

ARAB-ISRAELI RELATIONS

SUBJECT READER

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| Wells Stabler | 1944-1950 | Vice Consul, Jerusalem |
| | 1950-1953 | Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Washington, DC |
| | 1957-1960 | Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Washington, DC |
| Gerald A. Drew | 1950-1952 | United States Minister, Jordan |
| Slator Clay Blackiston, JR. | 1953-1956 | Political Officer, Jerusalem |
| | 1956-1957 | Desk Officer for Jordan and Israel Washington, DC |
| James N. Cortada | 1955-1959 | Economic/Commercial Officer, Cairo |
| Alfred Leroy Atherton, JR. | 1965-1974 | Deputy Director Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC |
| | 1974-1978 | Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs Washington, DC |
| | 1978-1979 | Ambassador-at-large, Middle East Negotiations |
| | 1979-1983 | Ambassador, Egypt |
| | 1988-1992 | Ambassador, Israel |

1956 War

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|--|
| Eugene H. Bird | 1955 | Jordan-Israel Desk Officer, Washington, DC |
| John H. Kean | 1958-1960 | USAID, Officer in Charge of Egypt, Syria (UAR) and Sudan, Washington DC |
| Richard A. Dwyer | 1960-1963 | Economic/Commercial Officer, Damascus |

The Six Day War

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Michael E. Sterner | 1960-1964 | Political Officer, Cairo |
| | 1964-1966 | Arab-Israeli Desk Officer Bureau of Near East Affairs Washington, DC |
| | 1970-1974 | Director of Egyptian Affairs Bureau of Near East Affairs Washington, DC |
| | 1976-1979 | Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of Near East Affairs Washington, DC |
| Marhsall W. Wiley | 1963-1965 | Economics Officer, Amman |
| William N. Dale | 1964-1968 | Deputy Chief of Mission, Tel Aviv |
| Dayton S. Mak | 1964-1969 | Deputy Chief of Mission, Beirut |
| Mark C. Lissfelt | 1965-1967 | Staff Aide/Commercial Officer Tel Aviv, Jerusalem |
| Justice Arthur J. Goldberg | 1965-1968 | Ambassador, United Nations, New York, NY |
| George Quincey Lumsden | 1965-1967 | Chief of Consular and Political Section, Amman |
| Anthony J. Perna | 1965-1969 | Air Attaché, Tel Aviv |
| James K. Bishop, Jr. | 1966-1968 | Commercial Officer, Beirut |
| Edward Gibson Lanpher | 1967-1969 | Rotation Officer, Tel Aviv |
| Teresita C. Schaffer | 1967-1969 | Rotation Aide, Tel Aviv |
| Chester E. Beaman | 1967 | Deputy Chief of Mission, Damascus |

Black September

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Slator Clay Blackiston, Jr. | 1967-1969 | Economics Officer, Amman |
| Richard E. Undeland | 1970-1974 | Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Amman |
| Richard B. Parker | 1977-1978 | Ambassador, Lebanon |

Johnny Young 1983-1985 Administrative Counselor, Amman

1973 war

Michael E. Sterner 1960-1964 Political Officer, Cairo

 1964-1966 Arab-Israeli Desk Officer
 Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC

 1970-1974 Director of Egyptian Affairs
 Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC

 1976-1979 Deputy Assistant Secretary
 Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC

Alfred Leroy Atherton, JR. 1965-1974 Deputy Director, Bureau of Near East Affairs
 Washington, DC

 1974-1978 Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs
 Washington, DC

 1978-1979 Ambassador-at-Large, Middle East Negotiations

 1979-1983 Ambassador, Egypt

Walter B. Smith II 1970 Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC

 1971-1974 Chief, Political Section, Tel Aviv

 1974-1978 Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC

David M. Ransom 1970-1973 Jordan Desk Officer, Washington, DC

Arthur R. Day 1972-1975 Consul General, Jerusalem

Edward G. Abington 1972-1975 Political Officer, Tel Aviv

Nicholas A. Veliotis 1973-1975 Deputy Chief of Mission, Tel Aviv

 1977-1978 Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC

Sinai field mission

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|---|
| Owen W. Roberts | 1976-1979 | Sinai Field Mission, Sinai |
| C. William Kontos | 1976-1980 | Director, Sinai Support Mission, Washington, DC |
| Samuel W. Lewis | 1977-1984 | Ambassador, Israel |
| William Jeffras Dietrich | 1979-1982 | Press Attaché, USIS, Tel Aviv |
| William Andreas Brown | 1979-1982 | Deputy Chief of Mission, Tel Aviv, Israel |

Camp David Accords & Israel-Egypt Peace Process

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|--|
| Alfred H. Moses | 1956-1980 | Lawyer, Covington & Burling, Washington, DC |
| Alfred Leroy Atherton, JR. | 1965-1974 | Deputy Director Bureau of Near East Affairs Washington, DC |
| | 1974-1978 | Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs Washington, DC |
| | 1978-1979 | Ambassador-at-large, Middle East Negotiations |
| | 1979-1983 | Ambassador, Egypt |
| Edmund James Hull | 1975-1979 | Political Officer, Jerusalem |
| Donald A. Kruse | 1976-1980 | Deputy Principal Officer, Jerusalem |
| Samuel F. Hart | 1977-1980 | Economic & Commercial Counselor, Tel Aviv |
| Samuel W. Lewis | 1977-1984 | Ambassador, Israel |
| David G. Newton | 1978-1981 | Deputy Chief of Mission, Damascus |
| Robert W. Duemling | 1980-1982 | Sinai Field Mission, Sinai |
| David N. Greenlee | 1980-1982 | Political Officer, Tel Aviv |
| Brandon H. Grove Jr. | 1980-1983 | Consul General, Jerusalem |

Israel invasion of Lebanon

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|--------------------------|-----------|---|
| Nicholas A. Veliotos | 1973-1975 | Deputy Chief of Mission, Tel Aviv |
| | 1977-1978 | Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC |
| Edward G. Abington | 1975-1977 | Staff Aide to Assistant Secretary Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Washington, DC |
| Morris Draper | 1976-1978 | NEA, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Washington, DC |
| Samuel W. Lewis | 1977-1984 | Ambassador, Israel |
| William Jeffras Dietrich | 1979-1982 | Press Attaché, USIS, Tel Aviv |
| William Andreas Brown | 1979-1982 | Deputy Chief of Mission, Tel Aviv, Israel |
| Richard E. Undeland | 1979-1983 | Public Affairs Officer, Damascus |
| Brandon H. Grove Jr. | 1980-1983 | Consul General, Jerusalem |
| Robert S. Dillon | 1981-1983 | Ambassador, Lebanon |
| John M. Reid | 1981-1983 | Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Beirut |
| Richard N. Viets | 1981-1984 | Ambassador, Jordan |
| Arthur S. Berger | 1982-1986 | Embassy Spokesman, Tel Aviv |

First Intifada

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|------------------------|-----------|--|
| Morris Draper | 1986-1988 | Consul General, Jerusalem |
| William A. Pierce | 1987-1989 | Deputy Public Affairs Officer Bureau of Near East Affairs, Washington, DC |
| Roscoe S. Suddarth | 1987-1990 | Ambassador, Jordan |
| Phillip C. Wilcox, JR. | 1988-1991 | Consul General, Jerusalem |
| William Andreas Brown | 1988-1992 | Ambassador, Israel |
| David Winn | 1989-1992 | Deputy Consul General, Jerusalem |

Madrid conference

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|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Brandon H. Grove Jr. | 1980-1983 | Consul General, Jerusalem |
| William Andreas Brown | 1988-1992 | Ambassador, Israel |
| Douglas R. Keene | 1991-1994 | Deputy Chief of Mission, Amman |

Zionist Movement and Recognition of Israel

WELLS STABLER

Vice Consul

Jerusalem (1944-1950)

Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1950-1953)

Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1957-1960)

Ambassador Wells Stabler was born in Massachusetts on October 31, 1919. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1941 and entered the Foreign Service in the same year. His career included positions in Israel, Jordan, Italy, France, and Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to Spain. Ambassador Stabler was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991

Q: You know, it is hard to recreate the time, but it really took a decade or so for the real enormity of what had happened to the Jews and others in Europe during the war to sink in. The Foreign Service came pretty much from the educated class in the United States and was not particularly responsive to the Jew in the United States. I can recall hearing, not so much in college, but in prep school, anti-Semitic jokes. At that time, particularly with turmoil obviously beginning to come with ships docking all the time, was there an annoyance with the Zionist movement?

STABLER: For one thing, for those of us who were serving in Palestine, it was clear that in a demographic sense that the majority of the residents of Palestine were Arabs. There were about a

million and a half people in Palestine of which about a million were Arabs and roughly 500,000 were Jews. So in the demographic sense, the majority was clearly Arab. On the other hand, as you drove around Palestine, which I did extensively, at all hours of the day and night, you couldn't help but marvel at what the Jews had produced in their part of Palestine along the coast in particular. It was a miracle what they had done agriculturally and to some extent industrially. They worked terribly hard. They were aggressive, of course, in terms of what they hoped to ultimately achieve. One probably didn't know at the outside a great deal of what had been happening in terms of the genocide in Germany. I happened to live part of the time in Jerusalem in a small apartment in a Jewish house. The owner was a marvelous woman who was a Dutch Jew, and who, after I left, unhappily was killed in one of these horrible terrorist actions where the Arabs shot up the bus in which she was in. You couldn't help but have great admiration at what they had done, but also you recognized that there was this constant encroachment on what was a demographic majority in the area. You couldn't help but be rather disgusted by some of the terrorism they pulled off in Palestine. A lot of one's British friends were killed as a result of incidents like King David, etc.

Q: Was this really saying, "Here you Americans have been talking about Jewish homeland, etc. and this is your problem."

STABLER: The Jewish homeland was what the British themselves had been talking about, the Balfour Declaration of 1917. But by 1947 there was clearly increased pressure in the United States because of what had happened in Germany which by then was fully known. There was real pressure of what do you do? We were not prepared to open up our immigration to let them all come into the States, so the next question was, "Where do they go?" By this time clearly the Zionist movement had decided that Palestine must become the national home for the Jews. Everything that they did was aimed at that time in terms of immigration to get them into Palestine. This was becoming a tremendously difficult thing for the British who had a large army, several divisions of troops, in Palestine. After all it is not a very large country, about 140 miles long and 70 miles wide. They had a tremendous concentration of first class British troops. And a fairly sizable police force which was composed of both Jews and Arabs, but the leadership was all British.

I think you are quite right that part of it certainly was directed to the United States. The British said, "We couldn't find anything through the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry; no one can come up with any solution; we don't want to have anything to do with this; we can't cope with it; we are getting out; so do what you will, we aren't going to be here."

The UN came up with the Partition Resolution which, of course, was strongly resented by the Arabs. I was advised ...again I would make a good many trips across the Jordan to see what was happening there...by the British when I went over there to take my car and have two Arab Legion soldiers with submachine guns sitting in my back seat. I did this and got over to Amman and my Jordanian friends asked why I was doing this as I was well known and no one would do

anything. They thought it was sort of an insult to come with two Arab Legion guards. So, I never had them again and nothing happened.

But there was very strong resentment. Temple bombs increased and we recognized, of course, that the day would come before very long, this was 1947, that the British would be out and where would we be. So we decided that in terms of safeguarding the Consulate we would have the British come and give us an expert estimate as to what it would need to guard the Consulate. They came up with a figure of 285 marines, which would be 24 hours guard service plus road escorts. We sent a telegram to Washington saying that, in terms of the future, here is what has been recommended. Washington obviously went into a dead faint because they never answered it.

About a week before the British left, Washington suddenly threw on top of us something like 30 civilian guards...young men who after the war, not knowing what to do had answered some sort of ad and signed up as embassy guards. They came from all walks of life. One man had ended up as head of the commissary in Rome, but still was a guard and found himself in Jerusalem wondering what the hell he was doing there. None of them knew how to shoot a gun. I had to take them out personally to a range, although I had never shot a tommy gun, to teach them how to shoot tommy guns. They were totally undisciplined. In addition to that all of a sudden they sent us, which was very useful, a 10 or 12 man navy communication team which turned out to be the only way we could keep communications going. I think we had in the Consulate General 15 of these civilian guards who were very nice young man but who were basically undisciplined. They drank quite a lot; one of them got mad at me one evening and chased me with a machine gun. It was really chaotic.

Q: During my last job I was seconded to the Historian's Office. Among other things I did a history of our Consulate General in Jerusalem. In the 1920s after the Balfour Declaration had come out, our officers there...the Jewish community was small and I think there was a certain antipathy towards the Zionist movement, a pro-Arab feeling ...were reporting again and again saying, "Zionism is all fine, but a homeland here means blood on the streets, and this is just not going to happen." Their predictions, of course, are true, there has been a tremendous amount of fighting which continues really to this day. Were you able to give reports saying that there was going to be a blood bath?

STABLER: Yes, one was giving Washington reporting of the views of various communities on this subject -- the Arabs and the Jews and some of the religious leaders who have an interest in all of this, and also the views of the British. We reported on what was actually happening there -- the various acts of terrorism, the strong feelings of the various Jewish and Arab communities. Keeping Washington not only abreast of what was happening, but what probably would happen if certain things were done.

Again, Pinkerton, I don't know what he said. I do know...because we did do a lot of reporting after Macatee got there in which I was involved...giving various points of view and letting them know actually the tensions that were existing between the communities and what might happen if certain things were done. And then, of course, after the Partition, we brought them up to date on that.

Q: I want to stop at the Partition time where we will pick it up later. One last question. What was your feeling and those at the Consulate General about the British letting go? Were you thinking, "Oh my god, they have a responsibility, and shouldn't get out." or "Obviously they can't control the situation and lets see where the chips fall."?

STABLER: Obviously everybody recognized there would be utter chaos and almost anarchy once the British left. It was well known as a result of everything that had transpired before -- the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry and then various UN studies, etc., and the British statement that they were getting out. One can sympathize with the British because this had become an enormous burden to bear, extremely expensive in terms of money and lives with no returns, which they had been carrying on for a great many years. There was no way that they were going to be persuaded to stay on. Pressure was brought to bear on them to stay on. They may have considered it for a while, but by that time the Labor Government had come in and I think that they finally just realized that there was no way they could do it or really wanted to do it.

We all knew that Partition wasn't going to be viable because everybody was against it. It was a big unknown that we were embarking on the day that the British pulled out. But the political situation had reached the point where there was no alternative. They wouldn't stay and the UN had no ability or capacity to put a force in there. It was just one of these machines that gathered speed and there was no stopping it. The United States had no power to stop it either because we were behind the Partitioning. We certainly weren't going to take over from the British. Domestically it was quite clear that this was what the Jews wanted because this was the creation by partition of the homeland. As it turned out they got the whole thing.

We knew in the Consulate General that there was the Hagganah.

Q: That was the Jewish army.

STABLER: Yes, that was the Jewish army. It was illegal, but the British didn't do much about it. They knew it was there and had some utility in the defense of kibbutzims and things of that sort. They got their arms helter-skelter by stealing from British ammunition depots and things of that sort. That was sort of the unofficial army. Then there was the Stern gang and the Irgun Zvai Leumi. The Irgun Zvai Leumi was the larger group and the Stern gang the smaller group. They also existed. One knew that the Jewish Agency ran a fairly efficient operation and the assumption was that the Hagganah would acquit itself pretty well in the struggle against the Arabs.

