

Jimmy Carter

FOREIGN POLICY AND POST-PRESIDENTIAL YEARS

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Moderator: Kenneth W. Stein

I grew up no more than two miles from here; it's quite gratifying to be back in Hempstead. It's also very gratifying to be here in the company of these five gentlemen, individuals who have an enormous amount of public policy experience dealing with the Middle East; individuals whose reputations far outweigh my own, and probably will for the rest of my life; individuals who have given enormous time to the pursuit of peace in the Middle East, and continue to do so, even though some of them are no longer involved in official public service.

No one who studies the Middle East or observes the conduct of American foreign policy can overestimate the extraordinary political achievement of President Jimmy Carter in negotiating the 1978 Camp David accords. Given the depth of historical animosity between Arabs and Israelis, it was remarkable that an agreement--however imperfect--was reached between Israel and Egypt in 1978. Since the September 1978 signing, the countries and people of the region have reacted to this historical benchmark. The accords proved that negotiation and not belligerency can begin to characterize Israeli-Arab relations. The legacy of the accords is their durability in the face of severe criticism and enormous political change in the Middle East.

When Anwar Sadat stated to the Egyptian People's Assembly on November 9, 1977, "I'm ready to go to their . . . Knesset to talk to them," most hardened cynics dismissed his statement as rhetoric. After his visit to Jerusalem, official Washington remained somewhat skeptical of this bold initiative. The Carter administration had spent almost all of the first year in office concentrating on seeking to reconvene a Geneva Middle East peace conference. Public endorsement of Sadat's venture was slow in coming from either the White House or the State Department.

During and after the October 1973 war, Secretary of State Kissinger had successfully established a working rapport with Sadat. The United States had become an interlocutor and intermediary. We had negotiated two successful disengagement agreements with Egypt, and one with Syria. In addition, Anwar Sadat began to trust Americans. He began to trust Kissinger; ultimately, he trusted Jimmy Carter.

In March 1977, at Clinton, Massachusetts, Jimmy Carter gave his historic speech in which he spoke about the necessity to establish a Palestinian homeland--the first president to make a positive statement about the Palestinian future. Subsequently President Carter met with virtually every major Middle Eastern leader, and he met with Menachem Begin after he was elected prime minister in May 1977. From April to August 1977, Carter and his foreign policy aides sought to overcome procedural problems involved in reconvening a Geneva conference. The sticking point then, as now, was the PLO, or Palestinian, representation. Israel opposed separate Palestinian representation at Geneva, and it adamantly opposed the establishment of a Palestinian political infrastructure, which would endanger Israel's survival. Ultimately, by the end of September 1977, Israel accepted the concept of Palestinian representation in a unified delegation at Geneva. After the opening session at Geneva, bilateral talks

between Israel and Egypt were to take place. How the Palestinian question was to be resolved remained an outstanding issue.

But Anwar Sadat grew impatient because the Syrians perhaps were going to be involved. He may have grown impatient because the United States, on October 1, 1977, had offered the opportunity for a renewed Soviet involvement in Middle East diplomacy with the joint statement issued by the Soviet Union and the United States. So in November 1977, Anwar Sadat traveled to Jerusalem. During the first nine days of November, he kept the idea of going to the Knesset to himself, finally he went. He met the Israeli leaders; he met people with whom he had been enemies for many years. He had said, in 1972, that peace would come in the next generation, and five years later he was in Jerusalem. But it was much easier during those first forty-eight hours in Jerusalem, with euphoria and expectations high, than it would be in the subsequent eight or nine months leading up to Camp David, to achieve anything substantial between the sides.

Subsequent to Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, talks took place in Ismailia, Egypt, Jerusalem, and Leeds Castle in England. It all led up to the decision by President Carter in mid-1978 to invite Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat to Camp David. The letters of invitation, which were signed by President Carter and were hand-delivered by Secretary Vance, are now in the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta. If you want to see an example of the economy of word usage by the thirty-ninth president of the United States, I recommend that you read those letters. They are also found in the back of Bill Quandt's book on Camp David.

In September 1978, President Carter invited Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat and their delegations to Camp David. Tonight, these five gentlemen will speak to us about their recollections surrounding events of Camp David. We have asked each of the principals this evening to speak for fifteen minutes. We will then have questions and answers. We want to give our principals an opportunity to query each other, to probe into the memories of one another.

Discussant: Hermann F. Eilts

Stein: Our first speaker this evening is Hermann Frederick Eilts, a distinguished university professor of international relations at Boston University. Ambassador Eilts was born in Germany, and received his B.A. from Ursinus College and his M.A. from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He is a graduate of the National War College and the Army War College. After serving in the U.S. Army in North Africa and Europe as an officer in World War II, Hermann Eilts joined the U.S. foreign service in 1947. He's seen diplomatic service in Tehran, Jidda, Baghdad, Aden, Yemen, London, and Tripoli. He served as U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1965 to 1970; was deputy commandant of the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, from 1970 to 1973; and was U.S. ambassador to Egypt from 1973 to 1979, participating in the Sinai I and Sinai II disengagement talks and the Camp David negotiations. He retired from the foreign service in 1979, and that year joined Boston University. It is with great pleasure that I present to you Ambassador Hermann Frederick Eilts.

Eilts: Fifteen minutes is not a great deal of time to talk about events that were so momentous as those of Camp David. What I would like to do in the time that I have is speak on the subject of President Carter and the Egyptian leadership at Camp David.

Dr. Stein spoke a few moments ago of some of the events leading up to Camp David. There's one event that I think deserves particular mention, because it has tended to be forgotten. It happened in the first meeting in Washington that President Carter had with President Sadat, shortly after the Carter administration took office. President Sadat, at the time, had a certain sense of uneasiness about Carter. He felt that during the election campaign, Carter had shown very pro-Israeli tendencies in some of his remarks, and he was worried, initially, about the promise President Ford had made that if he was reelected, the Ford administration would seek to work out a comprehensive settlement rather than continue the Nixon-Kissinger step-by-step approach. Sadat had pretty much concluded after Sinai II that the step-by-step approach was no longer viable. He was delighted when President Carter, very quickly after assuming office, accepted the concept of working toward a comprehensive settlement. It was in that context that the effort of the Carter administration in its first year in office was to get to a Geneva conference.

At that first meeting in February 1977, President Sadat said to President Carter that if we could work out a cessation of hostilities and peace, that should be enough. President Carter responded, "You must understand, Mr. President, I cannot possibly urge the Israelis to take the necessary action to withdraw from Sinai if there is not also a willingness of the part of the Egyptian government to formally recognize and establish diplomatic relations with Israel as part of any such package." Of course, diplomatic relations between the two states have existed for a long time, but I want to emphasize that in 1977, this was an extraordinarily candid statement. No one in previous administrations had gone so far as to say openly to the Egyptian president--nor, for that matter, to other Arab leaders with whom negotiations were taking place--

that what was critical, if one was going to try to get Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory, was a willingness on the Arab side to recognize Israel formally and to have diplomatic relations with that state.

President Sadat showed a bit of surprise that this had been put to him. He said something like "Well, maybe we can think about that in five years' time." To his credit, President Carter said, "Five years, no. We can't wait that long. The two things must happen at the same time." In a sense, of course, that was a very normal thing, but it was unusual for the Egyptian leadership to hear that proposition stated so unequivocally. In due course, as the Camp David agreements were worked out, and then the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the diplomatic relations became part of it.

Now, a word about Camp David. When the Camp David meetings took place, one of the immediate problems President Carter had to face was that Sadat--and I'm sure we'll hear about the views of Mr. Begin from my colleague, Ambassador Lewis--was primed for bear. Whatever positive spirit had come out of his trip to Jerusalem, and out of the talks that were subsequently held by the two leaders in Ismailia, had disappeared for a variety of reasons. Sadat had become convinced that the Israeli leadership failed, as he put it, to recognize the psychological breakthrough that he had attempted to make in visiting Jerusalem. So he made it very clear that he, Sadat, was looking for a confrontation with Mr. Begin at Camp David, and that he hoped President Carter would support him in this. Thus, Carter's first problem was to cool down, calm down, Sadat so that he did not come to the meeting, as he was ready to do, looking for a confrontation, and sour the conference at the outset.

A second problem that President Carter faced very, very quickly was a growing split between President Sadat and the members of the Egyptian delegation. The Egyptian delegation, very soon after Camp David had begun, concluded that President Carter was having too much influence on President Sadat; that Sadat was making concessions to President Carter. President Carter certainly worked very, very hard on Sadat; Sadat had the greatest admiration for President Carter. And some of the concessions Sadat seemed to be giving Carter went beyond what the Egyptian government had assured its Arab friends it was willing to make at Camp David. Thus, there was pressure on Sadat from his delegation, which included the deputy prime minister (who had met with Moshe Dayan on two separate occasions in Morocco as a result of the efforts of the king of Morocco), the minister of state for foreign affairs, the minister of foreign affairs, and a number of very able and influential officials in the Foreign Ministry.

The issue developed in this sense: What the Egyptians had wanted for some time--even before Camp David--was a U.S. proposal that would take into account the views of Israel and the views of Egypt, and could be used as a negotiating document. Now that was indeed done, but Mr. Begin made it very clear that a single document that included both Sinai matters--that is, Egyptian-Israeli matters--and West Bank/Gaza matters was unacceptable. It was therefore up to President Carter to persuade Sadat to agree not only to split the single document into two separate drafts but also to insist that these two documents not be linked. In other words, each document would stand independently, and each would have to be implemented independently, so that if

something happened on one and nothing happened on the other, this would not bring the implementation process to a halt.

The fact that Sadat was persuaded by President Carter to accept that split, and the legal separation of the two documents, was a source of enormous concern to the rest of the Egyptian delegation, which constantly sought to persuade President Sadat to stop making the kinds of concessions that President Carter sought. The Egyptian delegation tried hard to bring those two now separate documents together again, so there would be at least some kind of formal relationship between them. Generally speaking, the Egyptian delegation was unsuccessful.

The point I'm making is that the spirit of the Egyptian delegation at Camp David, their morale, was very tense--partly because of the concern that the relationship between President Carter and President Sadat had become so close that Sadat was willing to make the kinds of concessions that President Carter wanted, and that the members of the delegation felt were deleterious to Egyptian interests and to the Arab world as a whole. It was a very difficult situation. President Carter deserves great credit for handling Sadat so that the Egyptian president had developed a degree of confidence in Carter, in Carter's willingness to be evenhanded, to work out something that was fair to both sides. Sadat frequently said to Carter, "I will not let you down." That was clearly a statement welcome to President Carter, and obviously very helpful to him. At the same time, from the point of view of the rest of the Egyptian delegation, it was a source of trouble.

The eventual outcome of this tense situation was that the Egyptian foreign minister resigned at the very end of the Camp David conference, on the Friday before the meeting ended. And when the Camp David agreements were signed at the White House on Sunday evening, the minister could not be prevailed upon to attend the signing ceremony, he was so bitter about the whole matter. It was President Carter, through his efforts and the great confidence that Sadat had in him, who made it possible to move forward against the wishes of the members of the Egyptian delegation.

I would add a final point or two. Some of you may have seen the film that appeared a year or two ago on Camp David, which had a scene in which Begin and Sadat met in the woods of Camp David, and talked to each other, saying, "We two old terrorists, we know what it's about. Let's forget it all and work it out." No such thing happened; it was pure fiction.

