

It is often said that an unjust peace cannot last. The injustice will fester and eventually bring more war. On the other hand, if a peace settlement is perceived by the belligerents to be just, peace will endure. So the theory goes.

These familiar notions are very much alive among Israelis and Arabs. The problem is that peace in the Eastern Mediterranean has several faces. The various actors in the drama — Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian community, and many others — define "just peace" in different ways, and more often than not, the definitions are irreconcilable. Since 1948 there has been little or no hope that a mutually agreed peace, or even a bit of peace, might be on the way.

Yet as this is written, the first real break in 30 years of Arab-Israeli belligerence has occurred and another may be in the offing. In September 1978 the governments of Egypt and Israel agreed at Camp David on two frameworks within which peace might be negotiated between them, and between Israel and other belligerents. Furthermore, the two nations have since been at work trying to agree on a bilateral peace treaty and have come close to signing one.

Opposition to these dramatic peace initiatives has been widespread. Despite provisions about the Palestinian future in the Camp David agreements, most Palestinians consider President Sadat of Egypt a

traitor to the Arab cause because of his apparent willingness to sign what to them appears to be a separate peace. Most other Arab states, meeting in Baghdad shortly thereafter, declared their united opposition to Egypt's actions. And while the United States as mediator between the two countries has a large stake in the further success of the Camp David blueprints for peace, the Soviet Union, for the moment left out of the peacemaking process, is also in solid opposition.

But it is already clear that whatever else may happen, the frameworks signed at Camp David mark a major transition to quite new modes of thought about the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is not just a matter of the rules of the game; also changed will be the terrain, the style of play, the kinds of risks undertaken, the basis for making political friends. Basic realignments will surely occur — and a few already have.

Because of Camp David there is probably an even chance that an overall solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is nearer than before. At least any person who has worked for very long in the barren vineyard of Arab-Israeli relations can be forgiven for thinking so. But all observers are aware that the Camp David accords call for long years of effort. The signing of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, if it occurs, is a small first step — one that may or may not be in the direction of a final settlement. Most of the obstacles are still there. Chief

among them, of course, is the Palestinian urge for statehood, for a chunk of territory to match the Palestinian nationhood that is already in being. And the brutally hard fact remains that Palestinians and Israelis are emotionally attached to the same piece of earth.

What follows is a look at several views of what constitutes a just peace between Israel and the Arabs and at the issues with which the post-Camp David era will have to grapple.

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The most recent phase of the Arab-Israeli story begins just over a year ago. President Sadat of Egypt made a sudden decision to visit Israel and speak to the Knesset. His trip will certainly stand as one of the most dramatic political gestures of our times. Before the trip, during three decades of static belligerence and occasional short wars, a group of Arab states had sustained a common front against the establishment of a Jewish state, then against its continuing existence, and then against its further territorial encroachments. Now suddenly the world was electrified. Watched at television sets around the world, Sadat flew into Jerusalem, shook hands with his "enemies," and received the spontaneous applause of hundreds of Israelis lining the streets of the city.

Early in his speech to the Knesset, the Egyptian President said he had

not come to make a separate peace nor a partial peace that would simply delay a final settlement. Admitting that Arab states had for years refused to negotiate or even talk with Israelis, he declared his determination to enter into direct contact and bring down "the barrier of distorted and eroded interpretation of every event and statement" that had been taking place on both sides. He asked Israelis to accept his welcome "to live among us in peace and security." Then he gave his own candid assessment of what it would take to establish "a permanent peace based on justice."

1. An end to the occupation of territories occupied by Israel in 1967. Sadat mentioned East Jerusalem specifically; his general comments included: "The [Arab] nation's soil is equal to the holy valley where God spoke to Moses... We cannot accept any attempt to take away... one inch of it nor can we accept the principle of debating or bargaining over it."
2. Achievement of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, including their right to establish their own state.
3. The right of all states in the area to live in peace within their boundaries, with appropriate security guarantees.
4. Commitment of all states within the area to the solution of differences by peaceful means.
5. An end to belligerence. (Ending the state of war would establish normal commercial and cultural relations between states, including the use of waterways.)