But as you added up the Arab manpower for the Arab armies, it was hard, frankly, to see how in the final analysis the Jews would be able to withstand this onslaught. Added to this, of course, was the view in all the Arab capitals -- American representatives in all the Arab capitals were reporting that this better not happen because the Jews would be pushed into the sea. At times the war between our representative, James McDonald, in Tel Aviv and our representatives in the Arab countries was worse than the fighting because those in Arab countries took one side and McDonald the other.

Q: What was in Tel Aviv?

STABLER: On the 15th of May when Truman recognized Israel de facto, we set up a diplomatic representative's office in Tel Aviv. James Grover McDonald came to Tel Aviv as the first American representative. Although he was not an ambassador in the strict sense of the word, he was the American Representative in this de facto situation. The office was set up in Tel Aviv as indeed if it were an embassy with communications. Messages would be repeated Tel Aviv and Arab capitals.

As I say, on paper it certainly looked as if there was no way the Israelis could withstand the Arab onslaught.

GERALD A. DREW

United States Minister

Jordan (1950-1952)

Gerald A. Drew was born in San Francisco, California in 1903. He graduated from the University of California, Berkeley. He toured in Para, Jordan, Bolivia, and Haiti.

The following are excerpts from correspondence and journal entries.

Correspondence and Early Journal Entries of Gerald A. Drew

At the time he was ambassador to Jordan [actually he was the first U.S. minister to Jordan, 1950-52], Mr. Drew to the best of his ability protected Jewish people residing at that time in Arab countries. He cautioned the Arabs that the Arab nations have much to gain by having a Jewish nation among them, and if at peace with each other, Arabs and Jews would grow together culturally, industrially and economically, not needing any great power to assist them. He reminded the Arabs that Arabs and Jews were of common ancestry, similar to Americans and Canadians; and if both were to adopt the Latin alphabet, they would be able to understand each other just like the U.S. and Canada. While he was U.S. minister in Amman, he influenced other

Arab nations to relax their anti-Jewish laws enacted in 1948 during the establishment of the state of Israel.

SLATOR CLAY BLACKISTON JR.

Political Officer

Jerusalem (1953-1956)

Desk Officer for Jordan and Israel

Washington, DC (1956-1957)

Slator Clay Blackiston, Jr. was born in 1918 in Richmond, Virginia. He graduated with an A.B. degree from the University of Virginia. During World War II, he was an aviator in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Blackiston joined the Foreign Service in 1947 and served in Amsterdam, Stuttgart, Port-au-Prince, Jerusalem, Tunis, Jeddah, Cairo, Amman, and Calcutta. He was a member of the United States delegation to the United Nations in 1971. Mr. Blackiston retired from the Foreign Service in 1975. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: Could you explain what the situation was like at that time?

BLACKISTON: The situation was this: the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 had left a situation in which there was no peace, just Armistice Agreements between Israel and the four surrounding countries, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. The Lebanese border was the same border it had been, but on the Syrian border there were three demilitarized zones (DZs), where, when the fighting ended, Arab villagers were still living. The terms of the Armistice Agreement were that life in the villages should go on as before; they shouldn't be interfered with. The Israelis, practically from the beginning, started encroaching the DZs and ultimately drove the Arab residents from the Hula area DZ and the two up at the headwaters of the Jordan. They also would fire on Syrian fishermen; there was a section of DZ that was only about 30 feet wide between the eastern edge of the Sea of Galilee and Syrian territory and the Golan Heights. The Syrian fishermen would drag their boats across this strip of land and fish as they had been doing for centuries and this would cause trouble.

On the Jordan border the Armistice Agreements were negotiated by the Arab Legion, as it was then called. It was officered by British officers; Glubb Pasha was head of it, and the brigades were headed by British officers. And when the Armistice Agreements were signed they were

negotiated by British officers who really didn't know the terrain that well or the geography, so the Armistice border was drawn in such a way that villages were cut off from their land, instead of drawing the border so that it would encompass these communal lands. So many of the villagers would come over into what had been their lands to harvest crops, graze their sheep and so on. This would lead the Israeli border police to fire and sometimes kill them. Occasionally infiltrators from Jordan would cross into Israel and attack Israeli settlers. While I was there there was a famous attack on a town called Qibya led by Arik Sharon; it was a village at the end of a road projecting into Israel. In retaliation for some infiltration from Jordan, the Israelis made a massive night attack on this village of Qibya blowing up houses and killing some 60 people. The Israelis followed the same tactics -- there were a whole series of these things, Qibya is one of the best known -- they would encircle the town, mine the road (there would just be one road) on the Jordan side and then put these satchel dynamite charges against the buildings with the people inside. I think fifty-six people were killed. Then when the Arab Legion would come down the road, they had no other way to go as it was rocky terrain, the trucks would hit these mines. I was there the morning after with another FSO, Cleve Fuller; there is a picture in Life taken of us standing amid the bodies and describing us as UN observers. So this was the pattern of things and there were many of these places. My job included liaison with the UNTSO observers. Well, I lived on the Jordan side. Shall I describe all this?

Q: Yes, please do.

BLACKISTON: Is this getting too long?

Q: No, No. This is what I want, particularly this Jerusalem bit.

BLACKISTON: Let me describe the situation in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was also divided by the armistice line. There was the old city, which was the walled city, plus an eastern part of Jerusalem that was in Jordan; the new city was in Israel. The people of Jerusalem during the Arab-Israel war had defended the old city themselves, just the local inhabitants, but they were going to be overwhelmed so they called for help from Transjordan's King Abdullah. The Arab Legion came and did defend the old city so that it was not captured by Israel. We had one consulate general because the United States supported the UN partition plan which called for an Arab and Jewish state -- with a *corpus separatum*, which included Jerusalem and Bethlehem, an area that was to be internationally administered because of its significance for the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. Of course this never came to pass but we still today support the legal fiction of it. At that time U.S. passports in Jerusalem said Jerusalem, Palestine; neither Jordan nor Israel. Now that has been changed, I believe. So we had the Consulate General; the main office of the Consul General was on the Israel side on Mammilah Road; across from us was a Muslim cemetery that the Israelis bulldozed. There was an office on the Jordan side and that is the one that I headed. We could cross back and forth during the daytime, and we did; the general public could not. Consular personnel could cross at night but you had to ask for special permission; sometimes we did go for a reception or something on the Israel side.

We had UN observers who were assigned to ensure that there were not violations of the armistice agreement, or if there were to investigate who was responsible. It was called the UN Truce Supervisory Organization, and they were on all four borders. We had what is known as Mixed Armistice Commissions for each of these borders; there was what they called the HKJIMAC which meant Hashemite Kingdom Jordan-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission -- there were similar MACs on all the other borders. The observers came from the United States, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Canada, and maybe Norway, I've forgotten. My job was to get to know these officers and to report on incidents, so I got to know them very, very well. The MAC met in a building that was in a no-man's land between one part of Jerusalem and the other. There was some cooperation between the Israelis and the Jordanians with regard to mosquito control, because water would sit there and if they didn't do something about it it would affect both sides so they did do that much.

There was a firing incident in Jerusalem while I was there and the Jordanians -- this is on Nablus Road which comes out of Damascus gate going towards Nablus and would have gone on toward Damascus if there had not been a division between the countries. The Jordanians erected a wall which was about eight feet high, I guess, maybe more, so that in any firing from the Israel side the passersby would be protected. They were not using artillery but mortar shells. I am rambling a little here, but I might cite one case. We would get these Americans there, I guess you would call them hippies today -- they were going to make peace. I remember one day some guy had been in to the consulate to see me, then he'd gone over -- you could with permission cross over to the Israel side. One morning, there were loopholes in this wall, this guy walked into no-man's land and an Arab Legion man shot him dead right out in front of the consulate. Of course he should not have been there but he was a harmless guy. I remember my son calling me, and I looked outside and there was the guy dead.

JAMES N. CORTADA
Economic / Commercial Officer
Cairo (1955-1959)

Q: Well, talking about another relationship, you're an Arabist. You were in Egypt how did you view, and how did, you might say, those others who were involved in the Arab world, view Israel at that time?

CORTADA: Well, I really can't say, because, how one viewed Israel depended an awful lot on what their own backgrounds were. You have to bear in mind that I came from New York City. I lived mostly in the West Side near Columbia University, around Broadway and 112th, 114th street, 110th street. That was a neighborhood that was predominantly Jewish, Jewish middle class, professionals, and I grew up with these Jewish children. I was not aware till quite at a much later age, till I was a teenager in fact about these biases.

I can understand ... I blame the Congress after World War II, when it refused to accept 150,000 Jewish refugees, for forcing the Zionist's to get into the Palestine picture. You can bet your boots Congress has been the cause of an awful lot of our flaps overseas. And that was a crucial one, if they had taken in the 150,000 Jews wandering around trying to find where they were going to go, I don't think that the Middle East situation would ever have become the hot potato it is.

Islamic philosophy for the true believer and most are real believers, even though they may be lax, just like we have a lot of Christians who are true believers, but who are very lax in the practice of their religion, requires Muslims never to make a permanent peace with the infidel, only a truce. The very pleasant relationships that we have now, say with Egypt, and that we might have with Syria, if Syria and Israel make a deal over the Golan Heights, is really a truce. Whether it takes one hundred years more, two hundred years more, three hundred years more, to continue the struggle is not definitive for a true Muslim. In that culture, time is very relative. Now, other of my colleagues has biases in the matter. They could be pro-Arabs, they could be pro-Israel, and it depends an awful lot upon their background.

ALFRED LEROY ATHERTON, JR.
Deputy Director, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1965-1974)

Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs
Washington, DC (1974-1978)

Ambassador-at-Large, Middle East Negotiations
(1978-1979)

Ambassador
Egypt (1979-1983)

ATHERTON: Another thing about this period that I remember was looking at the role of the Department, particularly the role of the Near East-South Asian Bureau, in dealing with the Middle East. I became increasingly aware, having returned to this area after a five year absence, of the pro-Arab image of the bureau. The bureau was seen as basically sympathetic to the Arab side of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

And I think there was some historical basis. In the early years, it was the professionals in Near Eastern affairs who had recommended against the establishment of Israel and against recognition of Israel and in favor of trusteeship when the British said they were going to get out of Palestine. So there was this historical image, particularly in Israel and among pro-Israeli elements in this country and in the Congress -- that the Near Eastern Bureau was suspect from the viewpoint of Israel's interest. I had a very graphic introduction to this. One of the things I was expected to do was to go on the speaking circuit. We had lots of invitations to speak about the Middle East. One of the principal sponsors of these occasions was the ZOA, the Zionist Organization of America, which was very active in organizing meetings to discuss Israel's interests, and the Arab-Israeli problem, and the Middle East in general, mostly in Jewish congregations at synagogues around the country, or at educational institutions, or often sponsored by local Jewish community groups

in hotels. It seems to me there was hardly a week went by that I wasn't going out (usually they took place on Sundays), that I wouldn't be invited to go to one of these meetings. And the pattern that emerged, very clearly, was that there were three people on the platform: there was the ZOA representative, who was the chair of the meeting, there was a representative of the Israeli government, usually from the local consulate or from the embassy, and then there was me, as the representative of the State Department.

WILLIAM ANDREAS BROWN

Ambassador

Israel (1988-1992)

Ambassador William Andreas Brown was born in Winchester, Massachusetts in 1930. He joined the "Holloway Program" which was part of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Program and went to Harvard University, graduating with a Magna cum Laude degree. In 1950 he went to Marine Corps basic training in Virginia and later served in Korea. His Foreign Service career took him to a multitude of places including Honk Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, USSR, India, the UK, and Israel. His career includes an ambassadorship to Israel as well as several positions in the State Department, Environmental Protection Agency. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November of 1998.

Q: Would the term Zionist, in your definition, refer to a religious group?

BROWN: No. You have to be careful there. The Zionists can be secular, religious, or mixed secular and religious. The term is used very loosely. In general, "Zionist" means someone who is dedicated to the proposition that there is a land of Israel and that it should be a Jewish state. At this point you notice some differences between the various Jewish groups. Among the Zionists there are some who hold the view that they need to reestablish a Jewish presence in the Occupied Territories. This certainly was the viewpoint of the Likud Party and of its predecessor, the Herut, which was the hard core of the Likud. Going back to the views of Jabotinsky [founder of the modern revisionist Zionist movement], the revisionist Zionists considered that they were entitled to hold both sides of the Jordan River in modern Palestine. These people take the view that the British behaved disgracefully in 1921 by carving up the old Palestine Mandate and removing from it what the British called "Trans-Jordan." This is what we now call simply "Jordan." The British earmarked "Trans-Jordan" and said that that was an Arab entity under the Amir Abdullah. In other words, no Jewish settlement was allowed. The rest of Palestine was to be a combination of Arab and Jewish. The Jabotinsky school of thought clearly rejected that proposition.

Coming down to the modern period, the "settlement movement," as we currently use the term, began under the Israeli Labour Party Governments. The settlements consisted of isolated groups

of Jews who chose such places as the high ground often overlooking an Arab town or city. Often these areas were totally unoccupied and were, in fact, bare hillsides. However, they had some religious, or some religio-political significance to the settlers. They dug into these places. In a more extreme case, they moved into hotel space in Hebron, nominally as tourists. Then they stayed in a hotel and turned it into an armed camp downtown Hebron. This was an “in your face, here we are, and what are you going to do about it,” armed presence.

One has to remember that this process began when a rather weak, Israeli Labour-dominated coalition government, led by then Prime Minister Rabin, accommodated itself to this situation, somewhat reluctantly accepting the new settlements. It was on the basis of such new successful settlements that the Movement grew and grew.

Now, when in 1977 Menachem Begin became Prime Minister and Ariel Sharon arrived on the scene, this process really took off. By the time I came back to Israel at the end of 1988, these settlements had mushroomed so that they had become large, well-established communities. They were bedroom communities for commuters to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. They were advertised as having advantageous mortgage rates, subsidized by the Israeli Government, with a network of highways and other infrastructure in and around them. This was really serious, and it was constantly expanding.

1956 War

Eugene H. Bird
Israel-Jordan Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1955)

Eugene H. Bird was born in Spokane, Washington in 1925. He was in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1948. He attended the University of Washington, receiving a B.S. degree in 1948 and a M.A. degree in 1952. Mr. Bird's overseas career included posts in Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and India. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1994.

Q: Bringing our discussion back from Secretary Dulles to Gene Bird, here you were, straddling Arab and Jewish nations. What did all of you do during the Suez Crisis [of 1956]?

BIRD: I suppose we survived. The first thing we did was to evacuate everyone. We were told to get everyone off the West Bank area that we could. I called in [the heads of] the Mennonite and other missionary groups. There weren't a lot of Americans on the West Bank, but there was a sufficient number for us to have a problem getting them out. I tried to arrange for an aerial evacuation, because we didn't seem to be able to get permission to drive in our cars all the way to Beirut. A lot of people didn't want to leave their cars in Amman, [Jordan]. We made a disastrous attempt to bring in a DC-3 [aircraft], which we managed to lease from Air Jordan. We got about 30 people and all of their luggage out at the airport. At the last moment the Jordanians said that

their plane could not fly because there were too many risks involved for an Air Jordan plane in the air. There had been a "shoot down" in 1948 of a plane from Air Jordan, or, rather, the predecessor to Air Jordan. We knew one of the survivors of this crash, the head of the American School for Oriental Research. Here he was, being evacuated on an Air Jordan plane. He survived the 1948 shoot down by a "Yak" [Soviet built] fighter, an Israeli fighter from Russia, which always intrigued me. So evacuation was a major issue.