Indeed, another of the problems that President Carter had was to try to get Sadat and Begin together. My colleague, Ambassador Lewis, and I had urged President Carter, just before the Camp David meeting, that given the state of tension between Sadat and Begin, he should not try to get them together at the beginning; we had warned that this would not work. President Carter nevertheless tried to do so. The first day went all right, but the second day did not go well at all. From that point on, Sadat and Begin rarely talked to each other. Certainly they did not talk in any negotiating fashion. It was necessary for the American delegation to go back and forth between the Israelis and the Egyptians in order to get anything done. The two principal leaders, whatever had come out of the earlier Jerusalem talks and the Ismailia talks, had become very bitter toward each other. I must say in fairness that Begin was

less bitter and President Sadat more so, for he had concluded that the "spirit" of his Jerusalem visit should have been appreciated more by the Israeli prime minister.

As I recall the Camp David meeting, the elements affecting the Egyptian side were the principal problems that quickly emerged. President Carter had to be the mediator not only between the Israeli delegation and the Egyptian delegation, but also, in a sense, between Sadat and the objecting members of the Egyptian delegation. It was not an easy task, and it wasn't made any easier by the close confines of Camp David.

I've always recalled with a great deal of nostalgia that this was the only time in my diplomatic experience--which goes back to the end of World War II--and my involvement in the Arab-Israeli problem, which dates from the inception of the state of Israel, that it was possible to get senior Israeli officials (the prime minister), Egyptian officials including the president, and Americans together, even though their dialogue was limited to nonsubstantive matters. And despite the enormous difficulties of bringing them together and of finally getting a few on each side to talk to each other, it turned out to be possible to draft and sign the two Camp David agreements. They may have been modest in substance, but they were nevertheless the greatest success in this very difficult Arab-Israeli issue that we had had until that time--and, for that matter, that we have had since.

Discussant: Samuel W. Lewis

Stein: Just as Ambassador Eilts has given you a sense of Egypt's view, or a view, perhaps, through Sadat's prism, we are fortunate this evening to have Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis, who is president of the United States Institute of Peace, and during the Camp David process was U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Mr. Lewis was born in Houston, Texas. He's a cum laude graduate of Yale University with a master's degree in international relations from Johns Hopkins University. He was in the foreign service for thirty-one years. In his last post, he served for eight years as ambassador to Israel. He was a prominent actor in the Arab-Israeli negotiations, including participation in the Camp David accords. Ambassador Lewis also served as assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs; as deputy director of the Policy Planning Staff; as a senior staff member of the National Security Council; as a member of the United States Agency for International Development Mission to Brazil; and had lengthy assignments in Italy and Afghanistan. He retired from the State Department in 1985, and he has served on numerous occasions as Bill Quandt's tennis partner.

Before assuming the presidency of the U.S. Institute of Peace on November 1, 1987, he was diplomat-in-residence at the Johns Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute, and guest scholar at the Brookings Institution. It is with great pleasure that I present to you Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis.

Lewis: Ken Stein has set out quite a task for this disparate group of old diplomatic colleagues, and we each come at it, I suppose, with slightly different prejudices. Bill Quandt, who's going to speak very shortly, has written the definitive book, *Camp David*, about the negotiations themselves, all the events that led up to the Camp David conference, and some of those after it. It's hard to do better than Bill in describing the diplomacy or the details of the negotiating dilemmas; or, indeed, to describe better than he has President Carter's unique contribution and role.

What I want to do is what Hermann Eilts has just done, from the other side of the mirror: talk about the role personality played in this outcome, especially the personalities of Menachem Begin and of Jimmy Carter. To do so, it's important to go back a bit before Camp David.

Begin, you will recall, was elected prime minister of Israel in May 1977, just four months after Carter took office, well after Carter had launched his effort to reconvene the Geneva conference to achieve a comprehensive peace settlement in the region. And Begin, who had a reputation as an underground fighter, a radical right-wing politician, and a warmonger, was the last Israeli prime minister anyone would have predicted to be the first to achieve peace with an Arab neighbor.

I arrived in Israel the day after Begin's election. I spent several hours with him informally over lunch three days after I arrived, well before he had taken office. And I came, in that informal exposure to him, to understand some things about him that ran through the next three years as an important leitmotif in his relationship to President Carter. I found that Menachem Begin was an enormous admirer of the United States,

and in particular of the American presidency and of American presidents. As an outcast in Israeli politics all of his career, he yearned for acceptance as a legitimate political leader and as Israel's proper prime minister. Those two elements--his admiration for American presidents, whoever they were, and the United States; and his yearning for acceptance and legitimacy as Israel's leader--were interwoven in the way he reacted to Carter's diplomacy. Carter came to understand those characteristics of Prime Minister Begin, and I think his understanding enabled him to work through a very difficult series of policy conflicts with Begin over the next eighteen months in a constructive and ultimately successful way.

There was a big debate in Washington, prior to Begin's first visit as prime minister in July 1977, as to whether he should be treated with honey or with vinegar. His views on the West Bank and its permanent role in Israeli life, and its historical connection to the Jewish state, were well known. There were many in Washington at the time who felt that President Carter should lay the law down to Prime Minister Begin at the beginning, and make clear what was acceptable to the United States and what wasn't. Having some role in recommending to President Carter how to deal with Begin, I argued that in the long run, President Carter would achieve more success in bringing Begin to accept the necessary compromises for peace if he gave him honor and legitimacy at their first encounter.

For that first session, Carter accepted that strategy, and until March of the following year attempted to follow it rather consistently. It was a tough time for President Carter. Menachem Begin was a very difficult prime minister to deal with: proud; very concerned with legalities and the details of every negotiation and every document; immersed in Israel's tragic history and in the much longer tragic history of the Jewish people; highly defensive about any impugning of Israel's legitimacy or of its equality with other nations; very sensitive to personal slights.

But there developed between Carter and Begin a unique and interesting positive connection over months of meetings and negotiations and messages, and disagreements. That bond was grounded, I think, in Carter's religious convictions, in his upbringing as a Christian who understood the centrality of the Holy Land for American culture and for his own religion, and in an understanding of the history of the Jewish people in its biblical context. This provided an avenue for Begin and Carter to communicate, often when they could not carry on useful discussions about current issues. They could talk about the Bible, and they could talk about events of Jewish history that revealed something about Israeli behavior that Carter could understand.

Carter studied Begin very carefully, as I assume he studied Sadat. And as with every aspect of his Middle East diplomacy, he immersed himself in the details of Begin's history: he read his autobiography; he learned as much as he could about Begin's personal experiences during World War II. President Carter also came to realize that the tiresome, lengthy, legal dissertations about history and about the interpretation of language in documents that Begin so often subjected him to had to be endured, for they were an important part of Begin's psyche. This need to explain his actions in legal and in historical terms was central to his personality. Carter came to understand that, and as a man with an extraordinary degree of self-control and self-discipline, he sat through some very, very wearying sessions over those eighteen

months before Camp David, without ever--except on rare occasions--letting his anger show.

I referred a moment ago to Begin's admiration for American presidents. Begin, throughout their relationship, desperately wanted Jimmy Carter's approval and friendship. He wanted them because Carter was president of the United States; he wanted them on personal terms, because he admired Carter, and Carter's enormous attention to detail, capacity for work, and wish to help bring peace to the region. At the same time, Begin was anxious for Sadat's friendship, and one of his great disappointments during the eighteen months before Camp David was the gradual realization that Sadat disliked him. After the initial visit--that almost miraculous visit to Jerusalem by an Egyptian president after decades of warfare and bloodshed--relations between Sadat and Begin steadily soured. During Sadat's visit, Begin believed that he and Sadat had struck up a special friendship. And he continued to hope that their friendship was going to endure and be a bridge for the building of peace between the two nations. It was only in the spring of 1978 that Begin began to realize that Sadat found him quite disagreeable, and really didn't care to be in his presence. Begin was a very proud person; he hated to admit this, even to himself. It gnawed at him, for it then became more and more clear that President Carter, whom Begin admired and wanted as a friend, greatly preferred Sadat.

There was a fascinating triangular relationship here. Begin was the one most eager for acceptance, yet he was the odd man out. That, Carter understood; Sadat, I suppose, also understood it. Begin came to understand it later than the other two, and he tried to suppress, throughout the rest of his relationship with President Carter, his disappointment, his envy, about Sadat's preferred position among Carter's diplomatic friends. But it was difficult for him, and it often came out in small ways. It led me to encourage President Carter to try to find opportunities to send notes to Prime Minister Begin, to speak to him on personal matters, for Begin was a man not only of great pride, but also of considerable emotion about human relationships. So even when a policy dispute was unbridgeable, if you could communicate with Begin about something that had to do with his family or his personal concerns, it helped to get you over that immediate crisis in the policy arena. President Carter came to use personal correspondence with Begin to this end very effectively.

Now, as regards Camp David itself, I want to make one remark about Hermann Eilts's comment that after the second day, Sadat and Begin didn't spend much time together. Bill Quandt, in his book, makes it quite clear that this was Carter's decision. Begin was still anxious to meet with Sadat; Sadat was, I think, worn out from meetings with Begin. It was Carter's decision that if he continued his approach of the first two days, bringing the two men together with him as a triumvirate, letting them talk frankly to each other in his presence, the conference would blow up. Carter had planned on gradually getting a lot of the misunderstandings out of the way, and moving on to policy issues, but the chemistry was so unworkable that each meeting became less and less promising, and more and more explosive. Carter concluded by the end of the second day that he had to keep the other two principals apart; otherwise, the conference would fail prematurely. I think he was probably correct about that. So until the deal was finally struck, they didn't meet again. All the communication was done through their subordinates or through Carter.

I want to say just one quick word about the Israeli delegation at Camp David. It was, as usual in Israel, very disputatious, very noisy, very talented, and very important. Whereas Sadat was apparently struggling alone against the combined views of his delegation, who were trying to hold him back from making concessions, the Israeli delegation was the other way around. It was Begin who was standing fast against his delegation, who, in different ways, were pushing him to be more accommodating and more accepting of compromise formulas--proposed, usually, by the United States. Moshe Dayan, Ezer Weizman, and Attorney General Aharon Barak, now a Supreme Court justice, were the three key members of the Israeli delegation. In different ways, they all played crucial roles in helping Begin find ways to accept formulations of language that, in the first instance, his legal mind found totally unacceptable.

At Camp David, President Carter came up with one of the most unusual devices any negotiator has ever introduced in an international conference. Early in the second week, the effort to work out the overall framework for the Palestinian part of the problem was foundering. The issues had been divided into two separate frameworks: one for Israeli-Egyptian relations and the withdrawal from Sinai, which, by and large, was going fairly well; and one much more complex framework dealing with the West Bank and Gaza, which was still a long way from any agreement. Carter realized that the techniques being used--the United States producing a paper, getting comments separately from the Egyptians and from the Israelis, rewriting the paper, then giving it to each side for new comments, all the while controlling the drafts--although excellent, were not cracking the fundamental difference, which was that Begin was totally convinced Israel should never leave those territories. Sadat had to have some kind of commitment in principle to withdrawal if he was to take care of what he conceived to be his Arab and Palestinian audience.

So Carter persuaded Begin and Sadat each to name one senior member of his delegation to a drafting committee, and Carter selected Cyrus Vance as his member. Carter then chaired--as president--this working group: Barak for the Israelis, Osama el-Baz for the Egyptians, and Vance for the Americans. They worked with Carter for fifteen, twenty, or thirty hours--drafting and redrafting the language. Carter, as president, was of course not dealing with equals but with subordinates. Once he had Barak and el-Baz committed to a new draft, he would charge Barak with the job of selling Begin on what the committee had produced. El-Baz had the same task with the Egyptians. It turned out that Begin had great confidence in Barak as a jurist; he was persuaded by him to accept language that he would never have accepted directly from Carter, or directly from Sadat. Dayan, Weizman, and others in Begin's delegation pushed Begin in the same direction; and Barak proved to be particularly ingenious at formulating arguments to show Begin in legal terms why he could accept something that seemed to him, at first blush, to be impossible.