The speech was a promising beginning. Both the Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin and the leader of the opposition responded on behalf of Israel. If their responses lacked the boldness of Sadat's initiative, nonetheless the result was a flurry of negotiating activity in

both Jerusalem and Cairo. Negotiating teams for both political and military matters were established by the two sides. At the first meeting in Cairo, which was billed as "preparatory" to a new Geneva conference (the United Nations umbrella committee for Arab-Israeli peace), delegations from the United States and the United Nations showed up, but the chairs set out for other Arab delegations and the Soviet Union remained eloquently vacant. Egyptians and Israelis plunged into issues and found them intractable, especially the Palestinian issue. A general slowdown followed, and in the meantime all the area's political relationships were once again subjected to the strain of a new outbreak of chaotic violence in Lebanon. It began to look as if the bright hope generated by Sadat's visit would come to nothing.

It took another dramatic event to turn the matter around. In September 1978 President Carter invited President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to Camp David to discuss new steps. The discussions, unexpectedly, went on for two weeks, and to the marked surprise of those not involved, they produced the signatures of Sadat and Begin (with Carter as witness) on two basic documents intended as nothing less than a blueprint for overall settlement. The first, entitled "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel," provides guidelines for a treaty to be negotiated within three months. It envisages the return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt and a disposition of military forces (Israeli, Egyptian, and United Nations) that would protect the security interests of the two parties, and it calls for normal relations, broadly and carefully defined, to be established eventually between the two countries. At no point in this first document is there any mention of the Palestinian issue nor of any other Arab state; the document is aimed solely at bringing about peace between Israel and Egypt.

But the second document from Camp David aims at a comprehensive settlement. Entitled "A framework for Peace in the Middle East," it presumptuously invites other parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict to adhere to it. It recognizes that "it must involve all those who have been most deeply affected by the conflict," and it also takes the occasion to invite the United States to sit in on talks relating to its implementation and to the timetable for carrying out its provisions. Dividing the framework for peace into three parts, it speaks first about the West Bank and Gaza. Then it discusses the relations of Egypt and Israel and refers specifically to the other Camp David document. Finally, in a section called "Associated Principles," it sets forth the guidelines that should apply to peace treaties between Israel and each of its neighbors.

The section on the West Bank and Gaza bears careful reading, and accordingly I have annexed it to this Report. Already portions of it have given rise to several interpretations. President Carter's interpretation was given to Congress the day after the Camp David accords were announced, and what he said presumably provides a clue to the kind of pressure he will eventually exert to help resolve differences among the parties. Describing the provisions relating to the future of the Occupied Territories, he said:

*The agreement provides a basis for the resolution of issues involving the West Bank and Gaza over the next five years. It outlines a process of change which is in keeping with Arab hopes, while also respecting Israel's vital security interests. The Israeli military government over those areas will be withdrawn and will be replaced with a self-government of the Palestinians who live there, and Israel has committed that this government will have full autonomy. Prime Minister Begin said to me several times, "not partial autonomy but full autonomy." Israeli forces will also be withdrawn and redeployed into specified*

*locations to protect Israel's security. The Palestinians will further participate in determining their own future through talks in which elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza will negotiate with Egypt, Israel and Jordan to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza.*

*Israel has agreed that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people will be recognized. After the signing of this framework and during the negotiations concerning Palestinian self-government, no new Israeli settlements will be established in this area. The issue of future settlements will be decided among the negotiating parties.*

*The final status of the West Bank and Gaza will be decided by the end of the five-year transitional period, during which the Palestinian Arabs will have their own government, as part of a negotiation which will also produce a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. These negotiations will be based on all the provisions and principles of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242. The agreement on the final status of these areas will be submitted to a vote by the representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, and they will have the right, for the first time in their history, to decide how they will govern themselves permanently. We also believe there should be a just settlement of the problems of displaced persons and refugees. . . .*

Reactions were immediate among those involved but not consulted. Arabs everywhere rushed to compare the results with the assertions of Sadat's Knesset speech to see what had been lost during those 13 days at Camp David. Palestinians were predictably unenthusiastic and despite the references to full autonomy, those who made public statements said the document offered little or nothing new. King Hussein of Jordan expressed the need for further clarification, a cautious

response indicating his reluctance to play the negotiating role assigned to him by the Camp David group. To the surprise of no one, Syria and Iraq roundly condemned the whole affair. The Soviet Union, which had also been left out of the Camp David process, was strongly critical.

Most Egyptians, on the other hand, appeared to be excited at the prospect of peace with Israel, despite some high-level resignations and shifts within the officer corps. The United States clearly hoped that Saudi Arabia as well as Jordan would lend support, but this has not been forthcoming in any public way—and probably less than hoped for privately. Within Israel, reactions were split and publicly debated, but the heady notion that peace might be really possible began to spread, though there also remained some grave doubts.