And then there were demonstrations, which went on for about six months, during which time we kept our people out [of Jordan]. My wife and our two little children, both pre-schoolers and very young, boarded an aircraft, perhaps the morning after the [Israeli] invasion [of Sinai] and got out. It was one of the last aircraft out.

We had a lot of [American] tourists, of course. The tourists didn't see anything happening. It was a very calm period in Jerusalem itself. There were some troops up close to the line, but there was a prohibition written into the armistice agreement on having tanks near the line. Both sides respected that in 1956, unlike in 1967. So we had no incidents. I remember our emergency radio. I was trying to go from the Consulate on one side to the other. I turned the radio on but all I could receive was people talking back and forth in Hebrew.

They had the same kind of radios that we did. We had provided [the Israelis] with communications equipment. [When I was on the Israeli desk], I had helped to get that radio equipment [for them] in substitution for jet aircraft. They had very good U. S. Army communications gear, which had been integrated into the Israeli Army. They used it throughout the Suez Crisis.

So we were a kind of lonely group of [temporary] bachelors, sitting there in Jerusalem for almost six months. The rumor mill was always active, saying that it [the prohibition on having our families there] was going to be off next week and so on. But the official description of the policy was that, "We wanted to teach both sides a lesson." I remember the puzzlement of the Egyptian who invited me over, shortly after Secretary Dulles had made a very pro-Egyptian statement of sympathy. I said that we were taking the whole issue to the [UN] Security Council and were trying to get the British and French to pull out [of the Suez Canal area]. Really, Israel was a sideshow in this whole thing, even though she had gone almost all the way to the Suez Canal. Israel had been prevented from going all the way by the British, who told them, "Don't go any farther. You're not to take the Canal. We're going to take it." In fact, the Israeli Army probably could have taken the Canal all the way down [to Suez]. There probably weren't that many Egyptian troops left in the Sinai Desert area.

This didn't happen, so the situation became a matter of arranging for the evacuation of British and French troops [from the Suez Canal area]. We [in the Consulate General in Jerusalem] weren't directly involved with that, except that we were in contact with people like [British Consul General] Wilson and with the French [in Jerusalem] and so on. At the Consulate General we talked a lot [about the situation]. We tried to come up with ideas. One of the ideas we came up with was letting the Israelis keep the Gaza Strip at that point, because Gaza was not an area which the Egyptians had been remarkably good at governing. It would have given the Israelis a reason to return all of the 400,000 [Arab refugees] to within the 1956 borders. Our expression

was, "This will break the back of the refugee problem if you bring all of these people back into Israel." Let them go back to Ashkelon and the villages and so forth. We knew the villages had been largely destroyed, but we thought that we could find a way to reintegrate them into Israeli society.

I remember raising this idea at a very low level, just to test it with my contact in the Israeli Foreign Ministry. He looked at me as if I were really mad. It was a new idea to him. He said, "You don't understand anything about Israel, do you?" He meant [to say], "We don't want those people back. We want the land but we don't want them back." He said, "Why don't you take them instead to Brazil?" Years later Assistant Secretary George Allen told me that he had suggested the same thing to Secretary Dulles at the White House during the same period. They had been briefing President Eisenhower. Allen told me that both Dulles brothers were there--Allan Dulles from the CIA and John Foster Dulles from the Department of State. Allan said that maybe it would be a good idea to leave Israel with Gaza. John Foster Dulles went absolutely ballistic and said, "No, that would be rewarding aggression. We can't reward aggression. Forget that idea completely." So this was unacceptable from both sides. It's interesting to look back and see what's happening now.

Q: How was life for you in the Consulate General in Jerusalem? How were your contacts with people on the West Bank of the Jordan and how did they respond to the events of 1956?

BIRD: They were in a state of shock, of course, and then the situation turned into a state of concern about whether Israel intended to take the West Bank. The actual crisis itself only lasted about four or five days before [hostilities stopped], and about three days after the Egyptians lost Port Said. During that period the Mahafiz of Jerusalem, an East Banker who was very close to King Hussein, though not a Palestinian, was in very close touch with the Consulate General and with me, because the Consul General wasn't always in East Jerusalem. So sometimes in the evening I would go over there and talk with the Mahafiz or some of his friends and attend some of his majelis [conversation] meetings. There was constant political talk about Israeli intentions. There was real fear that the Israelis intended to take the West Bank at that time. They feared that it could easily be done and that it would happen. We were watching any buildup of the Jordan Arab Army--the Arab Legion.

I remember sitting with the head of the American Colony Hotel [in East Jerusalem on the Damascus Road] and other people who were quite well known and long term residents of the area. I had also gone down to Jericho and had watched a very long line of [Jordanian] military vehicles which had come down the very road which Yasser Arafat is now trying to get control of. My friend, British Deputy Consul General Wilson, was also with me. We watched through binoculars to see whether they were going to turn up toward Jerusalem, which would be an indication of war, or turn and go across the [Allenby] Bridge and go back into Jordan. In fact, they turned and went across the bridge and into the main part of Jordan.

It was a strange time as far as our relations with the West Bank are concerned. Our Deputy Consul General had completed his tour [of duty in Jerusalem] and left. Andrew Killgore, the new Deputy Consul General, had not yet arrived, so I was more or less left alone. I roamed up and down the West Bank of the Jordan. There wasn't a lot of consular work to do. I ran the office. By

then we had a couple of CIA types on the West Bank, working under the cover of the Consulate General. We were trying to report on what was happening in terms of the relationship between the West Bank and Jordan, because there wasn't much of a relationship between the West Bankers and Israel. The only place that they ever met was at the meetings of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission, or the IMAC, as they called it. That was just a few hundred feet from the Consulate office [in East Jerusalem]. I used to go over and talk with the Norwegian [UN officer] who was there at the time. We had very close relations with the UN. They had a very high level UN civil servant, a Frenchman. His efforts were to keep the two parties from militarizing the area close to the line of demarcation and keep the peace as well as he could. The effect that the UN had in terms of creating the conditions for peace were pretty minimal, in reality. This UN civil servant had a deputy, always a U. S. military officer, a colonel or lieutenant colonel, usually a Marine Corps officer. We became very close friends with him--his name was Barney. He was there during the Suez crisis in 1956.

Those military people in the UNTSO [UN Truce Supervision Office] really had more insight because they were operating on the Syrian front, and on the Egyptian front, too, through Gaza. And then, of course, there were the representatives of the UNRWA [UN Relief and Works Administration]. Henry Labouisse was ahead of UNRWA by that time.

JOHN H. KEAN

USAID, Officer in Charge of Egypt, Syria (United Arab Republic) and Sudan Washington DC (1958-1960)

John H. Kean was born in Saskatchewan, Canada in 1921. He attended George Washington University, receiving an A.B. degree in 1943 and a M.A. degree in 1947. Mr. Kean worked in the Department of Commerce from 1943 to 1952, whence he joined the Foreign Service. Mr. Kean's overseas career included posts in Turkey, Egypt, Ghana, and Swaziland. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1994.

Q: The Suez war grew out of that decision?

KEAN: Yes, the Suez war was indirectly, at least, in part if not in large part, a result of the western decision, U.K., U.S. and World Bank decision not to finance the high dam because Egypt, in 1955, decided, to a degree, to throw in its lot with the Soviets and in September 1955 sign the Czech arms deal in which they bought massive quantities of Czech and (and to a lesser degree Soviet) military equipment and began to negotiate with the Soviets for the financing and construction of the high dam at Aswan. So the whole western relationship with Egypt (which had been quite active in the period after the 1952 revolution though strained at the same time), had to be rebuilt. The strain, of course, derived from the Cold War as well as the U.S. relationship with

Israel. Egypt, as an Arab country, resented the tremendous support that was being extended to Israel. So it was a break of massive proportions in 1956 which was only being slowly healed as we began to try to rebuild a relationship with Egypt for broad geopolitical reasons even though it was fairly clear that Nasser had thrown in his lot to a very substantial degree with the Soviets by entering into the arms deal. Now, the U.S. had had a quite substantial and very broad-based technical assistance program in Egypt from the period 1952-1956.

One of the major undertakings that the U.S. had entered into during that period was to set up a project in 1953 as a binational fund which was unique for the Near East. It was called the Egyptian American Rural Improvement Service, EARIS. That went forward in the planning and early development stages for reclamation of a fairly substantial chunk of land, several hundred fedans or acres in the lower delta next to Alexandria, which was being reclaimed from Lake Maryut and two smaller pieces of land out in the Fayoum Depression, south and west of Cairo. The model for this administrative structure was borrowed from Latin America. At least nominally, the Ambassador (for the U.S.) and the Egyptian Minister of Agriculture were the co-directors of this joint fund. The work on the reclamation activity, which that program was designed to carry out, had been drastically slowed down but hadn't fully stopped during the period of the Suez war and the following year and a half when the U.S. no longer had a Mission there and for some period didn't have diplomatic representation in Cairo. The first thing that was done was to revive that program and resume the suspended activity for which funds were already in place. This was a fairly easy thing to do. So that was the first activity that was undertaken as assistance resumed.

The Mission was opened with a few key personnel in mid-1958 under the direction of Ross Whitman (who was also Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs.) To reactivate EARIS a small staff, which initially included Horace Holmes ("Mr. Point Four" from India) was sent to Cairo. He and Paul Kime and Al Lackey and a secretary were sent as the people to administer the revival of this activity. It was in early 1959 when that group went to Egypt and opened up this technical assistance activity. The land reclamation part was pretty largely in the hands of the Egyptians and had gone forward during the hiatus. We didn't have technical people there primarily concerned with reclamation. They were mainly focused on planning for the resettlement component of the program, which meant the design of villages, the development of the village facilities and the services that should be provided and working out the concepts that would underlie this resettlement process. The resettlement really means bringing people from other villages in the delta to settle this new land.

Q: Why were they doing that?

KEAN: There was steadily growing pressure on, and demand for, land as population increased. The Government was anxious to show that it was meeting that need and the U.S. found it politically desirable to cooperate. A large block of funds was committed to this project in 1953 as the last act in Egypt of the Point Four program before it was consolidated into FOA. Lake Maryut was one of the best areas for reclamation in the country. It was at the level of the Nile, not up on a bench land, and it was an area that had been flooded. Lake Maryut was the area that was being drained for reclamation, and somewhat fortuitously it turned out that this was some of the best land around. It had a great deal of calcareous material from the sea bed that had been

there before the delta was built up and with a certain amount of leaching to get the salt and alkali out of the land, it turned out that it was very rich. So it was a very fortunate place to undertake this program and it did well in future times as people got onto that land.

Q: Was this because of overpopulation or did people have to move for other reasons?

KEAN: Well, the key issue in Egypt, of course, is land. The rapidly growing population already meant too many people per acre to productively employ them in agriculture and there were few alternatives. People were therefore selected from some of the most crowded villages in the delta. Young families were the preferred group for the resettlement. This was the next step.

There's a lot of fiction in the whole notion of the joint fund arrangement. The Egyptians regarded EARIS as their project. They thought of this jointness as strictly window-dressing. As far as they were concerned, we were welcome to come and meddle in their business to the extent of providing technical assistance but the rest of it, the joint jurisdiction was something they never acknowledged de facto, even though they acknowledged it de jure: but "we went through the motions". We occasionally held these formal meetings between the Ambassador and the Minister to ratify something or sign an agreement but the ordinary day-to-day activities were carried on by the Mission Director. As the Mission was opened, the Economic Counselor of the Embassy was made the Mission Director, so you had it integrated at the head between the Embassy and the Mission, and that's the way it existed for quite a long time there all the way through all of my association with Egypt which then ran for nearly eight years.

So we are beginning something which is a major chunk of my career. Except for a period of seven months when I was in Pakistan in 1960 to early '61, I was in some measure associated with and concerned with Egypt either in Washington or in Cairo for the whole period from 1958 to 1966. There were periods when my major attention was focused on other things and I was only partially concerned with Egypt. Nevertheless, during all of that period except for the time in Pakistan I had some reason to be concerned with Egypt. As I said, I visited the Sudan in 1959 for about six weeks and then spent ten days in Egypt and had some opportunity to become acquainted on the ground with the situation in both of those countries. I did not go to Syria at that time because we really didn't have anything going there.

Over the next 16 or so months, while I was working on Egypt in Washington, we continued to gradually expand the program. A presentation was made in Washington late in 1958 about a set of things we might undertake to do in Egypt. That was included in the Congressional Presentation for the 1960 fiscal year and so with the beginning of fiscal 1960 we began to expand and increase our involvement. This was a response to the gradually thawing political relations between the countries and a deliberate effort to try to expand our relationships with Egypt. This was a counterbalance to the expanding Soviet involvement there. With the beginning of construction of the high dam in 1958 the Soviet presence became very significant. Throughout my whole time of involvement we were in a sort of head-to-head struggle against the Russian penetration of Egypt. It wasn't as direct as I've seen it in other countries (e.g. Afghanistan) but it was still intense. Clearly the U.S. and the Soviet Union were striving for influence there and so our involvement reflected that.

Our activities in the first year or two included EARIS and a few other activities but mainly the beginning of a program in the western desert to explore the feasibility of large-scale development of deep wells in the oases of the western desert (Karga, Dahkla and Farafara). From ancient times these oases had been a site of civilization. There is evidence that at one point there were as many as a million people living out there. They depended on shallow wells, but President Nasser had the conviction that there was a potential for large scale development again using deep-well water. So we sent a USGS team out there to drill test wells to determine the feasibility of development along those lines. That program went on for several years, and later when I was living in Egypt we continued to be deeply involved in that program. It proved to be not such a potential bonanza, although there was a lot of fossil water there which had been deposited geologically eons ago and under artesian pressure. Once the wells were punched, the water would begin spouting fifty feet into the air, but within a year or so the level of pressure declined. Then you would have to sink a slotted tube in the ground and install a pump to continue to draw water. Obviously there was a very slow rate of recharge and you would end up with an inverted cone of the water table in this geological formation where the inflow to the point of the well was relatively slow. You had only a limited supply of water that would not last indefinitely into the future. If pumped at a high rate, you would pretty soon exhaust the supply. Hence, it wasn't going to be a place to settle large numbers of people. That would have been great news for Egypt to have a place to resettle its growing population that was doubling every 23 years and rapidly outrunning the resources of the Nile River and the Nile Valley.

We also put in place a more general agricultural program which aimed to support the Ministry of Agriculture in providing improved research and extension systems. This was not a new activity. There had been similar programs before the 1956 expulsion of the Mission, but I think it's fair to say that the Egyptians were somewhat reluctant participants in this program. They weren't really ready to acknowledge that foreigners had a lot to teach them. They felt that they already had a high-yielding agricultural system. It was a system that had evolved over a period of many decades. They knew how to run it, it was highly dependent on the irrigation system and the system of crop rotation which had also evolved over many decades.