This was only one of a number of ingenious innovations that Carter brought to Camp David, like keeping the press away and forcing all the delegations to speak only through one press spokesperson--the U.S. spokesperson, Jody Powell. This minimized the impact of domestic political pressures on Begin from Israel and on Sadat from Egypt or elsewhere in the Arab world, which would have resulted from free press access to leaks from within the Camp David walls.

Unfortunately, by the time the conference was over, all of Carter's efforts to keep his self-control had almost worn away before the very difficult negotiating tactics Begin employed. Late on the night before the conference ended, there developed a misunderstanding about Carter's insistence that Begin commit himself to freeze all new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza for the entire period of negotiation of the autonomy agreement that was to be the follow-on stage to Camp David. Begin never afterward admitted that he had committed himself to such a prolonged freeze; Carter was convinced--and is convinced today--that Begin did, and that he changed his mind overnight. This issue, although it did not hold up the signing of the agreement, came to poison the relationship between Begin and Carter in the months ahead, and was one of the most important reasons why the follow-on negotiations to Camp David over autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza were ultimately unsuccessful. What was at stake here was the tenuous mutual trust that Carter had established with Begin, which survived with difficulty through Camp David, though somewhat frayed, and was then practically destroyed by the disagreement about what had occurred right at the end of the conference. Had Carter and Begin had a stronger relationship before Camp David, I suppose it would not have suffered so much from that misunderstanding. Indeed, the two men managed with considerable difficulty to work together to complete the formal peace treaty over the next nine months. But the fundamentals of their personal relationship were established, and then soured, by the way Camp David ended. This episode again suggests that, with these three unique leaders, personality interaction played an enormous role in the outcome of President Carter's greatest diplomatic triumph.

Discussant: William B. Quandt

Stein: Our next speaker is William B. Quandt, senior fellow in foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution. Dr. Quandt is an expert on the Middle East and American policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Dr. Quandt was born in Los Angeles in 1941, the second year that Anwar Sadat was at the Military College; their paths would cross thirty years later. From Stanford University in 1963, Dr. Quandt received his B.A. degree, and his Ph.D. in political science from MIT in 1968. Before coming to Brookings in 1979, Dr. Quandt served as a staff member of the National Security Council. He was also an associate professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, and worked at the Rand Corporation in the Department of Social Science from 1968 to 1972. During 1987-1988, he was president of the Middle East Studies Association, and he's a member of the Middle East Institute Council on Foreign Relations.

This evening, at the Axinn Library, I typed in Bill Quandt's name and came up with nine books. I won't read them all to you. Among his better-known ones are *The United States and Egypt*; *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*; *Decades of Decision: American Foreign Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict*; and *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*. I might say that his book on Camp David, *Peacemaking and Politics*, is a treasure, and I commend it to you all. Bill tells me it's in paperback and still available.

During the Camp David process, Dr. Quandt was a staff member of the National Security Council, a position he held from 1972 to 1974, and again from 1977 through 1979. It's with great pleasure that I present to you Dr. William B. Quandt.

Quandt: The perspective that I want to try to develop is derived from the position that I had during this period. I worked on the National Security Council staff; I basically had two bosses--Zbigniew Brzezinski and Jimmy Carter. And in order to keep them satisfied--and they had a very big appetite for information about the Middle East--I depended very heavily on the kinds of reports that these two excellent ambassadors filed from Cairo and Tel Aviv, and on the advice and judgment of my colleague Hal Saunders, who was the assistant secretary at the State Department. We worked about as much as a team as one could imagine.

I want to try to give you my perception of how the president approached Camp David, and I want to reflect a bit on something of a paradox about the particular individual who is the focus of this conference, Jimmy Carter. On the one hand, you could say that he had a streak of optimism about human relations and about the way the world works--perhaps even a streak of naïveté; he often talked about resolving disputes through understanding and reaching harmony--"harmony" was a word that came up over and over again; and I think he deeply believed that most conflicts were based on misunderstandings that could be resolved through evenhanded mediation. Therefore, when he looked at the Arab-Israeli conflict, he was not particularly overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task. He thought it could be resolved. That

went against the grain of many of the experts, who thought that it would be extraordinarily difficult to resolve such a deep-rooted conflict.

And that's the Jimmy Carter with deep roots in his religious beliefs, who came out of the civil rights struggle, and saw in one generation the change in black-white relations in the South. And it is the Jimmy Carter who was, in fact, a bit optimistic and a bit naive about the world. But another Jimmy Carter came through in the Camp David accords who was a rather tough-minded character about how you get people to agree, and was not above making some pretty strong threats and exercising some pretty heavy-handed influence. And I think anybody who tries to describe the man as having only one set of these characteristics is missing the complexity of the human being we're talking about.

Let me give you two anecdotes that show the different sides of the president. In the preparations for Camp David, as always happens, the bureaucracy was asked to generate briefing books, which turned out to be enormous volumes--often rather unreadable in their bulk. In this case, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance decided to get a few of us together to develop the key memo in this briefing book for President Carter. We spent several days on a very nice retreat in Virginia--Hal Saunders was there, Roy Atherton, and myself--and we tried to develop what we thought was the key memorandum that was going to clarify for the president exactly what he had to achieve at Camp David. We tried to focus on the issue of linkage, which, simply stated, was how the U.S. government would come down on the issue of whether the Egyptian-Israeli agreement should be a stand-alone agreement that had no relationship to the Palestinian issue, or whether, in some way, it should be linked to the resolution of the Palestinian issue. The Egyptian preference was for linkage; the Israeli preference was strongly against linkage; and we thought that, one way or another, Carter's major task was going to be to straddle this divide and find some way to get accommodation between these two starkly different views.

As I recall, Carter took this bulky book with him on a fishing vacation before going to Camp David, thereby clearing his mind before the onslaught. Shortly before meeting at Camp David, he called a number of us up and said, "I've read this book, and it hasn't helped me very much. First of all, I don't get the big point about this linkage issue. You're trying to make something very big out of something relatively simple. Of course, we want an Egyptian-Israeli agreement, and of course we want to do the best we can on the Palestinian issue . . . I don't see what you're talking about with this linkage issue." As I recall, we sort of went down the line. The secretary of state tried to explain it, and Brzezinski tried to explain it, and perhaps Hermann did and Sam did and Hal did. I was at the end of the line because I was the most junior, and I finally tried. He said:

You've got it all wrong, all of you. Let me tell you what's going to happen at Camp David. I've invited Sadat and Begin here to help overcome the real problem, and that is the fact that they don't trust one another, and they don't see the good points in each other's position. And by getting them to Camp David, away from the press and out of the glare of publicity, and away from their own political constituencies, I think I can bring them to understand each other's positions better. My intention is to meet with them for a couple of days, try to work through the misunderstandings, and within a very few days--two or three days at the most--we will reach agreement on broad principles. Then we can

give instructions to the foreign ministers, and they can go off and negotiate an agreement. That's what we're going to do at Camp David.

I don't know how the rest of you felt. My reaction was, "Oh, my goodness, we're here for group therapy. What are we doing?" My impression was, from everything I had read, that Begin and Sadat could not stand one another, and that this was going to turn out to be a disaster. Nonetheless, the president convened Begin and Sadat the first day; the first round was not an easy one, because Sadat came, as Hermann Eilts mentioned, "loaded for bear." He had a document with him that he insisted on reading aloud that was very tough, and Prime Minister Begin had a very hard time controlling himself. The president kept saying, "Calm down, calm down, you'll have your chance." The next day, Prime Minister Begin had his chance, and the whole thing fell apart. And as you have heard, they didn't really meet again for any substantive purpose.

So this was a side of Jimmy Carter that was overly optimistic; that was a bit naive; that thought reasonable human beings could sit around the table and, in due course, reach an understanding. But that's not the only side of Jimmy Carter. Had that been the only dimension of the man, Camp David would have ended on that third day, and we all would have gone home.

The other side of Jimmy Carter was a man who understood that politics was the art of making the deal that was available. And very early on, he sensed--certainly before I sensed it, and before many of the others did--that the most readily attainable deal was one between Egypt and Israel; whatever else we could get was fine, but we shouldn't miss the opportunity to get that. The great advantage of working at the White House is that you get to participate in the briefing book that's done at the State Department--that is, if you have good relations with the assistant secretary; you also get to put your own memo on top of it before it goes to the president. So the memo that went on top of this briefing book was a scenario for how Camp David should unfold. We advised him to try to reach agreement with Begin and Sadat on broad principles that would address a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, and not detailed agreements. And we had several scenarios for how he might try to do this.

Carter's reaction after reading this--and he was a reader; he read virtually everything that went to him--was to say, "You're not aiming high enough. We can do better than just get broad principles. At a minimum, we can get the framework for an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty." Most of us were surprised that that was what he had in mind. We had been working on the assumption that we were trying to get something more general, within which we could develop the framework for an Egyptian-Israeli treaty. He said, "I think we can get it, and I think Sadat's ready for it."

Looking back on what Carter had in mind, he was, on the one hand, more ambitious; he wanted full treaties, everything except the signatures, at Camp David. But it also had a narrower focus, and ultimately, it was more realistic than what we had in mind. I've tried to figure out where Carter got the notion that this was what was attainable. I trace it back to meetings that he had with President Sadat at Camp David in February 1978. None of us were present after the first meeting, which was a rather gloomy one. Sadat was very discouraged, very depressed. We left, and they spent the weekend together at Camp David. I've never known for sure what happened

there, but I do know that when President Carter came away from those meetings, he asked us to try to think through what the implications of a separate Egyptian-Israeli agreement would be. I think we sent a cable to our embassies in Cairo and in Israel and elsewhere, asking precisely that question. Carter already had started thinking about what we could really get, and he was on to that much earlier than we. And he was right. Sadat ultimately was prepared to go for a separate agreement.

At Camp David, President Carter played many different roles, but the role he played that I think was most impressive was taking the issue of the bilateral agreement between Egypt and Israel, and becoming the desk officer for it. Hal Saunders did most of the drafting of the initial agreement, the overall comprehensive settlement. But Jimmy Carter wrote the first draft of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement. It went through several variations, as did Hal's draft, and I think that some twenty versions later, we finally got agreement on a much different version. But Jimmy Carter, in his own handwriting, drew up the first version of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement. This suggests to me that here was a man who, despite his naïveté and optimism, was also a fairly crafty politician who knew that there were certain things you could get and certain things you could not.

So I think we need to understand that the man had two dimensions, not just one: not just the naive optimist, not just the shrewd politician or negotiator. The two came in a package, and at various times each served him very well, and at other times each tended to exasperate us. But in the end, it was the combination of Carter's optimism--his belief that peace was possible, despite the advice of some of the pundits--and the realization that there was a particular angle to this conflict that was susceptible to resolution now, that made it possible to reach the agreement we reached in 1978. And in that sense, Camp David really is Jimmy Carter's finest achievement.

Discussant: Harold H. Saunders

Stein: The next speaker is Dr. Harold Saunders. For twenty years, Hal Saunders worked continuously on the National Security Council (NSC) staff in the White House, or in the State Department. He has been at the center of Washington policy-making on the Middle East. After leaving government in 1981, he focused more broadly on the conduct of international relationships in our changing world. From 1981 to 1986, he was a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research; he is now a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.

A Philadelphian, Dr. Saunders received an A.B. in English and American civilization from Princeton University in 1952, and a Ph.D. in American studies from Yale in 1956. As a U.S. Air Force lieutenant from 1956 to 1959, he served in the Central Intelligence Agency, and stayed as intelligence analyst until he moved to the NSC staff in 1961. In the State Department, he served last as assistant secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs from 1978 to 1981. He was a key member of the small U.S. team that mediated five Arab-Israeli agreements from 1974 to 1979, including the Kissinger shuttle agreements, the Camp David accords, and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. He also helped negotiate the release of American hostages from Tehran in 1981.

