Osama el-Baz, who was undersecretary of foreign affairs. We also hope to receive a videotaped message from Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who was minister of state for foreign affairs and, of course, went on to become secretary-general of the United Nations. We are very pleased that the Egyptian ambassador is with us today, Ambassador Fahmy, and we thank him for attending.

Let me also acknowledge the presence of two very remarkable and accomplished women who are with us today. Rosalynn Carter and Joan Mondale are both here. Please greet them.

It is now my honor to say a few words of introduction for President Jimmy Carter. President Carter has lived a



**Lee Hamilton and panel**



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life of public service, characterized by extraordinary achievement and a deep and abiding faith. He is known to all of us and to the world as a man of principle, intellect, determination, and integrity.

The achievements of the Carter administration were substantial indeed. The Camp David Accords, the Panama Canal treaty, the Salt II treaty with the Soviet Union, the normalization of relations with China, a comprehensive energy program, a bold environmental record, the advancement of critical deregulation initiatives, the preservation of peace among the great powers, and, of course, the placement of human rights at the center of the United States foreign policy. Equally impressive is the unprecedented role that President Carter has assumed in the years since his presidency: world peacemaker. President Carter has brought his faith and the power of reason, dialogue, and goodwill to Ethiopia, Korea, Bosnia, Sudan, Uganda, Cuba, and Liberia, to name a few examples. He and Rosalynn Carter have traveled the world, monitoring elections and alleviating the suffering of disenfranchised, displaced, and malnourished people everywhere.

Simply put, his is the most successful post-presidency in the history of the United States. But the example of President Carter's life cannot be restricted to the label of president or former president: farmer, Sunday school teacher, Navy man, nuclear engineer, state senator, governor, fly fisherman, conservationist, author, poet, negotiator, husband, father, friend. His actions have represented the best aspects of his deep beliefs and have spoken to the aspirations of all humankind. Thus, it was for the totality of his life, as well as his public deeds, that he received the well-deserved recognition of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize. He has always believed, and still believes, that peace is possible between and among all peoples. He is a man who sees solutions embedded in the deepest of problems, and because of this, he has substantially enlarged the peace of the world.

Today, we gather to mark the momentous event that shines a light for future generations of peacemakers. The Camp David Accords can be attributed to each of the men who are on this stage. We owe them much, and we have much to learn from them. Our purpose

today is to look back on their achievement with a purpose of looking forward, and let us begin by turning to one of the great peacemakers of our time, President Jimmy Carter.

**President Carter:** Thank you, Lee. So far, I've enjoyed the program very much! (laughter)

This is an exciting event for me. As a matter of fact, Rosalynn was at Camp David as long as anyone sitting before you and participated intimately in every aspect of the negotiations, and I'm very glad that she's here as well.

I think it might be appropriate at the beginning to remember those who are not here.

After I left the White House in January of 1981, Anwar Sadat came down to Plains to visit with me and Rosalynn, and then a few weeks later Menachem Begin came down to visit with us. That same October, Sadat was assassinated, primarily because of his courageous stand at Camp David to bring peace to that region. We miss both of those men.

On the American side, we had 11 people who were intimately involved in the discussions, nine of them in front of you. The key one I would say who's missing is Cy Vance, a wonderful secretary of state and a great and dignified and wonderful statesman in all aspects of his life. Ambassador Roy Atherton is also missing from us.

Moshe Dayan, in addition to Menachem Begin, is no longer with us. We have two Israelis here whom I'll introduce in a few minutes.

Foreign Minister (Mohammed Ibrahim) Kamel resigned in protest at the time of the Camp David Accords. He refused to attend the ceremonies, but he was a very strong voice at Camp David, and I think maybe he influenced the pace of progress even though he was opposed to the final agreement. Hassan Touhami, he has also passed away since then. So we have a good representation here this morning.

I'll introduce a little bit later Osama el-Baz, who was Sadat's key adviser, who can't be here this morning because he still is a key adviser for President Mubarak and is, on a daily basis, involved now in trying to reconcile some of the Palestinian dissident groups, including Hamas and others, and getting them to support the



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peace process that's undergoing an effort at this time. So we miss them, and I'll be introducing the others later.

This morning, I'll be presiding. I'm going to limit the original comments to five minutes, and we'll then proceed to have kind of a roundtable discussion. And



**Jimmy Carter**

I've already told some of them that if they want to comment after their compatriots get through with an opening statement, just to stand their name card up on edge, and I'll recognize you, hopefully, in order.

When we went to Camp David 25 years ago and had just a few days, there had been four wars in 25 years, beginning in 1948 when Israel became a nation. Another war was in 1956, as many of you will remember, another one in 1967, and another one in 1973. So the whole region was consumed with a constant threat of major wars, within which thousands of people were

killed on both sides and where Israel was faced with the most formidable military and political power, and that was Egypt next door.

We had a chance in the early months of my own administration - I was inaugurated in early 1977 - to make a concerted effort to meet with all the leaders. I met with then-Prime Minister Rabin, who was under some attack because of allegations about a bank account over here. And he was somewhat weakened when I met with him. Later, I went to Switzerland and met with Assad, who was the president, as you know, of Syria. I met with King Fahd, who came to visit us here in Washington. I met with Menachem Begin, when he was surprisingly elected to head the government in Israel, and then with Anwar Sadat. So I had a chance to meet with and explore the possibilities for a peace process with all those leaders quite early in my administration, within just a few months of the time that I was inaugurated. I had been in office less than two months when I called for a Palestinian homeland, which sent some shockwaves through the political arena of the United States.

We had not much hope for progress. There was a deep, embedded animosity, hatred, and fear that permeated that region. And it had been ongoing almost without cessation since Israel was founded as a nation.

Sadat spent a long time with me upstairs in the White House. He was a bold man, as all of you know who are well aware of his character. He was willing to take a chance. He promised me that he would work as closely with me as possible. He said it was impossible in his lifetime to imagine diplomatic relations between Egypt and Israel, but he would explore other possibilities for progress. That was in 1977 in October. Sadat promised me that he would try to make a bold move for peace. Later, Sadat contacted me and Dr. Brzezinski, sitting on my right, and Cy Vance and said that he was going to convene a meeting in Cairo of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, which was the last thing I wanted to see was to bring Russia and China and France and Great Britain into the process. So I discouraged that, and Sadat later said that he would try to do something else, so he announced that



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he might go to Israel. This was in November. And in just a few days, Prime Minister Begin issued an official invitation for Sadat to come and speak to the Knesset which, as you no doubt remember, he did in November.

That aroused great hopes for us, but after that, there was a return visit to Ismailia by Menachem Begin, a very unsuccessful and unpleasant exchange between the two leaders. Another effort was made in Leeds Castle in England to bring the two together. It disbanded in total failure. So the initial impetus by Sadat to go to Israel and Begin to welcome him dissipated completely.

It was only after that that I decided to send an invitation directly to Begin and Sadat personally. In fact, I hand wrote the invitations and asked Dr. Brzezinski to deliver a personal message as well, and they both accepted my invitation to come to Camp David, which, by the way, was Rosalynn's idea. We were walking around Camp David one Sunday afternoon, and she said, "This would be a good place to try to get them to come off in seclusion. Maybe nobody could bother us for a few days."

So they came to Camp David. And when we arrived there, there was a very ambitious agenda in Sadat's mind. He wanted to make as much progress as possible. In my own briefings earlier and in the mind of Menachem Begin - who arrived a few hours later - his idea, and some of my advisers' ideas, was to develop an agenda on which we could agree and then later turn that list of tasks over to our foreign ministers and others to negotiate the specifics.

We spent 13 days there. The first three days I attempted to have Begin and Sadat come together. The two men were totally incompatible. There was intense perturbation between them, shouting, banging on the tables, stalking out of the rooms. So for the next 10 days, they never saw each other. And so we negotiated with them isolated from one another. Basically, we went to Sadat and negotiated with him and then to Begin and negotiated with him, and then the last few hours at Camp David after we had - I asked Bill Quandt to prepare a speech of failure on the 11th day, and on the 12th day, we made a breakthrough with the help of Aharon Barak and finally had agreement at Camp David, and we came back to the White House and announced it.

This morning, we're going to discuss those events in some detail by the people who made it possible, and then we're going to move forward, at least through six more months until we concluded the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt the following spring - a treaty, not a word of which has been violated in the last 24-and-a-half years - which still sends a beacon of proof throughout the Middle East and the world that it's not impossible, no matter how difficult the task might be.

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So that's what we're going to do this morning, and I'm going to point out two things. One is that Aharon Barak, at the time we went to Camp David, was the attorney general of Israel, and he had already been designated by Menachem Begin to become a member of the Israeli Supreme Court after Camp David was concluded. Since then, Aharon Barak has been on the Supreme Court. He's been the chief justice of the Supreme Court for quite a while, and he's still the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Israel. He came here with the understanding between me and him that he would not become involved in current events or future events and will confine his comments to a retrospective analysis of what was done. When I wrote a book called *Keeping Faith*, I pointed out that, in my opinion, Aharon Barak was the hero of Camp David. He was trusted implicitly and completely by Menachem Begin and by other members of the delegation.

The other representative from Israel this morning is the attorney general now, Mr. Rubinstein, and he also is



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precluded from getting involved in the current events and future events of a political nature in Israel.

So they will both confine their comments to that. The other speaker that we have, Osama el-Baz, had to remain in Cairo, but we presume he's on a video hook-up. We hope it will work. I see him now. Good morning.

**Osama el-Baz:** Good morning.

**President Carter:** Good morning, Osama. We miss you here, but I'm glad to see you again.

**Osama el-Baz:** We miss you, too.

**President Carter:** Well, thank you very much. Osama is the key adviser of a political nature to President Mubarak, which he was to President Sadat. And so that's why he couldn't be here. He's deeply involved, I understand, in current efforts to bring peace to the Mideast. But he's going to speak after Aharon Barak.

So for the first one on our list this morning, I'm going to call on the present chief justice of the Supreme Court of Israel and former adviser to Prime Minister Begin at Camp David, my good friend, Aharon Barak, with deep thanks for his coming.

**Aharon Barak:** Thank you very much. I am very happy to be here, of course, and I'm very happy that I was at Camp David. It was really an historic event.

The president already mentioned those who are not with us, and we must remember them.

In the American delegation, Vance and Atherton, and also President Sadat, and from our delegation, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, Moshe Dayan – all of them possessed vision, courage, and admiration.

But there was basically one hero at Camp David, without whom Camp David would not be possible, and this is President Carter. Because President Carter did not just run Camp David, he was involved in every detail of Camp David. I had a tough time with him because he would do the drafting, and I had to argue with him. And then Osama el-Baz had to argue with him. Well, how much can you argue with the president of the United States? But his knowledge of the details, his wish

to reach an agreement, his dedication to peace. There are many Camp Davids. Many people wrote about Camp David. I haven't written anything. But for me, from the first moment until the last moment, Camp David would never, never be possible without the involvement, the care, and the dedication of President Carter.

As the president mentioned, I'm now a judge, and I am not going to make any comments about politics. Even there, I was an attorney general – our attorney



**Aharon Barak**

general is different from your attorney general. There, I was a public servant. I was a true professional. And let me make a few very professional remarks.

We were prepared. Preparation is the key of the success. We were prepared, we had a peace plan, we had drafts, we had fallback positions, one after the other,



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and we prepared it for months and months and months.

Secondly, we had the common ground. On the toughest issue of the West Bank and Gaza, we had a common ground with the Egyptians in the sense that, through several visits that our ministers and I went with them, we had an understanding that the Egyptians were talking about something which seems like autonomy, and our plan was autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza. Of course, their autonomy was different from our

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*We were prepared. Preparation is the key of the success. We were prepared, we had a peace plan, we had drafts, we had fallback positions, one after the other, and we prepared it for months and months and months.*

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autonomy, but the concept was there, and the moment we shared a common concept, we could go and try to find a solution.

My other point is we had very, very tough negotiations. But I think both parties negotiated in good faith, and that's a crucial element in those kinds of negotiations. Be truthful. Tell the truth. Don't hide. If the other party makes a mistake, don't exploit it because the mistake will be found at some point, and only damage will be caused.

Trust the honesty and the integrity of the other parties. Always treat them as equals. And I had many, many fights with my good friend Osama el-Baz, and he was tough, and he didn't agree to much of what we suggested. But he was an honest negotiator – a word was a word, a promise was a promise. I trusted him. He never let me down, and I think that he also trusted me.

In order for those negotiations to succeed, you have to know very deeply not only your own party's interests, which, of course, one should know, but you have to know very deeply the other side's point of view. And we knew very deeply each other's points of view. One should know what are the red lines of the other party and not to push the other party above the line – it won't help – but to try to push him as far as possible to the line and to try to do everything you can to change the

line, but not to push him above the line, which brings me to another point, and this is imagination.

The key, I think, of the success of Camp David was imagination. Whenever we would reach the wall, we would not say, "Well, sorry, we've reached the wall. Nothing to do. Let's try to push the wall." The wall has got to stay. We immediately turned around and tried another technique.

When we failed on a horizontal level, we tried a vertical level. We tried always to create new constructions, new ideas. For our delegation, our minister of foreign affairs, Moshe Dayan, was really a master in new ideas, and I must say the same thing with the Egyptian delegation – Osama was always ready to test new things – and mainly the American delegation. What was so impressive for me is the American delegation, of course, starting with the president, but going down to all the participants, the imagination, the flexibility, the attempts to find new constructions, new tools, in order to solve tough questions. At the start of the negotiations – as the president mentioned in the beginning, the negotiations were between the president and the two heads of state – disaster. They are different in their personalities, in their points of view, in their political agendas, in everything. Well, you could go home. But here is part of the flexibility: Immediately, a new technique was found by which the president would not negotiate with the heads, but, so to speak, with the tails. He would negotiate with me as the Israeli delegate and with Osama el-Baz from the Egyptian delegation. And whatever we'd agree would be, of course, a conditional agreement. We would go back to our delegations and get their approvals. And I think this change of technique was crucial. The technique is in the heart of the matter. And I think by making this change, Camp David was really a success.

We used ambiguity. Ambiguity was the word. It was, I think, a constructive ambiguity, because there were many things that we couldn't reach an agreement on. So we drafted these on a high level of abstraction. When we couldn't meet on a low level of abstraction, we went higher and higher and higher until we came to such level of abstraction that allowed us to agree. But – and here is an important point – we realized the ambiguities.



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It's not the situation where I had an ambiguity, they had an ambiguity, and everyone was throwing around these old ambiguities. We were honest with each other. They understood that we understood what their ambiguities were, and vice versa. So it was the use of ambiguity with the understanding that every side has his or her ambiguities and what are they and how it will be used. It's a very interesting question, I think, that should be studied professionally about the use of ambiguity in international negotiations.

We have not used ambiguities for very short-term actions. If you said that in three months there must be another meeting, three months is a very exact term. It didn't say any reasonable time. But as we moved further from what would happen today or tomorrow, slowly, slowly, we went into the ambiguity with the idea that if there will be trust and understanding, those ambiguities will be solved. And if there is no trust and understanding, even precise wording will not help. And I think basically it worked.

My last point is that we took risks. I, as the legal adviser to our delegation, would tell my delegation what the risks were, and I would tell them, "Do you want this size of protection, or you want this size of protection?" And, of course, every delegation, at the starting point, said, "We want the maximum protection we can get." We were operating not on maximum protection; we were operating on the reasonable protection or minimum protection. Basically, our attitude was we should have - in those vague concepts, in those arrangements - we should have a good case. We should have a good case. Where? A good case in the court of public opinion as this was. And the moment I was assured that we have a good case, I will tell my prime minister, "Mr. Prime Minister, I think this amount of security is enough. We have a good case in the risks we are taking." And the risks were taken not only by me, the professional; the risks were taken by the heads, and they paid the price for it. And here we come again from where I started. Without the heads of the delegations, Sadat, Begin, and without the leadership and the risks taken by President Carter, the agreement could not be reached. Thank you.

**President Carter:** Osama, I'm going to call you

now. Let's restrict the time so everybody can speak, and so I might call time on you, but I want you to stay on. So, everybody, after I limit you originally, we'll have time for further discussion and for questions back and forth. It's a great pleasure to welcome you to our forum.

**Osama el-Baz:** Thank you, sir. I would say the following. I would like to state that very important facts learned by the experience, not in general terms but by experience, I observed the following. That without the active and continuous involvement of a third party who could be trusted by both sides, it would be very difficult to solve problems existing between two parties whose positions are too much apart from one another. And we're lucky to have President Carter, who was willing to devote and dedicate his time and effort for an extended period of time, almost two weeks, to get or help get a solution to a very intricate and complicated problem. Because there's no doubt that the Palestinian question is one of the most complicated disputes that emerged after World War II.

President Carter was highly qualified for that because he was a hard worker. He was a strong believer with faith and energy, and he was also a good listener. He listened to everybody. He was very patient, and whenever - oh, I know that we abused his patience many times. I remember that. But he was still willing to be more patient, and he knew the limitation. So without an active involvement by the United States, I believe that we would have been unable, and still today would be unable, to reach any solution to this intricate problem at all, and negotiations can drag on and create their own dynamics to the detriment of everybody. And so the president was patient and, you know, was a good listener, and he used to work very hard. He was working, I would say, harder than any of us because he was using a yellow pad and lots of pencils, sharpening pencils all the time, and never once stopped. His training both in terms of a nuclear engineer and his training in politics, and so on, made him a hard worker who was imbued, you know, by a sense of mission. He was acting all the time and driven by this strong sense of mission.

Without his contribution, it would have been very difficult for both of us to reach an agreement. On two



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occasions, each of us decided that it was a hopeless case, and we would not be able to reach an agreement.

Another complicating factor was the fact that we were negotiating an issue whose principal party was absent. The issue is basically the outcome of not only the autonomy dispute, but also the Palestinian question, as it has been called and it is still called now. And so we were acting – well, we didn't have the power of attorney of the Palestinian people and wouldn't have accepted any. The Palestinians have to speak for themselves, and today they have to speak, too, for themselves, and nobody can impose on them who is going to speak for them and so on.

I would say that it was through the perseverance – the patience, perseverance, and precision of President Carter and the blessings of Mrs. Carter, who was watching us from outside the room, praying for us all the time, sending us chicken sandwiches and soup. That atmosphere was very friendly.

I have to commend Chief Justice Aharon Barak for his cooperation because he was a very fair man. Whenever I wanted to get the learned view of another party, I would refer the issue to him, and he acted in a very conscientious manner. He was not acting in a partisan manner. He was not only representing Israel, but he was representing the truth. A good lawyer who was in good command of the legal structure of the system, and through this, President Carter was able to pull a rabbit from the hat because everybody thought that it was not doable. But he did achieve it, and he made it possible through his determination, vigor, and goodwill, and he was neutral, he was not a partisan, but he wanted to – he was always talking about the truth and what can be done and so on.

For that, their friends will never forget his contribution, and we hope that the U.S. people and the administration will follow his footsteps and continue being engaged, continue to be committed to helping both us and the Israelis put this whole matter to an end, because in the absence of that, all of us will continue to suffer to our detriment and to nobody's advantage with our own party or the people in the region but throughout the world. I believe that unless we use the rights, the

opportunities that exist today, we will be wasting time, effort, and valuable blood, as well.

**President Carter:** Thank you very much, Osama. Stay on – we might want to ask you some questions later on.

**Osama el-Baz:** Thank you, Jimmy.

**President Carter:** I'd like to ask everybody else, don't mention me any more. Everybody has been bragging on me too much. So in order to save time – but I appreciate it very much, but I'd just as soon that you don't have – but if you have criticisms of what I did, please speak fervently.

Now, I'm going to call on Mr. Rubinstein, the attorney general of Israel, who will make his comments. And if you all don't mind, if you could kind of limit your time to about five minutes, I would appreciate it. That

**Elyakim Rubinstein**





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way everybody can get around, and we can have more of an open discussion. Ely?

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you for having this conference. Thank you for the initiative. I'm glad to be able to see so many friends of those times and the mentioning of those who are not with us, unfortunately, in all delegations. Their contributions will forever be remembered.

This conference looms high after 25 years as one of the most impressive diplomatic achievements of the former century, and while President Carter asked not to be mentioned anymore, there's no way not to do it, and I can only associate myself with what has been said by my two former distinguished colleagues, by Chief Justice Barak and Dr. el-Baz. You could argue with positions that President Carter took over the years on this or that aspect, but what he did then was the combination of his being an engineer and a religious man, believing religiously in peace and in the bettering of human life. And though Prime Minister Begin used to say, "13 days and 13 nights," it was 12 nights only, but that was his line.

And I, having ever since participated in negotiations with the Lebanese, with Palestinians, with Jordanians, with Syrians and having shared our Jordanian treaty of peace delegation, I've had then opportunities to look at peace negotiations over the years, and Camp David remains, to a great extent, a role model. Unfortunately, the 2000 Camp David attempt did not succeed. This is the time to really review what happened at Camp David of 1978, and once you remember that when President Sadat came to Israel in November 1977 - and, to this moment, this is, for me, the most memorable moment because this was not in the cards.

That chilly Saturday night, it began a new page, a new chapter, and the United States, involved at the time with the Geneva idea, the Geneva conference idea, had to shift its efforts to the new grounds that had been opened. And the visit and the welcome by Prime Minister Begin, who felt that this is something historic and that should be taken on, was a beginning for a painful year of ups and downs. And, finally, President Carter decided to invite the delegations to Camp David.

Now, the United States, as you can read from the

book and from the materials given, those supplied, recently opened up, was focusing on the Palestinian issue, and so as its commitment, Israel wanted a breakthrough. For 30 years, we had wars with Egypt, and the idea of breaking this cycle was - with all the problems and apprehensions and what have you - high on our minds. And I believe President Sadat, who already had some unconventional decisions, had in mind also, besides his commitment to the Palestinian issue, his, the Egyptian interest for tranquility and peace, which began in the mid-1970s to be groundbreaking.