We did send people abroad for training and that had its political as well as its development dimension in terms of having an ever-larger pool of people in that country who had western connections. From the time of the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt on through the 19th century and then with the British and to some extent with French and Germans there was a lot of western orientation and western culture and western ties in Egypt, but they had an ambivalent feeling: "Yes, we are sort of western, but we are not really western; we're really Arabs, Muslims, middle Easterners; we're really people who have our own culture and our own future and we are not sure we want to be associated with these people who are too close to Israel anyway." That was basically the nature of the attitude that existed and formed the tenuous basis of our relationship.

RICHARD A. DWYER
Economic/Commercial Officer
Damascus (1960-1963)

Richard A. Dwyer was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1933. He completed an A.B. degree at Dartmouth College in 1955, and then earned an M.A. degree in Public Affairs at Princeton University in 1957. After college, he went directly into the Foreign Service. Mr. Dwyer's overseas career included posts in Syria, Egypt, Bulgaria, Chad, Guyana, and Martinique. He was interviewed by Professor Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 12, 1990.

Q: *The '56 war was the Suez Crisis.*

DWYER: Suez Crisis, that's right. And in the '60s the French and British were still major players. As a matter of fact, certainly the French still are today. The French traditionally served as protector of Christian interests in Lebanon--all Syrians then and I suppose now still consider Lebanon as part of greater Syria. I think probably we were playing a little more of a role because of the absence of the French and the British until 1961 or 2, I forget when they came back. Beyond that we had the oil pipelines...

Q: *Tapline.*

DWYER: Tapline, precisely. It had been cut off by the first war of Israeli independence and there was still hopes at that time that that might be reopened. We had the same interests then as we do now. The hope is that Syria might itself be sufficiently stable so that it might play a stabilizing role in the area being the country where internationally as domestically the most radical government was the one that achieved popular support for a brief period. I refer to it as democratic governments, but they certainly were not democratic governments in any sense we knew or know now, but they were democratic in the sense that until the Ba'ath took over there was a kind of live and let live attitude toward political turmoil. If you were a colonel and didn't make brigadier you tried for president or prime minister and if missed, nothing too bad happened to you. Usually you were made military attaché somewhere depending on the quality of the coup you attempted. After the Ba'ath came in, particularly the hardline wing of the Ba'ath, you stood a pretty good chance of being stood against the wall and shot.

The Six Day War

MICHAEL E. STERNER

Political Officer

Cairo (1960-1964)

Arab-Israeli Desk Officer, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1964-1966)

Director of Egyptian Affairs, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1970-1974)

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1976-1979)

Q: Now, you were doing what when the 67 War started? I wonder if you could tell how the State Department operated at that time. And your view of this operation as far as it impacted on us.

STERNER: I was a Desk Officer on the Arab-Israel problem and so was one of the first people involved in setting up a Task Force on the seventh floor. Before war broke out on June 5, 1967, there was a three week period of diplomacy to try to head off this conflict. You remember the sequence of events..

Q: And how you were seeing it and how you were reporting, prognosticating, etc. on this.

STERNER: Nasser ordered troops into the Sinai about May 15, as I remember it, and about three or four days later called on U Thant, then U.N. Secretary General, to withdraw the U.N. buffer force that had been in the Sinai and keeping the peace there. Then about the same time, or a few days later, Nasser announced closure of the Strait of Aqaba to Israeli shipping. At that point I think almost everybody felt that unless this thing could be defused very fast conflict was inevitable.

Q: The Strait of Aqaba was where they were getting their oil?

STERNER: Exactly. I can't tell you exactly what percentage but over the years about 60 to 70 percent of Israeli oil requirements came from Iran and certainly all that oil was coming into Elat. We were seized with trying to get the Egyptians to stand down and to think of various face-saving ways where it might be possible to prevent the conflict. We were, of course, worried about the implications of a conflict. No one at the time that this thing was brewing had any assurance that the Israelis could win this war in six days time. The Egyptians seemed very confident and for all we knew could give the Israelis some real trouble and we saw emerging out of that a very serious possibility of U.S.-Soviet confrontation, the Soviets being committed to Egypt at that time and ourselves to the Israelis. Even if we did not have such a confrontation, we saw naturally, the possibility of regional conflict unraveling our interests in much of the Arab world. So this was a really serious crisis for the United States. We of course had intensive diplomacy with the Egyptians but not too much avail. However, the Egyptians claimed that on the eve of the war, one of their top people, Zakaria Mohieddine was on his way here and had the Israelis not attacked might have defused the crisis. I tend to disbelieve this thesis because Nasser was too committed in the eyes of his own people and the eyes of the Arab world to the course of action he had taken. I think he wanted a conflict.

Q: Were you having contact with the Israeli Embassy and the Egyptian Embassy during this period of time? And how were they talking to you and were you sitting in on meetings?

STERNER: The Israelis were at first completely shocked that this had taken place. Secondly, very determined that we should take action and do something about it. The Egyptians on the other hand were full of bluster about the fact that they had the rights to do this. This was Egyptian territory, the Sinai was Egyptian territory, they waited eight years for the international community to do something about the Arab-Israel problem, and this force had been there all this time, and it was an unnatural phenomenon to have an international force. It was the expected argumentation to support their positions. We were not at all persuaded at any point of the legitimacy of what the Egyptians were doing and did not think they had a good case in international law. In my opinion, Nasser was the aggressor in this war.

Q: How did we see the Six Day War and its outcome? As you were involved in these various groups?

STERNER: We were enormously surprised by Nasser's action, initially very worried. We were also disappointed with the Israelis that they had not given us more time. We thought I at the time, maybe unrealistically in retrospect, that we had something going in terms of this international flotilla and our diplomacy. Once Israel attacked we were intensely worried about the conflict itself, about the potential for confrontation with the Soviet Union, and we were relieved when it became apparent in the third and fourth day of the conflict that the Israelis were scoring victories all over the place. We realized we were off the hook in terms of prolonged conflict and its impact on American relations elsewhere in the Middle East. There were many people who thought we might have to send troops and certainly would have to send massive supplies of military equipment at the time. But it happened so fast, you could hardly keep the shaded areas on the map moving as fast as the Israelis were taking over these areas.

Q: On the war?

STERNER: On this cheating business. On why the missiles were being built. I think Nasser was indeed weakened by the 1967 conflict, but not vis-a-vis Moscow. I think he was weakened in terms of his own military. His own military had been extending these missile sites under Israeli bombardment into this zone to protect Egyptian territory from Israeli air attack. All of a sudden, unbeknownst and unconsulted, I suspect the Egyptian generals, air defense generals, are taken by Nasser's agreement with the Israelis and the United States that freezes their activity at a stage that leaves them in a vulnerable position militarily. Should the cease fire break down as they thought it certainly would at some time, they would be caught with their pants down. They wanted to get these sites done. I think they put it to Nasser in those terms. Nasser probably thought I better not fight them on this one. The Americans are just going to have to accept this, and eventually the activity will come to a stop. No one can prove this, but that's what I think happened. The episode in itself is not all that important, but I cite it as an example of the kind of disagreement that was going on between the State Department and the White House, exacerbated by the personal differences between the Secretary of State and the National Security Advisor, and the fact that the President was clearly relying more and more on his National Security Advisor for advice and Rogers was increasingly a Secretary of State who was just meant to continue to manage this bit of machinery called the Department of State and Foreign Service, but have relatively little input on policy matters.

MARSHALL W. WILEY
Economics Officer

Amman (1963-1965)

Jordan – Iraq Desk Officer

Washington, DC (1965-1968)

Marshall W. Wiley was born in Illinois in 1925. He attended the University of Chicago, where he received a Ph.D. in 1943, a J.D. in 1948, and an M.B.A. in 1949. Mr. Wiley was a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1945. He joined

the State Department in 1958 and his career included posts in Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: How did this come at you? Were you ready for it?

WILEY: We were a little surprised when the war finally broke out. Obviously, the tensions had been building. And the Arabists had been saying for a long time that there has to be some kind of a settlement to this problem, or there is going to be an explosion. It was hard to predict just when the explosion was going to take place, of course. When it came about in '67, Jordan made the mistake of listening to Nasser, who talked him into joining into the war, of course, for which he paid a heavy price in losing the West Bank, which he has still lost, and has still now pretty much renounced any claim at all to the West Bank. In that period leading up to the war, I think, there was a lot of concern at the working level that our policies were not sufficiently vigorous in pursuing peace initiatives. Particularly, we were never very effective in working with the Israelis to try to get them to make an accommodation that would somehow be acceptable to the Palestinians, which we still aren't very good at that.

WILLIAM N. DALE

Deputy Chief of Mission

Tel Aviv (1964-1968)

Ambassador William N. Dale was born in Washington, DC in February 1919. He entered the Foreign Service in June 1946. His career included positions in Turkey, Israel, and Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to The Central African Republic. Ambassador Dale was interviewed by Dr. Henry E. Mattox on September 19, 1988.

Q: By the time you left in 1968, roughly that time, the war was over. There were problems of U.N. resolutions and questions of the West Bank and the refugees and so forth. What were the major bilateral issues that you were dealing with about the time that you left Israel?

DALE: The major one was that at the time of the Six-Day War, a great many more Arabs had been forced out one way or another from the West Bank and from the old refugee camps. We wanted some of those to come back to their homes. We thought that they should, especially family members. We had a great deal of controversy with the Israeli Government, trying for get them, on humanitarian grounds, to accept a large number of the Arabs back who had been forced out in the 1967 War. They did not do that, of course. They let a few back, a very few, enough so they could say they had done something. Because they wanted the land, the houses, just as they did in '48. They did not want embittered people coming back into Israel. That part is understandable.

Q: What was the rationale for taking the part of the Arab refugees?

DALE: We didn't look on it as taking the part of the Arab refugees; we looked on it as a humanitarian matter, that a good many people had been forced out of their homes, and across the border. They were victims of warfare, and they left homes and presumably going enterprises in what had been the West Bank. Many of them had also been refugees in refugee camps. We thought that by every humanitarian kind of desideratum, they should be allowed back. They were not necessarily going to make war on Israel; they had lived there before. The Israelis said no, but let a few close relatives back, enough so that we couldn't say they didn't do anything.

There was another issue, and that was the settlements. The Israelis began to put settlements in the Golan Heights and in the West Bank almost immediately. By that time, the United States Government was very firm in its stand that those were illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention, and that they would make it very difficult to reach a peace. So I think I was the first officer to deliver the protest. However, it was very noteworthy that Barbour would not deliver that. He had me do it, which downgraded it.

Q: I recall at the time, in another part of the world, that Israelis diplomats told me Israel would, of course, return the West Bank, given certain questions of Arab recognition, of course. Was that the position of the foreign ministry?

DALE: There was a brief period when Abba Eban was foreign minister, when I do believe the Israelis would have returned the West Bank almost in its entirety. The problem was that the King of Jordan, Hussein, at that point was in such a state of shock, that he couldn't seem to negotiate, couldn't seem to bring himself to enter into the kind of negotiation it would have taken. So for a period of maybe a couple of months, I think that would have been true. After that, the Israelis discovered they had something there, particularly Jews, and I don't think Jerusalem would have been returned anyway, but the West Bank. There were advantages to be gotten from it, so the position hardened and became consistently harder ever since.

DAYTON S. MAK

Deputy Chief of Mission

Beirut (1964-1969)

Dayton S. Mak was born in South Dakota in 1917. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona and a master's degree from George Washington University. After serving in the U.S. Army during WW II, Mr. Mak joined the Foreign Service in 1946. His career included positions in Hamburg, Dhahran, Jeddah, Libya, London, Lebanon, Kuwait, and Washington, DC. Mr. Mak was interviewed in 1989 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: What happened during the '67 War? This was the very successful war of the Israelis in which they basically took over the whole Sinai and the Golan Heights and all of the West Bank, too, wasn't it?

MAK: Yes.

Q: And Jerusalem.

MAK: Well, there was a great deal of tension before the war erupted. Nasser was making all sorts of threats against Israel. I'm not saying they weren't justified, I'm just saying that he was making all these threats about invading Israel and knocking out Israel for this reason and that reason. Jordan was sort of in between. They were terribly nervous about Israeli intentions, and suddenly the thing exploded, with the Israelis making a preemptive attack on Egypt, which was totally successful. However, as I remember, the King of Jordan saw some planes, thought they were ours, and protested to the American Embassy and to the world that Americans had joined in the battle against the Arab world.

At the same time, King Hussein decided that Nasser was winning so Jordanian troops attacked Israel. Foolishly, of course, but they attacked Israel. The Lebanese press then absolutely blew this all out of proportion, and the United States was suddenly one of the villains largely because of King Hussein's mistake about the Israeli planes.

Q: It was a six-day war.

MAK: Yes. Nasser resigned, and that brought out the crowds again surging through the streets, smashing western and "Christian" signs and windows and gunning for the American embassy. It was a very tense period. Everything was shut down in Beirut. And then Nasser decided to withdraw his resignation, and then there were more demonstrations. So it was really sort of hectic. It really was a pretty hectic period.

I remember during that time our dependents were all gone, and the city was dead, just dead. No planes were coming in, no boats going by, no traffic, just tanks around the embassy, and we felt very sorry for ourselves. I had a call then from a friend of mine in the Lebanese foreign office, Jean Riachi, I remember, Jean said, "Dayton, how about going to the beach today?"

I said, "What?"

He said, "Sure. Come on, I'll pick you up." So he picked me up at noon in his expensive Italian vehicle. I can't even remember the name of it, it was so expensive. We went down to the beach, and there were the Lebanese having a marvelous time. They were all on the beach playing beach ball, volleyball, and all the girls in their bikinis lying around, everyone eating and drinking.

I thought, "Boy, this really shows you how your mind can get the better of you." From then on I thought, "The hell with it. I'll go where I want to go in Beirut." Up until then I really felt that I

was practically in jail. But in a few weeks the dependents came home, and everything went along just as though nothing had happened, except, of course, from then the Palestinian problem got worse.

Q: *And we were reporting on it, seeing it, but there wasn't --*

MAK: That's when we were reporting daily on what the Palestinians were doing and saying what the Lebanese were thinking about, what the foreign office was doing about it, and what they could possibly do to maintain their own position in this country.

Q: *There's been, of course, a prohibition for many years, which has just been lifted with them this year to a limited extent, of dealing with the People's Palestinian Liberation Organization or anything to do with them. You're an Arabic speaker, you're a political officer, you have a lot of Palestinians and a lot of things that were happening and there was just beginning really to turn into a major element within Lebanon. Did you have any contact at all with people who would be considered Palestinian leaders?*

MAK: I don't remember having contact with any of them, no. Our contacts would be largely with Lebanese who were their spokesmen, who were their allies. And there were many of them, both in the press and politics. But, no. They didn't seek us out, and we didn't seek them out.

MARK C. LISSFELT

Staff Aide/Commercial Officer

Tel Aviv, Jerusalem (1965-1967)

Mark C. Lissfelt was born in Pennsylvania in 1932. He received his BA from Haverford College and his MALD from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1959. He served overseas in the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1956. His foreign posts included London, Tel Aviv, Bamako, Brussels, Bonn, Berlin and Paris. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 22, 1998

Q: *Can you tell about what was, sort of, the political and strategic atmosphere prior to that, and particularly from your perspective?*

LISSFELT: Well, there was sort of a calm before a storm. I remember making a trip with a visiting official from Washington down to the Egyptian-Israeli border on the Sinai and writing a telegram when I came back, and I still remember the title of it, which was "All's Quiet on the Sinai Front." This was a matter of weeks before the outbreak of this war, but what really sent a warning rocket in the sky a week before the war started was Nasser's decision to instruct U

Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations, to get the UN observers out of the Sinai, out of the way between Israel and Egypt, a request to which he promptly acceded.