Examining the Camp David documents carefully, each side tended to think it had given too much away. In order to achieve agreement, the Framework for Peace had to be imprecisely worded at some points, and partisans of each side interpreted the imprecisions as being unfavorable to themselves. For example, some Israeli liberals feel that Begin has, in effect, assured the emergence of a Palestinian state; guided by his own misperceptions about the direction of history, they say, he agreed to ideas about Palestinian autonomy that by the logic of events must inevitably lead to full independence. Many Palestinians, on the other hand, are convinced that the agreements of Camp David were expressly designed to *prevent* the emergence of a Palestinian state.

The Camp David documents attempt to cover all the issues that affect a final settlement. In the minds of those whose lives will be most directly affected, Israelis and Palestinians in particular, two issues appear to me to be paramount—settlements and autonomy. The issues overlap, of course. As a

Middle East diplomat once said: "The trouble is that everything is related to everything else."

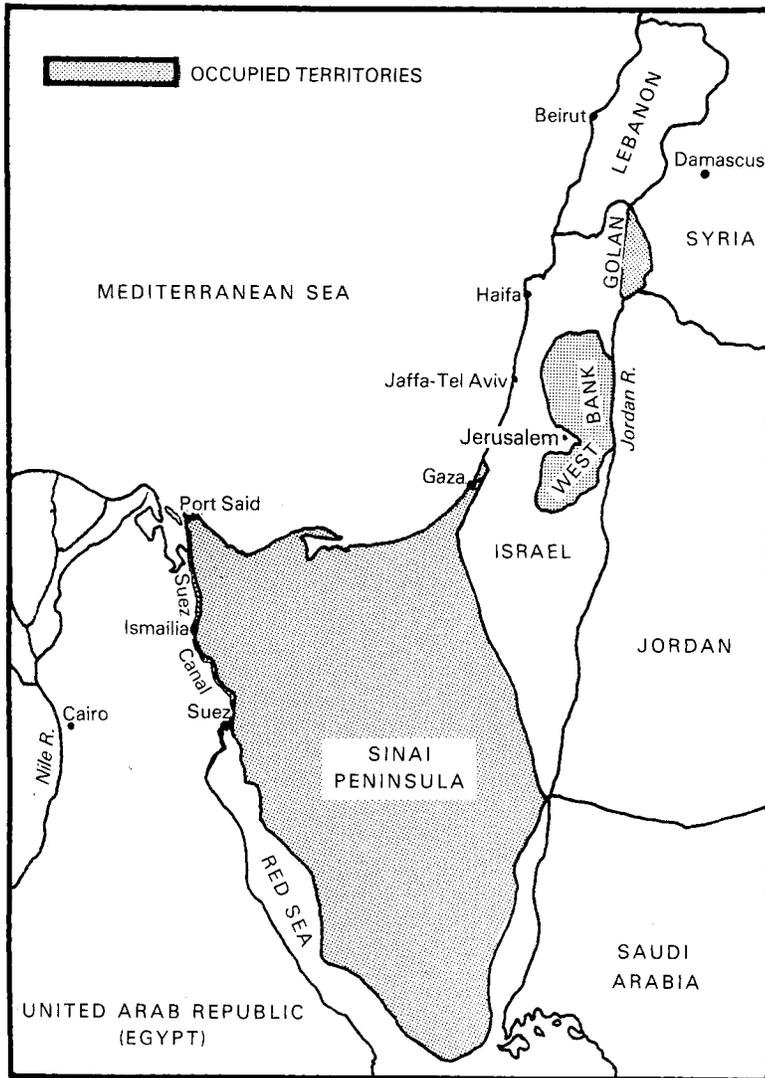
### **Settlements**

Behind the issue of *settlements* is the issue of land. Sadat's comments to the Knesset explicitly rejected any bargaining over Arab soil. Of all the issues that disturb Palestinians, it is the thought of losing land to Israel or Israelis that is most alarming. They see it as a nibbling away at their heritage, as a bit-by-bit encroachment on their most valuable possession by far, as part of a plot to take all of Eretz Israel.<sup>1</sup> Each new attempt to take land—by the ultraconservative Gush Emunim group or the Israeli army (in the name of security)—is considered further evidence of a final resolve to take it all.