Now, I must say that on the eve of Camp David, if you'd asked me if there was a chance for an agreement after the end of the meeting, I would have been very, very skeptical. And from reading the American materials, you can see that they, also, were skeptical, and they referred to all the old phobics and what have you. And I must say now reading those materials, you can see that the Camp David conference succeeded beyond the most optimistic scenarios. For us, when we entered the conference, I remember convening in New York, and I was then the chief of staff for Moshe Dayan, the foreign minister of Israel. If we were told that this will end with a continuity of negotiations, period, that would be fine. That would be a reasonable outcome. To come out with a framework which included a full-fledged peace with Egypt and a framework for peace on the Palestinian issue was beyond what was on our minds.

And there were very difficult issues on the agenda. For instance, for Prime Minister Begin, the Sinai settlement, which he then deferred to the Knesset to decide on - there were a lot of branches. One should remember we speak of 1978. This is when - the very beginning, since Sadat's visit, of the Israeli/Egyptian contact. This was when Israeli/Arab open diplomatic meetings were still very rare and very unusual, and as was mentioned, the Egyptian delegation - although it later agreed to assume the Arab role in the negotiation - was not speaking for the Palestinians, and the whole Palestinian issue, remember, was what the attitudes were at the time. This is not where we are today in many respects. And hovering is fundamentalism and the Iran crisis at the time - the Khomeini crisis is just looming high in



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those days – so the accords were maybe less than what was achieved, much less than what was achieved.

Let me say that I do feel – or I felt – for the loneliness of the decision-makers. Prime Minister Begin was – he had Mr. Dayan as the fountain of ideas, as Aharon Barak mentioned. He had later the President (Ezer) Weizman, who was very good in creating atmosphere. He had Aharon Barak as the top legal adviser. He had, also, all of the other staff members. But the decision-making was lonely, and I'm sure the same for President Sadat, who had the Arab world and the Palestinians and all the problems that they had, and this sense of loneliness is great. And here is President Carter working day and night with those yellow legal pads with his sense of mission. He didn't have to make the decision, but he had to broker. And President Carter said that Begin and Sadat at the beginning were not good, so they didn't meet thereafter. But I do remember – I want to remember – the last evening before we went to the White House to sign, and the way they met in, I think it was just a couple of hours before we went to the signing ceremony and the way they related to each other. And I do want to remember another meeting three years later, just a few weeks before the assassination of President Sadat, which I attended in Alexandria and the way they related to each other as friends.

So you can see that this very difficult beginning created something good but, unfortunately, President Sadat's life was shortened and then Prime Minister Begin also resigned later on, but it's important because – and I come here for a couple of words about lessons, first of all, leadership. They were two people who could assume the leadership and pay prices – internally, internationally, what have you, and they did it. What emanated was a very important message of peace here. You have to seek peace – the word peace process has become something kind of – sometimes the people look at it with suspicion and we go through tragedies nowadays. I don't want to go into it now but we do.

**President Carter:** Ely, take just one moment.

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** One moment, I'll finish. So the commitment for continuing for us at Camp David

was not perfect, and there were many things that we could think of whether this was the right way. But the bottom line was – and the proof is – that we are here 25 years later, and the peace with Egypt with all its problems of some aspect is the strategic peace there, and that's the important thing.

Finally, I'd like to say that when – there are a lot of things that I would've said had there not been this five-minute rule, but I will say that, unfortunately, that's life, but just two brief things.

One, media. The fact that the media was not there was – well, media people won't like it, but it made a hell of a difference. It would've – it wouldn't have taken off if the media had been involved on a daily basis. I remember the media was so excited. I remember one moment there was a telephone ringing in our cabin, and I picked it up. It's a general from Israel, and he says, "What's going on?" I said, "Oy, you know, we can't do it." And then the "oy" made it into a headline, "Worry in the Israeli delegation." But they didn't have information. The "oy" – you know, the famous Jewish sigh.

And the other thing is there were people who opposed Camp David, but over the years, they, I think – I remember Moshe Dayan in my last conversation with him. He died 10 days after President Sadat, and President Sadat was assassinated. Two days thereafter I had my last conversation with Dayan, and unfortunately, he was gone in a few days, and his main speech was, "Keep the peace with Egypt. Keep the peace with Egypt. Keep the United States involved." And those two things were his last speech. And I remember talking to Prime Minister Begin a few years later on the eve of the Camp David anniversary on another issue, and he said, "Look at what was done at Camp David, what we did for our people, for future generations."

And, finally, I remember a few years after Camp David, I was meeting a minister in Israel who opposed – one of those who voted against it in the Knesset – and this is about 1983 – and he said to me, "Look, if this is hopeful in another 15 years, I'll think the price was worthwhile." He was in opposition to Camp David. And this was 1983. We're now 20 years later. Thank you very much.



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**President Carter:** Thank you. OK, I gave you a few extra minutes. I'm going to call on, in order now, Vice President Mondale, Dr. Brzezinski, Quandt, Saunders, Eilts, Lewis, Jordan, and Powell, so you'll know when your time is coming. Everybody, abbreviate your comments as much as possible and say what you want to, and then we'll have time after that to have an exchange, and I'll call on people as you seek recognition.

Fritz Mondale, my friend, who took care of the whole United States and the rest of the world while we were up there enjoying ourselves on vacation in Camp David.

**Walter Mondale:** I think when every new president gets into that Oval Office for the first time and gets his first briefings, one of the first things he prays for is that he doesn't have to get involved in Middle East negotiations between Israel and Palestine. It's just common sense to avoid it.

Every new president, except President Carter, who long before he was sworn into office had this profound commitment that he was going to try to find peace there.

There were some political judgments made that I disagreed with. First was the idea of Camp David. If you can believe this, we were going to get Prime Minister Begin, a great leader not known for flexibility, and Sadat and all of us together up at Camp David with maybe a 20 percent chance of succeeding and try to work out these problems in front of God and man. I told the President, "If you fail, we're done. No one - we will sap our stature as national leaders. We've got to find some less risky way of trying to find peace there." He, of course, said, "We're going to do it," and we did do it, and it was really risky, and it nearly blew up three or four times, but we made it, and if we hadn't done that, we would have never succeeded.

Then, after the Camp David Accords agreement, we came very close to failing and getting the follow-on Egyptian/Israeli peace treaty signed. And as you may remember, there were some leaders floating through Washington that the president would speak to. It wasn't getting better. We were pulling further apart. And then

the president said, "I'm going to get on a plane, and I'm going to fly over to Jerusalem and Cairo, and I'm going to try to get this agreement finally signed." And I said, "Mr. President, you cannot do that because we have no way of knowing whether this will succeed, and we have other problems. If you fail on this mission, we will, once again, shatter the confidence of the American people in our presidency." But, of course, he went and he succeeded.

And I think that this is not only a model of a successful negotiation; it is also an example that we'd better remember of a source of rarely used American power and influence. And that is the engagement, intense involvement, of an educated and deeply committed president.

**President Carter:** Zbig?

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** Well, I have to confess that I was very eager to get out of Camp David because I had a special reason. I was rooming with Hamilton Jordan, sharing the same bedroom, and we measured the passage of time by the size of the pile of the dirty laundry in the middle of the room.

Let me, in very telegraphic style, make three comments. One is about the delegations; secondly, about their respective strategic performance; and then some overall generalizations.

The delegations - I think there were some interesting differences in the delegations. Putting it in a nutshell, my sense was, both at Camp David and subsequently, that on the Israeli side, the prime minister was strategically very focused, rather intransigent in his negotiating style, whereas his delegation, in particular some of his close associates, some of whom are here today but those also who are absent, were more flexible, and they were exercising a kind of intermediary role also between themselves and us.

The Egyptian delegation was headed by a president who was quite determined to have some sort of success from this venture and who was a visionary and conciliatory. But his entourage was more tough-minded, more inclined to feel that he was making too many concessions, and this was the internal synergy in the Egyptian delegation.



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**Zbigniew Brzezinski**

The American delegation, as has already been emphasized, was very much shaped by the president, who was simultaneously the strategist and the negotiator, and we wanted, of course, to use this venture to make a breakthrough to what was eventually comprehensive peace in the Middle East. And the president was very much in charge, not only of this process but very much so of the subsequent process after Camp David, leading to the actual signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Fritz has already mentioned the special trip to Cairo and to Jerusalem. He sent me ahead to Cairo to negotiate with Sadat, and typical of what I was referring to, he gave me instructions in writing, which I brought with me today, that were written by hand. They weren't written by anyone for him. He wrote them himself. There were 15 very specific points, which he instructed me to carry out, and then at the end, there was even a personal note, which conveys to you the sense of how he

stage-managed the whole process. It says the following: "Zbig, your assumption and demeanor should reflect absolute conviction," strongly underlined, "that proposals and peace treaty are in Egypt's interest. Do not acknowledge any doubt about this. We must implement Camp David Accords together. Sadat should not insist on speaking for West Bank Palestinians."

On the strategic performance, I would say that Begin achieved a short-range strategic success in that he split the Arab coalition. He took Egypt out of the Arab coalition, which was threatening Israel. I think, however – and this is an historical judgment which has yet to be validated – he was responsible for long-range failure because he embroiled Israel in the morass of settlements, from which it is very difficult for Israel to extract itself and which has paralyzed the possibility of genuine and rapid progress towards peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.



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Sadat achieved essentially an immediate national objective, which is the full recovery of all Egyptian land, which Begin was not prepared to concede, at least for a long time, in the course of negotiations. He wanted to retain portions, and he wanted to have some lease of parts of Sinai, special status for the settlements, and so forth. Sadat obtained all of that but at the cost of Egyptian leadership in the Arab world and Egyptian isolation at least for quite a while.

The United States obtained the absence of war – there has not been a war in the Middle East since Camp David – and was instrumental in achieving the first peace treaty ever between Israel and any Arab state, setting the precedent for an eventual peace. But we did not achieve our objectives regarding the West Bank, in part because Begin was so intransigent, in part because the political climate domestically was not susceptible, in part because other Arab countries would not back us. I remember going to Saudi Arabia and to Jordan on your instructions and saying to the Arabs, “Back us because Begin has committed himself to autonomy. We can translate autonomy into something much more. Begin has committed himself to autonomy implicitly on the 1967 lines. We’ll make that explicit. Back us.” But they wouldn’t take that chance.

To conclude, overall I would say that what Camp David shows is that, first of all, if the United States is to play a constructive role in the Middle East, it has to have a balanced and fair approach and be perceived as such by the world community and not be partial, not to provide umbrella just for one side or protection for one side or favoritism to one side.

And, secondly, and I don’t mean to belabor this point because it has already been made, presidential leadership of a very direct personal, sustained, dedicated type is necessary and was present in Camp David. Thank you.

**President Carter:** Bill Quandt, please.

**William Quandt:** Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for convening this opportunity for us to compare our notes and compare our different versions of Camp David.

I was probably the most junior member of the American team, and so I will just reflect a little bit on what the atmosphere was like as I saw it and felt it 25 years ago.

Obviously, as we prepared for Camp David, and there’d been a lot of prior negotiations, we realized that this was a real historic make-or-break moment. I think different people in the delegation have different senses of whether there was a real chance. I was probably on the more pessimistic side compared to some of the others. I thought that the issues between Egypt and Israel of a bilateral nature could be resolved. There was every reason to see the outline of that agreement, but I was deeply worried that the gap between Israel and Egypt on the Palestinian issues was so enormous that it would prove to be a fatal obstacle toward any real wide-ranging agreement.

Now, there was a hard judgment here to make as to how important that would be for President Sadat. President Sadat, on the one hand, came across as an “Egyptian firster.” He wanted to achieve Egypt’s national objectives – getting its territory back, ending the prospects of war. But he also, I thought, and I think most of us thought, wanted a comprehensive peace, he wanted to be the Arab leader who opened the way toward an overall settlement and who would perhaps not place Arab interests and Palestinian interests on as high a level as Egyptian ones, but he didn’t want to abandon them altogether. And we didn’t know where the point would be where he would balk if he didn’t get something, particularly on the Palestinian side.

At the same time, we knew that for Prime Minister Begin, any linkage between the Egyptian/Israeli treaty and the Palestinian issue was going to be extremely difficult for him to accept.

So when we prepared this document, that I think has been given to all of you, for President Carter’s preparation for Camp David, we went off to Middleburg in Virginia, the Harriman estate, with Secretary Vance and Hal Saunders, Roy Atherton and I, and we spent several days trying to think of how we could lay out the issues in a way that would kind of clarify what was possible, and we identified this so-called linkage issue as central. How much linkage could we get that would help give



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Sadat what he needed without being too much for the Israeli side to accept? You'll see that reflected in the papers if you read through them.

Well, you've heard that it didn't quite happen that way. Begin and Sadat didn't get along so well. And Aharon Barak on about day three came to me and said, "It's not working. They don't get along. In fact, everybody's retreating to hard-line positions. Get word to the President that he needs to keep them apart." And we did from then on.

Now, toward the end, we reached the crucial moment when the hard political decisions had to be made, literally 25 years ago last night and early, early this morning. President Carter met with Begin and Aharon Barak was there and Cy Vance was there, and the rest of us were waiting outside the door to find out how these crucial issues were going to be resolved.

In that meeting, I believe that one serious mistake was made on the American side. Let me just underscore it because otherwise I think on the Egyptian/Israeli things, we all did very well. At that meeting, we tried - President Carter tried - to get Begin to agree to a freeze on settlements in the West Bank and Gaza for a prolonged period, during the period in which negotiations would take place on the West Bank and Gaza. And I believe, according to what the president says in his memoirs, he thought he got Begin's agreement. I was sitting outside the door not listening, but Vance came out and said, "I think we have an agreement, but I'm not sure. We need to pin it down tomorrow." I have notes to that effect. And tomorrow turned out to be the 17th of September 1978.

We had received a letter from the Israelis, which was not the commitment that the president thought he had gotten. Meanwhile, we had told President Sadat that we had an agreement on a freeze on settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. At that point, there were only 15,000 settlers outside of the greater Jerusalem area, more or less. It turned out that we went ahead and signed the Camp David Accords that evening without getting the commitment that we had sought, and I think we knew it was a risky business, but we also knew that Begin was not going to give us quite what we wanted, and it turned out that it was a problem that came back

to haunt us. Today, there are 10 times or more that many settlers in the West Bank, and as Zbig Brzezinski just said, it has made the resolution of the Palestinian/Israeli part of the problem infinitely more complex. So although I agree with everything that has been said about the positive aspects of negotiations at Camp David, I do think we made one serious mistake, and it has become increasingly clear in retrospect that we're paying a price for that one mistake. Thank you.

**President Carter:** Thank you, Bill. Everybody will have a chance to respond later on. I'm going to respond to a couple things later as well. Hal Saunders is next.

**Harold Saunders:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. I would like to place my remarks in a larger framework. For me, this is a celebration not only of the historic achievement at Camp David, but it's a celebration of that achievement in the context of the Arab/Israeli/Palestinian peace process. That peace process set the stage for Camp David, four years of peace process before we went to Camp David, and the frameworks at Camp David set the course for the peace process ahead. One cannot understand what happened there without putting it in that larger context, and I might say that one of the mistakes after 1981 was not continuing the peace process with the energy that it had been pursued by three presidents and secretaries of state during the 1970s.

But what was the peace process? Probably at the table here, I was the only - I'm the only one who flew on the Kissinger shuttles, and we, on the Kissinger shuttle plane in 1974 at the time of the first Egyptian/Israeli disengagement agreement, I believe, coined the phrase "peace process." We started calling what we were doing "the negotiating process" because the idea, very explicitly stated, was to put one agreement, one interim agreement on top of another for the purpose of creating momentum, changing the political environment, and moving forward. But we realized very quickly that this shuttle, the intensity of our involvement, was changing the political environment, increasing a sense of possibility of peace in the Middle East. So we came to call what we did "the peace process." We realized that the process was changing the political environment. In looking back on the peace process



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**Harold Saunders. Dr. Osama el-Baz on screen.**

later, I said, “The peace process, when it worked in the 1970s, was a progression of mediated agreements embedded in the larger political process, and it was in that larger political process that relationships could actually change. The power to change lay in the political process itself.”

And that leads to a second point which has already been made, and that is that the process, when it worked, depended heavily on the intense continuous, dedicated, committed involvement of the president and the secretary of state, and I don’t mean dropping in and out every once in a while. I mean that in important periods the president was immediately involved, and on the Kissinger shuttles, the secretary of state was showing up on people’s doorsteps two times a day during the shuttles.

Now, the second point that I would like to make about the peace process is that it wasn’t a negotiating process. It was a combination of dialogue and negotiation. The Kissinger shuttles – for every shuttle, there were four or five trips before or visits of leaders to Washington. Kissinger once told people on the back of the aircraft [the media] – I don’t know whether Don Oberdorfer was on that trip or not – but they said, “Well, are you – do you have a text yet, Mr. Secretary?” And he said, “No, until you talk people into thinking about the same kind of agreement so they have a common picture of the agreement to be changed, it’s a worthless enterprise to put things on paper.”

Well, at Camp David, what really happened at Camp David was, of course, a lot of negotiations. But a



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lot more informal dialogue by Barak, el-Baz, both talking about the moments when they weren't negotiating, when they were trying to find out why each side needed what it needed and so on, so the combination of dialogue and negotiation is essential to the peace process, and I would venture to say that the absence of dialogue through many years since, with the exception of Oslo, has, for the most part, been largely responsible for a lack of progress.

A second point to be made here about the peace process is this continuous involvement not only of the two principal officers on our side but also the involvement of a coherent, professional, and political staff. And I think one of the great human rewards for me at Camp David was the collaboration between the five-person political team, headed by the president and the vice president, and the five-person professional team, four of whom you see here. That collaboration was a marvelous human experience, each of us bringing our particular abilities to the task at hand, so that the coherence of the professional and the political teams was important.

And, third, the evolution of a cumulative agenda is made possible by a sense of political process. Yes, we didn't do some things at Camp David, but we left Camp David knowing that there was an agenda, couldn't resolve these questions here, but they were for the next negotiations. So there was no sense that an agreement was the end of the road. I used to think to myself, the only reward for achieving an agreement – and we did achieve five of them in the 1970s – the only reward for achieving an agreement was the opportunity to negotiate the next one, which is going to be 10 times harder than this one because there was a continuity in the sense that it was a cumulative agenda.

And finally, fourth, while the peace process, the very word, assumes a multilevel peace process with the officials here and then the policy-influencing communities and the grass roots to whom Sadat appealed when he went to Jerusalem. Well, the idea of the peace process assumes that I think that my version of the one major failure on the part of everybody at Camp David – I mean all three delegations and no particular individual – was the fact that to this day there has not been success

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in somehow conveying the essence of this evolving process and changing relationships to the grass roots. The people in many instances did not come along, and I think that was probably less true in Israel than it was in the Arab world, but somehow – and it's a problem we'll discuss this afternoon – the need to engage people in the policy-influencing and the engaged public in this process is something that we did not succeed in doing. And that, I say, in face of the fact that there were literally numberless nonofficial dialogues since 1972, 1973, over 30 years. There probably wouldn't have been as much success as we've had if it hadn't have been for the interactions, especially between Israelis and Palestinians, at the nonofficial level. But somehow, we have not succeeded in translating that changing set of relationships into governmental approval, or the stars have not come together so that you had agreement at the grass roots level and agreement at the top at the same time. The exception to that, of course, is the period of the Egyptian/Israeli peace treaty following Camp David when the Israelis gave permission to their leaders and the Egyptian leader was bold enough to engage also and to produce a peace treaty. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

**President Carter:** By the way, I didn't mention it



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this morning, but this afternoon we're going to spend some time talking about the present and where we go from here and how the lessons we learned 25 years or so ago might be applicable in the future.

Hermann Eilts is next.

**Hermann Eilts:** Thank you, Mr. President. Much of what I wanted to say has already been said by previous speakers, but I'm reminded of one thing a previous mediator said – can you hear me all right or have I not – a previous mediator, Ralph Bunche, whose centennial we celebrate this year, said after negotiating the armistice agreements of 1949. He commented at the end of those very painful negotiations, “Now, I am a Middle East expert, completely befuddled.” And I think today you could say, “Middle East expert, completely bedeviled.”

One great problem that one faces in connection with presidential involvement, and there are many problems, clearly, is that both our Arab and our Israeli friends, once you've gotten the president involved, are convinced that he has nothing else to do but to worry about their problems. Camp David was the prime example, the belief that we could do it in two or three or maybe four or five days. And at the end of 13 days, if the president had not cut the session and said, “I've got to get back,” we would probably still be at Camp David negotiating that particular agreement.

What I would like to talk about briefly is the atmosphere in Egypt, and particularly with respect to President Sadat on the eve of coming to Camp David.

You know, it's 25 years ago, the agreement is there, we all take it for granted, and we forget the atmospherics of it at the time. President Sadat had made his historic trip to Jerusalem, in part in response to a letter, a handwritten letter, from President Carter to him that some bold step was needed. And Sadat, against the advice of many of his principal people, decided that the thing to do was to go to Jerusalem, break the psychological barrier, as he called it. He went. It was an historic trip. He came back very pleased.

Very quickly thereafter, things deteriorated. The trip with Mr. Begin to Ismailia did not work well. The political committee that was set up, the tripart committee, quickly collapsed. Sadat withdrew his delegation.

Interestingly, the most successful were the military meetings between Weizman and Gamasy. And when you think about it, you know, here were the soldiers who were fighting each other for this long period, and yet, when they got together, they seemed to do, generally speaking, not always obviously, very well. Gamasy, the Egyptian minister of war (defense), once said to me, “If the politicians would allow Ezer and myself to sit down, we could resolve this in 24 hours.” Well, clearly, they couldn't have, but the point still is at the military level, the professional military level – and the point is both sides had a professional military – they got on well. What is missing, it seems to me, in some of the present conflict, for example, with the Palestinians, is the lack of professional military people who can see things in strategic terms and perhaps work things out. Perhaps they can.