Q: It was considered to be sort of a political bluff by many, and U Thant was a little too quick on the trigger.

LISSFELT: Well, there was that criticism, of course. Why did he accede so fast? Why didn't he try to delay? It was taken as a clear warning signal, and it was at that time that the embassy right away began to think about what might be coming. The Israelis were certainly thinking about it, and you know what happened. But we began right away to offer people who were going - for instance, we were going on home leave, and my family was given the chance to advance their departure, and I would stay behind, just rather than go in July. The invitation was: "Why don't you just go along a few weeks and take the kids and go? You're going anyway." That was the first trickle out, then voluntary departure of all dependents, you know we've been through this probably with the downsizing of an embassy and the question of essential personnel. We were really downsized before this thing started.

I'll never forget the first day. I was a control officer for the visiting mayor of Philadelphia, whose name I've long since forgotten, sitting in the Tel Aviv Hilton Hotel, probably the tallest building in the Middle East at the time, and certainly the biggest target, if there was going to be a war, on the Israeli side. On the Monday morning when this war started, the mayor and I were having breakfast, and suddenly everybody began to head for the underground bomb shelters in the Hilton basement.

Q: It started with an Israeli air attack on the Egyptian Air Force.

LISSFELT: Well the Israelis would say it started with Egyptian feints and the prospects of their attack. You could debate that, as to when it started, but as far as we were concerned, it started with the destruction of the Egyptian Air Force that Monday morning within a matter of three hours on the ground in the airfields across the face of Egypt. It was a just a brilliant preemptive strike. We knew this by the end of that first morning, by the way. By Monday at noon, we were sort of breathing a little easier. We had the feeling that one was in the middle of a war but there was no question that we, unlike our colleagues in Egypt and other places, were going to be on the winning side, i.e., in the victorious nation.

At breakfast, though, when the sirens began to sound and everybody was evacuating the Hilton and this mayor of Philadelphia insisted on finishing his breakfast. We were alone in this restaurant. I said, "I think we should get out of here. I think something's happening, you know. The staff are running and they came and warned us to go downstairs." Something happened to the mayor's mind. He became irrational. We went back to the embassy and went down in the underground garage and he wouldn't go. He was demanding his "civil rights." (sic!). He kept saying, "I demand my civil rights." We didn't know how that applied to the prospect of an imminent air attack, down in the basement with the embassy staff. In the event, we were never

attacked. We then got that man out of town as quickly as we could. He was a senior public official who just went a little screwy. We heard horrendous stories from our friends in neighboring countries later. People in Egypt, I remember this, had to run a sort of gauntlet to get on trains to go up to Alexandria to be evacuated. It was horrendous for them. My family had gone ahead, fortunately, so I felt very free and confident and safe for myself, particularly after we saw what happened that first morning. On it went, and I left July 1st, when the war had long since ended and the Israelis were exultant and had hold of territories now which they have been ever since trying to figure what to do with.

Q: What about the acquisition of the West Bank and all of Jerusalem and all of that. How was that playing? I mean when you left there, not too long after the war-

LISSFELT: There was exhilaration on the part of the Israelis, particularly on the taking of the Golan Heights, which was done the last day, on Friday. I'll never forget that Friday sitting in my backyard in Herzliya north of Tel Aviv and seeing the Israeli Air Force flying back from their attacks on it. They were bound and determined not to let the Syrians escape scot-free from that war. It was clear. But particularly the taking of the Golan Heights - from which *kibbutzim* below were shelled periodically. You had to look up at the Heights to appreciate the military advantage. There was exhilaration on all Israeli hands. My neighbor was a young man of American origin but living in Israel, an insurance executive, who was fighting - he was just my age - fighting the third time in a war for his country as a bombardier on a plane. And these people were walking six feet off the ground. I recall our having the temerity to suggest: "Now is the time to be magnanimous. Be magnanimous in victory when you have whipped these nations. It's an opportunity which will come maybe once in a lifetime." But that certainly fell on deaf ears, and I don't recall how persistently the U.S. government pursued that. The idea was, now is the time to settle Jerusalem; now is the time to settle the West Bank, give it back, establish relationships. You're the victor. Be as magnanimous as you possibly can in victory, and it might settle the Middle East problem forever. But you suggested that and hardly got to the end of your sentence before sensing that the person listening to you, an Israeli, was *so* relieved by what they had accomplished in six days - I mean, with reason. He was intoxicated.

JUSTICE ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG

Ambassador, United Nations

New York, NY (1965-1968)

Justice Goldberg was born and raised in Illinois and educated at La DePaul and Northwestern Universities. He served in the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, after which he persuaded a career in Law. He subsequently became a major figure in the United States government, serving as Secretary of Labor, Associate Justice

of the US Supreme Court and finally as US Ambassador to the United Nations. Justice Goldberg was closely involved in major issues at the United Nations, including the Vietnam War and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1978. He died in 1990. Justice Goldenberg was interviewed by Ted Gittinger in 1983.

Q: Let's talk about that 1967 war for a minute. From your vantage point at the UN, how did you interpret Nasser's moves?

GOLDBERG: I knew a war was inevitable when Nasser moved his troops into the Sinai and Sharm el Sheik, evicting the UN. It was impossible for Israel to mobilize its troops and keep them mobilized for an indefinite period. They have a civilian army. Indefinite mobilization would bankrupt the country. Therefore I anticipated, as the record proves, that Israel would have to launch a pre-emptive strike. They couldn't indefinitely continue with complete mobilization, giving Nasser the option to launch an assault when he chose. And the Israelis always said that blockading the Straits of Tiran would be a casus belli. I told this to [Abba] Eban when he called on me after seeing President Johnson on the Friday preceding the outbreak of the war on the following Monday. Johnson twisted his arm at the Friday meeting. Eban saw me after he saw Johnson, went back to his cabinet, and said, "Well, the President of the United States says he's with us provided we pursue our diplomatic endeavors." When he came to see me after seeing the President -- I knew him; I always called him Aubrey, he changed his name to Abba -- I said, "Aubrey, tell me" -- he was dead tired, he really wasn't functioning. It was the Friday before the war started on Monday morning. The Israeli cabinet always meets on Sunday. I said, "What did the President say to you?" He reported, "The President said to me, 'Subject to our constitutional proscriptions, we are with you.'" I said to Eban, "You owe it to your government, because lives are going to be lost and your security is involved, to tell your cabinet that the President's statement means a joint resolution of Congress before coming to your aid, and the President can't get such a resolution because of the Vietnam War."

I have always believed in candor. I reported my conversation with Eban to the State Department and to the White House. Well, the Israelis debated Eban's report and my comments in the cabinet meeting on Sunday. [Levi] Eshkol, Israel's Prime Minister, sent a flash telegram to Johnson on Sunday in which Eshkol said -- he didn't refer to me -- "Our foreign secretary says that you made a commitment to really stand by us. Please confirm." Johnson then called me. He said, "Do you understand I made a commitment to go to war with Egypt with the Israelis if Nasser doesn't get out of the Sinai?" I said, "No. Look at my telegram to you." He said, "I haven't seen it." I said, "Get it, Mr. President. It says that you used the words 'subject to our constitutional provisions,' and it further says in my opinion, I don't see that the House and Senate are going to agree. You were very careful." He said, "Thank you." He said, "What do I do about Eshkol's telegram?" and I said, "Don't answer it."

Q: With reference to the couple of weeks or month before the war actually broke out, Nasser took a number of moves, made a number of statements, which were regarded as inflammatory. Did he act in the belief that the Israelis were not going to make war?

GOLDBERG: I don't know. Nasser's rhetoric always had to be taken with a grain of salt, as is customary with Arab rhetoric. It's pretty high-flown stuff. I did get most of the intelligence reports. I did not get the Mac Bundy reports, which evaluated the flow of intelligence, although Mac and I are great friends. There was no intimation in the fragmentary reports furnished to me that Nasser was planning what he did do. I recall the circumstances when I received real intelligence very well. I was taking all the UN ambassadors on a Circle Line tour of New York. My wife and I were tired of formal dinners, so we took the UN ambassadors on the Circle Tour. We had an old accordion to provide music and we served our guests hot dogs and the like. In the midst of the tour, which took place about the middle of May, a Coast Guard cutter hailed me and said I was urgently required to go to the U.S. mission, the President wants to talk to me. To the applause of the passengers, I had to climb down a ladder to get on, and it was then that I learned from the President that Nasser had moved into the Sinai, and that he had brushed the UN peacekeeping force aside.

I always faulted U Thant for not playing a waiting game, and also Ralph Bunche -- but Ralph was getting older and sick -- for acceding to Nasser's request. Instead of immediately acceding, they should have said, "We must first obtain the approval of the [General] Assembly or the Security Council." We had a letter which was given at the time of the 1956-57 war, from Hammarskjöld to Dulles saying that, at the insistence of the U.S., the UN peacekeeping force in the Sinai would only be withdrawn when their mission was completed, which translated means it would not be withdrawn absent a peace treaty. Interestingly enough, because Bunche's eyesight had failed and his memory somewhat, he didn't recall it. I had to bring him a copy of this letter. He didn't remember the letter.

Q: Did anybody ask the Israelis to accept the peacekeeping force on their side?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes. Since Nasser was the aggressor, there was no discussion about this. Egypt withdrew from the Sinai by force of Israeli arms, and the terms of the deal were that the Sinai would be demilitarized. So that it was not logical to have a discussion about a peacekeeping force on the Israeli side. What was involved was the demilitarization of the Sinai, which had been agreed to with DA Hammarskjöld. After all, the Israelis in 1956-57 pulled out at our insistence, General Eisenhower's, and part of the deal was what I told you, a letter that the peacekeeping force -- which [David] Ben-Gurion was reluctant to accept; after all, he had to pull out. The quid pro quo was that the UN peacekeeping force in the Sinai would not be withdrawn until its mission was complete.

Q: Let me recount a couple of things that we both are perfectly aware of. One was that the Israelis could not maintain their armies in the field indefinitely. The other is that Nasser began to remilitarize the Sinai.

GOLDBERG: Yes. He breached the understanding.

Q: He closed the Gulf of Aqaba, at least declared a blockade.

GOLDBERG: Yes, notwithstanding that Israel had to have access to Africa and to the port of Eilat.

Q: No, I have seen reports that claim the Russians were feeding Nasser intelligence.

GOLDBERG: That is correct. But on the first part, I did what our navy went up in arms about, but I said I had no choice and the President, I must say, supported me. In order to put to rest this canard, I invited UN observers to go on board our carriers and see their logs to demonstrate our planes did not participate, you see. Now about Russians -- it's a most peculiar thing, never explored in depth. The Russians certainly knew that the Israelis were not going to launch a pre-emptive strike, certainly Against Egypt. They were always worried more about Syria. Syria was ideologically closer to them. Although, during the fighting, the Soviets seemed to get fed up with Syria. Would it interest you to know that for some reason of Russian policy, when the Israelis started to move to El Quneitra and were thirty miles from Damascus, the same Syrian ambassador who had insulted me, came to me and said, "We need a cease-fire." And I said, "Go to your friend, the Soviet Ambassador." The Syrian Ambassador said, "He won't listen to me." We thereupon proposed the cease-fire resolution at the behest of Syria. I said, "We don't want another war and we don't want Damascus invaded." So I was the one who offered at the request of Syria, a cease-fire.

I remember further instances of Soviet behavior during this crisis. Khrushchev sent a threatening telegram to the White House similar to the one Kissinger got all excited about during his tenure. Johnson called me and read it to me. I was in charge, as I have mentioned. The President asked, "How do we answer this?" you know, over the hot line. And I said, "Very simply. It's a phony. The Russians logistically are a long way away, and the Israelis have a pretty potent army." So I said, "Why don't you answer -- " He said, "I'll put my secretary on." I dictated an answer and the President sent it. This, in essence, was the answer: "I suggest your Ambassador at the UN communicate with Ambassador Goldberg, who is in charge of this matter, and discuss it." This was the last I heard about it.

Q: It seems to me that Nasser either had very bad judgment or a very poor intelligence service.

GOLDBERG: There's no doubt the Russians told him of their suspicions, whether genuine or fabricated I cannot say. It is significant, however, that before Nasser mobilized and occupied the Sinai, the Russian Ambassador to Israel woke Eshkol up and said, "Our information is that

you're going to strike Syria." And Eshkol, in his pajamas, three o'clock in the morning, according to all accounts I've read, said, "You come with me to the Syrian front and I'll show you it's not so." And the Russian Ambassador said, "We have our own means and I'm not going to accompany you."

Now, it's true there were some belligerent statements by Israel, but those were not enough for any country to base its policy on. Now why the Russians fed the Syrians and Egypt with suspicions and highly provocative intelligence and removed their personnel has always puzzled me. Did they want to stir things up, create instability? This may be the only explanation. Because they must have had better intelligence.

Q: That would be my point. Surely the Egyptians had sources of their own, didn't they?

GOLDBERG: Well, but you must remember the extent to which, at that point, Egypt relied upon the Russians, a great deal. There were thousands of Russian specialists in Egypt at the time, and thousands in Syria. So, whether the Soviets were the motivating factor for Nasser, I cannot say.

GEORGE QUINCEY LUMSDEN

Chief of Consular Section

Amman (1965-1968)

Born and raised in New Jersey, Ambassador Lumsden was educated at Princeton and Georgetown Universities. After service in the US Navy, Mr. Lumsden joined the Foreign Service. Following assignments in Izmir and Bonn, he was assigned to Amman and Beirut, where he undertook Arabic Language Studies. Subsequent foreign assignments include Kuwait, Paris and The United Arab Emirates, where he served as Ambassador. In Washington, Mr. Lumsden held positions concerning the Arabian Gulf States. After retiring, he pursued petroleum and energy matters in the private sector. Ambassador Lumsden was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Let's talk about the '67 War. Was this foreseen? How did it play out?

LUMSDEN: The extent of what actually happened, I don't think anybody foresaw the momentous extent of the preemptive strike that Israel took. In early May of 1967, I had put in for leave anyway and got it approved for summer. In that my wife and children were going to go to Greece where her parents were still living and they had a nice beach house, they left Amman about the 17th/18th of May. Subsequently, one of the smartest things that I ever did not knowing that I was doing it. About the 20th of May, Ahmed Shakari himself arrived in Amman. The

rhetoric, what the Arabs called “mozaiadeh,” the outbidding of who was going to be more patriotic than the other, was going on. Of course, there were huge demonstrations in Amman and in the West Bank that worried the hell out of the Jordanian government. I was lucky enough to go around reporting some of this stuff. The Consular Section was so busy that they got another consul, who was eventually going to be my relief and he got there. The ambassador in about April said, “We’re going to transfer you over to work with Dick Murphy in the Political Section,” so they sent a replacement. Don’t let me forget to tell you the story about my relief there. But Shakari arrives. Huge demonstrations. I’m downtown thinking, “Boy, for once, I’m really in it now. Finally, I’ve made it.” I was still pretty naive on things. But at least I was down there. They were having riots. I was reporting them back. I knew that Shakari was here. “Be careful, Quincey, you don’t look like an Arab. Look out.”