If the Palestinians are land-conscious, so are the Israelis. Indeed, taking the history of Israel into account, it could not be otherwise. Yet many Israelis are against new settlements. One long-time observer has estimated that some 20 percent of the electorate are opposed in principle to *any* settlement of Israelis outside the 1967 borders, whether already in place or not. The majority are certainly against *new* settlements lest the possibilities of peace with Egypt and perhaps others be upset. And certainly there are Israelis who, while generally opposed to new settlements, are willing to use the threat of new settlement as a bargaining chip. At the other end of the spectrum, the compulsive hard core, determined to push on with the job of peopling the land of Eretz Israel, probably constitutes no more than 15 or 20 percent.

How many Israeli settlements are there now in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza? Or how many settlers are there? The answers depend partly on political and historical viewpoint. After the end of the 1967 war, the Israelis annexed East Jerusalem,

1. Eretz Israel, ancient Israel as described in the Old Testament.



which had been part of Jordan. They extended to it services available on their own side of the city, and made its Palestinian inhabitants citizens of Israel. Some Palestinians left—either voluntarily or under harassment or because of demolition to effect city improvement—but a lot stayed and some others even returned. A great many Israelis, however, moved into evacuated Arab houses but much more often they moved into new apartment blocks built just outside the old residential area. In the view of the Israeli government, by virtue of the annexation of 1967, the estimated 43,000 Israelis who have moved into East Jerusalem have not settled in Occupied Territory but have simply moved to another part of Israel. This Israeli

view of Jerusalem is a hard political fact, based on a powerful mystique. Many Israelis would explain that East Jerusalem cannot be considered Occupied Territory, that it is part of an eternal Jewish city that has finally been made whole. This sentiment is reflected in the Knesset action of July 1967, when it decreed that "Jerusalem is one city indivisible, the capital of the State of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

When one talks about the "settlements" issue, one usually means the settlements *outside* the annexed area, not what has happened in East Jerusalem. But

2. Quoted in a letter to President Carter from Prime Minister Begin, dated September 17, 1978.

the matter of East Jerusalem is another "settlements" issue of staggering insolubility. Most Israelis, of course, consider the Jerusalem matter settled; to use Sadat's words from another context, they cannot "accept the principle of debating or bargaining over" East Jerusalem. On the other hand, all Arabs buttress their arguments on Jerusalem by quoting United Nations Resolution 242, which speaks of "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and calls for "the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict." A quick study of the last phrase quoted, however, will reveal that two interpretations are possible. Israel has adhered to the resolution but does not take it to mean that she

must withdraw from *all* territories occupied.

It is agreed on all sides, however, that an Israeli who moves into Occupied Territory outside the annexed area of East Jerusalem is a "settler." Estimates of the numbers involved vary somewhat. Casual Israeli opinion puts the number between 3,500 and 5,000 persons. Diplomatic observers believe the number is closer to 8,000. Israeli political analysts point out that settling into areas that might revert to Arab administration is becoming increasingly unpopular. If the West Bank and Gaza do in fact revert, these analysts expect that most settlers will leave, with the possible exception of the die-hard Gush Emunim. Thus they do not understand why the settlements issue is such a big one in Palestinian eyes. Aside from the matter of East Jerusalem (which Israelis consider a completely different kind of issue), why worry about such a small number of settlers?

Answers to the question are supplied, of course, by Palestinians. They quickly assert that they do not put the East Jerusalem matter into a special category. They point out that the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem is about 100,000 and that the addition of a Jewish population of 43,000 since 1967 could be part of a takeover plan. Jerusalem's Teddy Kollek, the Jewish mayor who is surely one of the remarkable political personalities of our day and who has more than a few Palestinian supporters, recently added to Palestinian fears by stating publicly that there should in due course be a Jewish majority in East Jerusalem.

As for settlements outside the annexed area, Palestinians worry not only about the number of settlers but also about the land controlled by the settlers.<sup>3</sup> For

example, the land from the northern border of the West Bank to a point some 5 miles north of Jericho in the Jordan Valley is reported to be between 60 and 80 percent controlled by Israeli settlements. A fertile bit of land, this particular stretch could in the Palestinian view be used eventually to support Palestinians returning from the Diaspora. Moreover, the very pattern of settlement is disturbing because it conforms more or less to the Allon Plan, an Israeli scheme laid out some years ago whereby Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories would ultimately form a kind of human shield for the homeland, possibly with a "capitulations"-type arrangement that would make the settlers finally subject not to Arab but to special Israeli jurisdiction.