Anyway, the political committee failed. The military committee was all right. The camp meeting at Leeds in England, as has already been suggested, was a failure. You cannot imagine the dispiritedness of Sadat at this particular time. He was talking about resigning. His policy of working with the United States, his policy of trying to get peace had failed as far as he was concerned. He felt that Mr. Begin had not adequately appreciated the enormity of the gesture he had made, and he was talking about resigning. Whether he meant this seriously or not, who knows? But the point was, it took Mubarak and it took various others to persuade him not to do this, and, of course, the invitation to Camp David.

On the eve of leaving for Camp David, I met with Sadat in Ismailia, and Sadat said, “I want a confrontation with Begin. He has not appreciated what I have done over these many years. What is needed is a confrontation.” And he was determined to provoke a confrontation. Now, what that confrontation would've brought him is another question.

In any case, one of the interesting things to me, and I know to many others, when he arrived at Camp David, he had calmed down considerably. Perhaps it was jet lag. Perhaps it was President Carter's effort. In any case, I have never seen a relationship at that high a level that was as close as Sadat had with President Carter. Sadat respected the president enormously. He trusted the president



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enormously. So the president could say things to Sadat that almost anybody else could not have been able to. And, of course, in the case of Sadat, one never knew whether he was going to go this way or that way because he was a consummate – I’m going to use the term actor, and I don’t mean that in a negative sense, but he was innovative, and it has been suggested he was flexible.

**President Carter:** Time, Hermann.

**Hermann Eilts:** Right. There was one point at Camp David where perhaps we made a mistake, and that was Sadat counted heavily that we would bring the Saudis around in connection with the agreement. Had we brought the Saudis around, the other Arab states, whether they liked it or not, might have had to accept it. And we hoped that the Saudis would indeed support it. On the eve after signing of Camp David, we all went to the State Department, sent out telegrams, among them to King Fahd, saying, “We’ve got an agreement, and that agreement, although it does not enshrine a settlements freeze, there is a commitment, an oral commitment, for a protracted settlements freeze.” That, as has already been pointed out, did not develop. The following morning, the Saudis condemned the agreement. Whether our ambassador was able to make the representation to King Fahd or not, who knows? It might not have been possible at the time. In any event, that was one of Sadat’s deep disappointments, real disappointments.

The wonderful thing, the remarkable thing about him is he never looked back. He was not a carper. Once something had happened, he moved forward, and that, of course, is what he did. Let me close with that, sir.

**President Carter:** Sam Lewis?

**Samuel Lewis:** Thank you, Mr. President. I’ve had a chance on several other occasions to talk at length about my observations about Begin. I’m not going to do that today. There is not time. But he was a remarkably difficult negotiator, and if you want chapter and verse on that, I think President Carter can give it better than anyone else.

I want to concentrate on lessons. We’ve had a lot of very good flavor here of how things went, all of which sounds exactly right to me. It seems to me there were

several lessons that I drew, looking back on this, and have drawn over the years, and we ought to get into these some more this afternoon and their implications.

The first is about ripeness. It’s clear to me, in retrospect, the Egyptian/Israeli conflict was ripe for a settlement. That doesn’t mean it was going to happen without enormous effort. But on both sides, both parties were ready for it. It’s also clear in retrospect that the Palestinian West Bank issue was not ripe for settlement, and we got actually as much as was possible to get at the time. And this ripeness factor is very important in what you can achieve as mediators or as third parties no matter how hard the United States tries.

The second has certainly already been talked about a lot. Nothing would’ve been achieved without the kind of concentration, involvement by a president, a protracted involvement, demonstrating daily that he was in charge and was determined, not just that he had sent people out to work for him. And I would add to that, this success also reflected a remarkably good administration interagency team effort, not just at Camp David, but all through the process. Over the two years or three years of administration working on the Middle East, there was a remarkable degree of coherence in the way the Defense Department, the NSC, and the State Department were team players working for the quarterback. You can give a lot of credit to the quarterback, but having later on worked for different kinds of administrations, the Reagan administration and the Clinton administration, I can tell you, that ain’t the norm. And the fact that it was the norm, I think, contributed a lot to the outcome.

The third lesson I draw is that you’ve got to have, if you’re going to achieve anything in this part of the world, committed, strong, politically powerful, courageous, risk takers leading the local players, and Begin and Sadat in their own ways both were those. And today, unfortunately, we have different kinds.

The third-party role, no matter how well played, cannot succeed without local leaders who are prepared to take those risks and have the political clout within their own systems to sell difficult compromises. Begin had that clout, and Sadat obviously did, as well, and they used it.



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The fourth lesson I draw is that there was a remarkable degree of detailed, careful, creative preparation done, and the document that Bill referred to, which he and Hal had a great deal doing the writing of, is a good example of that. I was looking over that briefing memo for President Carter last night, and I really had forgotten how much of the language that is in the final Camp

the beginnings of a peace process and the first peace in the history of the region.

Now, there was a lesson I'd like to mention here about the follow-up period. Nobody has mentioned anything past the peace treaty. You may remember that the autonomy negotiations kicked off right after the peace treaty was signed, and that was the implementation of the frame-



**Sam Lewis and Hermann Eilts**

David Accords was in the briefing memo. You'd already cooked it up ahead of time. And that's the kind of preparation we did not see before Camp David II, and I think the demonstrated contrast is really quite remarkable. And it's months of tough, professional work that went into that.

Now, the fifth point I'd like to say is a lesson: One should not, in these kinds of situations, allow the best to be the enemy of the better, and I believe that President Carter was absolutely right to accept much less than Sadat needed and wanted in order to get as much as could be extracted from Menachem Begin and the Israelis at the time. It was very important not to let the best rule out your ability to get something a lot better in

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work regarding the West Bank and Gaza. I believe, looking back on that sad period in which we were all immersed for months on end in extraordinarily difficult and complicated floating negotiations, which

floated back and forth between Egypt and Israel, I think they were doomed from the beginning, and I'll tell you why - because the real protagonists weren't there. The Palestinians weren't present, and it was all about Palestine. It was all about the future of the Palestinians, and Sadat grandiosely said, "Oh, well, I can speak for the Palestinians," even though the president, I think, advised him not to. But he did. When Jordan turned down the invitation to come and the PLO intimidated the Palestinians within the territories who were anxious, many of them, to give this autonomy thing a try, Egypt stepped forward and tried to play the role. But Egypt could never make compromises on behalf of the Palestinians without being accused of selling them out, and there had to be compromises, and they were impossible to achieve.



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And it also failed for another reason. Begin had a strong case of buyer's remorse after Camp David. When he found that his own party, his own movement, his Likud party actually were all against what he had done, even though he had the majority of the whole Knesset, he had second thoughts. "Maybe I gave away a lot more on the West Bank than I thought I did. Maybe Aharon tricked me or something." But in any case, he started to try to demonstrate to his own public that he hadn't made any compromises at all. And buyer's remorse affected the way he dealt with Dayan and his future. It affected the way he ran the autonomy talks. He wouldn't give the same kind of flexibility to Dayan that he previously enjoyed in the previous negotiations. And I think the result was that the Israeli position became more rigid and the Egyptian position was impossible given the lack of Palestinian participation. So I'm afraid that in retrospect we were kidding ourselves to think the autonomy talks could ever have succeeded, and I don't think that Sol Linowitz, my friend, was right when he came to President Carter at the end of the administration and said, "Mr. President, we've got 80 percent done. If we can just keep the Reagan administration going, we can finish this." There was 80 percent done, but zero percent of the tough issues.

**Hamilton Jordan:** Mr. President, compared with my colleagues on this panel, my contribution was tiny, so my remarks would be very brief.

I do remember Camp David. The quarters were very crowded, so we drew lots as to roommates. I lost, and I got Zbig. So when my children ask me what I did at Camp David tangibly, I did Zbig's laundry for the 13 days that we were up there.

I remember the sense of despair that permeated our foreign policy team when the Likud won the election. I remember that despair being deepened when Prime Minister Begin first visited Washington. I see our friend Stan Turner in the audience. I remember a briefing that we received at the time that it had, you know, it analyzed the position of the party and the people that were coming to Washington, and I'll never forget, it said that Ariel Sharon, who was obviously still a popular war hero - I think he held the agriculture portfolio in the government

- but he said that while he was very popular, that Minister Sharon was a man from the past and a has-been, and here we are today.

I was reminded by Lee Hamilton's introduction of President Carter, the term risk-taking and conventional wisdom, and that's what President and Mrs. Carter's lives have been about, always believing that anything was possible, always setting their goals high and pursuing them aggressively, and that's what Camp David was all about.

I remember our colleagues who are not here, and I particularly salute the public servants who are here, people like Bill Quandt and Ely and Aharon and Hal Saunders and Sam and Hermann Eilts and Osama, who's with us telephonically, who spent their entire life working on this great problem. Thank you.

**President Carter:** Jody?

**Jody Powell:** I'm very much in the same position as Ham in terms of my contribution, so I'll be equally brief. I really want to say two things.

In terms of the White House press office, our responsibility was to do the best we could to keep media coverage of the proceedings from making the task more difficult than it already was. I think, on the whole, we were at least marginally successful, thanks in no small part to the support and cooperation of all of the members of all of the delegations, all three of the delegations, who did something rather rare, which was, on the whole, not to try to advance their own personal interests through their relationships with journalists at the expense of the larger interest of peace and the negotiating process, which reminds me once again in a much larger way of how proud I was then to be involved with and associated with people like this. And I must say today I'm even more proud.

Finally, I think we have to take note of the fact that Osama, Dr. el-Baz, has again broken new ground. I don't think I've ever before heard anyone refer to President Carter as very patient. Thank you.

**President Carter:** Very good.

I would like to say one thing, and maybe Osama would like to confirm this. There's been some insinuation



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that Sadat backed away from the Palestinian rights. My strong conviction is that this was one of the most important things that Sadat pushed. And we made extraordinary progress in that.

No one here can imagine how difficult it was to get Menachem Begin to agree to accept United Nations Resolution 242 in all its aspects – and that is written not only in the preamble to the Camp David Accords, but also in the text of the Camp David Accords – which calls for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories, or the nonacquisition of territory by force. That was an excruciating and very difficult negotiation.

The second thing is that Begin himself put forward the idea of full autonomy for the Palestinians. Not just autonomy, but he was the one who insisted on full autonomy. And then in the Camp David Accords themselves, there is a commitment by Menachem Begin to withdraw specifically, [quoting from the Camp David Accords] “a withdrawal of Israeli armed forces will take place and there will be a redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces into specified security locations.” That’s a very clear commitment of the Israelis to proceed with honoring the rights of the Palestinians.

Another thing it called for was the election of officers – leaders for the Palestinians, which did take place – not on schedule, but it took place the first part of the year, 1996. In fact, The Carter Center was in charge of that election. And it was an absolutely honest and fair and open election, where the members of the Palestinian Authority were elected and Yasser Arafat was elected to be president.

So, all those things took place. And I would say the most crucial issue of all that would have broken down the entire process was the willingness of Menachem Begin to abandon or dismantle the 14 settlements in the Sinai. This was very difficult for him. And I have always said, in any forum in which I’ve been involved, that that was the most courageous and difficult decision made at Camp David.

I had no difficult decisions to make. Sadat didn’t have very many difficult decisions to make. But that violated a deep commitment and an oath before God that Menachem Begin had made, that he would not disman-

tle Israeli settlements. And it was the trust that Aharon Barak had from Begin and his exquisite legal capabilities that finally permitted us to come forward with a conclusion that Begin would not authorize the dismantling of those settlements, which was absolutely necessary for Sadat, but that he would permit the Knesset to make that decision. And he further agreed that he would not interfere in its deliberations of the Knesset and let the Knesset make their decision without his interference. And I think by an 85 percent margin, the Knesset did indeed approve the dismantling of those settlements in the Sinai region.

So, one of the main things that we tried to do was to get these Palestinian rights. I do agree with what Zbig said, that that was the worst mistake that the Israelis made, was insisting on continuing with the settlements.

When we were there, there were 25 settlements and our best estimate was only 5,000 settlers and they were almost all immediately adjacent to Jerusalem. Since then, other presidents, including Reagan and George Bush Sr., were insistent that the settlements were illegal and an obstacle to peace. Under Presidents Clinton and Bush Jr. now, the opportunity for the Israelis to build unlimited settlements has been raised. And now there are about 125 settlements. And the New York Times’ latest estimate is 235,000 settlers. And this is the single most difficult issue to be faced and the most serious mistake that has been made, in my opinion, in the last 25 years.

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** Mr. President, you spoke of Begin being willing to grant full autonomy for the Palestinians. I’d like to raise a question regarding that and maybe Mr. Barak could also comment. Begin was a stickler for words. I mean, really very careful and insistent and deliberate about choice of words.

**President Carter:** A semanticist.

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** Yes, a semanticist. As I recall, he did not say full autonomy for the Palestinians, because he didn’t believe they were Palestinians.

**President Carter:** He said Palestinian Arabs.

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** Palestinian Arabs. That’s a very important distinction. He always emphasized that, because he didn’t accept Palestinian nationalism. Secondly,



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when he spoke of full autonomy for the Palestinians, he made it clear, at least in private conversations, that it was full autonomy for the people, but not for the people on the land. He had a very subtle distinction here in mind, that it's autonomy for the people in the sense that they would have self-governing instrumentalities or authorities, but it would not involve self-government over land. And that was again, a very deliberate semantic distinction, designed to preclude the idea of a homeland for the Palestinians.

**President Carter:** If it's all right, I'll let Aharon respond to that question, Ely, and then call on you. Aharon, would you like to?

[Mr. Barak yielded the floor to Mr. Rubinstein for a response.]

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** Let me say that when you talk about Prime Minister Begin, and again, he has been gone for over 10 years, why not remember where he came from in terms of his psychological and historical approach. He lost his family in the Holocaust. He was one of the early leaders of clandestine anti-British Irgun operations and the Likud. He was one of the founding fathers.

And for him – and I'm speaking as a civil servant who is not close to him anymore or who is not a member of any party. But one has to see where he came from, both historically and ideologically, to understand the compromises that he had to make. When I spoke of loneliness, I meant that he was there – the other members of all delegations, except for his own executive assistant, were not members of his political party or his ideology. And he had to cope with his very deep commitment to the idea of what's known as Eretz Israel, his commitment to the Jewish right over there. And that was something which, for him to extract language and actions from this, was very difficult.

But I do know and I do feel that he would stand by what he promised. Yes, Dr. Brzezinski is right, that he was talking to Palestinian Arabs at the time, because the feeling was that in the land of Israel and Palestine, they have Palestinian Jews and Palestinian Arabs. That was his thinking.

But because many people have spoken about the problem of the settlements, one should remember that I don't think he would have been able to give the OK for more than what he gave. And even President Sadat said that a few days after Camp David, what's wrong with the three months freeze for a treaty of peace with Egypt. And of course, President Sadat had his own difficulties where he came from. But for Begin, the future of the Jewish people in our country while trying to be fair to others – Palestinians or Palestinian Arabs, as he was referring to the Palestinians – was something very, very deep.

Another point is, I'd like to remind you that there was a myth that was going as if Sinai was promised by Moshe Dayan before the visit of Sadat – I think this is a myth. It's important to mention that, because otherwise we wouldn't have been sitting there negotiating days and nights at Camp David – and I also happened to look through the materials of the time, his meetings with the Egyptian representative, Dr. Telhami, and so on. And it's important to mention that because Camp David was the negotiation. I mean the real thing was negotiations at Camp David.

Another point is the – by the way, Mr. President, you said about the settlements that some administrations said was illegal and an obstacle to peace. In fact, President Reagan's administration referred to it as not illegal, and then he said it was difficult and an obstacle for peace. So, I don't want to go into the legality issue because of the time, but there were different approaches by American administrations.

Camp David was a compromise as much as a compromise can be. And unfortunately – and we should say that honestly today – for many years, the term Camp David for Arabs was not a kosher word. So, for instance, when we negotiated Madrid – I was heavily involved in negotiating Madrid in 1991 – the many aspects, I mean, various other incarnations, too. Many points from Camp David were taken. Sometimes I would say to Secretary Baker at the time, Camp David is not a fruit salad that you can take only a melon or whatever, or something else, you have to take it as a whole. But they wouldn't refer to Camp David, because of the friction in



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the Arab world they took here, but they used Camp David a lot thereafter without referring to it that way.

Last point here, because there are many things to say. I will refer to the question that was made by some of the participants on the education focus. Harold Saunders mentioned that. I didn't have the time to address it. That's so very important in our vicinity – and I'm saying that when we negotiate with Jordan, we try to learn from the lessons of what happened with Egypt.

There isn't enough of education. I don't want to criticize. We're here, basically, to celebrate an important historic event. I don't want to argue, but it could be said, somewhat to our society and to the Arabs, questions of normalizing relations the way they are. These things mean a lot to people, because you feel the – I remember the thrill that Israelis could go to Egypt or to something of the kind. But the need to educate for peace is still there.

I just read a book by an Egyptian named Tarek Hege, a man who makes this point, the notion of educating for peace. And I say it, because we have to look for the future and when people are talking in the afternoon on the Palestinian issues and others, one has to bear that in mind. So, thank you very much.

**President Carter:** Harold Saunders is next.

**Harold Saunders:** Thank you, Mr. President. I'd just like to put a little footnote to history here. And in doing so, I have to disagree with two of my colleagues. The meeting at Leeds Castle, I guess at the end of July, the last meeting before Camp David, was termed a failure. And somebody else said something negative about it.

I thought it was one of the best meetings we ever had. It was the best meeting, because it was a meeting to talk about what had happened since the Sadat visit to Jerusalem. It was a meeting to take stock. And the best part of it was, nobody went there thinking we were going to come out with an agreement. So the talk was free. And therefore, it was wide-ranging. There was a lot of talk about what Israel really needed in the West Bank and so on. So, I felt that that was very important.

And more to the point, several of my colleagues have made the point about careful preparation. The first draft of the Camp David Accords was written at the Churchill Hotel, the night we came back to London

from Leeds Castle. Because we left Leeds Castle thinking we were preparing for a meeting of foreign ministers at the Sinai field positions in the mountains down there – the American surveillance post.

So we came back thinking there was going to be another meeting and it turns out, for all the reasons that have been discussed today, that President Carter had a more ambitious picture. So it turned out not to be the meeting of foreign ministers, but it turned out to be the meeting at Camp David. The document that I happened to write and shared with some of my colleagues that night in the Churchill Hotel was the document that we amended, developed – Bill and I particularly, with Cy Vance, and took to Middleburg, as Bill mentioned.

It's also a further comment about preparation; we did go to Camp David with a document. We had our own notion in our briefcase of what the Camp David Accords would look like. And at the end of the first week, when things seemed to be slowing down on Friday afternoon, when the negotiations were going to stop for Shabbat, I sat down and took that document out and thought about what we'd heard through the first week of exchanges and drafted the document that became the negotiating text, which was shared the next morning with my professional colleagues. And we redeveloped it that morning and gave it to President Carter at noon on that Saturday. But that came out of the Leeds Castle talks.

And further, a principle that goes back here, that was the first time in the peace process when we actually surfaced an American document. We had gone into every one of the Kissinger shuttles with a draft agreement, because we wanted to see what the possible compromises were and we wanted to see what the pitfalls were. But we never took that document out of our briefcases during the Kissinger shuttles. It was only at Camp David, when Zbig came down to breakfast, about 8:00 or so, and said to the professional team, "President Carter wants a draft of an agreement by noon." And so, we brought that document out, which he'd already seen an earlier version of. So, let's not knock Leeds Castle, and let's celebrate the preparation that, I guess, Sam Lewis mentioned as being extremely important.



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**President Carter:** Osama, maybe you'd like to comment. I hope you will.

**Osama el-Baz:** I'd like to confirm a point you made accurately. I believe that I felt all along that President Sadat was as committed to the Palestinian cause as he was to the cause of Egypt. Because he knew all along that unless we addressed ourselves fully and adequately to the Palestinian track, nothing would be able to be sustained and continue. And one of his main instructions to us all the time was and has always been that without achieving a meaningful progress on the Palestinian issue, we cannot move.

And he was committed to this most because of certain political problems in terms of the concepts and so on – conceptually and also for practical reasons. He knew that unless we get something for the Palestinian people, that means that we have not taken the initial step, or the first step, to solve the Arab-Israeli dispute. Because the Arab-Israeli dispute is a coinage that appears later on. It was basically the Palestinian issue – the dispute between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Because prior to the establishment of the state of Israel, we never had any conflict with the Jewish people. We never had any problems for the Israeli-Arab Jewish issues and so on. And so the issue of liberating the Palestinians' land and enabling the Palestinians to exercise their God-given rights to self-determination.

**President Carter:** Well, that was – to repeat myself, that was my interpretation, because I know when Sadat arrived at Camp David, even before, he let me and Cy Vance and Zbig know that there were two issues. One was the removal of Israel from the Sinai. And the other one was the preservation or protection of Palestinian rights. And I think we were obviously much more clearly and specifically successful in dealing with the Sinai issue, which has been proven for the last 25 years, that the Palestinian issue still hasn't been resolved.

I think Sam has something to say.

**Samuel Lewis:** I'd like to raise another issue about the follow-on. I agree with Hal. I think it's important to emphasize this was a process that started way back in 1967, certainly got into high gear in 1974, and stayed in

high gear through the Carter administration and then had a bit of a sagging there in the Reagan years, the first part, and then tried to pick up steam again, and it's gone up and down. But it's been a process throughout.

And another issue in that process is demonstrated, in a way, by the success of Camp David and also the failure of the autonomy negotiations. In the Middle East, time is a wasting asset for negotiators. You can have all the stars aligned in the right places and you think you've got a chance to make a breakthrough, and something totally unanticipated – a vote in the Knesset, an explosion in some capital, a hijacking of an airplane, all sorts of things – will suddenly throw you off course. And if you don't move quickly to capitalize on moments of opportunity, they get blown away by unintended events and unanticipated events.