His most important book, *The Other Wall: The Politics of the Arab-Israel Peace Process*, published in 1985, builds on earlier writing about negotiation and describes the Arab-Israel peace process as negotiation embedded in larger political processes. His current project is a book extending that approach to the politics of international relationships globally. A longer-term project is a study of presidential policy-making in regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. I'm sure any of these gentlemen at this table would attest that Hal Saunders is a gentleman's gentleman, the quintessential diplomat. He has given advice and counsel to all of us. It is with great pleasure that I present to you Dr. Harold H. Saunders.

Saunders: I have to say two words of introduction. First of all, I did, and do, respect Jimmy Carter enormously, and the remarks this evening are reflections in no way intended to be critical. The other thing I want to say is that I have often thought about our shared experience at Camp David as one of the finest human experiences of my career. I think it was one of the finest professional experiences as well, but more important was the human experience. I say that for two reasons. First of all, I worked with these gentlemen and our absent colleague, Roy Atherton, throughout the peace process, from the end of the 1973 war, when Bill Quandt and I were colleagues in the NSC, through the Camp David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. I have never known a finer group of human beings or a more capable group of professionals. We liked working together, and I think it showed in what we did.

But to follow up Bill Quandt's insights into Jimmy Carter, my primary point in speaking of this as a human experience was that in my book--I worked for five presidents--it was a model of how a president can use the professionals around him.

At Camp David, Carter learned that if he was about to see Begin, he could call Sam over and try out a few ideas on him, and Hermann when he was going to see Sadat; when he really wanted something thought through privately with his staff--with Zbig and Ham Jordan and Jody Powell--he got Bill to do the drafting; and if it was a larger issue, he'd get me over there on the drafting. He really learned how to work with us as individuals, and I think all of us are deeply proud not only to have been part of the achievement, but also to have worked with Jimmy Carter in that way. I cannot pass up the opportunity at this conference on the presidency of Jimmy Carter to say that.

When I talk about Camp David, in many cases I'm asked to talk about the negotiations. I usually spend three-quarters of the time talking about the Arab-Israeli peace process before Camp David, and about a quarter talking about negotiations at Camp David itself. As Ken said in his introduction, I came away from the 1970s seeing the Arab-Israeli peace process as a series of negotiations embedded in a larger political process. Now, in this case, we are focusing on the person of Jimmy Carter. Therefore, I need to go back and think a little about how Jimmy Carter got that way; why did that person, with the attributes described by my colleagues, come to Camp David to deal with this particular problem?

This point has broader applicability in the series of conferences that Hofstra has run on the postwar presidents. It would be my thesis about any president that the picture of a problem that a president brings to the Oval Office shapes his approach to that problem throughout his presidency. He certainly learns from experience; he may refine that picture from experience; but it is likely to color his approach through much of his administration. So an important question to ask is what was the President's early exposure to the problem? This question points to a more specific body of evidence than, for instance, the notion of some scholars that a president's worldview shapes his approach to policy problems. Of course it does; but what we're interested in here is what his particular exposure was, and how he interpreted that exposure in the context of his larger worldview.

Looking at the postwar presidents in relation to this particular problem is interesting. I always knew when I worked for Lyndon Johnson that he had a soft spot in his heart for Israel, and I wondered why. And then I realized, years later, that during the 1930s, when he was a young congressman, he came to know leaders of the American Jewish community, and he worked to help escapees from the impending Nazi holocaust come through Cuba and find haven here in the United States. He had a formative human experience helping people deal with that horrible situation, so of course he had a soft spot in his heart for the Jewish experience at that time. Each of the presidents has his own story. Jack Kennedy, as a second-term junior at Harvard, spent part of the summer in 1939 in Palestine. There's a wonderful four-and-a-half page letter he wrote to his father--then the ambassador to Britain--about that experience: a nice description of the future job of a future president of the United States.

Well, in a nutshell now, turning to Carter and his exposure to this problem, I would say that he saw the Arab-Israeli conflict more as a human rights problem than as a human or political problem. Let me elaborate. What was his exposure to this problem? The first two elements come together. There was, of course, his education in the Bible, which, as we all know, has been a serious part of the life of Jimmy Carter

since his early days. Then there was his 1973 trip to Israel, a trip arranged for him--as for many other American public figures--by the government of Israel. I think it's fair to say that Carter's predominant experience on that trip was more one of placing the biblical experience in its geographical setting than it was one of deep thought about the policies of the government of Israel. Although these two elements account for a greater exposure to the Israeli side of the problem than to the Arab side, the interesting point is that Jimmy Carter came to the presidency, almost uniquely among postwar American presidents, knowing that there were two sides to this conflict.

By March 1977, at a Town Meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts, he spoke of a homeland for the Palestinians and shook a lot of people up by doing so. I asked him, "Why, Mr. President, did you, of all people, come to office putting the Palestinian dimension of this conflict as far forward in your perception of the problem as you did?" His answer was one sentence: "I saw it as a human rights problem." And that answer led to a discussion of how he came out on the liberal end of the spectrum in his Georgia community and in his Southern Baptist Conference. The detailed answer to that is appropriate to other panels in this conference, but I simply wanted to record for purposes here tonight his response to the question "Why, Mr. President, did you wind up at the liberal end of the spectrum?" His answer was, "My mother was a nurse who treated people who were sick, regardless of color."

In some way, though, Carter saw the plight of the Palestinians through lenses shaped by his experience with segregation and desegregation in Georgia. But, at the same time, to use his words, "Before I became president, I never met an Arab." And then he corrected himself. "Oh, yes, I did. A friend of mine took me to a racetrack in Florida, and there were a couple of young Arab gentlemen there, . . . they were friends of my friend, and he introduced me to them. But I never met an Arab." Carter speaks of learning about this and other problems from reading. He is an avid reader and scholar. To use his own words again, "I took delight--it wasn't a chore; I took delight --in learning as much as I could. I read all of Henry Kissinger's transcripts of his talks with Chou En-lai, and Nixon's with Mao Tse-tung. I read all about the U.S.-Soviet negotiations." He was a learner, but he did it from reading.

When I talked with him about what he had read, Carter couldn't come up quickly with titles of books, but for a presidential candidate, it's not so much that he read books; it's that he reads. People were always sending him memos and one thing and another; no wonder he couldn't remember everything he saw! But he did read. One of the documents that we know he read--and it might be interesting to hear Bill talk a little bit about this later--came to be called the Brookings Report. It was one of those things that prominent think tanks do in election years to take a look at a pressing problem that the new president would face, and to put it in perspective. The team that wrote the first Brookings Report was a collection of American scholars, former practitioners in government, Jewish Americans, Arab Americans; they tried to get a really good cross-section. But the interesting thing to me was not that it said, "Well, there should be a Palestinian entity of some kind. We should go back to Geneva." Rather, in the context here tonight, it was that from the perspective of somebody like myself in the government, this was a document that recorded what we all thought. This was the prevailing mode of thinking among those who had been in the peace process. I even think I remember that the president of the foundation that funded the

exercise had permission from Henry Kissinger to produce a public study that would say what we in the government could not yet say. Therefore, it was part of the wisdom of all of those who had been close to the process, in government and out.

I make the point because Carter absorbed that, and he wasn't so far, therefore, from the community of people who cared about this problem. And the remarkable thing to me was that Cy Vance came in as secretary of state; it was Carter and Zbig Brzezinski and Bill Quandt over in the White House, and myself and Roy Atherton and colleagues. We got together on our strategy of trying to move the peace process back to Geneva without writing more than two or three memos. We knew where we were going because it was in the air that that's where we should go. If Henry Kissinger had been returned to the secretary of state's office and Gerald Ford to the Oval Office, we would have done about the same thing as the Carter administration did at the beginning, I think. Carter put his own particular spin on this because, as I said, he had a particular readiness to recognize that there were two sides to the conflict.

My point in all this was that he came to his views by reading, not by dealing with human beings. And it's interesting what this can do to someone. Again, after he left the presidency, after he traveled to the Middle East for the first time out of office, he said to me--he'd had a wonderful meeting with people, with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza--"You know, you and Bill Quandt told me a great deal about the Palestinians and their needs and their interests . . . Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan is a wonderful student of this problem, and he talked to me about it . . . I discounted most of what you said, because I thought that you were pressing an expert's point of view. But now I've met them, and I understand."

But Carter didn't meet them before he became president. So he didn't have the formative experience that Johnson had of helping Jewish refugees escape the Nazi holocaust; he didn't learn from people the way Johnson and Kennedy and others did. Even in the campaign, his relationship with the Jewish community wasn't particularly close; the Jewish vote, in the end, was critical, but it was, as he thought, grudging and very late in the campaign. So he came to office with an analytical view of the problem. He had a biblically inspired sympathy for the Jewish experience, historically, over four millennia; but he also had an unusually balancing human rights perspective on the Palestinian experience, and an analytical recognition that you couldn't bring about peace unless you dealt with both sides of the problem.

Now, returning for a moment to some of my larger thoughts about the presidency, it's my feeling that a president doesn't have his own policy toward a problem until he's a half a dozen months or more into the administration and has had a chance to grapple with this problem as president. And of course, during that time, Carter had his meetings with Sadat and with first Prime Minister Rabin of Israel and then Menachem Begin. I think his exposure to Sadat was certainly more gratifying than his initial meeting with Rabin, and probably than his initial meeting with Begin, so his tendency to see the Arab side of the problem as worthy of attention was analytically reinforced by his personal rapport with Sadat.

This leads me to a much shorter series of comments about Camp David itself, since my colleagues have dealt with it in some detail. Camp David was a triumph of mediation and negotiation, not just a triumph of politics. I would say that just as Carter's picture of the problem was drawn analytically rather than from human and

political exposure, so was his approach to a solution. In brief, he relied heavily on negotiation. His dramatic political intervention--the Camp David accords themselves, the process--and his trip to the Middle East afterward to wrap up the details of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty were directed at bringing about a successful negotiation. Sam and Bill described the work of Carter--his ingenious work with his drafting group and his writing the first draft of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. That was his ability; he was, indeed, the engineer putting the pieces together to form a structure.

I believe that the Camp David accords and the peace treaty that followed were a dramatic and historic achievement; I believe there was a genius in them; I'm proud, as I said, to have been part of them. But all of us here at this table understand where they fell short. I personally had the job, about a month after Camp David, of going to the Middle East and trying to persuade King Hussein of Jordan and Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia and the West Bank Palestinians that there was something in Camp David for them. I think there's no point in mincing words: I failed. I didn't convince them, because there were too many shortcomings in the approach as they saw it. The accords fell short because they did not transform the Arabs' political environment, or the Israeli-Palestinian relationship, enough to permit full implementation. My conclusion about the peace process is the one that Ken stated: the peace process was a series of negotiations embedded in a larger political process. Only when the politicians had changed the political environment did we, as mediators, have a prayer. Change isn't initiated in the negotiating room; it's initiated in the political arena, and the mediators and negotiators only capture it on paper.

We did not succeed in generating between Israelis and Palestinians a political process for transforming their relationship comparable with that between Egypt and Israel. Part of the reason for that, to come back to my original point, is that President Carter saw this more as a problem in negotiating human rights than as a political and human problem of transforming a relationship. Having made that statement, I will now answer it, in part, by saying that the Camp David accords were one of those instruments in history that are essential to staking out a framework for the evolution of a subsequent negotiating and political process. I believe that if we had been able to implement the Camp David accords in the years after 1979--1980 through 1983--the political process would have emerged from that. So I am not denigrating the achievement at Camp David. I'm simply saying it wasn't allowed to be realized in a political process.