It is clear that the future of settlements depends on the definition of "full autonomy." If the Palestinians fear the "worst," so do others. The settlers fear that the territories will soon be administered by Palestinians and that the Israeli government will finally not be able to provide them with the special protection some of its ministers have promised. The government is caught between its natural interest in Jewish settlements and the demands of the negotiating process. Moreover, the Israeli Supreme Court has recently agreed to review a case of government-approved land seizure for settlement in the West Bank; with the sympathy and assistance of some concerned Israelis, a group of Palestinian villagers is pressing for a decision on whether or not the Geneva Convention should apply to this form of "colonization." If a decision favoring those whose land has been seized should happen to be handed down, the negotiating stance of the Israeli government would be drastically altered.

#### **Autonomy**

The issue of *autonomy* is also a broad one. At the heart of the matter is the question of defining the phrase "full autonomy," as

called for by the Camp David Framework for Peace. The document reads in part:

*... in order to ensure a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority, and taking into account the security concerns of all the parties, there should be transitional arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza for a period not exceeding five years. In order to provide full autonomy to the inhabitants, under these arrangements the Israeli military governments and its civilian administration will be withdrawn as soon as a self-governing authority has been freely elected by the inhabitants of these areas to replace the existing military government.*

The definition of "full autonomy" will be a matter of negotiation after a peace treaty is signed between Egypt and Israel. The Framework calls for the negotiators to be Egypt, Israel, and Jordan—with Palestinians to be allowed to join the delegations of Egypt or Jordan, "as mutually agreed" by all three nations. In practical terms, this means that Egypt and Israel alone will do the formal negotiating. King Hussein has already indicated his reluctance to take part. And the Palestinian community, dominated politically by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), will not agree to be represented by persons the Israelis would tolerate. It does not take great powers of analysis to understand that this negotiation will make Camp David seem like child's play.

What is full autonomy? What is self-government? One definition was implicit in the recent assertion by a prominent Israeli official that the West Bank and Gaza must remain under military rule, to which the "self-governing authority" would be subject. The military government's function in this case would be to make certain that the self-governing authority did not exceed its mandate, the inference being that under some circumstances the self-governing authority (or Administrative Council) could be dissolved. Clearly

3. See Ann Mosely Lesch, "Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Volume 7, Number 1, 1977, pp. 26-47, for the details on settlements existing as of September 1977. Updated in Volume 8, Number 1, 1978, pp. 100-119.

reflected in this trial definition was the Israeli fear that the Administrative Council might seek to turn itself into a constituent assembly that could evade the Israeli purpose of preventing full independence.

Even moderate Palestinians are already defining full autonomy in ways that are unpalatable to most Israelis. One Palestinian commented: "I believe the Palestinian community will finally accept the notion of autonomy if it is a dignified autonomy." What most Palestinians take as a "dignified" definition involves control over land and people in the self-governing areas; specifically included would be the power to levy local taxes, to exercise control of water and of the drilling of wells, and to determine what immigrants or returnees should be admitted from the Diaspora. In short, they seek an autonomy that falls just short of the control of defense and foreign affairs.

Each item of autonomy mentioned by Palestinians has a political connotation that makes it an issue. Take immigration. The Israelis fear that if the Palestinian Administrative Council permitted extensive immigration into the West Bank and Gaza, it would have both political and economic effects unfavorable to Israel. Politically, the "people pressure" could become intense, leading to a labor glut breeding unhappy groups of unemployed or even a demand for *lebensraum*. Economically, the region's scarce resources would be overtaxed. For example, the Israelis quite rightly fear shortages of water, on which their crucial citrus crops depend. The problem of the regional water table is a very real one; it has been going down year by year. With unrestricted rights to drill their own wells, Gazans might lower the water table intolerably. When queried on such matters, Gazans will often agree that some kind of coordination is essential to the common good. But who, they ask, is to play God? If the Israeli

government assumes the role, as it has done for the past decade, Palestinians claim that decisions favor Israeli agriculture at Palestinian expense.

But the biggest question about the definition of full autonomy is implicit. It lurks behind most political discussion. The Israelis refuse to discuss it publicly but privately they do so most of the time. The question is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the role it would play in the West Bank and Gaza when (if) governed by a Palestinian Administrative Council.