We saw that over and over again through the autonomy negotiations period. We saw it again very heavily during the Oslo process. And I've come around to think that one of the great, important contributions of the Camp David I process was, President Carter drove the process from the minute he took office, as hard as he could drive it, until we got to the peace treaty. Now he had to ignore – maybe not ignore, but not to deal with – a lot of other problems in the world, and perhaps it cost the administration some other things. But it did produce an outcome. And that was not possible to continue, in a way, after the signing of the treaty. The president and the secretary of state both had to spend more time on other issues.

They had a good emissary in Sol Linowitz. I don't think Bob Strauss was ideally cut out for it. He was the first one, but he didn't stay very long. But it wasn't enough to have the emissary. A good emissary can do a lot, but without that daily concentration of the president driving a process to a conclusion as quickly as possible, you're not likely to get there, because something is going to blow it out of the water.

And that reminds me of the problem of deadlines. We spent months in the autonomy period struggling with this question of the deadline, which had been finally agreed in the peace treaty negotiations to be one year, or a guideline, or a target date, I think it was finally called. Cy tried to convince the Israelis and the



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Egyptians: Don't have a deadline. He'd done some labor negotiations. He knew the pitfalls. But they insisted. They wanted a deadline. So we had one.

The result was, both parties felt, oh, we have a whole year to do this. And we don't have to worry too much until we get closer to the deadline. Then the closer they got to the deadline, the more they drew back, thinking we can't really negotiate and make compromises before a deadline. The deadline itself became an obstacle.

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*There were Egyptian documents and there were Israeli documents. The trouble was, the Egyptians were not prepared to accept the Israeli documents and vice versa. At some point, you've got to make a decision, it seems to me, whether you're going to take the risk—and it is a risk—of putting something on the table. Not to impose it—you can't impose it—but to give the party something to gnaw upon.*

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And these two elements of time – unintended consequences and the very great dangers in deadlines – are issues of lessons from that period that I think really are quite applicable today as well.

**President Carter:** Hermann, did you want to add to that?

**Hermann Eilts:** I want to comment, very briefly on three things that have been said. One, Harold's point that a document – that the United States had a document. It seems to me that that was the critical element. Whether or not you table it depends upon the situation as it develops. But you've got a document.

There were Egyptian documents and there were Israeli documents. The trouble was, the Egyptians were not prepared to accept the Israeli documents and vice versa. At some point, you've got to make a decision, it seems to me, whether you're going to take the risk – and it is a risk – of putting something on the table. Not to impose it – you can't impose it – but to give the party

something to gnaw upon. And let's face it, very often the parties, unable to get together themselves or agree on something themselves, can take what the third party puts on the table and say, they made us do it. Whether we made them do it or not is not the issue. But it's an excuse that you can use if you have to, to your own publics.

To me, that is the missing element at the present time, a document of that sort. This is what we regard as fair and reasonable. Now gnaw upon it. You may have to change it. Certainly the document that was presented was changed somewhat. But it seems to me that that is the way to go. That's the only way we've ever gotten the kind of things we have gotten – the Camp David agreements, the peace treaty, and it should be followed again.

Second, this question of the Palestinians; certainly Sadat had deep concern about the Palestinians, but let's face it, the Palestinians were not his prime concern. He was an Egyptian leader. He had Egyptians to worry about, et cetera. But he did need, if he was going to go ahead in some negotiation, some kind of fellow Arab cover. He could not do it alone without the risk of being told, you are deserting the Arab camp. And let's remember it was Egypt that was the principal Arab state that organized the Arab League and everything else that headed the Arab League, so some kind of cover was needed.

He didn't particularly like Yasser Arafat. It was a contentious issue between the two of them. We're the ones who asked Sadat to negotiate in behalf of the Palestinians. This wasn't a voluntary action on his part. I got instructions to go in to speak to him on this. And when I did, I have to say that the initial response was rather tepid. That he knew that Egypt was not authorized or delegated by the Palestinians to speak for them. It was very tepid. He said, oh, I want to think about that.

Then curiously, he rather morphed into – I will be the negotiator for the Palestinians. He never said yes, but after about a week or so, he began to talk that this is what we will do. We'll speak for the Palestinians, without having any authorization. This was one of the points that worried so many members of his delegation: that there was no Palestinian authorization for Egypt to speak for it. But let's face it, Egypt is Egypt in the Arab world. And Egypt has assumed, over the years, many responsibilities



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for other Arab states. Let me stop there, sir.

**President Carter:** Thank you. Zbig?

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** I just want to point out that the president's position was, and it was stated in writing, Sadat should not insist on speaking for the West Bank Palestinians.

**Hermann Eilts:** But, you see, where does that leave me, getting instructions to ask Sadat to speak for the Palestinians?

**President Carter:** Maybe we gave you contrary, conflicting instructions. Or maybe you got yours from Cy Vance, and Zbig got his from me. (laughter) Of course, when was the date on this?

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** This was when I was going to Cairo. This was after Camp David, in pursuit of the peace process.

**President Carter:** That's right. And as a matter of fact, the emphasis had changed from then. We were focusing, for the six months after Camp David, on getting the peace treaty negotiated in detail between Israel and Egypt. While we were at Camp David, I had written down on a scratch pad the basic elements of the withdrawal from the Sinai, what to do about the three airfields there, how close to the Israeli border any Egyptians could come, how far particular kinds of artillery and tanks could move across the Suez Canal, those kinds of things. And we thought – I thought when we left Camp David, that the three-month period that we had decided upon would be a gracious plenty.

But we soon found that there was some backing off, in my opinion, on the part of the prime minister. Moshe Dayan, when he talked to me, felt that his authority had been dramatically reduced, even though he was sent to Washington to negotiate. He felt that he didn't have the authority to make any concession at all, that any concession he made had to be approved back in Jerusalem.

And so, at the time Zbig went to talk to Sadat, it was not in Sadat's or anyone else's interest for him to project himself forward as the primary spokesperson for the Palestinians, but to deal with the very difficult and

intricate questions that related only to Egypt and Israel. So there was a different emphasis as we concluded the peace treaty. Then there was, six months earlier, when we concluded at Camp David, when the Palestinians issue was, I think, very high on the priority list.

Osama, do you have any comments to make about that?

**Osama el-Baz:** Well, I quite agree with you, Mr. President. President Sadat wanted to – he was caught between two different extremes. One extreme would say that you should go into the process of Camp David, know exactly what you can get, and guaranteeing that you not be forced to make any concessions that you think were not tenable and that might lead to further litigation in the future, rather than animosity and rather than conciliation and coexistence.

On the other hand, he knew that he did not have a mandate by the Palestinians. And so, he cannot speak on their behalf fully. He can express the aspirations, their views that are known to be representing the Palestinian cause, but without any specificity. And specificity is needed when you get into the stage of writing down something that can be binding that combines future generations of both sides.

So, for this reason, I believe that President Sadat was making this a point, that he'll never abandon any Palestinian right and that he'll never betray the Palestinians or commit them to a certain position they wouldn't like to commit themselves to, both for ethical and for practical purposes.

But I'd like to clarify my remarks by repeating again that had it not been for your dedication and your willingness to devote your time and effort continuously to this awesome responsibility, we wouldn't have been able to get anywhere.

**President Carter:** Thank you for that. One of the things that's interesting is the extreme peer pressure that exists within the Arab world. We have the ambassador from Egypt here now. But one of the things that was impressive to me at the time was, even before we went and had the peace treaty consummated, the Saudis privately, including King Fahd personally, – not the



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king, but he was speaking for the king – were greatly supportive of the peace process, and he stopped in Washington on the way back from hospital to give us full approval for what we were doing. Whereas publicly, the Saudi Arabians were condemnatory of what Sadat had done. Even when I went to Jerusalem and to Cairo the following spring, finally to conclude the details of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, the first phone call I got back, when I got in Air Force One and took off from the airport in Cairo, was from the Saudis, saying they were fully supportive of what we had done. But even then, they led the attack on Sadat and boycotted Sadat, and the Arab League moved out of Cairo and so forth.

So, privately, the Saudis were supportive, but publicly and in the realm of the Arab League, they were condemning what Sadat had done in making concessions and working out a treaty.

King Hussein refused to endorse the Camp David Accords. Hal, was it you who went over to – Hal went over, and Hussein had given me, after Camp David, a voluminous list of questions, about 25 different questions, which I hand wrote the answers to. And then Hal Saunders went over to converse with King Hussein, hoping and expecting that he might publicly support the Camp David Accords, which would have been a major step forward. I think history would have been different had he done so. Why don't you describe, just briefly, what occurred there?

**Harold Saunders:** Hussein, I think, was supportive of the concept, but he didn't think we could deliver. That was his bottom line. He became very emotional. His wife had been killed in a helicopter, and it was the same helicopter that had taken him, King Hussein, to the secret meetings with the Israelis. So, somehow in his mind, all that emotion got wound up in that. And he said, look Hal, you know I would give my life if I could bring peace to my people. But I'm just afraid that you can't make this work.

So it was a pragmatic decision and, of course, what we were really asking him and Fahd during that trip of mine was to try to postpone the Arab summit meeting, which, as Osama said, the Iraqis were pressing for. And

neither Hussein nor Fahd seemed to feel able to buck that. And I even had some intelligence reports at the time that there'd been assassination threats to the Saudi leadership emanating from Iraq. So, there was a lot going on there.

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** You know, Mr. President, on King Hussein, this brings into question the matter of ripeness. I had many, many conversations with King Hussein in later years, in the years of making peace with Jordan – Osama and me. In those years, he had been determined to move ahead and finally did move ahead, and we had the treaty of peace made with Jordan, which was very important to myself.

I think that in looking back, he didn't feel ripe – and ripeness is an important issue. It was mentioned before here by some of our colleagues. We live in a complicated part of the world, and without being offensive, but you do have this notion that was mentioned about some of the parties or the players, that in private meetings they would say many things that would be in the right direction in terms of peace. But the test would be – can they go public? Can they afford going public? With the pressures that exist – Dr. el-Baz mentioned it, some of the Americans mentioned it – as we look historically, we can argue that this or that side could have moved earlier, but I think that there is the question of ripeness. And of course, you can ask when is something ripe? Who decides what is ripe? But at the end of the day, this is the party who has to deliver us to decide that it is ripe. Sometimes you think something is ripe and it's not. And in the afternoon you will be talking about the Palestinian issue, and there is a lot of disappointment, because people thought things were ripe and they were not probably ripe and then tragedies occur.

So what I'm trying to say is that when you look at things historically, you can criticize or argue this or that on that side and so on and say something on us or something on the Arabs, but the question is whether a particular setting – what happened at Camp David was that God brought to the same roof, under the same roof, people who, with all their problems and differences, felt at that point of history that they are to make the decision, despite the difficulties. And I remember they would be



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giving constant problems. And I remember Dr. Boutros-Ghali saying to us in the treaty of peace negotiations, at the beginning, let's finish it until this or that date, because there is that conference coming maybe November 1 or something and then we should be there before and so on. So, the message of complexity has to be in our mind when we make judgments on historical points.

**President Carter:** Thank you. Do we have the tape from Boutros-Ghali, anybody know? Not ready yet, but it might come in? All right. OK, that's fine. Jack Nelson, if you also have a question?

**Jack Nelson:** At one point, Jody Powell called David Broder, of the Post, and myself over to have lunch with you in the Rose Garden, and it was an hour, off-the-record session, and it was all about the Mideast. And when we left we looked at each other and said, well, we know what that was about. And what it was about was your assuring us, I guess, so that we would assure our readers that you were supportive of Israel.

Now, I wondered, why is it that you have had such a hard time sometimes of convincing Israel that you are really supportive of them? Even when you were pulling off the Camp David Accords, you were under criticism at the same time by Israeli leaders. Was part of it because you were so close to Sadat, or is there some other reason?

**President Carter:** Well, I think I mentioned in my opening remarks that I had been in office just two months. I went up to Massachusetts and made a speech, calling for a Palestinian homeland, which seems innocuous now. But at that time, it was unprecedented. And it was on that basis of trying to protect Palestinian rights and honor the principles expressed in United Nations Resolution 242 and 338 and so forth, with which everybody's familiar, which has primarily three things in the substance: Israel withdrawing from the occupied territories, a universal recognition of Israel's right to exist and exist in peace, and to treat the Palestinian refugees with justice. Those are the three things in U.N. Resolution 242. And I maintained an allegiance to them.

I was really the first Democratic president that ever lost the strong support of the Jewish community in this

country. But at the time of Camp David, when we came out of Camp David and signed the agreement in the White House and then six months later with the treaty, we had an enormous and beautiful celebration with a big tent, and everybody seemed to be euphoric. I had, I think, strong support from the Jewish community in this country.

But I have maintained, ever since then, a feeling that there needs to be a balance between Israel and the Palestinians. And that's not an acceptable position for many American politicians. I'm not an American politician anymore. And maybe one of the reasons I'm not an American politician anymore is because I took a balanced position. But still, I think that's the proper way to go now. And so, I have always felt that I was a strong supporter of Israel.

And when I call now for Israel's withdrawal from the massive settlements policy, I'm not trying to work to the destruction of Israel. In my personal opinion, that's the best thing for the Israelis. And I don't have any authority; I just have my voice. But I have noticed recently, even in the New York Times, which I don't think is biased against Israel, there is a question now being raised repeatedly: What is the distant future of Israel? Is it to maintain control over the West Bank and Gaza? Or with the severe restriction on Palestinians' movements and basic freedoms? Or is it to eliminate the 1967 so-called green line and have one land body west of the Jordan River that's going to be a homogenous mixture of Jews and non-Jews, where the majority of non-Jews within the next 10 years or so is going to be able to prevail politically? Will they be given a right to vote, or will they be deprived of a right to vote?

So, those questions have still not yet been answered. And my own personal opinion has been, 25 years ago and still is, that it's better to honor the U.N. Resolution 242 and for Israel, basically, to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza. There're some caveats to that in which I believe very deeply. And that is, that there's no way that Israel can or should withdraw to the 1967 borders or to the so-called green line. There have to be some modifications.

And a major portion of the Jewish settlers, in my opinion, will be there permanently. Those in the



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proximity of Jerusalem and a few other places that I could draw on a map. But the extensive implanting of Jewish settlements – maybe 10 or 12 here or 10 or 12 there or 25 there – with a company or a regiment of Israeli troops to protect them and then highways to connect them that are basically protected, I think is counter-productive. So that's a decision that still hasn't been made. And I certainly don't have any authority. I have zero influence anymore as far as what is going to be done. But I'm very concerned about that. And that's why I have been characterized perhaps as not being friendly enough or protective enough of Israel.

Another point to be made – I was going to make this and some comments at noon – the basic strategic situation has changed. And this is a subject that I've never seen addressed before. When I was president, it was in the midst of the Cold War. And what happened with Egypt, what happened with Syria, what happened with other Arab nations, what happened with the Palestinians, was uncertain.

Sadat had just recently thrown out the Russians. And when I had a confrontation with Sadat at Camp David, I told him that this might very well be the dividing line between the United States and Egypt. But there was a great strategic issue involved about my own country's security and stability because we were inseparable then from what happened in the Mideast. If it had erupted into war, it would not have been just throwing stones or helicopter attacks or tank attacks in Hebron or in the Gaza Strip. It would have been a conflagration that could have been uncontrollable.

As a matter of fact, at the end of the 1973 war was the only time in history that there was a marshalling, an alert of nuclear forces from the Soviet Union and the United States. So in the midst of the Cold War, to summarize, we had major strategic interests in what happened in Israel and with Israel's neighbors.

That is no longer the case, which is a harsh realization. In many ways, the United States could back away from Israel and the Palestinian issue now, without any serious threat to our own security or involvement. It's our allegiance to Israel, including mine and all of my predecessors and successors, that has bound us to Israel. But we were

directly involved then. We're not anymore involved now.

And that's one reason why President Bush could go through his entire term in office, four years only (laughter), and not become deeply involved in the Mideast peace process. I hope he will. But I'm not sure that that's likely. So, there's a difference in situation there, but I have always been loyal to Israel. I have never wavered in military, political, or economic support for Israel. And in my opinion, everything that we did at Camp David and subsequently has been designed to preserve the integrity of Israel.

**Jack Nelson:** Has President Bush at all solicited your advice?

**President Carter:** No.

**Don Oberdorfer:** If I could ask mine?

**President Carter:** Yes, please do.

**Don Oberdorfer:** In the first place, I found this morning absolutely fascinating, as a sometimes historian, to hear the retrospective thoughts of you all. I have a question, but first I want to make one little parenthetical remark. Hearing about the commitment that is necessary. President Carter and I have both been somewhat involved with the North Korean problem.

There was a meeting two or three weeks ago in Beijing of the United States and the North Koreans and the six-party contacts, which was probably a good idea. But the meeting took 30 minutes, including consecutive translation. And the instruction to the American chief of delegation was: no negotiation. You can have a contact, but no negotiation. It's clear that's a totally different thing from the kind of commitment that you all have been talking about this morning.

Now to the question. The question is, things that we've heard about today, particularly the problems, the things that slipped, the mistakes and so on that have been cited, and of course, there are always, in many historical things, things that develop later. I think of the ones that were mentioned first by Bill Quandt, the failure to take into account and do anything about the settlements. Secondly, Sam Lewis is saying that you have to rely on powerful political leaders and of course some of them were lost: Sadat, Begin, and then later on,



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Rabin, whose loss was so grievous.

The third thing: the failure to involve the Palestinians, which Sam Lewis brought up, and Hal's statement of the failure to really convince the publics sufficiently. Do any of you think you did foresee or could you have foreseen these difficulties coming? And if you had, in practical terms, could you have done anything about it which would have headed off some of these difficulties, given the fact that, of course, the Carter administration ended up having four years and not a longer period of time; could it have been different had you seen this future, and was there a chance to do something that would have alleviated some of these things?

**President Carter:** I'd like for others to join in. But in my opinion, we went as far as was humanly possible at Camp David. I don't think we could have gotten another word of concession from either the Egyptians or the Israelis. In fact, the whole process was on the verge of total collapse. I had asked Bill Quandt to draft a failure statement to be issued. And this was just a few hours before we finally adjourned. And as I mentioned before, that last final subtle change, to let the Knesset decide on dismantling Yamit and the other 13 little settlements, was almost the straw that broke the camel's back. And it was that that gave us success instead of complete failure. And had we failed at that point, a treaty between Israel and Egypt would have been out of the question. We would never have considered it anymore. I would like for others to comment if we could have gone any further with it.

**William Quandt:** I think on the Egyptian-Israeli front we did the best we could and I think the test is that it has lasted for 25 years. I do think there – the issue that I mentioned, and I wasn't present for the discussion of how to handle the issue of a period of settlements freeze for the West Bank, but my understanding is that we asked for a settlements freeze that would last through the period of the Israeli and the Palestinian autonomy negotiations, which was not a three-month period. It ended up being more like a one-year period. And Begin offered three months by tying it to the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. I think – and I have to speculate on this.

But the way we formulated it, the request was that the settlements should remain frozen; settlements activity should remain frozen until the autonomy negotiations had been concluded, to Begin, meant that could be indefinitely because the negotiations might not succeed. And I thought that, later, that maybe we should have asked for a one-year freeze because Begin could probably do that. If he could do three months, he could agree to a year. What he couldn't agree was that it would go on forever, possibly, if the negotiations failed. And would it have made a difference?

I think what it would have meant is that we didn't have the day after Camp David the perception that on the first test of interpretation of what had been agreed upon, we said Israel had agreed to a freeze on settlements for the duration of the autonomy negotiations. Begin immediately came out and said, no, I didn't. And we have nothing on paper to point to. And so, on the first test of interpretation, Begin won. And I think that helped discourage King Hussein. I think it helped to set the tone of what's going to happen whenever there's an argument over what was agreed upon.

First, there's no document. There's nothing in writing about the settlements freeze. That was a gaffe. And when it came down to interpreting what it meant, Begin said I agreed to three months, period, that's it. If we could have got him to say a year and said that the autonomy negotiations had a year to go, at least the facts on the ground would not have been changing as we were inviting Jordanians, Palestinians, and other Arabs to join the Camp David process. It's the only thing I can think of that we might have done differently and we might have actually succeeded in getting Begin to say yes to.

**President Carter:** Well, there I disagree with him. Because I was present and my strong belief in my written notes that say that Begin agreed to freeze the settlements during the autonomy talks. And the schedule for the autonomy talks was very clearly expressed. And Cy Vance agreed with me. But it was just a few days after that that Begin then announced, in my opinion, contrary to what he had said, but he was an honest man, and this was the only difference that he and I had in this way, which I think is minimal for all the complex



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things. He said, only three months. Three months was not long enough. It took us six months just to get a peace treaty negotiated. So, that was a very serious defect, in not having that in writing. Whether we could have gotten in writing what I thought he told me verbally is another question. That is a possibility. I'd agree with Bill on that subject.

**Samuel Lewis:** Mr. President, can I follow on that just a minute?

**President Carter:** Yes, you can.

**Samuel Lewis:** Because it was that morning that Begin sent the letter saying three months. Hal brought you the letter the morning after that meeting. And my question has always been –

**Unidentified Speaker:** The morning of the 17th.

**Samuel Lewis:** Yes, morning of the 17th. No, no, the morning of the signing, as I understand it. Because then we – the question was, you'd already seen Sadat that morning and mentioned you had this commitment, as I understand it. Now, you then get the letter. It says three months. And you give it back, I think to Hal, and say, look Hal, this isn't the right thing, go back and please get the right letter. And you never spoke to Begin about it that day. And Hal, of course, couldn't get another letter.

My question to myself has always been, if you had risked a blowup over that that morning – if you'd gone to Begin yourself and said there's a misunderstanding, this isn't what you said last night, can't you give me a year or let's make it more specific, or please give me the right letter or talk it out with him, do you think that would have blown up the treaty? That's my question.

**President Carter:** I don't think anybody could know.

**Samuel Lewis:** What do the Israelis think? Maybe they would – Ely, do you think maybe that would have blown it up?

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** Maybe Aharon was more into the core meeting. But my impression was it was a natural misunderstanding. Begin was a man of his word. If he said it – the president was an honest man. I don't think

that he would have given a commitment which would re-enter the core problems of his ideological beliefs and convictions. I think that, in fact, President Sadat said a few days later in Congress, I believe, well, so what's wrong about three months? I don't think Begin would have gone back on his word.