Two days later, the ambassador, Findley Burns called, “Quincey, come with me. We’re going somewhere.” The ambassador; Dick Murphy, the political officer, the station chief, who by the way is still the personal representative of the old king and the new king here in Washington, and I were summoned to the prime minister’s. This was Wasfi Tal, a wonderful guy. We sat down. I wondered exactly why I was there. It later became apparent. I was working with Dick, but I knew relief had just arrived. The prime minister started to explain a likely scenario that if hostilities broke out, we as Americans had to do a couple of very important things. First, we had to get that squadron of F-104s with American pilots out of there. The second thing was, what were we going to do with all these Americans? We had a USAID group building a road. We had agricultural experts down in the valley. And we had a lot of Palestinian and Jordanian Arabs with U.S. passports. What do you plan to do with all these people when hostilities break out? Then I did probably the one thing that a young officer in those conditions should not do. I opened my mouth. I said, “But Mr. Prime Minister, surely Jordan isn’t going to go to war with Israel.” He stopped in mid-sentence, took off his glasses, and said, “Young man, you’re rather new to our world, aren’t you?” Of course, I was fairly new then. I said, “Yes, Sir, I am.” He continued, “Let me tell you one thing. You must never forget that we are Arabs and you must never underestimate our capacity for totally illogical action.” That was the prime minister. Word for word. Wasfi Tal subsequently was assassinated by Black September because he was the progenitor of that. It’s the famous scene at the Sheraton Hotel in Cairo where the assassin drank his blood. The war came. I was there because I was to get Americans the heck out of the way. As a result of that, I was sort of informally attached to a Jordan army medical unit during the war. As soon as the cease-fire was sort of holding, I went with them down into the Jordan Valley to try to find people who were coming out from housing and sent them all back to Amman. Of course, we couldn’t do anything with them because the airport had been bombed out and the runway was all shot. Finally, they got some C-130s in there. That took about three weeks. But I traveled from South Shunay to North Shunay. That is less than 10 miles along the Jordan Valley. I counted over 100 armored vehicles that had been shot out there. They hadn’t cleaned up the bodies and stuff yet. Most of them were not Jordanian. They were Iraqi. The Iraqis had entered not really knowing what they were doing, except that they were going to be Arabs. They were

very confused. I think some of these vehicles probably drove off the road themselves in the confusion when Nasser had told the Iraqis and Hussein that he still had air power to protect them. Of course, the Israelis took care of the Egyptians the first couple of days and then went after the West Bank. These guys arrived just in time to get totally clobbered down there. So, that was a real eye opening time.

Now, I received previously, just at the time of the shift over in the Political Section and my relief arrived, orders just before the war. This was a good six months in advance. I was going to be the principal officer and consul, the top officer at the post, in Basra. Well, there was no post in Basra after this event. I said, "Well, you know, I would love to go to the formal Arabic training at FSI/Beirut and area studies at AUB if you haven't got an assignment for me." They said, "Okay, we'll take the MLAT Test (Modern Language Aptitude Test)." I took the test before. I also wanted to see if I could get Arabic training, not just before the war. The test was administered by none other than April Glaspie of Baghdad fame. Although I didn't star on the test, nevertheless, they said, "You're getting the feel of this. We'll let you go to FSI in Beirut." So, that was the real turning point for me. When we left Jordan, we got some home leave and then I went to FSI/Beirut at the end of 1967.

Q: We'll stop at that point, but first I want to go back to during the war. Was the fact that Jordan entered the war considered by others as "This isn't going to work?"

LUMSDEN: It was considered by us working in the embassy as folly, but having said that (Of course, Dick Murphy would be the one to really talk to about this.) it probably could not have been avoided. The Jordanians, all as a part of posturing, because Nasser was bringing pressure, had put long tongs in the Latroon salient. These were these long army tanks.

ANTHONY J. PERNA

Air Attaché

Tel Aviv (1965-1969)

Anthony J. Perna was born in Jersey City, New Jersey in 1918. He attended Syracuse for two years and then decided to join the Air Force in 1940. He served in the Air Force for twenty years and was involved with the nuclear weapons tests on the Bikini Atoll. In 1960 he was sent to Paris and given the Strategic Air Command post with NATO. He also served with the National War College in Washington D.C. Mr. Perna was interviewed by Francine D. Haughey in 1992.

Q: This was an American Navy ship?

PERNA: This was an American ship. Actually it was run by the American intelligence people, NSA. They had staffs of Navy people and they were from the agency that was involved in listening, not only to the Soviets, but to everybody. That was their business. The Israelis claimed that it was mistaken identity. In the heat of battle, the heat of war, they thought it was Egyptian. They did not think it was American. They thought it was Egyptian and they had some bad "snafus" in their control center, one team changing and another team coming on, failed to tell the team coming on that there was a plot of a target out there that had been recorded previously. And in the confusion, the next time it was sighted they said it was unidentified. And the Israeli Air Force attacked it and before they stopped, they had shot it up and killed some 35 people. The Israeli government apologized profusely, and said it was a mix up, it was not deliberate. It was an error, they were sorry, and they promised recompense, etc. This has been a bone of contention down through the years and journalists have tried very hard to make a case both on television and in the printed journalism that the Israelis did it deliberately. Our position at the Embassy after sending my Naval Attaché out there and flying over in an helicopter and doing everything that we could, and checking with the Ambassador, we reported to Washington that we had no grounds upon which to dispute the statements that the Israeli government made. It was an official government position that they had made a mistake and that it was an error in the heat of war, and that they were sorry. They admitted it and said that they would pay the damage, which they ultimately did. But the case has never ended. There are still a lot of people, including families of the wounded and of the fatalities who believe that it is legitimate to make a case that this was done deliberately. I accepted the Israeli position.

But in saying that I accept their explanation on the Liberty case, I would make this kind of a general qualifier. The Israelis could do anything, no matter how bad it embarrasses us, and no matter how bad it insults us, if they think it's in their own national interest. If they think it's a big enough issue, even though we get a black eye from it, they will do it. And so will we, and so will any country. This is not restricted to the Israelis. But it was a bad episode. The ship limped off west under its own power, and they got the casualties off, and the Navy came to rescue them, etc.

The period following the Six Day War was equally deeply involved with the UN resolutions: Would they give back this? and would they give back that?" etc. And a quick synopsis goes like this. The Arab countries would not recognize any boundaries other than the original green line that existed when the Six Day War began. The green line was decided on the island of Rhodes in 1948, and the Israelis said no way will we go back. They have an area in the middle of the country where there is only 11 miles from the green line to the ocean and this separates Haifa and the Galilee from the plains of Sharon and down to Tel Aviv. The plains of Sharon is the coastal area going down to Tel Aviv and then further south towards Beersheba and Jerusalem. But that 11 mile area they will never have again.

Jerusalem, they will never have divided again. Jerusalem, they have made their capital and they have built big apartment complexes all around in areas which had been Arab. We don't have our Embassy in Jerusalem. Our Embassy is in Tel Aviv. Most other countries have their Embassies

in Jerusalem. But the Brits and the French are still in Tel Aviv and I think the Germans and some of the other NATO allies are there. The Soviets of course left at the beginning of the Six Day War and they're just now reestablishing diplomatic relations. They haven't had them since 67, but they're about to renew them.

But the city of Jerusalem is never going to be divided again. The Israelis will go to war over it. And although there are large numbers of Arabs living in Jerusalem, there's a whole Arab sector in the old city; Bethlehem is Arab completely. To my knowledge there are no Jews living in Bethlehem. But in the area of Jerusalem there are large populations in areas where they have apartment complexes, shopping centers, libraries, swimming pools, hospitals, schools, etc. There are about six of these areas around the city.

The West Bank has the Israeli settlements, as you know, for various reasons. Those zealots who wanted to force the Arabs out are trying to do it by building settlements and pushing them. Those who are militarily oriented want the settlements to be in positions to stop any attack that might come in the future, principally on the high ground, strategic positions, and along the Jordan River. Since Rabin came to power, (and I know him well, he was Chief of Staff during the Six Day War. I entertained him at home lots of times, traveled with him) he's more of a dove than Shamir who was a hawk. He's talking now, and there's a possibility that he will negotiate an interim government for five years, give the Palestinians some kind of a police force of their own and permit them to run their own infrastructure. Presently, the Israeli military takes care of the roads, and the communications, and the electricity and all that. They will give that over to the Palestinians and they will give them some measure of self rule. They won't let them have military defense, military self-defense, although they will let them have a police force. We're talking about a three thousand man police force. The Israelis will control foreign relation. They won't let the Palestinian run foreign relations. But everything else, they will let them do themselves. Run their own jurisprudence system, run their own tax system, run everything themselves. And they've stopped construction on some six thousand housing units. And it looks now like Rabin is going, hopefully, to push to get these talks going. Baker was just there a few days ago, and the prospects are that if the zealots on each side don't take too much control that there can be a period of relative quiet, and this will keep the factions from raising hell. There will be terrorist attacks, and there will be bombs, and there will be this kind of stuff going on, still, but an interim plan is possible.

JAMES K. BISHOP, Jr.
Commercial Officer
Beirut (1966-1968)

Ambassador James K. Bishop, Jr. was born in New York in 1938. He received his bachelor's degree from Holy Cross College in 1960. His career has included positions in Auckland, Beirut, Yaounde, and ambassadorships to Nigeria, Liberia,

and Somalia. Ambassador Bishop was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November 1995.

Q: You left Auckland in 1966 and went to Beirut from Summer of 1966 to the Fall of 1968. How did that happen?

BISHOP:

The most interesting part of my tour came in 1967, during the so called "Six Day War" between Israel on one side and Egypt, Syria and Jordan on the other. By that point, as I said, I had joined the Commercial Section. But with the onset of the conflict, I was instructed to return to the Consular Section to help out with the evacuation of the Americans. We evacuated 3,300 people in 36 hours by getting Pan Am to send to Beirut eighteen aircraft, leasing a half a dozen MEA airplanes, and commandeering an American ship which happened to be in port. The Foreign Service manual gave us the authority to do that; so we did. We put 600 people on the deck of the ship, which took them to Cyprus. It was a pretty wild time.

We used the campus of the American University as the evacuation center. I sat up shop there with my consular staff--my faithful Lebanese assistants. We did the necessary documentation work for the evacuees. At one point, we heard gunfire which seemed to be getting closer and closer to us. We could see the British Embassy staff, whose chancery was next to the University compound, busy burning their classified documents on the balcony. They also heard the gun fire; they went back inside and then returned carrying hockey sticks and cricket bats--to repel anyone who might have tried to climb into the building, I guess. As it turned out, the gun fire came from Lebanese troops who were retreating in the face of Palestinian mobs that were sweeping through the campus. We were harassed by the Palestinians who were very suspicious of the use we might be making of our walkie-talkies, but no physical damage was inflicted. At night, we did hear and see explosions in the harbor. I remember people playing guitars and singing while waiting for buses to take them to the airport. We had to travel through neighborhoods filled with Palestinian refugees, who were presumably hostile. We had Lebanese soldiers and policemen, with machine guns, on the buses.

We took the evacuees to the airport and put them on the planes. I said goodbye to my own family. No one knew where the planes were going because Pan Am had pulled them off of their regular routes and was going to send each plane to a point where it could be used again for regular Pan Am flights. I was asked to stay in Beirut along with about 25 other embassy employees out of a complement of 225 that we had when the war started. The staff which was left included Marines, younger officers and the DCM--the Ambassador having been ordered to evacuate. It was an exciting time for a few days.

I was the duty officer the night Nasser announced that he was resigning. I was in the chancery with just a Marine and an Army captain who dropped in for conversation. We had people grouped together in apartments located on the two main access routes to the Embassy. Someone in one of the apartments reported by radio that a mob of about 5,000 people was marching by toward the Embassy. I had been given the name of a Captain Nohas--I believe--at military

headquarters whom I was to call in case of an emergency. So I called him and he told me that he was aware of the mob. He said that there were some Lebanese army tanks were following the mob. I suggested that perhaps it would be wiser to have the tanks move ahead of the mob so that they could come between it and the Embassy. Ultimately, the tanks did move ahead of the mob and broke the mob up before it could do any more damage to the Embassy. By then the embassy had been fire bombed and shot up by protestors.

The next morning, I went to an apartment occupied by three other officers to get some sleep. This apartment overlooked another approach to the Embassy. As dawn broke, I heard mobs below chanting "Nasser! Nasser! Nasser!" The landlord came into the apartment and noticed that we had a radio and a weapon. A Shiite, he said: "I will never tell the mob that you are here." When he left, we discussed the situation. We had been considering moving anyway; so we decided that we would go one at a time, disguised to appear as Lebanese as possible. The first of my apartment mates to leave was Ed Djerejian, who spoke Armenian, Arabic and French. As he was Armenian, he looked like some members of the local population. Then David Zweifel went; he was bald and could have passed as an Egyptian. He also spoke Arabic. Then I slipped out. That left Tucker Scully--6'2 and blond. The only clothes he had with him were a blue button down shirt, chinos and sneakers. There was no way that he could pass for a native. He reproached us later for having moved so rapidly and keeping our distance from him; we had agreed before leaving the apartment that we would stay within a hundred yards of each other. By the time we neared the embassy, the troops had established a perimeter around it. Djerejian identified himself to an officer who happened to be a Maronite Christian, and greeted him with "Viva Chamoun! Viva Eisenhower!" He gave Ed a big embrace and let us through the military cordon to the Embassy.

When we arrived in Beirut, we found politics to be communal. We lived in a Druze quarter--deliberately. We were looking for a building that had some character. We had decided that we would put our kids into local schools so that they could learn French and Arabic. We found an apartment on the ground floor of a building owned by the Elgawi family. Across the street, there was a group of Syrian laborers living in the basement--there must have been twenty living in two rooms. The Elgawi's kids were taxi drivers. We learned--as much as foreigners could learn--about the Druze who lived in the same building with us.

As a consular officer, responsible for the approval of visas, I was very much sought after the Lebanese; we had lots of social invitations--mainly from the Christians--the Maronites and the Orthodox--but not exclusively so. Many Christians would not acknowledge that they were Lebanese; they preferred to be known as Phoenicians, putting as much distance between themselves and the Muslims as they could. The fracture lines that later ripped Lebanon apart were quite evident in the mid-1960s, even though communal violence had not yet broken out. When we had to evacuate, I saw a sign on a wall which read: "Saturday today; Sunday tomorrow" implying that the Jews would be attacked first and then the Christians.

We had to get people out of various neighborhoods after the evacuation because mobs went through those areas where Americans lived, destroying any property that might have been ours.

I can remember a staff meeting that I attended as the 1967 war approached; various armies were moving in various directions. We had an Air Force Attaché, who unfortunately was no more capable than the Naval Attaché. He reported that the four divisions of the Iraqi army were moving to the Jordanian frontier on their way to Israel. Porter looked down the table, said: "And I suppose the residuals are forming a welcoming party for the Kurds who are arriving in Baghdad." Ambassador and Mrs. Porter were quite attentive to the Embassy staff. I didn't have a close relationship with him, but people who worked closer to him felt the generosity that both he and Mrs. Porter had extended to them. He didn't speak Arabic, but from my vantage point, he seemed to be well regarded by all elements of the Lebanese community.