Many Israelis have a fear of the PLO that borders on the irrational. It is not just because the PLO is the focus of Palestinian resistance to the status quo; and it seems to spring from something more than the collectivity of terrorist acts, executed or threatened, for which the PLO is responsible. One Israeli intellectual said "the PLO is frightening because by our own aggression we brought it into existence." Whatever the reason, the fear is there; some Israelis acknowledge its irrationality, others reach deep for rational explanations. The PLO, they say, is not representative of the Palestinian people; it is an authoritarian organization which from its headquarters in Beirut directs a network of invective aimed not only at discrediting Israel but at erasing its existence. PLO representatives in foreign capitals spend their time furthering these basic aims among other governments. Its principal political instrument is terror, and one should never negotiate with terrorists. On all these anti-PLO sentiments, there is an almost total consensus among Israelis. When asked if there is anything that would make the PLO palatable as a negotiating partner, more often than not Israelis will answer negatively. For some, but only some, the answer would be that the PLO must announce it was not bent on the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state and must renounce the use of terrorism.

The PLO response does little to allay Israeli fears. Its functionaries assert that the PLO is indeed representative, that a free election—now impossible—would demonstrate this. They point to the recent Israeli-permitted West Bank elections, considered less than free, and they note that contrary to Israeli expectation, most of the mayors elected were publicly pro-PLO. By none of these reminders are Israelis comforted. As for terrorist activities, the PLO says that the end clearly justifies the means and stresses the fact that it has no other effective weapon. At the same time, PLO officials have *not* stopped insisting that Palestine should be a secular democratic republic—for Palestinians as well as for Jews. Nor have they said publicly what they hint at privately, namely, that they would settle for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state composed of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As long as they believe it in their interests not to make reassuring public pronouncements, they will make no dent on Israeli opinion.

A perceptive diplomat said recently that Israeli sentiments about the PLO are similar to those of Palestinians about settlements—each evokes fears to an extent unwarranted by reality. A recurring Israeli nightmare is a PLO-controlled Palestinian state, which Israelis imagine would quickly become a base for terrorist attacks on Israeli families. The irony, of course, is that the more resistant to the PLO the Israelis now become, the more they strengthen its hand. And though they find the fact of little comfort, there is a good case to be made for allowing the PLO to dominate an independent West Bank and Gaza. With the PLO out in the open—in a state where no army or only a small one was allowed by treaty—the Israeli army poised on the frontier could move quickly and expeditiously in a crackdown that would be far more effective than anything possible now. Because it would have territorial responsibility and national standing, so the

argument goes, the PLO would be transformed from a paramilitary force into a political grouping answerable on matters of governance and security.

Given the fears of Israelis, however, it is not surprising that the PLO is not mentioned in the Camp David documents. Yet everyone has to know that the PLO will play a role of some kind when (if) negotiations begin on the meaning of autonomy. Its influence in the Occupied Territories is overwhelming; what it thinks and says will determine what is thought and said and done in the West Bank and Gaza. If autonomy is defined in such a way that suitable West Bankers and Gazans agree to be "freely elected" to a "self-governing authority," it will be because the PLO has agreed to the definition and given its tacit approval to the agreement.

Let us make the supposition that a peace treaty is signed between Egypt and Israel and that negotiations get started "to negotiate the details of a transitional arrangement" for the Occupied Territories. With the United States occasionally at the table and always in the wings, the two countries will seek to work out and agree on "the modalities for establishing the elected self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza." Jordan, whose king has been talking instead with Arafat of the PLO in a major switch of strategy, will not be physically represented, but Hussein will be carefully consulted, presumably, and what is decided will need a measure of agreement from him in order to make it work.

If the wishes of Jordan must be taken into consideration, so must those of the PLO—doubly so and in trickier circumstances. For openers, the PLO leadership is deeply suspicious of the Camp David talks, of Israeli and Egyptian intentions, and of the United States. While the PLO is recognized as an official spokesman for the Palestinian community by most nations of the world, it has not been recognized as

a spokesman, let alone a negotiating entity, among those now making the decisions called for by Camp David. Yet, frustratingly for them, PLO leaders know they are the dominant political force among Palestinians. Like King Hussein, they will have to be informal negotiators. But their resentment will be monumental, and their suspicions of evil intent will be thoroughly reciprocated by the Israelis.

The matter is extremely complicated. Just to illustrate the dynamics of informal negotiation, imagine two situations:

1. Egypt and Israel agree to a definition of autonomy that is not agreeable to the PLO and its sympathizers. No one of standing in the Occupied Territories is willing to stand for election to the Administrative Council. This includes persons who in the past have not been PLO sympathizers, none of whom under present circumstances would want to take the risk of being branded "Quisling."