I'm saying it again, I wasn't personally a part of his close entourage, but I saw him over the years, too, as a man of his word. So, I believe it was a misunderstanding rather than a going back on something that he said. And again, maybe Aharon would know more about this. At the time we were probing into the documents and what we saw, and our feeling was, clearly, that there had indeed been a misunderstanding.

**President Carter:** I think I agree. It was a misunderstanding. I don't believe that Begin lied to me about it. I think that he meant when he said it that it was three months. I thought when he said it – it was during the negotiations. And of course, I had no way to enforce anything because it was Prime Minister Begin's decision to make, not mine, about how long the settlements would be frozen. The thing to remember, though, is the difference between then – with 25 little, tiny settlements, a total population of 6,000 – and now, with settlements everywhere, with 235,000. That has been the enormous change in the last 25 years. Sam, did you have another comment?

**Samuel Lewis:** Well, that's the point. There's no question that was a crucial moment.

**President Carter:** It was.

**Samuel Lewis:** And we've all paid the price, because nobody since has tried as hard as you did. But I still wonder if you couldn't have talked him into it that morning, if you'd done it personally?

**President Carter:** Nobody knows. Aharon, do you have something?

**Aharon Barak:** Well, just the fact I participated in this talk. There was the president of the United States, there was Begin and I. I think – would Dayan have been there? I don't remember. The only one who took notes was myself.



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Aharon Bharak (far right) with Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale

**President Carter:** Now we're going to get it settled.

**Aharon Barak:** And I have my notes. And I took my notes and put them somewhere else. And then, because I didn't care about it, and then when this dispute came up, Begin called me up and said, Aharon, you wrote it down. What have you written? I opened my notes - three months. And I also told the prime minister, look, if you want, I will make a Xerox of my handwriting and then send it to President Carter. And I called President Carter. And I told him, three months, this is what I wrote down. So those are the facts as I have seen them.

**President Carter:** I don't dispute that.

**William Quandt:** The only other written record is - I was sitting outside and Secretary Vance came out and debriefed us. And he said we know we have a three-month commitment from Begin. It might be longer; we need to pin it down tomorrow. That's what my notes said. It might be longer.

**President Carter:** There's another factor in that we didn't anticipate the discussions were going to go on

indefinitely and still be pending, 25 years later, about Israeli settlements. We thought that we were heading towards a complete agreement in the time schedule specified in the Camp David document, which is available to all of you. Anyone else? Jody?

**Jody Powell:** A brief thought here, as someone who has no notes and if I had, they would have long been destroyed. But, it seems to me - and I offer this as an observation - that as we sort of go through the "who shot Johns" and the ticktocks on this, that we might on occasion be in danger of sort of missing the real issue or the real problem. As a layman, it seems to me, that to the extent, which I think a lot of people do, we see the settlements and their expansion as a huge problem now, it was not what happened in those nine months between the three months and the 12 months that has created the problem. What has created the problem is what has happened in the many years after that.

And I will offer an observation, which people may be free to challenge it, despite President Carter's observation he had no ability to - no control over this, that if



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President Carter had been president for another four years, that at least during those four years, the expansion would not have taken place.

**President Carter:** I've got a summary here that I copied out of the New York Times a couple of days ago of the number of settlers and settlements. And for a couple of years after that, there was no substantial increase. The massive increase has taken place in the last 12 years. But, that's a moot point now, but it's a very interesting thing to pursue, because the proof of history has been that the number and extent of Israeli settlements has become the single obstacle, in my opinion, to resolving the issue in the Mideast.

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** Mr. President, I don't want to go into current politics, but the focus has been here on settlements, and this is one of the issues that had to be settled. And I tell you – of course, I attended Camp David in 2000. And there were ideas, which you also mentioned part of them in one of your remarks, on how to resolve this issue. But, I just took now the floor for one reason, because the focus has been on the settlements, as if this is the question. It is a question, but there are other questions, and I assume in the afternoon, people here will be talking about terror, about commitment, about leadership, about prejudice.

Camp David 2000 could have been different. The years after that could have been – all of us speak of iffy matters in history: if you tried to get Begin to do this, if this would have happened. The iffy issues are – I think I will, despite my initial inclination, take the floor for a few minutes in the afternoon, just to speak of what's happening now, because we should see the picture in its entirety.

And there is an interest to the issue. And the interest is the lack of a partner and not the focus on one issue, which is worth looking at and resolving, but it's not the issue. And the issue is, you said, Mr. President, at Camp David, Mr. Begin was very proud of it – that the security of Israel would be maintained during the agreement and forever and so on, and you mentioned today your commitment.

The issue of security, which is so – I don't want to mince words, but going to the funeral, I know the doctor

that was killed last week or his daughter the night before her wedding. She was a neighbor. I went to the funeral. I rarely weep. I was weeping all the time. And for what reason? So, I am saying that we should look at the entire picture. It's true that after Camp David this was an issue that was dealt with on a daily basis for a few weeks or for a few months and may have been of importance. But this is not the whole picture I must say. Thank you.

**President Carter:** Here.

**Leon Charney:** As you know, Mr. President, I was pretty close with Ezer Weizman and you during this process. Sam Lewis was absolutely correct when he said that Menachem Begin had buyer's remorse. Begin was a man of his word, as Elyakim says. But Ezer Weizman resigned, basically because he thought that you were correct. And at the point he did resign, he was the crown prince of the Likud Party and well on his way to think he could be the next prime minister.

But the facts on the ground show that he could not beat Menachem Begin at that point. So, I think that you are totally correct that the people of Israel at that point were exhausted to its limitation. And that was tested, because Ezer was very angry at Begin at that point. He was really upset. He kept saying to me, Leon, this guy really is sorry about what he did, but he'll stand by what he did.

And I don't know, once you look up the documents then, Weizman was the most popular guy in the country at that point and really on his way to becoming prime minister, and he really thought he could knock him off and he thought that he'd be gone and become the next prime minister. Before he resigned I went to see Brzezinski in his office, and I talked to Harold Brown, and then you called Weizman at his home and talked a little bit about it. But I think that historically speaking, you could not go any further, because the people of Israel at that point just couldn't take it.

**President Carter:** Would anyone have any comments or questions before we – yes, right here? On the second row here; they should have a mic.

**Unidentified Speaker:** Thanks. Mr. President, the joke on your staff was that if they wanted to get you to



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do something, they should tell you it's politically costly. And I know that this issue, we've been touching on it. But I want to go back to Hamilton Jordan. He underplayed his role in all of this. But I recall that from the record, that he had prepared an extraordinary document for you personally – for your eyes only, very early, asking you to focus on building a domestic constituency for any major initiative, especially on the Middle East, including building a coalition amongst senators, members of Congress, community, particularly the Jewish community.

And my recollection is that you, in fact, did begin to do that. And my question to you is, do you feel that you've done enough of that? Had you not done it, would you have succeeded here at home? And is this sort of part of any successful American diplomacy to date, particularly towards the Middle East, that you can't succeed unless you have a huge domestic coalition to move forward?

**President Carter:** Well, back in those days, we had, I think, senatorial giants, including Jacob Javits and Abe Ribicoff, who in a way, could speak to me, as the president, on behalf of the Jewish community. And they were supportive. And if you go back to the two major occasions, one at the conclusion of the Camp David Accords, which everybody knows is 25 years ago today, and then six months later when we signed the peace treaty, I felt then, as a sensitive political figure, that there was a massive approbation of what we did, both within the general public and also within the American Jewish community. And I don't have any reason to have changed my mind about that.

But as time goes on and the bloodshed occurs and the dissension arises again, there is an innate sense of protection of Israel that arises in this country. And it's part of, not the American Jewish community, but the American community in general. And that's the way I think it ought to be, and that's the way it's going to be. So, there has never been any balance in the American community between the Jewish community that is Israel, on the one hand, and any adversary.

There was a semblance of balance because of Sadat's personality and because he went to Jerusalem and he

made a speech to the Knesset. There was a semblance of a balance then between Israel on the one hand and Egypt on the other hand, personified by Sadat. That was a transient circumstance. So, the overwhelming feeling in this country now and then, and in the future, is when Israel's in trouble, Israel will have our support.

**Unidentified Speaker:** Thank you for this fascinating discussion with so many colleagues that we admire. First, thank you also for sticking to your position about settlements, because clearly as you travel to the region, as I have for the last couple of decades –

**President Carter:** Would you let folks know who you are and whom you're with?

**Judith Kipper:** Judith Kipper, Council on Foreign Relations.

**President Carter:** Thank you.

**Judith Kipper:** The settlements issue has, from the day after 242 was adopted, has always been the symbol of Israel's ultimate intentions about the land. And finally, the issue between Israel and the Palestinians is about the land. I want to ask you if you think that presidential power has changed since the end of the Cold War, when we lived in a world of transnational threats? Today, if a president calls in the leadership of the Congress, the Christian right, the Jewish community, the Arab American community, and says this is our policy, this is what we're going to do, you're with me or you're against me, has that possibility, with the end of the Cold War and the strategic threat that you spoke about, has that been diluted or do you think it can still be done?

**President Carter:** Well, I might let Jody or Hamilton or Zbig respond to that, more than I. But there are times in our country when the president speaks with almost absolute authority and with overwhelming support. I think the most vivid example of that has been after 9/11, when President Bush had almost an open door to instituting almost any plan that he and his advisers evolved under the guise or umbrella or name of terrorism and protection against terrorism. Because our whole country felt that President Bush was correct when



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he said we are at war with terrorists and we're on the same footing, in effect, as you were after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

So, in a period of crisis – when the president changes from being a belabored civilian administrator into the commander in chief of our military forces – that's when the president does have that overwhelming presumption of authority and influence. But in between times, I think the president has got to struggle for every possible element of political support from the various groups – sometimes they're in conflict with each other – in order to prevail.

I don't know if I've answered your question or not, but that's the way I see it. And the more the crisis is involving our nation's security, the more dominant the president is, because he becomes the commander in chief. In between times, he's got to struggle for every possible realm of support. Fritz?

**Walter Mondale:** I just wanted to make one point. The Camp David agreement, the Accords, the accomplishment was very well and strongly received by the American people. I don't remember the particular polls. But in those days, the vice president used to go out among the people, (laughter) and I traveled the whole country and there was a lot of excitement and pride in them.

**President Carter:** Hamilton?

**Hamilton Jordan:** I think you made a good point. I think the Cold War provided a context to rally kind of disparate groups behind things that were perceived as national interests. Things were black and white. There was always the Soviet bogeyman that you could – that was there. And here we are today. Things are not black and white. They're all shades of gray. And our country is seen around the world, admired in many ways and hated in others and the only real superpower, economically dominant.

And so, I think it makes building and organizing diffuse domestic constituencies for these controversial issues much more difficult. So I think your point is valid. And I think our political system, just by its nature

and evolution, is much more fragmented, highly partisan, and dominated in both parties by extreme voices.

**Jody Powell:** Can I add to that, Mr. President?

**President Carter:** Surely.

**Jody Powell:** Yes, I want to follow on Hamilton's last comment, and I want to try to be careful about how I say this. But, in this world today, which is so much more partisan and nasty and divided than it was 20, 25 years ago, and I thought things were tough enough then on many days, and you have a situation like what happened on 9/11 or those moments of a tragedy or challenge that sort of bring a country together. There's a very important choice that has to be made. Inevitably there will be, whatever the choice, there will be that rallying behind.

Then there's a judgment that has to be made as to whether one will use that as an opportunity to reach out

**Hamilton Jordan**





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and try to build a genuine bipartisan coalition in support of a particular approach or to what extent that will be used also as an attempt to gain political advantage. And I think it follows, as the night to day, that to the extent the former is the course taken, the more longer lasting and the more powerful and the more beneficial to the country that rallying together will be. To the extent the latter is the choice, the more fragile and the shorter-term and the less able to withstand difficulties down the road that support will be.

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** Let me just add one more point to this. It seems to me that, of course, the president has an enormous opportunity to mobilize public support on behalf of the policy that he favors. And he does so particularly when there is a crisis. But there is a danger in this, namely, how does he define the crisis? Is the definition of the crisis a real definition of the challenge, or is it something that has a peculiar life span to it, in that the crisis is so vaguely defined that it can be viewed almost as permanent? If you define the crisis on the basis of fear, you can mobilize public support. But there are costs to that because fear also breeds attitudes and hatreds and intolerance that can be dangerous. And I think we have to be very conscious of that today.

Secondly, when you mobilize public support, you have to be, particularly in a democracy, for leadership is dependent on support, completely truthful. You do not want to mobilize public support on the basis of allegations, assertions that over time become increasingly doubtful as to their factual correctness, because credibility between the leader and followers and credibility of America in the world is a very precious asset. When we were struggling for peace in the Middle East, it was a good cause, the crisis was tangible, what was being sought was very specific – a peace agreement. We did not accomplish everything we wanted, but it was concrete. Much the same was the case with the Cold War.

What worries me a great deal about the contemporary circumstances is that the danger is vague. It is being propounded on the basis of fear. If there are no acts of



**Jody Powell**

terrorism, that means we are winning the phantom war against terrorism. If there are acts of terrorism, that means there is a war on terrorism. And the evidence is occasionally subject to doubt. And that I think is very pernicious for the longer-term functioning of a democracy.

**Ted Kattous:** Mr. President?

**President Carter:** Yes, sir?

**Ted Kattous:** Ted Kattous. Until recently, I was the U.S. ambassador to Syria. And I wanted to ask you, when you first came into office – and I was a junior diplomat then in Damascus – as I recall, it was your hope to put together a conference on the Middle East, to try to settle the issue comprehensively. And Assad was a very tough customer. He had his requirements. It seems to me President Sadat did not want to mortgage Egypt's foreign policy to the lowest common denominator. And he, largely on his own, decided to try to move ahead separately and apart from any conference that would shackle his ability to maneuver. Could you comment



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or could you have one of your former aides comment on that, on the extent to which you saw that coming? You were briefed on it, part of it, or did it come as a bit of a surprise to American policy-makers as well?

**President Carter:** Well, as far as Assad was concerned, when I first became president, Zbig and I effectively made out a list of about 10 major accomplishments we wanted to address. Mideast peace was just one of them, but it was a very important one. And Assad was a crucial player, because at that time we were laboring under a United Nations resolution that called for an international conference to be headed by the United States and the Soviet Union.

We had a brief skirmish with that the first of October in 1977, but I wanted to meet with Assad to see what his degree of flexibility was. He wouldn't come to the United States and never did, even though I invited him then and I invited him later as a former president. And I went to Syria several times after I left the White House to meet with him, writing a book about the Mideast and other reasons. I actually met with him in Geneva, when I was involved in the summit conference of the G7 in June of 1977. I went to Great Britain for the summit conference. I went there a little early and I took a side trip to Geneva and met Assad.

He made it plain then that he would not be flexible, but he was affable, and we got along fairly well. But when Sadat moved to the forefront, there seemed to me to be an anti-Sadat factor in Assad's attitude. He deeply resented any insinuation by Sadat that he was speaking for the Arab world. And Assad kept that attitude until the last time I saw him, which was not very long before he died.

So, Sadat turned out to be the most accommodating and flexible and dependable ally that I had. And so by default, we placed our eggs in the Sadat-Begin basket after Begin was surprisingly elected, I think in May of 1977. We actually invited and hoped that Hussein might join us. That proved to be impossible. I was willing to uphold the PLO to join us, but there was a prerequisite,

which they never came close to fulfilling, that they had to accept United Nations Resolution 242 and acknowledge Israel's right to exist and exist in peace. They wouldn't do that.

So, a lot of people have asked me, even recently, with this anniversary coming up, don't I think I would have been better off if we'd had the Palestinians and Jordanians at Camp David? I don't think we would have accomplished anything. And it was legally and politically prohibited for the PLO to come. And it was not possible for Hussein to take that chance.

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** May I add a footnote?

**President Carter:** Yes, please do.

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** Moshe Dayan met with the Egyptian representative, Dr. Telhami, a few times. One of them was a couple of weeks after Sadat's visit to Israel. That was in Morocco. I attended that meeting. And Dayan wrote in Hebrew kind of an outline of what he had in mind as we were now starting a new page with Egypt, the Palestinians, and he had also a few lines on Syria, on the Golan Heights, and so on. And I translated it into English, and we worked on it and so on, and finally we gave it to Dr. Telhami. And he read through the paper and when he got to the Syrian lines, he just folded the paper, tore the few lines that were connected with Syria, carried it back to Dayan and said, not dealing with this. And he gave it back to him. And I should have kept this paper. (laughter)

And so, in a way, it somehow complements what you just said, Mr. President, and unfortunately, you know, we did have talks with Syria – being an archeological artifact. I attended them also in Shepherdstown here a few years ago in West Virginia. And it didn't take off, unfortunately. And again, I have respect for everybody, but they couldn't bring themselves to shake our hands in those talks, basically saying hello, and the gap shrunk but couldn't be overcome. So, we're still there. But at the time, Dayan raised it because he thought as we talked, the whole 242 gambit we'll talk about that too, but that was what happened. Thank you very much.



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**President Carter:** Mr. Rubinstein is ubiquitous. At every meeting he seems to have been there. That was great. But this is very enlightening. We're going to run out of time soon, but I told them, Hal, before -

**Harold Saunders:** Just a word on the Assad part of this picture. You may recall that we resumed relations with Syria and became intensively involved in the mediation of the Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement with Kissinger in May 1975. Having achieved that agreement and then moved into the latter part of the year, the question was well, what was going to be the next effort? We had an Egyptian/Israeli disengagement, a Syrian-Israeli, and then the hope was to do something on the Jordanian front. But that became not possible because of the Rebat decision and so on.

So the question was open at the beginning of the Ford administration, what next? And I remember our talking to Syria, to Assad, at a point when we pretty much decided that there would be a second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement, which came into being in the Sinai II, but when Kissinger talked to Assad about that, Assad was plainly quite opposed to it. And the point was apparent. He didn't think that he would have enough bargaining leverage to get the Golan back if Egypt checked out of the process.

So it was a very simple thing, he said, I have Syrian interests at heart here and it's in my interest that there be a united front. And you remember when you came to office and we were talking about going to Geneva, the issue was, will there be a United Arab delegation or will there be separate national delegations? And Assad held out for the United Arab delegation because he was going to lose his leverage.

But to Assad's credit, I remember his final statement in that conversation with Kissinger, which I thought was one of the most statesmanlike comments that I have ever heard. He said, as nearly as I can remember, I deeply disagree with what you tell me you are going to do, but I don't want it to affect our relationship with the United States.

**President Carter:** Kissinger told me once that Assad was the most fascinating person he ever talked to.

**Harold Saunders:** Just parenthetically, Assad was learning English on the side during that disengagement agreement, and Kissinger told him that he would be the only Arab leader who spoke English with a German accent. (laughter)

**Hermann Eilts:** And just to follow up very briefly the statement that Hal just made, it hasn't been mentioned, but one of the major things as far as the Egyptians and much of the Arab world were concerned about when you became president, President Carter, was shifting from the step-by-step approach that had characterized the previous administrations to "comprehensivity." You made a statement to that effect very early, and this had remarkable impact.

And as you will remember, the first eight or nine or 10 months of your first year in office, we were busy getting ready for a possible Geneva conference. Step by step, in meetings you had that you referred to the agreement with the Soviets. And then, as I remember, when push came to shove, we were not getting an answer from Assad as to whether he was going to go, even after you had accepted the idea of a unified Arab delegation, causing you to write that handwritten letter to Sadat; some bold step is needed. And Sadat then made the trip to Jerusalem, which shifted the thing again from comprehensivity to bilateral relationships.

**President Carter:** I mentioned earlier that one of the things that Sadat attempted to do on comprehensiveness was his first proposal to me to have all the members - the permanent members of the Security Council - assemble in Cairo to pursue peace in the Mideast. And that's something that we didn't want to see done. And we went from that to the meeting. Rosalynn, do you have a comment? It's about time for lunch, is that it? OK.

Well, we are still expecting a comment by video from Boutros-Ghali in Egypt (sic; Boutros-Ghali is in



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Paris). I don't think it has come in yet, is that correct? But it's still going to come. Osama, we're going to adjourn for lunch here. I guess you've got to be adjourning for supper or something. Would you like to make a final comment before we do adjourn?

**Osama el-Baz:** Thank you, sir. I believe that this session has been most useful. Lots of samplings were made that represented the truth. My belief is that we need the continuation of this kind of an involvement. This kind of a determined effort in order to change the present situation that exists in the age and the culture is very vicarious indeed.

**President Carter:** Thank you. Well, I personally am gratified to know that you are still involved in the present situation. Because I don't think anybody has a better grasp of the totality of the issues between Israel and the Palestinians and neighbors than do you. We're doubly grateful for your participation today.

**Osama el-Baz:** Thank you, sir.

**President Carter:** Thank you, everybody.

(Session adjourned for lunch.)



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# LUNCHEON ADDRESS

(NOTE: Lee Hamilton, director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, reintroduced President Carter.)

**President Carter:** Thank you all very much. First, I want to express my personal thanks to Lee Hamilton for his kind remarks and for being our host today. This is an historic and wonderful place for us to assemble.

I just came back a few days ago from Japan and China. The Carter Center has had programs in 65 nations in the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, we have had about 1 million test plots in agriculture financed by a Japanese partner, and we are involved – The Carter Center is – in monitoring elections in almost 800,000 small villages in China. They are very honest and democratic elections.

While I was in Japan, I remembered going through China and Japan in 1981 soon after I left the White House. At that time, I was asked to make a speech at a small college near Osaka. When I got to this little college, everybody was so nervous, it made me nervous. So, I got up to make a speech, and I thought I would put the Japanese at ease – the students and professors and their parents – by telling a joke. It takes so long to translate English into Japanese that I didn't choose my funniest joke – I just chose my shortest joke. So I told my joke, and then the interpreter gave it, and the audience collapsed in laughter. It was the best response I have ever had to a joke in my life.