My final judgment is not one of criticism but an analytical suggestion. It comes from the way King Hussein of Jordan described his concerns to me during that trip in October 1978. And I would paraphrase him in these words: "The Camp David framework is certainly sincere; it might even be a reasonable approach at getting something started between the Israelis and Palestinians. But I just don't think you are politically able to deliver its full implementation as you describe your purpose." And we haven't.

Discussant: Daniel C. Kurtzer

Stein: Hal has set a very formidable stage for our last speaker, Dan Kurtzer. Since the accords signing ultimately resulted in the March 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, many political leaders have blamed the accords for removing Egypt from physical confrontation with Israel, for making it easier for Israel to go into Lebanon in 1982, for allowing the Israelis to impose a policy on the Arab world in the 1980s of "Do unto others before they do unto you." What is quite clear is that since the Camp David accords were negotiated, there have been many other ideas, many other plans, many other declarations, by various groups, by organizations--the Arab League--by the European Community, by our government, that have sought to build on, amend, or tear down the Camp David accords--the framework, if you will. In essence, the accords have become a benchmark; they have become a basis from which many other ideas and plans have emerged.

We are going to leave it to our colleague from the State Department, Dan Kurtzer, to speak about what has happened to the intent, the tone, and the substance of those accords in the ten years since. Dr. Dan Kurtzer, a foreign service officer, was appointed deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs in June 1989. His responsibilities include the Middle East peace process, U.S. bilateral relations with Israel and Egypt, and Palestinian affairs; he is not responsible for Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait.

Dr. Kurtzer was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and received his B.A. from Yeshiva University, and his M.A., his M.Phil. Middle East certificate, and his Ph.D. from Columbia University. Dr. Kurtzer and Jimmy Carter joined the federal government the same year, 1976. Dan Kurtzer was assigned to the Bureau of International Organization Affairs; Jimmy Carter went to the White House. In 1977, Dr. Kurtzer took a leave of absence from the State Department to accept an appointment as dean of Yeshiva College; he returned to the Department of State in 1979, and was assigned as first secretary for political affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo. In 1982, he was appointed first secretary for political affairs in Tel Aviv. He returned to Washington in 1986 to become deputy director of the Office of Egyptian Affairs; in 1987, he was appointed a member of the secretary of state's policy planning staff, where he was a speech writer for the secretary of the state; and he was an adviser to the secretary and assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs on issues relating to the Middle East peace process. He has twice received the State Department's Superior Honor Award, and in 1985, the award of the director general of the foreign service for political reporting. Every academic, every scholar in the United States who teaches Middle Eastern history, would like to write like Dan Kurtzer.

During the Camp David process, Dan was at Yeshiva College. It's with pleasure that I present to you a dear personal friend, Dr. Daniel Kurtzer.

Kurtzer: It is a tough act to follow four of the greatest practitioners of the art of diplomacy who have told us their experiences and shared with us their wisdom about

what contributed to the success of Camp David. I feel very much like the character at the end of the "Rocky and Bullwinkle" show, who is left to sweep up the leftover pieces--described, quite graphically, by both Hal Saunders and Sam Lewis as the unfinished business of the Camp David accords.

Let me start with three reflections on the unfinished business of Camp David, which will answer, in a rather complicated way, the simple question of what has gone wrong since, and why successive American administrations have been unable to build on Camp David and to fulfill its promise.

First, immediately upon the completion of Camp David, as Ambassador Lewis noted, there were problems concerning the accords themselves--problems that not only would bedevil the treaty negotiations but also were to prove particularly troublesome in the negotiations that related to the resolution of the Palestinian problem, Israeli-Palestinian relations, and the future of the West Bank and Gaza. Inherent in those difficulties was the added dimension that for both Egypt and Israel, for different reasons, as well as for the United States, the Egyptian-Israeli component of the Camp David process became paramount. And so, although a great deal of time was spent by Israeli, Egyptian, and American delegations moving back and forth between Cairo and Tel Aviv to try to negotiate a self-governing authority, to try to negotiate Palestinian autonomy, to see whether the promise of the second half of Camp David could be fulfilled, in fact, the leadership of the three countries had their eyes very much on April 1982--the date by which Israel's withdrawal from Sinai was to be completed, and the real promise of the peace treaty was to be seen: full normalization of relations, full diplomatic relations, and full peace.

In a sense, the negotiations to implement the second half of Camp David became a bit of a sideshow. There was, in fact, as Ambassador Lewis indicated, a challenge from the outset in the efforts by both Egypt and Israel to revise Camp David, to reinterpret Camp David, and to lend to Camp David interpretations that were really inconsistent with the spirit, if not the letter, of the accords. This is manifest in the dispute that erupted immediately after Camp David, and which continues today, over whether the United States and Israel could reach an understanding about the Israeli policy of building new settlements in the process of trying to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The environment after Camp David immediately was beset by other very pressing regional concerns, as well as global concerns. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; the Iranian revolution; and Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon became primary moving factors in the politics of the three key parties of Camp David, and they became excuses for all to focus less much attention on the Israeli-Palestinian dimension.

A second way to look at Camp David and its aftermath is to look at politics. Several speakers have talked about domestic politics and regional politics, that is, the influence of the political process within states on the ability of states to negotiate, and how they define their interests. The politics after Camp David--particularly in the United States but also in Israel and Egypt--changed considerably. If there was one lesson that successive administrations would learn about President Carter's effort at Camp David, it is that it did not pay off politically. Jimmy Carter became vilified in the communities that should have supported him the most: the Jewish and Arab. In fact, the only place where Jimmy Carter ended up the hero in the aftermath of Camp David

was in Egypt, where President Sadat and the leadership--even those who opposed Sadat's policies--saw Carter's efforts as the harbinger of an American attempt to try to bring about a comprehensive settlement.

But Egypt does not vote in this country, and so the presidents who followed Jimmy Carter had to wonder whether it paid politically to invest the kind of time and attention that Carter did in trying to bring about a Middle East accord. This did not necessarily lead to a decision to ignore the Middle East, but it had to raise doubts in the minds of advisers as to whether Carter's kind of involvement in the Middle East was worth the price that he ultimately paid.

What followed Carter's efforts was a prolonged period of stagnation in American policy with regard to the peace process, in which the United States said that it could not want peace more than the parties themselves. This is a truism that happens to be true. But the one thing that Jimmy Carter demonstrated beyond a doubt is that the parties may want peace, but they cannot achieve it without outside help. They cannot do themselves what the United States helps them to do. This attitude gave way to the view that the parties needed to demonstrate an interest before the United States would try to move the peace process forward.

In the Middle East, everyone is a politician. The same kinds of considerations that motivate American presidents to shy away from the Middle East motivate the parties themselves to shy away from the Middle East peace process. In Israel, after Camp David, great disappointment set in almost immediately over the terms of the peace process, and particularly over the relationship that developed between Israel and Egypt. The promise of normalization, trade, open borders, and a new dimension in Israel's relations with its neighbors never materialized. In Egypt, opposition to the treaty among a significant political elite continues. Although there is a basic acceptance of the principle of peace on both sides, and the basic institutional framework of peace remains intact, the relationship that was envisaged by all parties before Camp David never came about. This led the political leadership in both Israel and Egypt to raise the same kinds of questions about the costs of a peace process that American presidents would raise in the United States.

Let me suggest a third factor. In addition to the environment that was changing, in addition to the politics that militated against the fulfillment of Camp David, there was the element of leadership. A colleague of mine at the State Department has a thesis that the age of heroic politics in the Middle East has ended. In fact, if we look around, there are no David Ben-Gurions or Menachem Begins on the scene; and there are no Gamal Abdel Nassers or Anwar Sadats on the scene. In Israel since Camp David, there has been a prolonged period of political succession, starting with Begin's resignation and not yet finished. In Egypt, only until recently, the same problem existed; many questioned whether the leadership existed to move Egypt beyond a kind of status quo policy. An unlikely source, the late Kamal Jumblatt, once said that the Middle East has room for everyone to live in, but it does not have room for everyone's ambitions. And that probably characterizes the way leadership today looks at the Middle East. What drives many leaders today--not only in the Middle East core countries but also at the periphery--is the concept that ideology is more important than the practical movement toward a peaceful settlement.

In some respects, Arabs and Israelis have reversed roles over these years. In the past, Israelis said, "We'll sit down anywhere, any time, with anyone to talk about peace"; today, one hears conditions attached to finding an Arab partner. Similarly, one could always count, in the past, on Arab partners rejecting the idea of sitting down with Israel. And yet, now there are indications in some quarters that perhaps there are changes under way in the Arab world. Questions do remain as to whether the Palestinian movement has come to grips with the reality and significance of the state of Israel in the Middle East.

All is not lost, however, and those of us who work on this issue are neither crazy nor blind optimists. Part of the reason that we do continue is that the beauty and the genius of Camp David still persists, and they provide us with tools, ideas, and ways to approach the problem of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

One story illustrates this point. In 1983, when Secretary of State George Shultz began to move around the Middle East in the aftermath of the Lebanon invasion, a cable came in from one of our posts in Middle East country that, at that time, was characterized as rejecting the peace process. The ambassador reported a question that was posed to him by the foreign minister: What is the U.S. attitude toward Palestinian self-determination?

With everyone otherwise occupied, a junior officer was assigned to answer the question, and sent back a response drawn from the Camp David accords: that Palestinians should participate in the determination of their own future. Through the process of self-government and the process of voting on the agreement that was to be negotiated, they would have participated in the determination of their own future. The reaction to this was quite instructive. The host country thought that the United States had changed its policy, and was amazed at how far forward, how far-reaching, U.S. policy was. In fact, all that had been done was to quote from the Camp David accords.

There is still enough in Camp David to be worked on, and to be implemented, that we do not necessarily need a new framework to start a negotiating process. The idea of a transition period; the idea of self-governance for Palestinians as a means of establishing a new relationship between them and Israel; the idea of providing Palestinians with political and economic decision-making power over their future--these ideas have not changed over the years, but they continue to take on increased and important salience in the resolution of this conflict.

So we leave this Camp David discussion with a kind of bittersweet attitude. We are left a bit disappointed by the failure of all of us--the United States and the parties in the region--to understand that a breakthrough achieved in 1978, and not fulfilled in 1990, is an unfulfilled breakthrough. As we pursue this peace process, we look back to the Camp David accords for inspiration, because they still provide us with a pathway to pursue. We still look for the kind of leadership qualities, the kind of political qualities, that were demonstrated by all sides at that particular moment in time, when the leadership of the three countries joined together in an effort that proved so successful in resolving an element of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

NOTE

The views expressed in this article are those solely of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views or policy of the United States government.

Questions and Answers

Stein: You can tell why it was easy to bring this panel together. These gentlemen know more, and can express it much better, than any of us possibly could. And rather than lose the poignancy of Dan's conclusion, I would like to turn immediately to the panelists and ask them if they have any questions of one another, and then to the audience for questions that I hope they will pose directly to the individual panelists.

Gentlemen, if there's anything that you'd like to clarify, please go ahead. This will be a free exchange, and we'll just pretend the audience is listening to a conversation.

Lewis: Can I ask a question of Hermann? Dan talked about the failure of leadership in the recent seven or eight years, and it does strike me that none of us have actually accented the loss of all three of the Camp David leaders from the process. Begin retired, unexpectedly, inexplicably, in midcareer; Sadat was assassinated; Carter was defeated. Do you think, Hermann, if Sadat had not been assassinated, and Carter had not been defeated--leave Begin aside; leave him out of the equation--would we have succeeded in completing the promise of Camp David?