EDWARD GIBSON LANPHER

Rotation Officer

Tel Aviv (1967-1969)

Ambassador Edward Gibson Lanpher was born in 1942 in Richmond Virginia. He earned his undergraduate degree in 1966 from Brown University and was sworn into the Foreign Service later that same year. His first post was as a Rotation Officer in Tel Aviv, Israel but later his Foreign Service career took him to such posts as Gabon, England, Zimbabwe, and Australia before he was appointed Ambassador to Zimbabwe. He was interviewed in June 2002 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Why don't we talk about the Six Day War?

LANPHER: As things heated up and the rhetoric started flowing out of the Arabs and they blockaded the Straits of Tiran, there was definitely an increasing prospect of war. The last week of May the U.S. government put out a warning to American citizens to not travel to Israel and, if you're there, get out. Cliff English put me in charge of the evacuation of American citizens, including repatriation loans. I worked my butt off for 10 days and we got a lot of American citizens out of the country between then and the fifth of June.

Q: Did you find that all of you were seeing this as a just war?

LANPHER: I think we all thought it was probably a just war in the sense that Israel didn't really have much of an alternative. I don't think we spent a lot of time pondering that question. We were all too busy. Our ambassador, Ambassador Barbour, was probably the most plugged in American ambassador there ever was. When the first air strike went off on Monday morning, he was invited to the cabinet room and sat with the rest of the cabinet for a briefing on it. He was like the 21st member of the cabinet. That was the nature of the relationship. So, we were very well informed. With the Egyptian air force out of action, the war was essentially won in the first

hour. The rest of it was on the ground as the Israelis blitzed with their tank force through Gaza and into the northern Sinai. I was one of the first Americans down into the northern Sinai after the war. The devastation of the “blitzkrieg” was quite incredible.

Q: You started on the Six Day War. Now why don't we talk about the Liberty and your take on that.

LANPHER: During the Six Day War, which went from Monday, June 5, to Saturday, June 11, it was very hectic in Israel and throughout the Middle East. There was a heck of a war on three fronts. As part of our monitoring of that war, and I was not aware of it at the time, the National Security Agency had sent an eavesdropping ship to the Mediterranean that was apparently positioned very close to the Israeli forces in the northern Sinai to eavesdrop presumably on the communications during the course of the war as part of our overall monitoring effort. On the Thursday of the Six Day War, that ship, which was close to the Israeli coast, within eyesight, came under attack by Israeli forces - air force and navy. Before I left the embassy that afternoon, I had heard about this attack on this ship. I don't think anybody in our embassy was aware that that ship was in the area. But we certainly heard about it as soon as the attack had taken place. The ship wasn't sunk and it managed to limp off but there were heavy casualties, something in the neighborhood of 16-20 dead. When I got home to my house in the Israeli suburb north of Tel Aviv that evening, and my wife wasn't there because she had been evacuated, my neighbor, Oded Vered, came over to my house and said, “I need to talk to you. Something terrible has happened.” He proceeded to tell me that he, as an Israeli naval reservist, had commanded one of the motor torpedo boats that attacked this ship, the Liberty - he didn't even know the name of it and I didn't know the name of it at the time – along the coast that afternoon. He told me that as they approached the ship, the ship was not flying any flag and that there was no identification on it indicating that it was a U.S. ship or a U.S. naval ship and that he as commander of his motor torpedo boat had gotten on the signal lamps and flashed repeatedly the international signal asking “what ship where found.” There is some sort of international code about all these things. They never got a response from the ship and they proceeded to attack it with, I guess, torpedoes and machine guns. He was very distraught about this because they subsequently discovered that it was an American ship. But the damage had been done. After he left, I immediately contacted our assistant naval attaché, Lieutenant Commander Allan Wile, who later worked for the State Department in INR, and Captain Ernie Castle, our naval attaché. They were very interested in the information that I had gotten from this fellow and gave me a lot of questions to go back and ask him further. By the time I was able to talk to him the next day, he had obviously been told by his commanders to say nothing. The lid had gone on. There was no more discussion. I had talked to him right after the incident, as soon as he got home, and he had been so upset by this whole thing that he had blurted this out to me. But then the lid went on and he would never talk to me again about it. We remained good friends, traveled around Israel together, but that was it.

Q: What was the attitude within the embassy?

LANPHER: People in the embassy had been unaware that the ship was in the area and were incredulous but I think the consensus as best I recall was that this was a tragic accident in the heat of the war. You had war going on on three fronts. Everybody was tired after three or four days of the war. The Israeli navy had not had an appreciable role in the war. Everybody wanted to be a part of it. There was overeagerness, trigger happiness, whatever. But accidents do happen in war. Witness, recently two of our planes managed to kill a bunch of Canadians in Afghanistan.

Q: Was there a point when the Jordanians and the Syrians came in? Were there real concerns that things would go bad for Israel?

LANPHER: Not really. There was great apprehension before the war started that things would go bad for Israel. They were clearly outnumbered and outgunned by any order of battle information – number of tanks, planes, etc. The idea of a three front war was something that had everybody worried. We were worried ourselves because we had evacuated all our dependents. We told American citizens to get out of Israel a week or 10 days before the war started. But in many respects, the war was over in the first hour when the Israelis took out the Egyptian air force and sent their tank columns into Gaza and into the Sinai. That was a rout. That was an unbelievable rout. The Israelis were just very, very good. Tragically, the Jordanians and the Syrians got sucked into this, but by the time they got sucked into it through their own propaganda and beliefs, the Egyptians had been pretty thoroughly trashed and the Israelis were on the Canal in no time. There were some big battles in the central Sinai. But the Israelis were able to shift a lot of forces to the Jordanian and Syrian front in the latter days of the war, so it wasn't really a three front war 100% from day one.

Q: At the time, as the Israelis rolled into the West Bank and into Gaza, was it felt that they were going to stay? Was there any concern about their staying? What was the feeling in the embassy?

LANPHER: We simply didn't know. Of course, as the war went on, and it was only a six day war, but in its aftermath, the focus shifted to New York, Security Council resolutions, and Jarring missions. We were also involved in the year after the war in trying to broker secret peace negotiations between Israel and Jordan. We were involved in peacemaking efforts. I don't recall whether we thought the Israelis would stay on. The Israelis lost over 600 dead in the Six Day War. At that time the country had about 2.5 million people. That was a terrible amount of casualties for them to take in a small country. So, there were very strong feelings certainly on the Israeli side that they weren't going to give up anything that they had taken except in return for real peace. They were very adamant about that. On the eve of the Six Day War, at its narrowest point, the Jordanians were within 17 miles of Tel Aviv on the coast. That doesn't give people a lot of sense of security if you're in artillery range of somebody who says they want to kill you and take you over. From the Israeli perspective, I think they had a case. But I don't recall whether we had any absolute policy on the Israelis getting out of that territory.

TERESITA C. SCHAFFER

Rotation Aide

Tel Aviv (1967-1969)

Ambassador Schaffer was born in New York and later educated in France. She received her undergraduate degree from Bryn Mawr College and joined the Foreign Service. Her Foreign Service career took her to Israel, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. Ambassador Schaffer was interviewed by Thomas Stern in September 1998.

Q: *So in early 1967, you went to Tel Aviv.*

SCHAFFER:

Before any serious hostilities broke out, I remember talking to the Political Counselor at a social occasion. I asked him whether he thought that Israel had any territorial ambitions on any surrounding areas -- like the West Bank and the old city of Jerusalem. He said that he didn't think so; he felt that if the Israelis ever occupied those areas it would be by force of circumstances. I remember that analysis well, because it was so correct.

The first sign of the trouble that culminated in the 1967 war was an aerial dog-fight between Syrian and Israeli planes which occurred in early April, 1967. The Israelis shot down a number of Syrian MiGs. That was a serious incident in part because it was such a departure from the normal pattern of infrequent border skirmishes. The dog-fight increased tensions thereby leading to a flurry of diplomatic activities designed to block an escalation. I was generally familiar with those diplomatic efforts by reading the general file maintained in the Embassy's communication center that was available to all American officers; in fact, we were encouraged to read it. Since I was not terribly busy, I read it assiduously. Of course, the file did not include any sensitive traffic, but since I had become friends with a few members of the Political Section; they filled me on details that were not in the reading file. So I had a pretty good sense of what was going on and what the Ambassador and the Political Section were doing in that crisis atmosphere.

There followed a number of further incidents. I still remember a couple of fiery speeches by President Nasser of Egypt. He said that he was asking the UN observers, who had been monitoring the Israel-Egypt borders and in Gaza, to leave. He also said that he was closing the Straits of Tiran -- the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba and therefore the Israeli port of Elat. The Israelis had for many years stated that the closing of the Strait would be a *causis belli*. So, more and more analysts came to the conclusion that war was very likely.

The UN observers did depart. The Straits were closed. The Israelis started a general mobilization. That became obvious to us because many of our Israeli employees were called up for army service. In early June, 1967, a government of national unity was formed with Moshe Dayan -- the leader of the opposition -- joining the government. This new government was a clear signal that war was possible -- if not imminent. I remember going to visit some Israeli friends and helping them put masking tape on their windows, to prevent them from shattering in case of air raids.

The national unity government was formed on June 2 -- three days before the war broke out. The second of June was a Friday. Over that week-end we were blessed by a visit by James Tate, Mayor of Philadelphia. We knew he was coming, but he apparently had not been reading the tea leaves very well. In any case, I was assigned to help the control officer -- Mark Lissfelt -- in the care and feeding of the Mayor. Before landing in Israel, Tate had requested that photographs be taken of him and the Prime Minister and of him and the Mayor of Tel Aviv. Of course, the PM was in cabinet meetings for much of the day and night; he had much more important matters to worry about than the visit of an American Mayor. The Mayor of Tel Aviv was in the hospital at the time with a very serious heart condition -- he was dying. So Tate didn't get his photo opportunities; on Monday, he came to the Embassy to seek assistance for some more impossible requests. He then heard the air raid sirens that signaled the start of the Six Day War. I had also heard the sirens earlier. I knew that the Israelis had been testing the siren system for sometime; I thought that this was just more testing. I went out to my balcony, after finishing my breakfast. Although the traffic on the street was quite light, I didn't see any other signs of an impending air raid. I noticed that a military jeep, driven by a person in uniform, stopped across the street from my apartment. Out of it jumped two kids who then quickly headed for their school. I interpreted that as a positive sign. So I drove to the Embassy just in time to hear the sirens starting again. Mayor Tate was wondering around the Embassy, obviously displeased and unhappy with our inability to get him his photo ops. I was told that it was my job to get him down to the Embassy basement because that was what we were supposed to do when the sirens went off. Tate was most unhappy about that development.

The Israelis were filled with great anxiety about the War. I was first struck by the starkness of the response. For example, when one walked the streets of Tel Aviv, there were no young men; only children and older people. There was practically no vehicular traffic because cars had been requisitioned. Eventually, a few did reappear, mud caked because they had been used in the desert and therefore had been camouflaged. I discussed the War with many of my Israeli friends. As I mentioned earlier the family I knew best was Sephardic. They were very anxious and bitter about the Arabs, who they thought didn't care how many people they would kill. For that family,

Israel was the only place to be. So I think that the sense of being beleaguered was the most memorable one.

At the end of the War, there was an incredible euphoria. People drove through the street with tops down, honking, waiving, singing, shouting. I remember well the annual Festival of Song which was held in Tel Aviv. That year, one of the songs that was entered was called "Jerusalem the Golden." which had just been written. It was performed by Shuli Nathan, a singer with a gorgeous voice. It didn't win the competition, but came in a close second. But it was the song that everyone remembered from the festival.

After the Israelis had taken the old city of Jerusalem, which happened on Tuesday or Wednesday (June 6 or 7), the song writer wrote an additional stanza about the Israelis' return. It became even more popular. Young men, who were being discharged from the army were singing it -- actually shouting it. The song had captured the imagination and inner-most feelings of the Israeli people. The opportunity to return freely to the old city with all of its holy places resonated deeply; it was a huge emotional experience. Besides the euphoria of victory, which highlighted Israel's strength and fortitude in the face of considerably larger enemy forces, there was a sense that now Israel could show the world how humanely it would deal with this new situation. In the first few days, there was considerable skepticism that the map of the area had in fact been changed. Many thought that once a peace agreement was signed, much if not all of the conquered territory would be returned to the powers which controlled it before the War. By the end of the summer, this skepticism had disappeared as it became obvious that the new boundaries would be maintained, at least for the foreseeable future.

I had another interesting experience during the War. There were about 1300 American citizens living on the West Bank. The week after the end of hostilities, I was asked to go to Jerusalem to help the officers of the Consulate General respond to families in the U.S. who were anxious to know how their relatives were. I was supposed to man the office while the regular staff went out into the field to find these Americans. It was an exciting time because it was the beginning of Israel's occupation of Jerusalem. Our Consulate people knew a lot of Arabs who had lived in old Jerusalem; they were seriously distressed by the new turn of events. They had watched a major exodus of Arabs from old Jerusalem as the Israelis moved in; most of them moved to the east bank of the Jordan River.

The activities of the CG staff was very much in the old Foreign Service tradition. They looked up and down the West Bank, looking for any piece of information which would allow them to find these American citizens. The staff did know a lot of them; in other cases, they knew in what town they had been living. So they went from town to town looking for these Americans. We worked long hours during and after the War.

In Jerusalem, we were living dormitory style. The staff was ordered to leave their housing and congregate in the American School for Oriental Research, which was close to the office. This

was done partly for security reasons and partly to minimize the problems of travel in the city -- there were check points and the documentation required to move around by car changed daily. So we stayed in the neighborhood. A Consulate General officer's wife organized the kitchen that fed us most meals. In fact, this practical need created an atmosphere of camaraderie. We sometimes made our facilities available to American journalists who were coming through.

As I am sure has been documented in other oral histories, the relationships between the Embassy and the Jerusalem Consulate General were tender -- as they always had been and remained so for many years. The CG in Jerusalem was an independent post; it did not and does not report to our Ambassador in Tel Aviv. Although the tensions were noticeable, it did not stop the CG from asking for help from the Embassy.

The War had some positive impact on my personal relationships, particularly with those people whose house I visited to help put tapes on the windows. That was a kind of bonding experience. As for the reaction to the U.S. in the streets, that was harder to judge. In the middle of the War, the Israelis fired on and sank one of our Liberty ships. After the War, the French, who had been Israel's most reliable arms supplier, turned against it. So we became the putative major supplier, which became a subject for extensive discussion for the U.S.-Israel relationship.

I might just comment briefly on the tensions existing in Israeli society. The split between various religious communities was already apparent in the mid-1960s. There were some members of the religious right that would not accept the State of Israel. There was an ultra-orthodox neighborhood -- Mea Shearim -- right next to the Mandelbaum Gate. That became a problem for those who wanted to cross the Gate on Saturdays. These religious ultra-conservatives would stone cars driving through their neighborhood on the Sabbath, forcing people to take circuitous routes. This brought home to me the difficulties of maintaining a close-knit society, that included both ultra-orthodox and very liberal people. I also remember that there was a rabbi in Brooklyn who had gotten Congressional approval mandating certain grants to some of Israel's ultra orthodox schools in Jerusalem. At one point during my tour, I was asked to escort a Member of Congress, Silvio Conte (Democrat, Massachusetts), to Jerusalem; the Brooklyn rabbi was there as well. We visited the school supported by the American tax-payers. Before leaving for Jerusalem, the Ambassador called me into his office to tell me that he didn't want the Congressman or the rabbi to make any new commitments because the Israeli government objected strenuously to these schools. I was supposed to make sure that the delegation did not say more than normal pleasantries. I was half successful; I kept the Congressman away from some of the schools.