I couldn't wait for the speech to be over to get to the green room and ask the interpreter, "How did you tell my joke?" He was very evasive. But I persisted, and finally he ducked his head and said, "I told the audience, 'President Carter told a funny story. Everyone must laugh.'" So, there are some advantages in having been president. That is one of the advantages in my life.

Today, I'm not sure I have an advantage in trying to summarize what we've done this morning. I had some notes made out beforehand, but almost everything I wanted to say has already been said. I will just take a few

moments to encapsulate what has been done involving the Middle East, at least during my time in public life.

I remember the earliest stages of my involvement in the Middle East. I took a trip over there with Jody Powell and Rosalynn in 1972 when I was governor, and we had a chance to travel around Israel and to try to understand the problems there. We spent about half



**Jimmy Carter**

the time looking at biblical places and half the time learning about what was going on between Israel and her neighbors after the wars that had attacked the existence of that nation.

I formed an alliance there that came to the forefront when I was president. After the election, even before I



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was inaugurated as president, I had decided that I would make every possible effort to get away from a step-by-step process, which was very effective in the past in some cases, and try to deal with the entire gamut of Mideast problems. That was really what precipitated my meeting during the first few months of my administration with the leaders of the Middle East.

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*We had alternatives. One was for me to prepare a document that was patently fair, at least in our opinion, and that would be acceptable by one side. Then to use the threat against the other side of being isolated when the document was made public and it became obvious that one side had rejected it.*

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All of them came to the United States except Assad. He refused to come to the United States throughout his entire life, so I did go to Geneva, Switzerland, to meet with him. But that started the process, at least in my own administration, for the Camp David effort.

Looking back on all of the issues or events that took place, including the Camp David Accords, there is a continuity that is both discouraging and also offers some modicum of hope. United Nations Resolution 242 was passed unanimously, including a positive vote by the United States and Israel, at the conclusion of the 1967 war. Its basic premises call for withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and for the acknowledgement of Israel's existence and sovereignty – and its right to exist in peace – by all the nations of the world. And a third thing that it calls for is a just settlement of the refugee problem.

Those were the three basic elements for peace, but obviously peace was not achieved. Additional wars took place – the latest one was in 1973. When we went to Camp David, it was with an effort to continue the process that had been begun a long time before.

I'm not going to try to repeat what we have talked about this morning, but I would like to just outline a few things, because, in reading my voluminous notes that I took at the time, it's obvious that some issues were in the forefront.

First was Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist in peace. Second was Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, with exceptions that had to be negotiated for Israel's security. A contiguous, or Palestinian, state was assumed with – to use Prime Minister Begin's phrase – “full autonomy for the Palestinians,” or to use his more precise phrase “Palestinian Arabs,” because he maintained to me that Israeli Jews were also Palestinians.

And third was an undivided Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, while we were at Camp David, we negotiated a paragraph that for a number of days was completely acceptable to both Begin and Sadat. But toward the end of the session, the last few hours, both of them urged me to delete that paragraph from the final document because it was so sensitive on both sides. They thought they had enough sensitive stuff in it to begin with.

The other issue that has been persistent throughout all these years has been the United States playing a very strong role. I personally used what was called a single document – I have been involved in a lot of negotiations since then, and I've always used a single document – getting my superb assistants, who were all on the program this morning, to ultimately prepare a proposal that was presented precisely word by word to the Israelis, primarily to Prime Minister Begin, and to Sadat and to the Egyptians on the other side. We didn't have one document for one and one for the other.

This was a very long and torturous effort to get everybody to agree on exactly the same document. It has been pointed out this morning that some of the things were put in with an element of ambiguity because we could not decide on precise definitions, and we could not decide on precise schedules.

We had alternatives. One was for me to prepare a document that was patently fair, at least in our opinion, and that would be acceptable by one side. Then to use



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the threat against the other side of being isolated when the document was made public and it became obvious that one side had rejected it.

I'll give you a quick example that may not necessarily be the only one involved. If everything else had been accepted that we had in the entire Camp David Accords, including full diplomatic recognition for Israel, the right to traverse the Suez Canal, all of those elements, and the only issue that remained was Israel's insistence on maintaining a few Israeli settlements in the Sinai, and that was the only thing, then Israel would have been in a very difficult position to put their whole premise on that point. In my opinion the Israeli people would have been disappointed had the entire process been voided because of a few settlements.

That was a technique of negotiation that, luckily, didn't have to be implemented because at the last minute, Prime Minister Begin did permit the settlements to be dismantled. One was at Yamit, which I believe had about 3,000 settlers; it was a fairly large settlement, and there were 13 other very small ones.

What Sadat wanted was very clear. He wanted good relations with the United States, which Begin also wanted. He wanted his sovereign territory returned. That was something on which he would not deviate at all. He wanted peace with Israel for many reasons so that he could deal with other challenges to his own regime. There were some very important and serious challenges, for instance, from Libya against Egypt at that time, and Sadat wanted to be looked upon at the end of the whole discussion as making a strong attempt to protect the rights of the Palestinians.

Begin, as I said, wanted good relations with the United States, and he wanted Israel to be accepted in the world community by the major Arab nation that had been a threat militarily and politically to Israel above all others. The fact that Sadat was finally willing during the Camp David Accords to give full diplomatic relations with Israel was important to him. He wanted peace, and he wanted to demilitarize the Sinai if he gave up control of it.

The worst disagreement that we had at the end of the Camp David Accords, as we've discussed quite thoroughly this morning, was concerning the Israeli settlements: whether Israel would continue to build the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza or whether they would be frozen during the time that we were negotiating to conclude all of the elements of autonomy for the Palestinians. I misunderstood what Prime Minister Begin said. I have no reflection on his integrity or his honesty.

A couple of days ago I got the "Road Map to Peace" text that has been prepared under the leadership of President George W. Bush, and I read it very carefully. It was very interesting to me how almost completely compatible it is with what was done at Camp David and what was confirmed later on in the Oslo negotiations performed by the Norwegians in 1993, almost exactly 10 years ago.

I will quote one paragraph from it, and this is a key paragraph. This was issued on the 30th of April this year.

*"A settlement ... will result in ... an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors. The settlement will resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and end the occupation that began in 1967, based on the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, United Nations resolutions 242, 338, and 1397, agreements previously reached by the parties, and,"* it went on to say *"the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah – endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit – calling for acceptance of Israel as a neighbor living in peace and security, in the context of a comprehensive settlement."*

*"This initiative,"* it concludes by saying, *"is a vital element of international efforts to promote a comprehensive peace on all tracks, including the Syrian-Israeli and the Lebanese-Israeli tracks."*

You can see that this description of what the so-called "Road Map to Peace" now encompasses is almost identical to the basic premises of the Camp David Accords combined with the Oslo agreement.



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Unfortunately, at this time, the most difficult decisions in the “Road Map to Peace,” which is what we are talking about now and what we will be talking about this afternoon, were avoided or postponed to some uncertain time. I say that not in criticism, because there were some elements of the Camp David Accords that we delayed to be implemented within three years or five years. Some of the most difficult decisions were delayed.

Its key early provisions, however – a good number of them – have been rejected by the Israeli Cabinet. There were 14 caveats that have been promulgated by the present Israeli Cabinet that subvert some of the major portions of the “Road Map to Peace.”

Terrorist attacks, as you know, have been launched and continue to be launched by Hamas and other violent Palestinians.

There are four partners in the “Road Map to Peace,” hopefully combining enough international strength to implement and to convince doubtful parties. But the European Union, Great Britain, and Russia have been put aside, and the United States plays the same role that we did 25 years ago, almost a unilateral one. The entire effort seems to be languishing. Again, let me point out that I’m not saying that in a critical way, because I understand, having been president, that President Bush and his administration are deeply involved with other issues of international importance affecting the security of the United States. One is obviously the Iraqi war, another is Afghanistan, another one is the challenge of nuclear capabilities from Iran, and some statements have come out in the last few hours concerning Syria and North Korea. I need not go on anymore. There is enough there to show that it would be impossible now, even if he wanted to, for President Bush to go up in isolation for 13 days to try to deal exclusively with the Mideast peace process.

In the meantime, as you all know, a wall or a fence is being constructed, which can be of great concern. I don’t know the exact delineation of it, although I’ve seen a map of it. It follows, in some ways, the pre-1967 border or the so-called “green line.” In other places, it is departing from the pre-1967 line and encroaching substantially on Palestinian land in the occupied territories.

I’ve outlined very briefly a parallel series of challenges and problems that have been disturbingly persistent for the last half-century. I, and many others, have attempted to resolve these issues. Well-meaning and courageous and deeply committed leaders of the opposing parties have participated as well.

Do we face a hopeless prospect for peace? No, I don’t think so because I think there is a tremendous focusing of global attention and deep concern on this existing or remaining problem.

Let me point out that United Nations Resolution 242, the Camp David Accords in 1978, the Oslo agreement in 1993, and the “Road Map to Peace” in this current year all agree that peace will come to the Mideast only if two things happen.

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*With strong leadership, determined mediation that is trusted, a balanced role between Israel and the Palestinians, and good faith, I believe we can still see peace in the Middle East in our lifetime. That is my prayer. And that is my expectation.*

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One is that Israel refrains from retaining in the occupied Palestinian territories or the West Bank and Gaza the multiple settlements that have to be defended militarily and connected with a web of relatively uncrossable highways. That’s important and extremely difficult.

The other one is that the Palestinian national authority and all Arab nations must acknowledge the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Israel and its right to live in peace and must exert their combined effort to control and to prevent any further acts of terrorism or violence by any Palestinian group against the people in Israel.

Those are the two basic issues that must be addressed. There are others with which I am very familiar. One is Jerusalem and another is the right of return. The right of return is required to be resolved fairly in United Nations Resolution 242 and also, as you notice, in the



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current “Road Map to Peace.” But, in my own opinion, that can be handled. I think a tiny number of Palestinians could ever hope to return to Israel proper, and the number that would come to even the West Bank and Gaza would be limited. There is something of an escape valve there and that is the generally accepted principle that Palestinians who can put forward a legitimate claim for the right to return can be compensated for property they’ve lost, not as determined by Israel or the Palestinians in another altercation, but through some international claims tribunal.

When I resolved the hostage crisis with Iran, during the last few hours of my administration, I also agreed to a process for determining what would happen to \$12 billion in Iranian assets that had been frozen by the United States. There were a multitude of claims against Iran filed by a wide range of Americans, and Iranians also had claims against the United States. An Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal was established in The Hague to resolve

these disputes through binding third-party arbitration. Essentially all of the claims involving private claimants were resolved successfully. A similar process could be established for resolving the Palestinian claims.

So I think the refugee question and the Jerusalem question are not the burning issues. I think the issues are full acceptance of Israel’s right to live in peace – to stamp out any hope that terrorists can prevail and to prevent further acts of terrorism against Israel – and the relinquishing of a substantial portion of the settlements that now permeate the West Bank and Gaza. Those are the two basic issues, and I don’t see them as impossible to resolve.

With strong leadership, determined mediation that is trusted, a balanced role between Israel and the Palestinians, and good faith, I believe we can still see peace in the Middle East in our lifetime. That is my prayer. And that is my expectation.

Thank you all.



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QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION

**President Carter:** Now, I promised earlier that I would take a question or two or comments. I don't know if we have a microphone or not, do we? If not, just speak up. It will be informal. We won't be here long.

Any questions, comments? OK, from the audience first, if not, from the news media.

*(NOTE: Microphones were not available to the audience for the following question-and-answer session.)*

*(Question related to the chances of reaching a peace agreement with Yasser Arafat as the leader of the Palestinians.)*

**President Carter:** I think the question of whether Arafat can represent the Palestinians in peace talks is a moot one now. I don't think that that's a possibility, judged by the firm statements that have been made by President Bush and by Prime Minister Sharon. So I think the only alternative now is to find a representative of the Palestinian people who can speak with authority and who has the confidence of the Palestinian people themselves.

My own opinion is that that person will also have to have the imprimatur of Arafat's approval. And whether the current selection for the prime minister will suffice, I don't know. But my personal opinion is that the time has passed for Arafat himself to become involved in negotiations with President Bush and his administration and with Prime Minister Sharon and his administration.

*(Question related to a possible postponement of active U.S. involvement in the Middle East dispute due to President Bush's concerns about the upcoming election.)*

**President Carter:** I don't really believe that there would be a postponement of the Mideast issue because of the upcoming election, although that is a factor. I think it's more a matter of President Bush being, you know, absorbed with challenges from the terrorist front. We now have a very difficult role to play in Iraq, with multiple pressures on our country about how much to share responsibility for military, political, and economic roles in Iraq.

My own preference would be that we do share completely the responsibilities for economic and the political role. I would like for us to welcome in other countries to participate militarily, as well. But I don't think that America should give up the military leadership in Iraq under any circumstance.

And as you well know, the threat of North Korea, as I mentioned, is, I think, the most serious in the world today, because if North Korea should go to the extent of becoming a nuclear weapon state, having a very advanced technological capability to sell their missiles, and potentially, nuclear weapons to other countries, that is a major threat which would result, I think, in almost an inevitable move by Japan and South Korea and others to a nuclear capability, as well.

And so I think that is a major issue. I need not go down the list of them, but I don't think it's the election holding it up, I think it's primarily other issues that won't let the entire Bush administration, including the secretary of state and others, to become involved in resolving the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians.

There was another point that I made this morning that I haven't heard addressed anywhere else. And that is that there's a different situation now. When I was president, I looked to find the threat of an outbreak of war between Israel and Egypt as directly threatening the security of my own country because we were in a Cold War with the Soviet Union. That doesn't exist any more.

And now the primary motivation for American involvement is really concerned about Israel's security and Israel's right to live in peace. And, of course, we are also concerned from a moral and ethical point of view with justice for the Palestinians. But I think that the Mideast situation now, unfortunately, is one that can very well be postponed or relegated to a secondary level of priority in the president's full agenda.

*(Question related to whether it would be an effective strategy for President Bush to put more pressure on Israel.)*



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**President Carter:** I think I might let Mr. Rubinstein answer that, or maybe the Israeli ambassador, who is here. I don't really know. You know, it's not up to me to speak for President Bush.

I think in the past the Israelis have felt that I put too much pressure on them to withdraw from the Sinai region 25 years ago. As a matter of fact, some of the later leaders of Israel, including prime ministers, have severely chastised me for the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, saying that I forced Israel to give up too much. But as those who were at Camp David know, there was no way that I could force Prime Minister Begin to do anything that he didn't want to do.

I don't think that Israel responds to pressure. That's my reaction. Israel has so much political support in this country, and Israel is such a proud and sovereign nation themselves, that in my opinion, overt or detectable pressure is counterproductive. I think that in every case, in a successful negotiation, what the mediator must do is put together a set of proposals which, at the conclusion of a negotiation, lets both sides feel that they have gained an advantage.

And I think that's what happened 25 years ago. I don't think there's been any doubt since then, by the overwhelming public opinion and by almost all leaders, that both Israel and Egypt won, and that neither side lost in that process. I think that has to be done. But pressure I don't think would work.

*(Question related to whether the United States is intentionally sidelining other members of the quartet and what could they do.)*

**President Carter:** Well, I don't know. I was expressing my own opinion. There's no official exclusion of them from the process. But I don't believe that Russia or the United Nations or Great Britain would now take a public role disputing the policies that are being pursued by President Bush.

What could they say? If they wanted to, they could speak out publicly if they disagreed. They could make statements of different kinds, but I don't know what they could do. I don't think there's any doubt that by default the United States plays a pre-eminent role. The

point I was making was that the so-called quartet is really just the United States.

*(Question related to the ways in which U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East would look different if President Carter were currently in the White House.)*

**President Carter:** Well, that's a big if - if I was in the White House today - well, some things would be different in other parts of the world. And I don't know if I want to go in detail about that, but I have publicly stated that I favored, for instance, the direct talks with North Korea. And I did not favor the United States' invasion of Iraq absent the United Nations' approval. So if I was in the White House at my ancient age, it may be that the United States would be more afraid to devote increased attention to the Mideast dispute.

But I just hope that there will come a time in the near future when we will have a strong and trusted spokesperson from the Palestinian side and when the Israeli government will decide to accept the basic premises of the road map for peace, which they haven't done. And then, at that point, I believe that the United States will find the leadership to act as a mediator. But for me to say what I would do if I was in the White House now, about the Middle East, I can't answer that question.

Maybe one more question, and then we'll wrap this up.

*(Questioner identified himself as an outgoing intern at The Carter Center.)*

**President Carter:** This must be a brilliant young man!

*(Question asking about President Carter's basic principles of negotiation and mediation.)*

**President Carter:** Yes. Well, as a matter of fact, I've written a book about this, called *Talking Peace*. And my book was written specifically to be used as a textbook in college courses about conflict resolution. The book has been used a lot in law schools when they didn't want to litigate, but wanted to negotiate. And I used the Camp David process as one of the many examples. The Carter Center is involved quite often, as you know, in resolving conflicts.



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But the basic principles are to have a mediator that is looked upon by both sides as being fair and balanced, and not oriented in favor of one side at the expense of the other; that's extremely important.

I think the second thing that I personally used is a single document, which enforces the premise that the mediator is telling both sides the truth. If you look at the same text, and you present it to one side and the other, there's no way to conceal, you know, to deal in subterfuge.

The next step is that in every small incremental step toward a resolution of differences, whichever side makes a concession has to feel that what they will gain ultimately is greater than the concession they're making now.

Another very important element in any negotiation that's difficult is to be able at the end of a negotiation, and I always insist on this when I am a mediator, to present my final proposal to the public and let both adversaries – if they agree, fine, if they disagree let them explain to the public why they disagree. Because almost invariably, with rare exceptions, the people involved in a war or a conflict are much more eager for peace and a resolution of their differences and an end to a conflict than their leaders who are at the negotiating table.

And I think that was the case in the Mideast when I was involved with the peace treaty. In fact, I made that exact statement to the Knesset when I went over to conclude the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. The people were overwhelmingly in favor of the principles that we had put forward, outlining the treaty between Israel and Egypt, but we had a difficult time getting the leaders to agree at the end.

So I think to involve the public as much as possible, have a balanced mediator, tell the truth to both sides, understand the issues yourself, and realize that both sides at the end have to come out winning. That's in general terms, and I think that those general terms

apply to almost every conflict mediation in which I've ever been involved.

*(Question regarding the future of Mideast peace negotiations and the Road Map to Peace.)*

**President Carter:** This afternoon our forum, with which most of you all are familiar, is going to devote itself to looking at the present circumstances and where we might go from here, what lessons we might have learned. I presume they'll be outspoken in disagreeing with me if they feel that I have said something with which they do disagree.

And we hope that after this session this afternoon, we will have a little better understanding of what possibilities might be put forward to the general public. We intend to encapsulate in a written report what we have discussed today, which may be also of benefit in the future.

And I would presume that everyone on this panel, who, as you've noticed, are experts on at least some phases of the Middle East dispute, would be eager to assist in any way called upon in the future. So I want to express my thanks in advance to all of those who have participated. And this afternoon I think we'll have a very, a fairly brief, but an open and frank discussion of the issues that still remain.

No one can realize, except maybe my wife, how important the security of Israel is, justice for the Palestinians, and an ultimate resolution of the conflict. It's painful for me every time someone dies over there, and I feel there may have been something that I could have done 25 years ago that would have led to a permanent peace. But my heart is just as deep among the people who live in that region west of the Jordan River as it was 25 years ago. And I will never give up hope in trying for peace for everyone there.

We have to adjourn now to begin the afternoon session.



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AFTERNOON SESSION

**President Carter:** Well, this afternoon, we're going to devote our time pretty much to the present and future. But there is no prohibition against anyone resurrecting our experiences in the past as an application to the current issues in the Middle East. Vice President Fritz Mondale will be presiding, you all are undoubtedly happy and relieved to know. And with this great advancement in our process already, I am going to turn the program over to Fritz.

**Walter Mondale:** Thank you, Mr. President. We have about eight panelists, I believe, today, this afternoon. But we're going to begin by hearing a message from Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who sends his ideas by video from Paris. I don't know if that announcement is ready yet.

**Boutros Boutros-Ghali:** First, I want to congratulate President Carter for his initiative to convey today this symposium at the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Camp David agreements. I want to congratulate also President Carter for his courage, for his political will, for his perseverance 25 years ago. Because due to this perseverance, due to this political will, we have been able to sign the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in March 1979.

Now the question is: Was Camp David a success? Yes, it was a success. The proof that it is a success, that it was a success, is that peace prevails today between Egypt and Israel in spite of the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East, in the occupied territories, in Iraq. Number two: Camp David's contribution to the conclusion of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. And finally, Camp David helped Egypt to play the role of negotiator between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Now the question is: What made the negotiation of 1978 a success, and what ought to be done now? One, there is no comparison between the situation in 1977, 1978, and the situation today, because at this time the number of settlers in the West Bank was no more than 4,000, and today there are more than 400,000. This is the first difference.

The second difference, there is such a bloody confrontation between the Palestinians and the Israelis that it will need years to obtain a real reconciliation between the two parties. And what ought to be the solution? I believe that Ben Ami, the former minister of foreign affairs of Egypt (sic) (Ben Ami is from Israel), did write a paper in the French newspaper *Le Monde* two days ago, saying an international mandate on the occupied territory: what had been done in Kosovo could be done in the West Bank and Gaza. And this new approach will be the first step to achieve the road map and to achieve peace in the Middle East.

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But once more, thank you, President Carter, for what you did 25 years ago. And thank you for your courage, and let us hope that you will be able to achieve peace before it will be too late for us at our age.

**President Carter:** He knows how old I am!

**Walter Mondale:** We thank you very much. And it's a perfect way to start this afternoon's discussion. We're fortunate to have Attorney General Rubinstein of Israel with us. He mentioned during this morning's panel that he'd like to say a few words this afternoon. And so if you will begin.



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**Elyakim Rubinstein:** Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. I really didn't think I should participate in this because I am a civil servant, not a political man. I didn't want to go into the current politics, but something that I heard made me request just a few minutes.