Ellis: I think we would have had a very good chance of doing so. Sadat realized, by the end of Camp David, that it was the concessions that he had made--at least from his point of view--that had made Camp David a success. Now, granted, there was an egocentric aspect about that, but he had to take that position since, as I've indicated, his own people were criticizing him. He counted very heavily on the second Camp David agreement--that is, the West Bank-Gaza autonomy agreement--working out, and he counted on President Carter to make it work. He realized that in the year 1979-1980, President Carter was involved in the election campaign, and that the president had to deal with a very serious hostage crisis with Iran. Sadat was hoping very much, somehow, to be able to defer substantive discussions, which, as had been pointed out, were not working well on autonomy, until what he hoped would be Carter's reelection. And he was confident that Carter would then reinvolve himself in a major way in the negotiations, as he had at Camp David, and that something would come out of it.

There was, though, an essential difference--which I'm not sure that even Carter could have overcome--between Sadat and Begin on the issue of autonomy. As far as Begin was concerned, West Bank-Gaza-Palestinian autonomy meant narrow powers and responsibilities for the Palestinian self-governing body; it meant no participation in the electoral process on the part of the hundred thousand or so Arabs of Jerusalem; and it certainly meant that whatever might come out of the five-year transition period of autonomy would be such, in terms of the narrow powers and responsibilities of the self-governing body, that there was not going to be any chance of self-determination. Moreover, Begin's point was that autonomy would apply to people and not to land. The Sadat view was totally different. The Sadat view was that autonomy powers and responsibilities of the self-governing body should be broad; second, that not only should the autonomy apply, the self-governing body should have control over both

people and land--a very, very significant issue; and third, that the Palestinians of East Jerusalem should participate.

Incidentally, it ought to be borne in mind that Sadat was not a particular lover of Palestinians. In fact, he was very much an Egyptian nationalist. He wasn't even a great lover of other Arabs. Nevertheless, by the end of Camp David, because of the negative reaction that Camp David received even in friendly Arab countries--Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco--Sadat had come to realize that something more had to be done for the Palestinians than had been done at Camp David. Hence, the importance that he attached to having those autonomy talks work, and while he understood that in 1979 President Carter could not involve himself, he desperately hoped that once the election was over and Carter was reelected, something could be worked out. There was still hope for compromise, but not a great deal.

I think if those leaders had remained in power, something would have resulted, because there would have been a greater willingness to focus on the issue, and focusing on the issue would have meant compromise by both sides. In my view, what really went wrong after Carter was out was that there was no longer as much focus on the issue as there had been.

Quandt: I think there's a lot to that argument, but I do think also that there was a fatal flaw in the autonomy negotiating process, and it would have continued even if Carter and Sadat had been in office; it was the flaw Hal Saunders alluded to. After Camp David, we failed to persuade either Palestinians in the territories or the Jordanians to enter the negotiations, as Camp David had planned for them to do. We failed, in part, because Sadat mishandled this issue and didn't help us very much in the persuading process. We failed, also, because Begin was preoccupied with his internal opposition, and said things publicly that interpreted Camp David in ways that drove Palestinians away rather than attracted them to it. And we failed for other reasons as well. And then Sadat said, "Okay, Egypt will represent the Palestinian position." I think, in retrospect, that was a fatal flaw that could not be overcome, for it was clear throughout the autonomy negotiations that Egypt could not make concessions on behalf of the Palestinians without running unacceptable political risks. If the Israelis were to be brought to a more realistic interpretation of autonomy, it had to be face to face with the people who were going to be living the autonomy; the deals had to be made directly with them. The failure to get them into the act, I think, was the worm that would have rotted the apple, even if the two leaders had survived.

Saunders: I'd like to pick up on a number of things that were said. I'll make one comment very quickly and then leave it aside. And I say this having worked for two Republican presidents in the White House, as I worked for two Democrats before that, and then for Jimmy Carter. Just picture what might have happened--to supplement Sam's original question--if Ronald Reagan, with his overwhelming electoral mandate, had picked up rather than dropped the autonomy talks. That would have injected a politically supported American involvement; it wouldn't have been the same as Carter's, but nevertheless it would have been there. But instead it was put on the back burner. So I think we bear some responsibility there.

But the conversation that I wanted to get into was the question of linkage. I guess I speak here, for a moment, in October 1978, as the emissary to the absent parties--

Jordan and the Palestinians, particularly. I remember a night at Camp David when probably all four of us were in a little room in the recreation building around the table, and found ourselves all of a sudden writing that Jordan would do this or that. And then we stopped and said, "You know, we can't say this." Even in a bureaucracy, it's a simple practice that if you're going to speak for somebody else, you'd better clear what you're saying with them, and Jordan wasn't there for us to clear these words. It was then we adopted the conditional: Jordan would be invited, too, if Jordan did this, etc. After Camp David, Carter called King Hussein and said, "Please don't say anything about the Camp David accords until we have a chance to sit down with you and tell you about them and their contents." An exhausted Cy Vance was put on a plane and sent to talk to Hussein, and I was sent out later to continue the dialogue more broadly.

One thing we see in that situation was that we were left to sell the Camp David accords to the Saudis and to the Jordanians and to the Palestinians. For all my admiration for Sadat, I really do have to fault him for acting out of his negative feeling about Palestinians and other Arabs, which Hermann just described. What would have happened had Sadat been able to go to Hussein and Assad and the Saudi leadership and the Palestinians and say, "I didn't get everything I hoped to get at Camp David, but there's really more linkage here between the Sinai agreement and the West Bank agreement than is in that document because I have certain assurances from the U.S. leadership"? What if Sadat had made the appropriate gesture, and visited them, and said, "I didn't do what I promised you I would do, but here's why. We did the best we could, and we think we can keep this process going." So, in that sense, there was a failure in the politics of Sadat at that moment.

The question of linkage is a fascinating one. We could go on here all evening among ourselves about this, because in the very first draft of the Camp David accords that Bill referred to, we had a sentence that explicitly linked the withdrawal from the Sinai to the implementation, or the inauguration, of the first self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza. I remember on that Saturday when we first showed this to Vance and Brzezinski in the morning, and revised it and then showed it to President Carter around one in the afternoon. This was *shabbat*, so there was a kind of downtime in the dealings with the Israelis and the Egyptians, and we worked among ourselves. I still had that sentence in there about linkage. I think if you went back and looked at the draft, you'd find various annotations in the second and third drafts that say, in effect, "This doesn't make any sense; drop this; get rid of it; we don't need it"--and it dropped out. And yet, linkage remained an issue throughout the negotiation of the peace treaty, six and seven months later. The refrain from the Americans to the Egyptians was "However we handle this in a legal document, and there probably will be no formal linkage"--and in retrospect, it's probably well that there wasn't--"the fact is that the quality of normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel will depend on the quality of the continuing peace process and the involvement of the Palestinians and, later, the Jordanians and Saudis."

So we had the same problem with the word "linkage" that we had with the Soviets. There is a question of quid pro quo legal linkage, which we rejected; and then there is the problem of the real-world fact that the issues are intertwined, they are linked. It was that second form of linkage, in a way, that did us in. When I had to try to explain the Camp David accords to people in the West Bank and Gaza, I think it's fair to say

that if I could have had one more thing, it might have been possible to get them to come along with us. The "one more thing" would have been the ability to deliver on what we thought was the Israeli commitment to stop settlement. That, more than any other thing, undid the Camp David accords because it convinced the Palestinians and the Jordanians that we wouldn't be able to deliver. But we had been able to deliver and say, "Look, this is a serious effort that we're going to make on the West Bank-Gaza. There's a political process that will unfold here; you Palestinians will be governing--however minimally--the land defined by the 1967 line, except for the area around Jerusalem. Take it, whatever it is, and work with it, and build yourselves here as responsible governors in this area; then you will have a different relationship with Israel. But we couldn't sell that; we couldn't establish that kind of real-world linkage.

Lewis: We also had going on simultaneously, Hal, a very vehement campaign by the PLO in the territories, trying to stop your persuasive abilities from having an effect on the population, and I think that was an important factor. Had the PLO seen the Camp David accords for what they really portended as a possibility for Palestinians and behaved differently, they today would have a far different situation, I think, in the Middle East in general. Dan did not refer to the fact that during the last four years, as we've gone through a series of iterations of American peace plans and peace initiatives, all based essentially on the Camp David idea, more and more plaintively, the Palestinians--including PLO members--have said, "We didn't see Camp David at the time for what was in it. If we only had, we'd be almost there by this time." It's another example of how repeatedly, since the 1950s, good ideas have been accepted by either Israelis or Palestinians several years after they were offered, too late to be effective.

Saunders: I agree with your point, Sam. In those conversations of October 1978, I met with a lot of people in the West Bank, but principally with two different groups. One was a group of people that you might describe as technocrats from the West Bank and Gaza, at a dinner in an American's home; these were the people running the hospitals and the services under occupation. They really thought the Camp David accords had something for them. They were asking really practical questions; Will we get to control our own budgets? Can we import medical supplies on our own authority? Things like that. They saw real potential. The other meeting was with the "notables"--the political figures on the West Bank--and they were all scared. They said, "We were elected to govern a municipality; we weren't elected to negotiate for the Palestinians." And this went on and on.

I said, "Well, look: If you were really ingenious, why couldn't you get yourselves deputized by the PLO? Why didn't you have the dialogue? If you think this has possibilities, persuade the PLO. Get yourselves deputized by them to negotiate in this and consult with them; have your own constituent assembly--do whatever you want, but come on in." Finally, one of them just threw up his hands and he said, "Achl We are all sheep. We can only follow; we can't lead." And that was a castigation of his fellows, not of me. I agree that the failure of the Palestinians--and I would have to say the other Arabs--to come in strong on this was partly because I couldn't persuade them, and partly because they had Baghdad breathing down their necks. Part of my mission was to persuade the Saudis and the Jordanians to defer an Arab summit that

the Iraqis were trying to put together; indeed, they did have a summit, and they condemned the Camp David accords. The Saudis tried to resist it. There was a recess in the talks, and they went back to Saudi Arabia, and we had intelligence reports that the Iraqis had threatened to assassinate the Saudi leaders if they didn't go along with the condemnation of the accords. So that's what Hussein and the Saudis were up against--then, as they are again today.

Ellis: May I suggest another thought? I share Hal Saunders's view that the major reason the Camp David agreements were not more widely accepted in the Arab world was the unresolved issue of a protracted settlement freeze in the West Bank and Gaza. But apart from that, the question was Saudi Arabia. Sadat counted very much on getting Saudi endorsement; if he got it, he felt, given the influence of the Saudis with the PLO and other elements--influence brought about largely through the use of what you might call financial diplomacy--they would at least be accepted widely enough to be viable. And here, I think, we--specifically President Carter--made a mistake. Carter believed that the Saudis would go along with whatever came out of this effort. Just where the president got that idea, I don't know; I can only assume from our ambassador in Saudi Arabia, but he denied indicating that the Saudis would support anything, and I know we had discussions at Camp David as to whether what was evolving was likely to be acceptable to the Saudis. Sadat counted on Carter's assurance that the Saudis would support him. But as it turned out, the signing took place on Sunday night; by Monday morning, the Saudis had already denounced the accords. So all the other efforts then to get the Saudis to act a little more positively toward the accords at the Baghdad summit that the Iraqis were calling were too late. But it was a question of the protracted settlement, in my judgment, and the fact that we could not get the Saudis to accept it.

Stein: Let me, at this juncture, turn the microphone over to those in the audience who want to pose questions--not statements--to our assembled guests. If you would please approach the microphone on either the left or the right side, we'll take the first question. Please address it to a particular panel member.

Q: I'd like to address my question to Dan Kurtzer. Given the optimism you raised that the framework for Camp David is still basically alive, at the same time there is pessimism because you say the three primary participants aren't there and we don't have that kind of leadership in Israel, in Egypt, and in the United States, how do you see this ever shaping up again? How do you see the process picking up some steam in the future?