2. Egypt and Israel agree to a definition of which the PLO does not disapprove. That is, the PLO believes the definition might lead—perhaps after the five-year transitional period described in the Framework—to sufficient independence to justify the risk of giving tacit approval. This approval means that they will not, temporarily at least, disrupt matters by terrorist acts and that they will permit certain West Bankers and Gazans, either the real leaders or a slate from the second rank, to run for membership on the Administrative Council.

But if the tacit approval of the PLO is necessary to make the Camp David agreements work, how is it to be obtained? Put another way, who will be negotiating unofficially with the PLO in order to determine what they will and will not agree to? Israel (certainly) and Egypt (almost certainly) are out of the running as possible intermediaries. In deference

to Israel and its sensibilities, the United States does not formally recognize the PLO, though presumably it could find informal channels for consultation—if the PLO, in its annoyance with the American refusal to grant formal recognition, agreed to use such channels. Jordan might take the role of intermediary, whether it joins the talks formally or not, but so far it is unclear whether the long-time enmity of the PLO and Jordan is abating by virtue of common opposition to the forces of Camp David. If Jordan should play the role, it would, in the recent words of an Arab politician, be in the category of "truth is stranger than fiction." It is also possible the intermediary will be someone else entirely, but the conclusion that there must be a way of consulting the PLO is hard to escape. Egypt (and the United States, for that matter) cannot afford to agree to a definition of autonomy that produces an electoral force in the West Bank and Gaza and an Administrative Council made up of nonentities subservient to Israel.

At the same time the PLO is not in a position to veto whatever it does not like. To be sure, the organization is made up of a high proportion of persons who are "young, literate, and without hope" (to quote an older Palestinian) and are to some measure prepared to bring the house down rather than compromise. But the leadership appears to understand that politics is the art of the possible. The Israeli tactic, of course, will be one of delay. (Indeed, many Israelis would be pleased to delay indefinitely any kind of agreement on the definition of autonomy.) After long negotiation, without an agreement, the Israeli government could claim and go on claiming that it had done its unavailing best to reconcile "the principle of self-government . . . and . . . the legitimate security concerns of the parties involved," and thus prevent any change in the status quo. This would not worry the Israelis because they would have their separate peace treaty with

Egypt already signed and in hand. Accordingly, the PLO must use its veto power with great skill if it really wants to promote a situation that might lead to independence.

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As this is written, negotiations between Egypt and Israel proceed. The two principal obstacles to final agreement have received ample coverage in the world press. The experts are saying that both Sadat and Begin have invested too much in the Camp David notion of peace to allow the negotiations to come to nought. Some experts and some politicians are also saying that the obstacles are minor ones when compared to what the parties have already agreed to. Perhaps this is so, but they are also crucial in the eyes of the two governments.

The first obstacle is Egypt's insistence on tying the peace treaty between itself and Israel to progress on Palestinian autonomy. Egypt needs the approval of at least some other Arabs. It seeks to protect itself against the accusation of betraying the Arab cause that signing a separate peace would bring, and thus does not wish to agree to one of the Camp David documents before making certain that the second will be put into force. Because the Egyptians fear Israeli delaying tactics, they want a clear statement in the treaty or its annexes that will include a timetable for the granting of autonomy or some other additional pressure on the Israelis to agree on a satisfactory definition of autonomy.

The second obstacle is closely related. If the Egyptians insist on a treaty linked to the Palestinian situation, the Israelis insist that their treaty with Egypt be an unconditional one. It is a fair assumption that Israeli flexibility at Camp David was based on the lure of a possible treaty with Egypt that would insure the neutrality of their southern neighbor in the event of war with other Arabs and break through the encircling wall of Arab refusal to establish normal international relationships. Thus the bilateral treaty with Egypt is what Israel is really buying. It is hard to imagine that Israel can afford to settle for less than a treaty that will last. She cannot accept a treaty that depends for final validity on the future of the Palestine community. And in response to another current demand by Egypt, she cannot for the same reason accept one whose military provisions do not unequivocally take precedence over previous pacts signed by Egypt with other Arab states.

The United States is in the middle. It wants a treaty. It will search diligently for a formula that will allay Egypt's fears of appearing to be un-Arab and Israel's fearful concern that the treaty should be an enduring commitment. Moreover, the United States apparently believes that a settlement of the

Palestinian issue is crucial to a just and durable peace, and it will doubtless press hard for a definition of Palestinian autonomy that would in its view be "dignified" enough for the tacit approval of the PLO.