But on the nostalgic side, when I saw Boutros-Ghali, I remembered that when President Sadat came to Israel, he was welcomed by Moshe Dayan, our minister of foreign affairs, and we drove from Jerusalem – from the airport to Jerusalem in Dayan's car, and Boutros and Dayan being in the rear, and I was squeezed between the driver and the security guy. And I was listening to the conversation, which was really a very initial, very – they were looking for subjects to discuss, and they talked about archeology. And they and also Boutros – my wife and I, we have four girls, God bless them – and he always calls me “abu Banat” – which means in Arabic “the father of daughters, of girls.” I don't know if he means it as a compliment; I see it as a compliment. Whenever he sees me, “Abu Banat, how are you?”

Anyhow, but I didn't take the floor for this ...

**President Carter:** Thank you for your statement. (laughter)

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** I took the floor just, you know, to say that I'll be a bit emotional. At this point in time, the main goal is to fight the suicide terror. I can't tell you – you all know what is going on, but you are not there, and we are there – a number of my own friends and neighbors, including last week's victims, the doctor and his daughter on the eve of her wedding.

But a year ago, our ambassador to South Africa had a niece who was on her last day of college and was killed in one of the terror attacks. And her grandmother, whom I know well, is an Auschwitz survivor with a blue number, tattooed here. And she lost her parents in 1944 in Auschwitz, an only child from Budapest, because they were Jewish. And now she loses her granddaughter, 22 years old, for the same reason.

It's the agony, the pain, and I am not deaf and blind to pain on the Palestinian side. But why is this

**Elyakim Rubinstein (second from left)**





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happening, and how is this to be curbed? And this is the goal. And our main problem at this point is the lack of a partner. I've been a peace negotiator in my various incarnations for these 25 years. And there were these two leaders who decided, and they made up on their commitments. Where are we now? There's no partner. That's the tragedy at this point. No other tragedy because had there been a partner, and Arafat - people thought he may be a partner, but he is not.

I attended Camp David 2000; we were there for more than two weeks - 15 days - and things were on the table. And I cannot accept the revisionist history now that we didn't offer this, we didn't offer that. And instead of saying "OK, listen, this is good but not good enough. Give me more. Do this, do that." Instead there was a big "no." And then we deteriorated into all of this.

Another - so, the challenge now is, and again, you know lawyers always say - who was it that said that "I am looking for a one-armed lawyer, because all lawyers say on one hand and on the other hand." And I think for the first time I heard it was from an Egyptian negotiator back in 1978, 1979, Dr. Abdul al-Ayan, later a judge at The Hague Court, it's not a question of on one hand or on the other hand, it's a question of we may commit mistakes, we may be wrong on this and that.

But the basic thing is you need a partner that will fulfill the execution on that was here, and I can understand peoples' views on the settlements, but at this point what we should maintain is the Golan. In particular after September 11 is the fight against terror. This is for the Palestinians, too - the misery that it pushes for everybody.

I want to add one last point. We could talk a lot about this. Our government accepted the road map, with the caveats that were mentioned, but the basic thing is there and that was accepted this way by the U.S. administration.

Now the road map includes a lot of things. On our side and on the Palestinian side: The basic (issue) is security. Another matter is reforms. Now when I speak of reform, I am not being a patronizer saying, hey, the other side has to, we are a democracy rule of law, they have also to be a democracy rule of law. I am saying it

because at this point of time, but not only this point, for years there's been a legal limbo, or rather a legal jungle, in the Palestinian Authority. Not in the last three years. Even before, no priority on the rule of law, and it all evolves into the same thing. When you speak of law, you speak of bringing people to justice; you speak not only on terror, but also on raping a child, also on car theft, and what have you.

And so I don't want to take much of your time. And I think we should never, ever lose hope for peace. And with this I fully agree with President Carter, we should never tire, because we have all of these difficulties; we should never give up the hope and working for the hope. At this point of time, our focus should be in this direction. The public mood of the Israeli public, and I assume also the Palestinian public, will change - I see change if we don't have this menace, this daily bloodshed, this heart-tearing situation.

So I think this would be the first focus: Looking to the more remote future, if the Palestinian leadership emerges, I am confident that we can reach an agreement. I am confident that we can reach an agreement. Ideas are there - recipes are there. One can argue this way, that way, but at the end of the - but let's start with the first humane and human request: life, the right for life, the right for basic human security. Thereafter, the sky is the limit. Thank you very much.

**Walter Mondale:** Thank you very much.

What I am going to ask our panelists to do is to give us their views on this afternoon's topic, "what do we do now in the Middle East?" And try to keep those remarks to five minutes or less. And we'll start with Zbig.

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** Well, first of all, let me perhaps start by pursuing a little bit off the line that was just spoken to us, because it's a very powerful line. It's a profoundly moving line of argument. It addresses the very basic problem of human suffering and justice. But it also illustrates the depth of the problem, because it addresses in a truly moving and a compelling way the grievances that are rightfully felt by one side. But by the same token, it really doesn't address the grievances felt by the other side.



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**Zbigniew Brzezinski**

The examples of people who have lost their lives are beyond the pale in terms of what they stand for morally. When innocent lives are destroyed by terrorists, there's no excuse for it. But the fact is that innocent victims are not confined just to the Israeli side. Eight hundred innocent Israelis have been killed by terrorists; 2,800 Palestinians have been killed. Not all of them were terrorists – hundreds of children, a lot of women, a lot of innocent people. And one could and should grieve for them, as well.

If one reduces the problem to the lack of a partner or simply to the fight against terror, one is saying in effect the problem is just the Palestinians. And the Palestinians should now pursue a civil war against their

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*First, we have to clarify for the parties concerned what is the outcome of the road map, where is it leading? A little bit along the lines of what you did, President Carter. Namely, we have to make it clear that the idea of two states side by side is not some amorphous abstract idea, but a concrete idea. Two states largely based on the 1967 lines, with only nominal right of return to Israel, because a large influx of refugees would destroy the religious ethnic integrity of Israel, but no significant settlements inside the West Bank beyond the immediate territorial proximity of Jerusalem.*

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militant groups, while otherwise the policy remains unchanged: the policy of occupation, of humiliation, of expropriation of land, and of collateral deaths in the course of various targeted assassinations.

I don't know how anyone can expect a partner to plunge us into a civil war when his own situation is not improving. When the settlements are still continuing, and no steps are being taken to deal with the armed settlers, when all of the violence that is directed also against the Palestinians in this tragic conflict continues. I think both sides need a partner. I have no grief for Arafat because he's elusive and not dependable. But I have to tell you very frankly my admiration for Sharon is equally restrained, and his human rights record and his performance and his veracity are not all that pure.

The chairman, the recent chairman of the Knesset, Avraham Burg, has just written a very powerful article, in which he addresses, among others, the moral credentials of Prime Minister Sharon. And they're not admirable. So we have a problem. And that problem requires some deliberate assistance from the outside. I am speaking specifically now to the problem at hand, the peace process. I do think that four steps are needed.



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First, we have to clarify for the parties concerned what is the outcome of the road map, where is it leading? A little bit along the lines of what you did, President Carter. Namely, we have to make it clear that the idea of two states side by side is not some amorphous abstract idea, but a concrete idea. Two states largely based on the 1967 lines, with only nominal right of return to Israel, because a large influx of refugees would destroy the religious ethnic integrity of Israel, but no significant settlements inside the West Bank beyond the immediate territorial proximity of Jerusalem.

Secondly, we need to accelerate the road map, which involves several years. There's even to be an intermediate stage in it. I think this is a prescription for eruptions, for suicide killings, for retaliatory killings, and for renewed escalation. The process cannot be leisurely; it has to move more rapidly.

Thirdly, I think we have to be willing to persuade, or to use our means of persuasion on both sides to abstain from provocative actions. We have to be willing to put pressure on the Palestinians to abide by the various targeted steps in the road map. We have to be willing to do the same with the Israelis. Not make excuses for one side in favor of the other, but try to persuade and to push both in the same direction.

And last but not least, we have to be willing to indicate our readiness to reinforce any peace arrangements that eventually may emerge so that both sides have some degree of confidence that they will be enduring. In other words, we have to be willing to guarantee the security arrangements, perhaps even with an international presence including the United States. Because only that way can we give both sides some sense that the end for the road map is not only a formal peace, but a peace that has a chance of enduring. All of that means a serious commitment, a serious commitment, based on compassion for the human tragedy that's involved here, but in a compassion that is generalized and not selective.

**President Carter:** You know, one of the encouraging things is we have had sometimes extensive interludes of harmony and peace and goodwill and hope among the same people who are involved today in animosity and

hatred and violence, on both sides. If you look back at the time of the Camp David Accords, there were no terrorist acts. There was no constant fear of disruption or fear of going there. I would go to the Mideast and travel all through the West Bank and Gaza and Jerusalem without any fear for my own safety.

The same thing happened at the conclusion of the Oslo agreement. There was a time of euphoria and goodwill and expectation and hope for the future. And I would say it lasted substantially until Rabin's assassination by a fanatic who was against peace, just like the ones who killed Sadat. And there was a great deal of approbation among some misguided people in Israel for this young person who assassinated Rabin.

But the point is that both sides, who had been at each other's throats, when there was an indication of goodwill and hope for the future, responded immediately with a peaceful attitude. The same thing occurred in the period when I was over there last in an active way, helping conduct the election for the Palestinians in January of 1996. There was no fear of attacks or bombs. It was completely peaceful. And everybody was going about their business with no intimidation or anticipation that we would be attacked.

But so the point I am making is that although it looks hopeless right now because the animosity is so deep, the exact same people, three or four or five times in the past when given a glimmer of hope, with enlightened leaders, have responded with goodwill towards each other. Even earlier the same thing applied. I would say when Sadat visited the Knesset, invited by Prime Minister Begin.

So these are not bad people. They're not inherently terrorists or abusers on either side. I think that the Palestinian mothers and the Israeli mothers are equally hopeful that their families can be raised in peace. And I think they can live side by side with proper promise or assurance that the leaders will honor commitments made. And so I have some hopes for the future, despite the unpleasant situation now that doesn't seem to have an avenue to progress.

**Walter Mondale:** Harold Saunders.



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**Harold Saunders:** Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President.

I'd just like to take off from President Carter's comments. I still find myself saying, when I am asked what I think is going to happen in the Middle East, that the peace process is irreversible. And I deeply believe that, even though I am no fool.

And I can be despairing of what is happening today, except that I can't use the word "despair," because if I can turn to the Christians' script for a moment - I've often given a talk on faith, hope, and love, but I've changed the next line to say "and the greatest of these is hope." Because if you're in a situation like that, you wouldn't work on these problems if you didn't have hope to take - not blind hope, not mindless hope, but hope that these things can be resolved if you can stick in there long enough, intelligently.

The second point that I would make is that every time I get this question my first reaction is I wouldn't have gotten into this mess in the first place. I could go back to 1981 when the administration that followed ours put the peace process on the back burner. And I could come right down to Camp David 2000 and ask "Why in heaven's name did Bill Clinton take people to Camp David seven-and-a-half years into an eight-year term?" He should have been there the moment the Oslo Peace Accord seemed to be foundering.

And so I find myself in a lousy position when somebody says "Well, what would you do now?" Just like when President Carter got the question at lunch. "What would I do now?" Well, if I had my choice, I'd be somewhere else. Just what the president said. I'd be - the situation would be somewhere else.

Having said all of that, though, I start by recognizing that I am not in the government at this point. And I know from being in the government how much you don't know when you're not dealing on a daily basis with the conversations, the exchanges, and so on. And yet I have a sneaking suspicion that this situation isn't ready for negotiations. People used the word "ripeness" earlier. But it's not ready for negotiation because somehow the participants have lost sight of what they're about.

I don't know what Ariel Sharon really wants. And I

don't know that anybody in the peace process has sat down with him, not as a negotiator, not as somebody who is trying to get him to do A, B, or C, but somebody who would sit down and say, "What do you really want here?"

And yes, we all know that terrorism needs to stop and so on. But beyond that, what if it stops tomorrow? What if you had a partner tomorrow? What is Sharon really about? And what are the people around him really about? And I would say the same about Arafat.

So given my personal life outside government today, where I depend a lot on informal dialogue for finding out what people really care about, what they really need, I'd be inclined to step back from negotiations and send somebody to talk to leaders who could find out what

**Harold Saunders**





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real motivations are about. What would this look like if terrorism stopped tomorrow? I don't know. Would settlements stop? Would – and so on and so forth.

So this is it – I fully subscribe to the kind of plan that Zbig laid out. For instance, they're all quite intelligent steps, but I am not sure anybody has the ability to get there, and fully agree that each side needs a partner. And how does one go about the politics of producing that partner, on either side?

I'm not even sure that – I read the Avraham Burg op-ed piece the other day. And I knew his father intimately from our earlier involvement in the peace process. I thought it was a profound statement. Well, if that's true, if Israeli society has failed, then there needs to be dialogue within Israel about what the Israeli state is becoming. Just as there needs to be dialogue among Palestinians. And maybe declare a moratorium on negotiations for a period of time until people can sort out who they are and where they're going. That's a very abstract statement, but I – yes, you can send negotiators into the breach and do that sort of thing, but there's nothing to negotiate about when neither side really is in control of their own situation.

**President Carter:** I would like to make one comment. It's not an abstract question, because I think we need to consider what's going to happen if the United States does not play a substantial mediation role. And I think that is a very strong likelihood. I don't see at the present momentum or initiative for the United States to regain a substantive mediation role. And I mentioned at noon that there are some distracting and very important issues that are not going to be resolved soon. I don't think the holdup is the upcoming election.

And so what are we going to do? Is there any hope at all that the Israelis and the Palestinians are going to make the initiative themselves and voluntarily make concessions and reach out to the other side in peace and harmony, in constructive and flexible terms? I don't think so. I think the most likely prospect for the next year, or two years, or three years, or whatever is a minimal U.S. role.

And what does that leave us? I really don't understand what might fill the vacuum. Or whether it's just

going to be a drifting, of sustained violence on both sides. And right now, the Israeli government spends – I'm quoting The New York Times – a billion dollars a year to maintain the settlements, to pay the premiums for settlers to live in the occupied territories, and to defend the isolated settlements that permeate the whole West Bank and Gaza, 125 of them, and to build roads that connect every two settlements. They're like a spider web when you see the map. I have a map somewhere, but I don't know where it is. Is it not here, Rosalynn?

Well, anyway, I think we are faced with a prospect of losing a foundation that has been there ever since Israel became a nation. And that is a willing and sometimes eager United States to take the initiative. And almost all of those initiatives have been with reluctant response from whichever two adversaries were at each other's throats. I don't see the prospect in the future. I'm not trying to be dismal about it.

But maybe my concern would just be a question, and some others could spell out a possible avenue toward a resumption of a genuine move towards peace. At this time, although I hope and pray for it, I don't see it. And I am very doubtful that the Bush administration, or any other president who was there at this time, would launch a major, top priority effort to resolve the Palestinian issue. I don't see it.

**Walter Mondale:** Bill Quandt.

**William Quandt:** Well, just to cheer you up a little bit more after President Carter's uplifting vision of the near future, I agree with much of what my colleagues have said this afternoon. Not all of it. I think I share President Carter's real concern that we're in a terrible situation with respect to the dynamics between Israel and Palestine, Israel and Palestinians, with no easy way out.

And I am afraid that, as much as Hal and I have worked long and hard together over many years, I don't agree with him that the peace process is irreversible. It makes it sound a little too mechanistic, as if you just sit back, and eventually it will work itself out. I think if it works, as one of the lessons one can draw from this morning, it takes an enormous amount of human effort to make it work. Put this on inertia and you slip backwards, you don't go forwards.



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**William Quandt**

I know, having implied that, probably expressing more hope than a kind of guaranteed outcome, but I'd like to challenge one of the underlying concepts that I think has driven peacemaking for too much of the past 25 years. And I say this, again, reluctantly because there are people here in the room who have endorsed this idea. But I think it has been misused as a concept. And that is the concept of ripeness.

There was a notion during the 1980s and much of the 1990s that American diplomatic initiatives on this issue only make sense when the circumstances are ripe. It became a great excuse for not doing anything whenever we chose not to do something. It simply said, "Well, circumstances aren't ripe; when they're ripe we'll know," and how do you know? Well, because, you know, it gets easy, when things are ripe they happen kind of naturally.

And the American role then is to kind of nudge the parties along. Clinton used the word "facilitator." Thank God, President Carter was not just a facilitator.

Facilitators get people together, and then step back and let them do their thing. People who want to make peace can make peace that way. Sometimes – that's what the Norwegians were able to do at Oslo.

This conflict needs more than a facilitator. It needs somebody on the outside who can be a catalyst, who can be a prod, who can be a friend, who can be a guarantor, and a real nag, "Just don't let them leave Camp David without reaching an agreement." That's what

he said to them, "You cannot leave. And you won't leave if you want my friendship in the future." And that got Sadat's attention.

If – partly it's an attitude. You don't go around, unfortunately, as President Clinton did, saying "We cannot want peace more than the parties." That was said maybe a thousand times. And, of course, in some sense this is their conflict. They have to be the ones who decide to bring it to a close. But by saying "We can't want it more than you do," It's as if "Well, if you guys don't want it, we don't really care about Middle East peace." We do care about Middle East peace as Americans because we have a national interest in it.

So I'd say one thing that has to happen if we're talking about American policy primarily here, the American president has to make it clear that Israeli/Palestinian peace is in the American national interest and explain to Americans why that is the case. Now, it may be that the Israelis have a prime minister who has a questionable record of commitment to peace. The Israeli public seems to want peace, but the current prime minister has a checkered record, let's say.



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And the same thing on the Palestinian side. I think the bulk of the evidence is that Palestinian people want peace on terms, of course. And Arafat is very problematic. And so what do you say, "They don't want peace because their leaders are really screwed up?" No, I think you say, "There's a potential there, but it won't be realized by leaving things to their own dynamic." And so the United States has a role to play as a ripener, not waiting for things to ripen but to help accelerate the political dynamics.

Now, how could you do that today? First, I'd say "Don't try to revive the road map." And say "It's just in slight disrepair, let's just kind of grease the wheels, and kind of launch the car down the same old road." The problem with the road map was both sides were very tentatively committed to it, and the Americans weren't very serious about it either, as far as I can tell.

Secondly, it did not have a clear destination. Although President Carter read the best part of it, which sketched the very vague destination, the parties are looking by now at the details. They know the vague destination. They're looking at actually what would happen in Jerusalem. What would happen on refugees, what would happen on borders, what would happen on security? How can these things be worked out? The generalities are not where the problems lie so much today.

And the road map did not have those details. And so I would say step back from the road map and take what you have to work with. The realities are Sharon

and Arafat are not ready to move. OK, tough luck.

Does that mean we don't do anything? I don't think so. I think what we do is say, "We have strong international consensus, the quartet reached agreement, the Russians, the Europeans, the Americans, the U.N. secretary-general, and the Arab League." And who are our other allies in this? Most ordinary Israelis and most ordinary Palestinians.

So how do you start? You try to crystallize with the consensus of the international community what that vision is. Let's be frank about it, it's Clinton plus. It's Clinton slightly improved. You can do better language. Even now, Israelis say yeah, we know it's pretty close to what it's going to be. The Palestinians: We didn't accept at the time, but it's pretty close to what it will be. Let's spell it out again, call it, you know, the new international consensus, and let's fill in the blanks that the road map was afraid to fill in.

And then, I'm going to borrow this shamelessly from Rob Malley and Hussein Aga, who said don't ask Sharon and Arafat to accept it because you will know what will happen – they won't accept it. Ask them to present it to their publics in a referendum to see if the publics want to see peace built on this basis. And they say no – of course, they can say no, we can't force them to do it. But it'll start an interesting debate in both societies. Do the people who are going to be affected by this have the right to express their views on a substantive plan? Yes, on balance we want it. No, on balance we don't want it. If they say "no," then honestly, I think I would pack my bags and give up.

But if they said, if they had the chance to express themselves, and said "yes," I would sweeten the offer by saying, we in the international community will pledge that if their publics say "yes," and if their leaders accept to go down this road, we will generate a Marshall Plan for the Middle East that will be generous, to help with Palestinian restitution, to help with building the economies that have been shattered by this conflict, to help create a decent life for the people in the region. And we will be generous. And we will help with the implementation. You, Israelis, and you, Palestinians, have proved you cannot implement agreements without some help.



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The help comes tangibly with some kind of interposition force that takes responsibility during a period of time, as Israelis pull back, and before Palestinians exercise sovereignty. Is it possible? I don't know. Is the George W. Bush administration likely to show any interest in it? I'm pretty sure not. Is there any alternative that makes any sense to me? And I've studied this for 30 years today. No. If you want Israeli/Palestinian peace, it's going to look, it's going to have to be done something like this, or it's not going to happen.

**Walter Mondale:** Hermann Eilts.

**Hermann Eilts:** Well, I share the views that have just been expressed, pretty much. I go back to an Arab/Israeli peace, back to 1947. My early, one of my early posts, was in Jerusalem for a short period of time, before there was a state of Israel. And I was involved in all subsequent U.S. efforts to try to get an Arab/Israeli peace. The Johnson mission, the McCloy mission, et cetera.

And my views tend to be shaped in part by that rather long involvement in a thankless job, a necessary one but a thankless job. It seems to me that - well, let me go back for a minute. From the beginning, we recognized there were two major aspects of the Arab/Israeli problem. One was Israel and Egypt, the largest Arab state, the state that had most influence in the Arab world. And this was particularly true, of course, at the period of Nasser. The other was the Palestinian problem.

And I think we sometimes forget these days that we are late, we, the United States, are latecomers to the ideas of a Palestinian state. For many, many years we considered the Palestinians as no more than refugees. And then the evolution toward recognizing the Palestinians as something, a political entity rather than refugees, that really started with you, Mr. President, the homeland concept that you enunciated.