Kurtzer: As Sam Lewis suggested, very often ideas that don't find support when they're first proposed over time will gain support. One of the most interesting vignettes from our diplomacy of the last year and a half came after the Israeli elections proposal--of May 14--was published. At that time, we were engaged in a dialogue with the PLO in Tunis. One of the most significant questions that came back to us was phrased somewhat as follows: We understand what the Israeli plan is intending to do. What we don't understand is why it's not as good as Camp David. The PLO had undertaken its own study of Camp David; had not yet come to grips with Camp David fully enough to be prepared to endorse it; but clearly understood what the strengths of

Camp David held out as a possibility for Palestinians in a negotiating process. So, with that understanding, as it grows over time, the challenge for the diplomats, as the leaders assess whether their own environment is correct and ready for decision making, is to try to build little bridges between the parties and find out whether some of these changed attitudes can be translated into changed positions and changed policies, and see where things can work.

This is one of the things that we have tried to do over this last year and a half: taking an Israeli election proposal that had a lot of weaknesses in it but had one inherent strength: that it provided a potential pathway to a process that would lead, through a series of steps, to a comprehensive settlement. And it was for the promise of starting out rather modestly in an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue--through an election, through negotiations, in multiple stages--that we tried to attract some support, and have not yet been able to do so. You don't find a ready-made formula, but over time, as the different parties assimilate the importance of different aspects of this process, you try to find those bridges that can be built and see if the political environment can sustain them.

Q: It seemed from the discussion we just heard that the prime thing we learned from the statements that were made here--and I want to thank you gentlemen for giving us these little bits of the inside workings of the diplomatic process--is that the only success we've had so far in the Middle East was when there were direct negotiations between the heads of the states in dispute. Why does our government, and individuals in our government--particularly in the Bush administration--keep bringing up the concept of an international conference, which we know is unacceptable? In my experience and the little knowledge of history that I have, I don't know of any major dispute between nations that was solved in an international conference--only by direct negotiations of the parties in dispute. I'd like to hear from those who follow this particular idea of an international conference.

Lewis: I think you ought to ask Dr. Stein this question. I'll tell you why. The U.S. Institute of Peace--for which I have the honor to be the president--has made a grant to Dr. Stein--not to bribe him to bring me here tonight, I assure you, but for a project directly related to your question. His study is of all the peace conferences that have taken place on Middle East issues and what can be learned from their successes and failures. And there have been some successes; they haven't all been failures. But before he answers, let me say this: It is clear that even at Camp David, when you had the three principals together, locked up in a diplomatic prison, direct negotiations weren't the answer. It was, in fact, an indirect negotiation, with the United States moving back and forth between the two delegations. There was social contact, but the negotiating was all indirect. And I suspect that will be the pattern for success in the future.

Kurtzer: Let me add two comments, if I may. Number one, I think there has been a misunderstanding of American policy since 1980. The Reagan and the Bush administrations have both indicated their quite severe reservations about the viability of an international conference, and have adopted positions that indicate support for a properly structured conference to be convened at an appropriate time--two important caveats to the convening of a conference. That said, there is nothing inherently wrong

with a conference as a vehicle to launch, or to help facilitate, or to help support, a negotiating process. A key element in the Shultz plan in 1988 was use of an international conference. None of the parties really expect negotiations per se to take place in a conference format, but many of the parties need the conference as a kind of umbrella or cover or facilitator for the process itself. So one of the arguments that we've had with both those who favor a conference and those who oppose it is not to inflate the importance of a conference, but also not to denigrate the kind of use that a conference can be in helping to bring about, or to support, a negotiating process once launched.

Stein: Let me very briefly give you some information about an international conference format. Each side believes in self-determination, but each would like to determine by itself what the other side will bring to the talks. In other words, each wants to be there alone, but each wants to determine the procedure or the conditions that will allow the other to come to the talks. No side wants the other side to determine the outcome alone. Each side fears the unknown, and as soon as they feel that they're getting close to some sort of negotiating dynamic, they get very cold feet, because they're afraid that they're going to get into a dark tunnel; they don't know whether it's really light at the end of the tunnel, or it's an oncoming train.

Q: But this is the nature of any negotiation.

Stein: I'm just telling you what I know from what the respective sides have said. And most important, some elements of each side are willing to say, "Let's go to an international conference," and each side demands active, vigorous U.S. participation.

Q: No, that's not the position of Israel, as I understand it. The position of Israel is that we are ready to sit down with any one or all of the Arab states and resolve this dispute face to face.

Stein: An international conference is one mechanism; it's not an exclusive means, as Dan pointed out.

Q: But what is wrong with face-to-face negotiations?

Stein: Nothing. If they want to go face to face, that's their business. I'm just telling you what the research has told me so far. Let's get on to the next question. This is a discussion about Camp David, not about convening an international conference.

Q: Since it's impossible to assemble so many American Middle East experts who've actually had successful dealings with the Middle East, I'd like to ask the gentlemen on the panel to comment on the Iraq situation, and in particular to comment on its likely impact on the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Quandt: Let me take a crack at the end of that. However the Iraq crisis comes out, the Middle East is not going to be the same. There may be a series of regime changes; certainly, if war is the outcome, that's likely. And if Saddam Hussein gains a diplomatic victory, I think our friends in the coalition are in serious internal trouble as well. Therefore, it's very hard to predict what the Palestinian-Israeli problem is going to look like until you know which outcome of the Gulf crisis you're dealing with. But one thing is clear: The crisis already has produced a deadly blow to the peace camp in

Israel, and to those people who had been moving in the direction of accepting the necessity for eventually negotiating with the PLO and the Palestinians. That's been set back dramatically. The suspicion between the two communities has been heightened enormously, and therefore, I would say that while there will undoubtedly be international pressure, in the wake of the Iraq crisis, to move on to an international conference or some other format for dealing with this long-standing major issue between Palestinians and Israelis, the prospects for doing it very quickly in the aftermath of this crisis are, I'm afraid, very poor.

Q: My question is for Dr. Eilts. Mr. Ambassador, during the remarks you mentioned the objections raised by the Egyptian staff during the early negotiations at Camp David. Were those objections reasonable or legitimate representations of Muslim, Pan-Arab objections or concerns? And if so, why were they not taken into consideration, given that they may have been legitimate?

Eilts: I would not characterize them as consistent, necessarily, with overall Muslim concerns, because the Islamic world goes beyond the Arab world. But as far as the members of the Egyptian delegation who were critical of Sadat--everyone other than the president himself--they felt that what Sadat was doing, in terms of conceding various points at Carter's request, was going to cause precisely the kind of problems that arose after Camp David; that Sadat, as I pointed out, had made concessions that went beyond what he had told the Arab leaders he would do--that is, limit the concessions he would make. With every passing concession--especially the separation of the Egyptian-Israeli effort in Sinai and the West Bank-Gaza autonomy--they argued that whatever came out of it probably was not going to be accepted in Egypt itself, and they did not want to be part of it. That was why the foreign minister resigned at Camp David. And in terms of Arab reaction, they were right. The overall Arab reaction was exactly what they had predicted.

Why wasn't that realized by Sadat? Well, Sadat was mesmerized, in many ways, by President Carter; the personal relationship between them was one I'd never seen between two leaders before. Sadat had enormous confidence that Camp David, even though it was a small and in many ways imperfect step, was the first step toward a more comprehensive peace process. And he counted on President Carter's personal involvement in the future to make it work. The other members of his delegation were dubious that it would work.

Q: I'd like to ask Dr. Saunders a question. What prompted President Carter to join with the Soviet Union in October 1977 to go to Geneva, and was that decision a factor that prompted President Sadat to go to Jerusalem?

Saunders: Bill may want to add something to my response, because he was part of those negotiations in New York. My picture of what happened there is as follows: As we all know, most of the diplomatic effort of 1977 was directed at trying to reconvene the Middle East peace conference in Geneva. Most of that effort in the first half of the year was an American effort; we went to the Middle East twice with Vance, and Carter saw the principal leaders himself. Then we realized, in midsummer, that there was another chairman to the Geneva Middle East peace conference that had met before Christmas in 1973: the Soviet Union. The calendar of diplomacy includes the

fact that in September-October, many of the foreign ministers of the world come to the U.N. General Assembly, and that conclave provides a moment for many bilateral discussions; very often, if the Soviet foreign minister comes, he includes on his itinerary a visit to Washington to see the president, especially if he and the secretary of state get together in New York.

So, after a trip to the Middle East to try to move the process further toward Geneva, and having a deadline of trying to get there by the end of 1977, it was natural that we would think of using New York talks between Secretary Vance and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to bring the Soviets up to date on the thinking and the work that we had done to pave the way for a resumption of the conference through writing terms of reference. When you're going to have a meeting of that kind, you also, as staff members, recognize that after the principals meet--especially if the press knows they have been talking about resuming the Middle East peace conference--the spokesmen for the two ministers will need something to say. If one is judicious, one wants to have that something pretty well prepared. So I think it was worked out that maybe this time, given the importance of the issue, we should consult with the Soviets before the foreign ministers even met. I can't remember--maybe Bill will--whether we sent a draft to the Soviets for them to comment on, or they provided the draft; it usually goes from the Americans to the Soviets.

In any case, when the Soviets came to New York, there were intense discussions between the staffs of the foreign ministers about that communiqué. I think the Americans felt pretty much that the language in it was quite satisfactory to us; we had not given anything away. We'd made a few advances, but it was essentially something we could be comfortable with. And a document was released after the Vance-Gromyko meeting. If there was a failure in the process, it was not a failure of diplomacy but a failure to anticipate the reaction of Israel, and some elements of the American Jewish community working through the Congress. Part of the surprise, I think, was the fact that during these talks with the Soviets, the American team had checked out the current draft with both the Egyptian foreign minister and with Foreign Minister Dayan, who were in New York. I think perhaps Dayan was as surprised as anybody at the rocket that he got back from the Israeli government, objecting to this coming together of the United States and the Soviet Union.

I see it much more--as you can tell--as the product of normal, high-level diplomatic dialogue, and not as a major shock in diplomatic language itself. Now, your second question is did that trigger Sadat's visit to Jerusalem? I know there's been that theory around; I personally haven't subscribed to it, but others from the panel may disagree with me.

Quandt: It was the Soviet team who prepared the first draft when they came to New York, and by any standards, it was a better draft than we had any reason to expect. Most of the slogans and jargon were missing, and therefore there was an inclination to work on it. It was not given tremendously high priority, insofar as there were a lot of other things going on. Insofar as there was a strategic rationale for going ahead with this, there was the feeling that Syria was going to be a problem as we tried to move forward, however we moved forward, because it seemed to be the most reluctant of the Arab states around Israel. And the Soviets had a better relationship by far with Syria

than we, and we thought they might be prepared to use some of their influence as the entry to getting this honorary role of cochairman, which they had had in 1973. Insofar as there was some political reason for it, it was to try to get some leverage over the Syrians through the Soviets--and that's exactly what the Syrians read into it. My recollection--and I think Ambassador Eilts will confirm this--is that the initial Egyptian reaction was very positive, because they thought we had gotten a handle on the Syrians. The initial Syrian reaction was very negative; they thought they were cornered, with both the Americans and the Soviets pressuring them. My recollection is that Sadat's words to Ambassador Eilts were something like "master stroke" or "brilliant stroke."

Eilts: It was "brilliant."