So the treaty, if it is signed, is just a beginning. The process envisioned by Camp David is long and extremely difficult and the vision will change as the process unfolds. The Arab states arrayed against the Camp David agreements will react forcefully in one way or another, and they will to some degree have the support of the Soviet Union. The near-chaos in Lebanon, affected both by the miseries of internal Lebanese politics and by the PLO, will have a bearing on what happens. Other nations will seek to demonstrate that they, too, can influence events. As one European observer put it, "all in all it will be something like playing billiards on a small boat in a rough sea—and each ball with a shifting center of gravity."

(January 1979)

## ANNEX I

Excerpt from "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David," taken from the official text dated September 18, 1978.

### Framework

Taking these factors into account, the parties are determined to reach a just, comprehensive, and durable settlement of the Middle East conflict through the conclusion of peace treaties based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in all their parts. Their purpose is to achieve peace and good neighborly relations. They recognize that, for peace to endure, it must involve all those who have been most deeply affected by the conflict. They therefore agree that this framework as appropriate is intended by them to constitute a basis for peace not only between Egypt and Israel, but also between Israel and each of its other neighbors which is prepared to negotiate peace with Israel on this basis. With that objective in mind, they have agreed to proceed as follows:

#### A. West Bank and Gaza

1. Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the representatives of the Palestinian people should participate in negotiations on the Resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects. To achieve that objective, negotiations relating to the West Bank and Gaza should proceed in three stages:

(A) Egypt and Israel agree that, in order to ensure a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority, and taking into account the security concerns of all the parties, there should be transitional arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza for a period not exceeding five years. In order to provide full autonomy to the inhabitants, under these arrangements the Israeli military governments and its civilian administration will be withdrawn as soon as a self-governing authority has been freely elected by the inhabitants of these areas to replace the existing military government. To negotiate the details of a transitional arrangement, the government of Jordan will be invited to join the negotiations on the basis of this Framework. These new arrangements should give due consideration both to the principle of self-government by the inhabitants of these territories and to the legitimate security concerns of the parties involved.

(B) Egypt, Israel, and Jordan will agree on the modalities for establishing the elected self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza. The delegations of Egypt and Jordan may include Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza or other Palestinians as mutually agreed. The parties will negotiate an agreement which will define the powers and responsibilities of the self-governing authority to be exercised in the West Bank and Gaza. A withdrawal of Israeli armed forces will take place and there will be a redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces into specified security locations. The Agreement will also include arrangements for assuring internal and external security and public order. A strong local police force will be established, which may include Jordanian citizens. In addition, Israeli and Jordanian forces will participate in joint patrols and in the manning of control posts to assure the security of the borders.

(C) When the self-governing authority (Administrative Council) in the West Bank and Gaza is established and inaugurated, the transitional period of five years will begin. As soon as possible, but not later than the third year after the beginning of the transitional period, negotiations will take place to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza and its relationship with its neighbors, and to conclude a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan by the end of the transitional period. These negotiations will be conducted among Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. Two separate but related committees will be convened, one committee, consisting of representatives of the four parties which will negotiate and agree on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, and its relationship with its neighbors, and the second committee, consisting of representatives of Israel and representatives of Jordan to be joined by the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, to negotiate the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, taking into account the agreement reached on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza. The negotiations shall be based on all the provisions and principles of UN Security Council Resolution 242. The negotiations will resolve, among other matters, the location of the boundaries and the nature of the security arrangements. The solution from the negotiations must also recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements. In this way, the Palestinians will participate in the determination of their own future through:

- 1) the negotiations among Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza to agree on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza and other outstanding issues by the end of the transitional period.
  - 2) submitting their agreement to a vote by the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza.
  - 3) providing for the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza to decide how they shall govern themselves consistent with the provisions of their agreement.
  - 4) participating as stated above in the work of the committee negotiating the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.
2. All necessary measures will be taken and provisions made to assure the security of Israel and its neighbors during the transitional period and beyond. To assist in providing such security, a strong local police force will be constituted by the self-governing authority. It will be composed of inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. The police will maintain continuing liaison on internal security matters with the designated Israeli, Jordanian, and Egyptian officers.
  3. During the transitional period, representatives of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the self-governing authority will constitute a continuing committee to decide by agreement on the modalities of admission to persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, together with necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. Other matters of common concern may also be dealt with by this committee.
  4. Egypt and Israel will work with each other and with other interested parties to establish agreed procedures for a prompt, just and permanent implementation of the Resolution of the refugee problem.