But it was always going to be difficult - without in any way detracting from Camp David - the Egyptian/Israeli peace problem. I think we ought to remind ourselves, if we've forgotten, that there are major differences. In the case of Egypt and Israel, it was two states in the area at odds with each other that finally made

peace. We should remind ourselves, too, I think for a minute, that peace, as the Israelis have discovered, does not mean friendship between peoples. And we ought not to expect that a peace treaty brings about friendship.

So long as it brings about some element of mutual respect and a willingness to negotiate remaining differences - and there will always be remaining differences - to me, that is already important. As one who has seen for many, many years the situation before there was a peace, I wish the peace were warmer between the two countries, but by heavens, I am glad there is a peace.

On the Palestinian side, after all, Sinai was for Egypt and for Israel a strategic buffer. The Palestinian issue, Palestine is the heartland of the major problem. We always knew that, we knew whenever it would be tackled, that all of these contentious issues would come forward. Hence, time after time, as the United States was involved in various peace efforts, we deferred, one way or another, consideration of the Palestinian, and I'm not talking about the Palestinians or the Palestine problem, the Palestinian - if you will - Israeli problem.

And I must confess, I've always been uneasy about that. It was necessary. But that's where the nub of the problem is in many ways. The issue, for example, of the Palestinian Authority as it now exists, it's not a state. One was negotiating with the state as far as Israel is concerned. One can negotiate with a Syrian state, whatever one may think of the government. One can negotiate with Lebanon, whatever that government may be at any given time. But the Palestinian Authority is anomalous so far as statehood is concerned. And it's only in the Bush administration that the word "state" has been mentioned, down the road. In any case, that makes it difficult.

Second, it's already been pointed out there is a major leadership vacuum, it seems to me, in the Palestinian community. We've seen over the years that what is required to make peace, and this was true at Camp David, and it was true then with the peace treaty, is that two strong leaders are necessary. Imaginative, they need help, no question about it, but two strong leaders. We don't have that at the moment in the case of the Palestinians.



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And then one might say, well, it's been suggested, submit whatever is decided upon to a referendum. I believe in democracy, but let me tell you I'm uneasy when I hear the term that we have to introduce more democracy into the states of the Middle East. Yes, I would like more participation, public participation. But the belief that somehow if you've got a democratic structure that the results of a referendum or whatever it might be would bring what you want when it comes to Arab/Israeli/Palestinian relationships, I think is a big gamble.

The places where peace has been brought about – in Egypt and in Jordan – were, after all, in a sense, authoritarian governments. In my view, sadly, in order to get more peace between Israel and Arab regimes, one requires, at least for the time being, authoritarian governments. Now that may seem difficult to take, but I think that's absolutely necessary, a strong Arab leader willing to assert himself, not necessarily through the ballot box, because I am uneasy about ballot box results in so many Arab countries, but by the forces of his personality, and if necessary, by the instruments of coercion that he has; in my view, sadly, that's a necessary element for a peace.

As far as the Israelis and Palestinians are concerned, there are other problems. Jerusalem, the most contentious issue. You may feel it should go this way, or it may go that way, but Jerusalem is a major problem, as we all know.

I am not as sanguine as you are, Mr. President, on the question of the refugees. For a period in my career, I dealt with the Palestinian refugees. That was in the 1950s, at that time in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. UNRWA was looking after 640,000 of them. Israel said there were only 500,000 – that was based upon the last British census with an extrapolation for figures. That was difficult enough then, now the figure is 3.8 to 4.2 million refugees. Clearly, most of them are no longer the original refugees who left in 1948, but these are people, sons, grandsons, et cetera, who may still hold title deeds for properties left behind.

But I go back then for a minute to the Taba negotiations. One of the breaking points was the refugee issue. And I worry, quite frankly. I am not sure that a simple solution of a few going back; what do you do with the

rest? You compensate them under old Resolution 194 for properties left behind, but the compensation figure – I was once involved in trying to figure out the compensation figure for Jews who left Iraq, Jews who left Iraq in 1948, and this was in the 1950s. The figure had gone up to the billions. The figure to compensate Palestinians now will be many, many billions.

Now maybe one should say money is not the issue, but at a time when we're spending in Iraq, when we're spending in Afghanistan, when we're spending elsewhere, when we have a jobless society – maybe the recession is over, maybe it isn't, but a jobless society – I worry quite frankly about the ability to get together the necessary monies to compensate. Remember all of those deeds, the properties left behind; the value has gone up enormously in the intervening years, and they're going to claim higher figures.

So, I see the Palestinian problem, the refugee problem, as a much more serious problem than some may. Maybe it can be overcome. But I guess in the end I still believe there has got to be strong U.S. involvement. We must be careful not to argue that we're going to disengage. We've disengaged so often, and that hasn't worked out. But a strong U.S. role, imaginative U.S. role, and at some point something on the table, something perhaps similar to the Taba agreement arrangement is in my view the only way. But Lord knows, we're a long way from there. Thank you, sir.

**Walter Mondale:** Thank you, Hermann. Sam Lewis.

**Samuel Lewis:** Well. You know, my instinct tells me Hal is right. My hopes tell me that the president is right. Logic tells me that neither Bill nor Hermann are right, though I certainly admire the beauty of the scheme.

I think there really are only two choices at this stage for the United States. And while you don't like the phrase, we don't want, we mustn't want the peace more than they do, or we don't want the peace more than they do, Bill, but speaking really as an American, and the president was doing this a bit at lunch, in fact, in this era we don't own this problem. It is a heck of a problem for us in this room, but it's not the major problem for the American people.



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And so I have enormous skepticism that this administration, or the next one for that matter, would endorse either of these two schemes that you've both suggested, but I think there is a third possibility if you really believe we should invest the national will in this at this point, and that the chances though small are worth the investment, and that's debatable, but it certainly is arguable. I'm almost inclined to think that the other utopian proposal which is on the table, not Rob Malley's about the referendum scheme involving first putting together an international coalition of all the great powers to decide what should be done and then presenting that to the people of those two states, which they've elaborated in an International Crisis Group document within the last two weeks. It's had its tempting side.

I have a little hard time imagining a government like Israel's, leave aside the Palestinians for a minute, but I have a hard time imagining any Israeli government, given their tendencies toward a certain degree of national will and pride, saying "You can ignore us, and go and ask our people whether they want to swallow this or not, and we'll somehow facilitate the referendum." That strikes me as a little peculiar.

Martin Indyk, as all of you probably know, former ambassador and assistant secretary, has in foreign affairs and other places been proposing a trusteeship – basically, an American trusteeship under U.N. auspices, though he tries to coat it a little bit – over Palestine with the involvement probably of American troops, and hopefully, a few other troops to help keep the security situation under control and thereby inhibit the idea from carrying out weekly assassination attempts. While Palestinian society is reformed, the democracy is perfected, and you raise the economy and the polity to the point where it could really be an independent state and negotiate perhaps some adjustment in its tentative provisional borders with a sovereign state next door.

I think quite honestly, if you really want to make the argument that it is in the U.S. national interest, overriding many more very competing priorities, for us to try to solve this problem before it gets worse, and it is getting worse, and it's going to get worse. It's going to

get bloodier and worse over the next two or three years, I think almost without question, if something dramatic doesn't happen. Then you really ought to go for the trusteeship idea.

If we have that much interest in the problem and much American stake in it, we should be prepared to take responsibility for protecting Palestine from Israel, and Israel from Palestine and helping Palestine become a real state. It's not beyond our capability. I don't think it's probably an easier task than when we've taken on Iraq, frankly.

But, of course, one of the small political problems with that is it will require the American president or somebody admitting that some of those soldiers we send there are going to get shot at by several different sets of people: Israelis, settlers, maybe the Israel Defense Force, certainly the terrorist organizations within Palestine, maybe not too many, but a few. That's a huge risk, a political risk for a president.

But nonetheless, it seems to me that to be honest, either we ought to take charge of the problem and be prepared to invest in it enough to do so, or we ought to accept the proposition that leaders are going to have to change because of the dynamics within these societies, and more bloodshed is going to be involved in that process before we can again initiate the kind of useful, energetic, directive, third-party role which we've traditionally tried intermittently, and certainly tried most successfully with President Carter.

I don't know that there would be any ability to get the Bush administration to think this way. I surely doubt it. But if you have a couple more years of really deteriorating conditions, and there is a change of administration in Washington, I could imagine the next American president thinking perhaps this is the right course to go on.

And, of course, you're never going to get a real negotiation that's going to have a chance of success about a total settlement with the two leaders there at present, Arafat and Sharon. They both have limits. Sharon would be happy with a tentative provisional mini-state surrounded by Israel, and therefore, protected against Israeli threats. And most Israelis today will be



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happy, not happy, but would be content, I think, to have the wall finished and hide behind it for a while longer while the Palestinians tear themselves apart, because they're scared to death without the wall – nobody knows how to stop the suicide bombers.

It's ironic, Sharon still has more than 50 or 60 percent overall approval, despite the fact that the record of his administration has been the failure on the one thing he promised to do, which was to stop the terrorism. And the rest of his program has mostly been bankruptcy, although now Netanyahu is showing a little more promise as a finance minister than he ever did as a prime minister, so maybe the economic picture is not quite as dark as it was a year ago.

I am depressed by this discussion, because I think some of us are letting our hopes run ahead of our brains. And some of us are trying to hide from the politics of the situation, here and there. Yes, 60 to 70 percent of the Israeli public want peace. And the Palestinians want peace. And 70 percent of the Palestinians, or 80 percent, want no leader but Arafat, so long as he's there. And most of the Israelis accept the proposition that Sharon isn't going to bring peace, yet they don't see anybody better. And the opposition has been defanged, you don't have an effective opposition. You have a right-wing Likud government, with few cosmetic additions to it here and there.

So the political situation in Israel doesn't promise much change, or in the Palestinian territory. And, therefore, I think ultimately, Hal probably is right about how things are going to go. But I would suggest if we really want to take on this problem, we take it on for real. And maybe not this president, but the next one, maybe this president, goes to the Security Council, asks for a trusteeship, promises to do X, Y, and Z, and brings in some other countries to help us, and tries to really solve it.

**Walter Mondale:** Thank you. Hamilton? Jody?

**Hamilton Jordan:** This is a fascinating discussion, and so I am going to pass in favor of my wiser colleagues, except for Jody.

**Walter Mondale:** Jody.

**Jody Powell:** 'Tis a far wiser thing that you do now than you've ever done! (laughter)

I'll be brief, but not quite as brief as Ham, but almost. This is really maybe more about how we got to where we are, maybe a little bit about how down the road we might get back to where we were, or something like it. But I've been struck listening to these comments, which obviously have not been in agreement, but which have been powerful and insightful, and every one of them gave me six new things to think about and wonder about and different ways of looking at very old issues and very old problems.

It seems to me one of the tremendous assets going into Camp David – well, actually two – one was a willingness, indeed, an eagerness to build upon the accomplishments of others. Hal spoke of this – the third president, the fourth secretary of state, different parties. But there was no reluctance at all that I ever detected on President Carter's part to build upon, and acknowledge, and recognize the accomplishments that had been made in the past.

Beyond that, there was a clear willingness to make use of the people and the commitment and the experience and the knowledge that had been built up over that time. It does seem to me that that is something that has been gradually lost over the years. And that there has increasingly been an inclination on the part of new administrations to want to make the point that nothing had ever happened before, and Inauguration Day of that January was worth very much. And nobody that was involved in anything before that January 20th of that year had really much to offer the country. And that to me, it seems to me, may say a lot about how we got to the sad state that we are in now and perhaps down the road about a way to get things back on a more thoughtful track.

**Walter Mondale:** Thank you. Mr. President, would you like to say something?

**President Carter:** Well, I think everyone is kind of inundated with a cacophony of thoughts and ideas – some very discouraging, some maybe overly hopeful. I would be amazed if any Israeli government could accept



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a United Nations mandate to set up the protectorate or whatever in the West Bank and Gaza. If they would I would have no objection.

There is an effort being made to do partially what Bill Quandt said, and that is to build upon what Clinton put forward at Camp David II. And it's kind of sustained negotiations. I've been kept informed about it. But there have been concessions made that would not be acceptable to the Israeli side, in my opinion. I've seen the maps, and I've seen the agreements, and I've seen the text involved in the refugee question and Jerusalem and the delineation of borders and the retention of some settlements, a substantial number of settlements, and the swapping of territory from just east of Jerusalem for an equal or a little bit larger amount of territory that belongs to Israel to the Palestinians, and so forth. It's headed by an idealistic Israeli named Yossi Beilin. He has taken what Clinton and them put forward at Camp David II that was rejected by Arafat. And has continued to negotiate with the approval of top-level Palestinians. And part of what Bill Quandt put forward might be a possibility in the future if this package is finally concluded and it's promulgated to the public, it may be so patently attractive that although the embedded leaders on both sides now can't reverse themselves or accept it, it may be a 90 percent agreement on which some future progress could be made. I hope so.

As a matter of fact, last year when I went to Oslo, the plan was to reveal the agreement two days later in Sweden. But there was a crisis in Israel in the government, and the Swedish government decided they didn't want to endorse it. But anyway, there is a sustained commitment by people of goodwill representing Israelis and Palestinians trying to find some framework for peace. It would be to some degree similar to what was done by the social scientists out of Norway that resulted in the Oslo agreement. But this was not involving the government of Israel. It might very well involve the Palestinians' National Authority.

And so it's not a hopeless case. And I think that's the conclusion of our discussion today, which has been maybe confusing, maybe discouraging, but informative.

It certainly hasn't hurt the situation in the Mideast, but I do think it does show that there are people who have still a burning desire to see some progress made.

I think everybody here has been impressed with the substance, and quality, and statesmanship, and dedication of the people who surrounded me at Camp David. That's been kind of an untold story. I've gotten a lot of credit for it, but you can see that the basic thinking and planning, and strategy, and persuasiveness, and tenacity has been contributed by the folks sitting up here with me.

**Walter Mondale:** Bob Pastor?

**Bob Pastor:** Thank you. Two questions, one about the state of play right now in the Middle East, and the other about a solution.

The first is: Has there been a significant turning point in the last month in the decision by the Sharon government to go after the entire Hamas leadership, both the political, as well as the military? And is this such a significant turning point that we'll look back on that decision about month or two months from now and say that the situation has changed so dramatically that we're in a different world?

The second question on solution, Bill and Sam, in particular, but everybody alluded to the nature of the U.S. role in a final, in an attempt to try to guarantee or catalyze the solution as Bill said, that might involve the presence of international forces including the United States. And the question is really, anticipating that as a possibility, what would one want to negotiate beforehand from the U.S. perspective that would reduce the risk that U.S. forces would be targeted or that the effort overall to guarantee would fail? What could be done beforehand so as to assure that this critical role on the part of the United States, including international force of some kind, would work?

**Walter Mondale:** Well, we've got two questions there. Would anyone like to answer them?

**Zbigniew Brzezinski:** Well, let me try to answer, perhaps the second one. It seems to me that the precondition would be at least some preliminary agreement between the Israeli side and the Palestinian side regarding the



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distribution of territory, the question of security and access to the settlements, the termination of some settlements, the termination of some of the terrorist organizations, and things of this sort. Because otherwise, the United States would be plunged into the conflict rather than reinforcing some gradual progress towards peace.

I may add that this incidentally is also pertinent to the suggestion that Sam Lewis made about a trusteeship. Now when you talk about a trusteeship you have to ask yourself: U.N. trusteeship of what? What would the United States try to protect or police if it were to assume a trusteeship? Would it be essentially the status quo, that is to say, quite a few settlements, specialized roads for them, the sort of absence of any clarity regarding territorial distribution, and so forth. If that was the case, the trusteeship would be essentially, an American occupation on behalf of the status quo which would then plunge us into the conflict.

If, on the other hand, the trusteeship would be a disguised way of moving towards a settlement because it would entail, for example, trusteeship defined territorially, more or less by the 1967 lines, some progressive termination of settlements, of course enforcement of the progressive liquidation of the terrorist organizations, then a trusteeship could be in effect a way of camouflaging a peace process through American engagement but under international sanction, perhaps therefore more palatable to some of the parties concerned.

So it all depends really on what one defines as a trusteeship, and that also pertains to the answer to your question, namely, what kind of a settlement will we be enforcing and protecting?

Sam, do you want to take a crack at the Hamas question?

**Samuel Lewis:** Well, I think one of the really difficult questions is what kind of assurances could you get from anybody about the behavior of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and maybe even Hizbollah, although let's leave them out for a moment?

If we were going to lead an international force, and Zbig is certainly right, to defend exactly what is a key question, you would certainly try to have some kind of

assurance from those organizations that they would lay low, and presumably that assurance could only be obtained by the kind of hudna process that Mohamad (sic: Mahmoud) Abbas tried to carry out. It really would have to be a deal between the Palestinian mainstream leadership and the organizations that aren't part of the mainstream for a temporary cessation of "x" period of time, while an international force takes control, and the Israeli army withdraws, and that would have to be part of the deal.

So, while the president is quite skeptical that any Israeli government would endorse a referendum, I am also quite skeptical that they would – I didn't mean to withdraw, you were talking about the referendum, I think?

**President Carter:** No, I didn't mention the referendum, I mentioned the trusteeship.

**Samuel Lewis:** The trusteeship, yes. Well, I share your skepticism. Nonetheless, I think you can imagine the situation deteriorating now to the point over the next year or two where there's a lot more desperation on the Israeli side as well as the Palestinian side, so that there might be a little more receptivity than there is today.

I think right now, my sense from reading is that the Israeli public is feeling, was feeling a little better as a result of the beating up on the Hamas leadership through the rather successful operations, some successful, some less so, despite all the collateral damage. And that if the Hamas doesn't carry out any big operations in the next month or two, they'll slip back into an assumption that this kind of suppression of terrorism maybe can work for awhile. But I am very skeptical you won't see the Jihad or someone else with some more bombs in that period. So I don't think it could last very long.

I don't know how you get deals with these two organizations. And let's not forget, Jihad at least seems to be pretty much a wholly owned subsidiary of the Iranians. And they have been certainly stirring the pot there, from whatever intelligence I've read about. And so you've got a little bit more than just the immediate actors to be concerned with. And since I don't think



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you'd ever get real assurances, any international force that goes in there has got to be prepared for casualties. And I can see some of the settlers involved with this if, in fact, the Israeli troops were pulled back, and they were left "unprotected."

**Walter Mondale:** OK, one question here. Right.

**Helena Cobban:** Hi. I'm Helena Cobban. I write a column for The Christian Science Monitor. And I guess my question is: Has the time come really to sit down with as many Israelis as possible to ask how they see the future in say 20, 25 years? Because they have, obviously, their own concerns, but they also have this responsibility under international law of running a military occupation over some people who are not their nationals. My father was, you know, part of the British occupation force in Germany, and they did what I think was a very laudable job with that occupation. We, as the United States, are now running an occupation in Iraq. And goodness only knows if we are going to be able to do a decent job with that occupation.

But really how do they see the end point of that responsibility that they have under international law? Do they see the end point as the creation of a viable Palestinian state at peace with them – and the word "viable" is really important there? And if not, how are the legitimate political aspirations of the Palestinians to be met? Is there any alternative to a one-state solution or a two-state solution?

**Walter Mondale:** I'll give that question to Hal Saunders.

**Harold Saunders:** Well, as you can tell from my earlier comments, I'd love to see the kind of dialogue among Israelis about what the future of the state plus the occupation would be. I've long felt that the real need for sustained dialogue was not between Palestinians only but among Israelis. So I'd like to see that play a role, but I don't know – I mean, that would take a long time, and I'm not quite sure what, having proposed it, I am not sure what we would end up with.

But I think Israelis need to be encouraged somehow to engage among themselves, because there are widely divergent views among them about that question. The same would be true among the Palestinians. But I don't know how one does pose that, except that I would like to see it happen.

**Walter Mondale:** Attorney General Rubinstein.

**President Carter:** This will have to be the last one.

**Walter Mondale:** This will be the last question.

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** In response to what has been said, first of all, before leaving to catch an airplane, I would like to thank President Carter and The Carter Center and everybody else for inviting me for this interesting day.

**President Carter:** We're glad you came. Thank you.

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** Thank you very much. On the point that was just raised by Ms. Cobban, I think the answer lies in what was, for instance, the very lively debate that goes on daily in the Israeli press, and media, and the public opinion on these issues, and it's a lively debate in a democracy.

It was demonstrated, I think, without being self-righteous, at Camp David II. I mean at Camp David 2000 because there was an outline which could be defined this way or the other, but, and you couldn't take off – I was in charge of the Refugee Subcommittee there. And the ideas that came there were, in my view and the American administration's view, at the time quite reasonable. The whole thing didn't take off; again, I must come to this notion of a partner. And it is something that when it shows up, it will, I think, take off; it has to take off.

All these ideas that were mentioned here – one thing I want to say, President Carter mentioned today the notion of some Israeli speaking of a one-state solution with a combined Israeli/Palestinian state. I think it's a wrong idea.

**President Carter:** I do, too. I certainly wouldn't advocate –



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The panel and Mrs. Carter

**Elyakim Rubinstein:** But you mentioned it as something that has been mentioned by some writers. I think it is the wrong idea. The Zionist vision is a Jewish state with an Arab minority, equal rights and all that, which I myself work on it on a daily basis, but the notion of Israel as such is the distillation of the hopes of the Jewish people, and their prayers and their hopes for thousands of years must be there and must continue. And this does not in any way contradict all kinds of ideas as far as peace is concerned.

Finally, I find myself compelled to say something about things that were said here about our prime minister. And I'm not a proud member of his or any other party; in fact, I conducted investigations that relate to some of his family members. But he is the democratic elected

prime minister – he was the defense minister when they finalized the Sinai agreement, and the evacuation of 1982 was done with all of the agony that took place in dismantling those settlements at the time. And he has committed himself, and when the day comes, when the opportunity presents itself, and I have no doubt that democracy will, for a reasonable peace solution. I am saying that because while Americans like, you know, this fair play, balanced play, but not always putting people on the same, he is not in a power level with Arafat with all of the criticisms that anybody put on him.

Thank you very much for everything, and thank you for this conference.

**Walter Mondale:** Thank you very much.

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