Quandt: Sadat thought it was going to solve his main problem in going to Geneva, which was to get the Syrians to stop being so obstructive. My feeling is that when he realized that wasn't in the cards, and hadn't been worked out, and that Carter himself, after the domestic reaction to the October 1, 1977, statement, was, in a sense, retreating from it, Sadat knew that he didn't have anything to corner the Syrians. That made him start to worry about the Geneva conference, particularly as he saw Carter's own domestic stock fading during October. So it's only in an extraordinarily convoluted way that the October 1, 1977, communiqué is related to Sadat's decision to go to Jerusalem. His initial reaction was a very positive one, not a negative one.

Eilts: May I add a brief point? I think it's very important to try to explain why Sadat went to Jerusalem. Contrary to some revisionist history, he was not at all upset about that U.S.-Soviet statement. He called it "brilliant," for the reasons that Bill Quandt has given, and also because he felt that it was possible to have the Soviets present at such a conference and yet limit their potential mischief-making capabilities by, for example, the chairman--not the cochairmen, the Soviets and ourselves--not participating in committee sessions. The expectation was that the committee sessions, which would involve Arabs and Israelis, Egyptians and Israelis, would not work, and very quickly, the parties would rush out to seek the assistance of the cochairmen.

The Soviets had no relations with Israel, so they were hardly in a mediator's role; the United States did. So Sadat was not worried that that Soviet mischief-making capabilities were dangerous. He decided to go to Jerusalem when in October a series of working papers developed. The working papers were, in effect, the agenda for the Geneva conference. Moshe Dayan came to Washington; President Carter suggested that Dayan write what he thought should be the agenda. He did so. Several days later Ismail Fahmi, the Egyptian minister, came; President Carter asked him to look at the agenda, and Fahmi said, "My God, this is an Israeli draft; it's no good." So the president said, "Rewrite it," and Fahmi rewrote it. In due course, Moshe Dayan came again and said, "My God, this is an Egyptian draft; it's not acceptable." And so on. This working paper was finally sent to Egypt after the last Dayan revision, but we couldn't get the Egyptians to accept it. They would not accept the fact that this was what we called an American draft; they said, "This is nonsense; this is an Israeli draft." So one was stuck.

At that point--because we were reaching the end of the year; and the end of the year, or early January, had been the target time frame, the objective--President Carter

proposed that we all go to Geneva without terms of reference; that we make the writing of terms of reference the first item at Geneva, no matter how long it took. At least we would be in Geneva, and that had a symbolic importance. The various parties--some with greater reluctance than others--agreed to that, with the exception of the Syrians. The Syrians never answered. And so days passed, and Sadat saw, as he put it, "Peace is slipping through my fingers for procedural reasons." The United States did not have enough influence on Assad to get him to change.

So President Carter sent Sadat a hand-written letter. He said, "I need your help. I need some bold action." And when you said "bold action" to Sadat, this was the kind of thing that he loved. So he came up with various ideas, one of which was going to Jerusalem, not to shift the peace process away from Geneva but as a step to getting it toward Geneva. The idea of going to Jerusalem was a product of two things. First, over the years, Sadat had been meeting regularly on his trips to Europe with very prominent Jewish financiers in Austria, Paris, and London. They had all urged him--they were all anti-Begin--that the way to handle Begin was to go to Jerusalem and have direct talks. Second was King Hassan of Morocco. He had, several months before, sent Sadat a message from a very prominent Jewish leader saying the same kinds of things: Why don't you go to Jerusalem or have direct talks? It was direct talks; it wasn't Jerusalem.

And Sadat, in that dramatic fashion characteristic of him--Sadat was a showman, first and foremost--put together these suggestions and the message he had received from Hassan, and added to that his own flair for the dramatic. He would go to Jerusalem during the Muslim holiday, and use that venue to present the Arab case--to break, as he put it, the psychological barrier. That would be the way to break this impasse that had developed because the Syrians were not answering on the issue of terms of reference. Sadat seriously believed that was the way it was going to work. When he came back from Jerusalem, he called me and said, "We're going to be in Geneva in two weeks. And next week, we're going to have a preparatory conference here. You'll see. I've done it." The preparatory conference was held, but hardly anybody attended. As a result, the peace process shifted away from Geneva. It was that issue of not being able to have terms of reference that would allow the parties to go, that caused the trip to Jerusalem.

Q: First, I want to thank all of you gentlemen for a most enlightening and interesting and educational evening. The question I have is, Egypt had its Sadat, Israel had its Begin, but the Palestinians were really fragmented. Arafat spoke for only a very small portion of them. Who, therefore, could negotiate for the Palestinians and make any successful meeting of the minds in this kind of an environment? I'll address it to Mr. Kurtzer, and whoever else would like to enter into.

Kurtzer: It's a short question, and it's a question that has not had an answer yet. As Ken indicated in his introductory remarks tonight, perhaps the most bedeviling question in the peace process has been that of Palestinian representation. And it's been that way because the conditions under which the two key parties are prepared to meet with each other have not yet been close enough to bridge. Over the course of the past couple of years, we've tried a variety of formulas to get around the obstacles of, on the one hand, conditions set by the government of Israel with regard to PLO participation,

and on the other, the conditions set by the Palestinian community with regard to PLO participation. We have come very close to finding formulas over the years that would allow a Palestinian partner to join the process, that partner being legitimized through a variety of ways by the PLO, but not in a way that would be so overt as to drive Israel from the table.

But having come close doesn't get you a cigar. We haven't yet found a formula that both sides can live with. It is far more, I would suggest, than a procedural question, because both sides, the Israeli and the Palestinian, have invested in the question of Palestinian representation rather far-reaching implications for the peace process. For Israel--and I speak in generalizations here--the question of PLO involvement in some ways is seen as a question of almost delegitimizing the state of Israel, because the PLO is seen, in the minds of many Israelis, as antithetical in its very nature--by its charter, by its meaning--to Israel's secure existence. And there are those in the Palestinian community who hold a vision of a political settlement that in fact would negate Israel's security and perhaps Israel's existence.

So it's not simply a question of representation, but the representation question is a way of getting at the issue that I suggested is at the heart of this conflict, and that is, is there room--physical, psychological, and political--in Palestinian-Arab Israel for both Jewish nationalism and Palestinian nationalism? And if you can psychologically, politically, get to the answer of that question, then the issue of how you represent both sides in the negotiating process would, I think, be easier to address.

Stein: I'm tempted to end it here, but I asked each of my panelists when I wrote to them several months, if not a year, ago to bring an anecdote about the Camp David process, and share it with the audience. If you will permit me, I'd like to give them each an opportunity to tell an interesting story.

Ellis: When the Egyptian delegation came to Camp David, they looked around and said, "My God, what are we doing here? Why do we have to be up here in the mountains of Maryland"--which they didn't care about--"surrounded by barbed wire, by Marines, far from any city? Why do we have to stay here?" The senior members, especially the deputy prime minister, who most desperately wanted to go to Washington, kept trying to get over the fence, and of course were not allowed to do so. The only person in the Egyptian delegation who accepted it was President Sadat. I asked him, "How is it, Mr. President, that you are so calm about this?" He, too, liked the city life. He thought about it a bit, then said, "Well, it's better than Cell 20." That was the cell in which he had been imprisoned for four years many years earlier in Egypt, for participation in a terrorist action against a very unpopular leader at the time; that's where he learned English.

Saunders: I have to tell two quick ones. Sam Lewis commented that a way to Begin's heart was to get to the personal side of life. Carter tells the story that on the last day of Camp David, when the negotiations really almost fell apart, things were very tense. He had to go to Begin's cabin and try to resolve an issue related to Jerusalem--the toughest issue of them all. As he walked out of his study, he saw a pile of photographs of himself. Begin had asked Susan Clough, Carter's secretary, for autographed photographs for each of his grandchildren, and Susan gave the president the name of each grandchild. Carter had inscribed each of these photos to the name,

and signed them "Jimmy Carter." So he picked up the photographs, found Begin on the porch of his cabin, and they headed for a very tense meeting. In the cabin, Carter casually and tentatively put the photographs on the table, and Begin saw that they were inscribed to his grandchildren. He started turning them over and talking about his grandchildren. At the end, according to Carter, he said, "Mr. President, this is what we're all about, isn't it? Our grandchildren."

My personal story is that later that afternoon, I was called over to Carter's lodge. Brzezinski and Vance were in the living room when I walked in the front door. As I entered, Carter and Sadat had obviously just finished their meeting in Carter's study. I stepped aside because Carter obviously was going to say good-bye and Sadat was going to go out the door and back to his cabin. After they shook hands, Sadat went out. Carter turned around, and because I'd stepped aside, I happened to be face to face with him. As nearly as I can remember the words, he looked at me and said, "I think we have an agreement, but I was afraid to ask him."

Ken asked us, when he wrote, to say a little bit about what we felt at the end of the Camp David accords. When we went down to the White House and were in the East Room in front of the television cameras, watching the signing and all the smiles, I looked at Sadat and thought, "This is not the jubilant celebration that most of the world is going to think it is. This is a very sober moment."

Quandt: Picking up on Hal's anecdote, about half an hour after that, as we had all been briefed and an agreement had been reached--we thought--the planning madly began for the PR coup at the end of all this: Could we have a White House signing ceremony that night? At that point, they called in all the media people and started asking how quickly they could do this and that; could they get people from Congress, and so forth. They finally said, "It'll take us four hours to do it." It was about 6:30 or so at that point, and Carter said, "No, it's got to be 10 o'clock. You've got to do it faster." So everybody started rushing to get things ready. My recollection is that just as we were all getting ready to go, an enormous thunderstorm began. We all paused and thought that somebody up there took notice.

Just one other brief anecdote, because that was the tail-end of Hal's: Before going to Camp David, the issue arose--as it inevitably does from the intelligence types--should we bug the cabins so we will know what they're saying to one another? Presumably, people do this on a fairly routine basis. But this created a bit of a division within the American camp. Brzezinski thought, of course, we should; the more we knew, the better. And Vance, the gentleman that he was, thought we shouldn't. Carter decided that we shouldn't, and so, as far as I know, during the entire proceedings, we did not have access to that kind of information. But I can tell you that the Egyptians and the Israelis thought we were doing it, and they had all of their private conversations outdoors.

Lewis: Well, I guess I have to tell two quickies also, one humorous and one not so humorous. In between meetings, there was a lot of tension released in various kinds of athletic enterprises. Brzezinski played chess with Begin, and Jody Powell--as I think Bill recounts in his book--and Hamilton Jordan pleaded with Begin to please beat Brzezinski, because if he allowed him to win, he would be insufferable for the rest of the conference. Begin did, in fact, come out (I think) in a draw. But one of the kinds

of athletic endeavors that was most interesting to me was tennis. There were two very nice tennis courts at Camp David, and there was a lot of tennis in between meetings. One time, Bill Quandt and I were playing against the Israeli ambassador, Simcha Dinitz, and Dr. Lewis, who was the doctor to the Israeli delegation. Carter was playing on the court next to us, with Begin looking on, against somebody else. Bill and I were having a hard time at that moment. Carter turned and yelled to us, "You guys better win, because you're playing for the West Bank."

And now a more sober anecdote. It was one night, midway through the conference, when Carter had finished an extremely unpleasant, difficult, querulous, long, and wearing meeting with Prime Minister Begin, then briefed our delegation about it. I walked out after him; he was heading back to his cabin. He said, "Come walk with me." We walked through the woods, just the two of us, back toward our cabins. He said, "Damn, I don't think Begin wants peace!" And I said, "There's no Israeli who doesn't want peace, Mr. President, least of all Menachem Begin. What we're talking about here is how much would you pay and how much can you risk for a formal agreement." He grumbled a little bit. "Well, I don't know. I'm not sure." And then, at the very end of the conference, after the deal was made, the agreement was reached, we were walking, and Carter turned to me and said, "You know, I think you were right about Begin. It was the price."

Stein: Let me thank my colleagues. I think tonight some of us remember Walter Cronkite: "You are there."