CHESTER E. BEAMAN

Deputy Chief of Mission

Damascus (1967)

Chester E. Beaman was born in Indiana in 1916. He received his bachelor's degree from Depauw University in 1938. His career includes positions in London, Wales, Cairo, Port Said, Philippines, Syria, and Malta. Mr. Stuart was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in September 1999.

Q: How was it known that a war was going to start?

BEAMAN: There were several things. One was the usual criticism by Syrians and other Arab countries by radio, of Israel and the U.S. helping them. I think the Israelis went into Jordan first. Syria had broken diplomatic relations with Jordan, of all countries, because a Syrian man and woman were going across the border into Jordan presumably to assassinate King Hussein. The customs officials were examining the car when it exploded and killed a customs official. Of course, these people were immediately taken into Jordanian custody and questioned at length. So Syria because their people had been taken into custody, broke diplomatic relations with Jordan at a time when the war was imminent. It was primarily the acrimonious condemnation on radios that caused us to think war was coming. I was down in the souk one day, and I saw soldiers buying cardboard suitcases, a lot of them. What's this about? I immediately went to the embassy to put that on the record to add to a list of other indicators. Bob Paganelli was the second ranking political officer in those days. He later became ambassador to Qatar. He spoke Arabic well and kept phoning government officials to assure safety of the embassy.

Black September (1970)

SLATOR CLAY BLACKISTON, JR.

Economics Officer

Amman (1967-1969)

Slator Clay Blackiston, Jr. was born in 1918 in Richmond, Virginia. He graduated with an A.B. degree from the University of Virginia. During World War II, he was an aviator in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Blackiston joined the Foreign Service in 1947 and served in Amsterdam, Stuttgart, Port-au-Prince, Jerusalem, Tunis, Jeddah, Cairo, Amman, and Calcutta. He was a member of the United States delegation to the United Nations in 1971. Mr. Blackiston retired from the Foreign Service in 1975. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: Were you there at the Black September movement?

BLACKISTON: I'll tell you what happened. Arab suspicion was very great; I was told that there was a rumor that I had maps. I did have maps that were just the standard maps of Jordan put out by the British cartographer's office, and they read something into this. In any event there was a rumor which the CIA had picked up, or the Jordanians had told it to them, that there was going to be some sort of assassination attempt. So for a period of time I had some protection. Then, shortly after I left, a really tragic thing happened. The assistant Army attaché--I was not there, it happened just a month or so after I left when this Black September thing started--was a FAS student, well they train army officers in various esoteric languages including Arabic and they had it up in Beirut. He had been a FAS student, spoke Arabic and had a very pretty wife. Some people came to the door and wanted to see him and he wouldn't open the door and was trying to protect his family, wife and kids I think; he was standing behind the door, the front door was locked, and they shot him through the door and killed him. Then we had the invasion of the Intercontinental Hotel where they took it over.

Another thing that happened, Bob Fisher and I, he was the head of UNRWA for Jordan, had gone down to Karami Camp. Karami Camp--UNRWA Camp--is in the Jordan Valley. There had been some infiltrators from Karami Camp into the west bank; the Israelis had retaliated in a massive way and the inhabitants of the camp, well the PLO--the place was heavily armed, we noticed this when we went down and it was not a healthy thing for outsiders to go into those camps--defended the camp and repelled the Israelis. They captured one or two Sherman tanks and one of them they had down in the main square in Amman. It was a very tense sort of situation; I went down to look at this tank but I didn't hang around. That was the situation there and then it got worse. L. Dean Brown came there as Ambassador and then there was the Black September thing and Brown had a terrible time. But I had left before he arrived.

RICHARD E. UNDELAND

Public Affairs Officer, USIS

Amman (1970-1974)

Richard E. Undeland was born in 1930 in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from Harvard University in 1952 with a degree in English literature, received an M.B.A. from Stanford University, and studied in Egypt from 1955-1956. In addition to Algeria, Mr. Undeland served in Vietnam, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in July of 1994.

Q: Could you tell me what Black September was, for those who don't know?

UNDELAND: September was the month in 1970, when the *Fedayeen* hijacked three airliners – TWA and Swissair first and then one of BOAC – and forced them to fly to a place in the Jordan desert east of Amman. After a protracted delay and much posturing, the hijackers let the passengers and crews go, then set off charges that wholly destroyed the planes. Throughout this crisis, Jordanian army forces stood by in a circle around the hijackers and planes, powerless, or at least not prepared, to intervene with force. It was Jordan's darkest hour, for although the king had been increasingly urged by his army and supporters to enter the fray, soundly defeat Arafat and prevent him from even thinking he might be able to take over. Yet, he continued hesitating to act, why, I have never really understood. In the end, he did give the order, the army moved rapidly and decisively, so that after a couple more days, no question remained over the outcome.

When I arrived, the most serious fighting in the city was over, but there was still resistance and a good deal of firing, especially at night. We had no choice but to stay put, hunkered down if you will. Our movements were restricted to *Jebel Amman* and then only from its third circle to the west. If one needed convincing that it was not completely over, an army truck mounted with a 50 caliber machine gun was stationed a couple of hundred meters from where we were staying; it would fire off bursts towards the center of the city from time to time. To give a physical idea of Amman and what being on part of one hill meant, it is another of those cities built on seven hills or, in this case, *jebels*. We had access at that time to no more than perhaps ten percent of its total area, maybe not that much.

The American embassy, located on *Jebel Luwebdeh*, one hill over from Jebel Amman, had been surrounded and besieged for some two weeks. The only persons to get out were the ambassador, Dean Brown, and the political officer, Hume Horan, who twice or thrice went to see the king. For these trips, an escorted APC roared up to the embassy with all guns firing; the two Americans ducked in through the back hatch and off they went at top speed, with all guns still blazing. Those in the embassy had a difficult time physically, with diminishing food and fuel supplies, stopped up drains, little space, but, as I was told, with morale that was never higher.

I was sent into Jordan primarily to get out news items for USIA's media and to send to other MidEast posts for their home grown usage. The U.S. was providing major assistance, and we wanted others to know about it in more detail and, frankly, with more of our slant than was being provided by the commercial media. My first task was to report on the air force hospital, which

had been flown in and was treating the most badly wounded. We got photos, I wrote stories for the USIA press service and did radio spots for the VOA. This went on for about a month, although in the latter part, it was tapering off. I nearly needed the hospital's care myself, for driving out there one day, I got run off the road into a ditch by a Jordanian army truck but fortunately emerged no more than a dazed "what happened, where am I?", as bits of the shattered windshield rained down.

RICHARD B. PARKER

Ambassador

Lebanon (1977-1978)

Ambassador Richard B. Parker was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1923. He received a bachelor's degree in engineering from Kansas State University. Prior to joining the Foreign Service in 1949, he served in the U.S. Army as an infantry officer. Ambassador Parker's career included positions in Australia, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and ambassadorships to Algeria, Lebanon, and Morocco. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: This was Black September.

PARKER: Black September. Something that Harry Symmes has described in his oral history.

The people moved to Lebanon and set up this state within a state in southern Lebanon which became the nearest thing they had to a homeland. They would attack the Israelis. And the Israelis would come over and bomb the Lebanese. This became an intolerable situation for the Lebanese. The Israelis were trying to force them into doing something about the Palestinians, but they couldn't because the Palestinians were primarily Muslim. This became a matter of religious solidarity between Lebanese Muslims and Palestinians. Lebanese Muslims, in general, supported the Palestinians. The Maronites in particular opposed them. And the army being divided between Christians and Muslims was unreliable. They weren't going to shoot at fellow Muslims. And so the army couldn't be used. The state was unable to cope with this.

This problem was aggravated by the economic and social inequalities that had built up in this country. Particularly between the north and the south. The Shia in the south were neglected and very little was done for them. They were behind everybody else in terms of literacy and education and wealth and property and in any way you want to look at it. Social graces and so forth. But they were the most prolific part of the population, and they were by the mid-1970s, probably the largest Muslim sect in the country. They were crowded into what was called the Belt of Poverty around Beirut. A collection of lower class housing, poor sanitation, and so forth. Sort of amalgamated with these three refugee camps of Tall Za'tar, Sabra and Chatilla, C-H-A-

T-I-L-L-A. To western observers, a constant potential source of trouble. They indeed provided a majority of the fighters in the Muslim militias.

Well, this was a very unstable situation. The Syrians had decided -- correctly in my view -- that the only way you were going to bring this situation under control was to disarm the militias. Every family in Lebanon had an automatic weapon. The Syrians were going to go out and collect them. They were going to start with two refugee camps, Sabra and Chatilla, in Beirut which were strongly fortified by the Palestinians.

JOHNNY YOUNG

Administrative Counselor

Amman, Jordan (1983-1985)

Ambassador Young was born in Georgia and raised in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Delaware. He was educated at Temple University and entered the Foreign Service in 1967. Before being named Ambassador, Mr. Young served in a number of embassies in the administrative field, including Madagascar, Guinea, Kenya, Qatar, Barbados, Jordan and the Netherlands. In 1989 he was named US Ambassador to Sierra Leone, where he served until 1992. He subsequently served as US Ambassador to Togo (1994-1997), Bahrain (1997-2001) and Slovenia (2001-2004). Ambassador Young was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Black September.

YOUNG: Yes. This was something that the king had to live with. The king was trying to be a peace maker, trying to be the good moderate, trying to be the good soldier in the Middle East. He was trying to be the good friend of the United States and at the same time trying to demonstrate that he was a solid Arab and a good backer of the Palestinians, so he was in a very delicate position. That said, the relations with the United States remained good and I must say that Ambassador Viets' faults notwithstanding and I'll get to those later, those faults were basically internal, but from a substantive point of view he was an extraordinary ambassador. I have never seen an ambassador with a more effective relationship with the head of state as I witnessed Ambassador Viets and King Hussein of Jordan. It was truly exceptional. Hussein trusted Viets more than any other ambassador there and trusted him more I think than even some of his own ministers. He relied on him for all kinds of advice and counsel. Viets even looked the part which was this great, good looking man, large mane of silver hair, beautiful complexion. So he not only looked it, but he played it, a very smooth fellow, just a top notch professional in his relationship with the host government. He was loved at all levels, not just by the king, but his relationship with the king was truly extraordinary. I've never seen anything like it. I'm not sure, I can't speak to this authoritatively, but I'm not sure any of his successors succeeded as well.

Now, to Jordan. We arrived in the summer. We got settled in our house. Then I had my initial walk around the mission and my initial meeting with the ambassador. He acknowledged that the inspectors had written up a less than favorable report on the mission and that he basically wanted me to clean it up. That was my job to clean it up and I understood that and I respected him telling me okay, you have a free hand, take care of it. I began to do that right away in terms of all kinds of general services, rules and regulations and administrative rules and regulations and financial rules and regulations. It just went on and on and on.

I have to tell you a couple stories to highlight this problem. We arrived at the time the outgoing budget officer was still at post, the one who had had a lot of difficulty with Viets. I might add that when I was in the inspector general's office and when the inspectors had returned from Amman and had told me about some of the things going on there, one of the things they said to me was, you know the budget and fiscal officer had a file about five inches thick and on the cover of this file in big black letters were CYA.

1973 War

MICHAEL E. STERNER

Political Officer

Cairo (1960-1964)

Arab-Israeli Desk Officer, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1964-1966)

Director of Egyptian Affairs, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1970-1974)

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1976-1979)

Q: Well, how did the October '73 War play out from your perspective? How did we react to it and what were you doing at this time?

STERNER: Well, again, I happened to be back -- I mean, I was still back. It was six years later, or whatever, from the '67 war and I was still in the Department. This time I was a couple of notches up the line. But there I was setting up another Task Force. This was a much more interesting, difficult and of course less decisive war. To Kissinger's credit he saw about midway through the conflict that there were major diplomatic opportunities that could be seized, if you could bring this conflict to an end in a way that preserved those diplomatic opportunities. And he charged in. He had just moved over from the National Security position to the State Department as Secretary, so he was in a position to do that. He had all those loyal folks over at the White House still working for him in effect. Brent Scowcroft had been there as his Deputy, who was elevated and saw eye-to-eye with him on most issues. And now he had all this machinery he could mobilize as he saw fit within the State Department. He negotiated the terms for a cease fire with the Soviets that set the stage for negotiations. He fought the Israelis down when they

wanted to persist in the war so as to complete the encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army in the Sinai. He knew if that whole army was captured or destroyed that the Egyptians would be so humiliated and so defeated that it would detract from post-war diplomatic opportunities. And in this case the Israelis backed down. In essence, the war ended on a no-victor, no-loser note which was important for what transpired. Kissinger got talks going at Kilometer 101 in Sinai, which led to a more stable cease fire. Then talks began under U.S.-Soviet auspices in Geneva. The Soviets were then firmly moved out of the picture and Kissinger took over the negotiations himself. He achieved three agreements: the first Sinai agreement, the agreement for disengagement on the Syrian front, and finally the Sinai II agreement for a further stage of withdrawal. So it was a notable achievement. But with the Sinai II agreement the potential for further progress along these lines was exhausted. You could not carry this slice-of-territory for slice-of-peace concept any further. The Sinai II agreement was a victory but it had its costs for American policy in the form of an ill-considered undertaking never to deal with the PLO which plagued our policy for the next ten years. Kissinger agreed to that. The Israelis got very tough -- said they were not going to agree to the Sinai agreement without this assurance and he ended up giving them that. And then I went off to the United Arab Emirates at about this point.

ALFRED LEROY ATHERTON, JR.
Deputy Director, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1965-1974)

Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs
Washington, DC (1974-1978)

Ambassador-at-Large, Middle East Negotiations
(1978-1979)

Ambassador
Egypt (1979-1983)

Well, it was too late. In retrospect, it was quite obvious that Sadat had already, in collusion with President Assad in Syria, made the decision that they were going to have to take military action in order to unfreeze the situation on the ground and also diplomatically. And it wasn't very many weeks after that, within a month, to my recollection, that the crisis suddenly erupted into full scale hostilities. It was a master bit of deception on the part of the Egyptians and the Syrians. They obviously had to make preparations. They had to do certain things that could not be hidden from photographic and electronic surveillance.

But what they did could be interpreted in different ways. It was interpreted by Israeli intelligence, and by most of ours, as Sadat wanted it interpreted, namely that it was simply preparations for military maneuvers in the eastern part of the country. Since the Israelis and we both had started from the premise that Egypt didn't have the military capability to launch a successful attack, we therefore interpreted the intelligence to fit that preconception.

In fact, as history tells us, the war broke out on the day of Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Hebrew religious calendar, and it also was during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. So the

Israelis have ever since then called this the Yom Kippur War and the Egyptians have called it the Ramadan War. Those of us who tried to be neutral about it would call it the October 1973 War.

But it was obviously a well-planned and a major coordinated attack by Egyptian forces against the Israelis east of the canal, and by the Syrians against the Israelis in the Golan Heights. There was no action on the Jordanian front. The Jordanians had not been part of the plan, though they had picked up intelligence about it as many others had. Needless to say, there was a certain amount of scrambling in the halls of the Department of State, in the White House, and up in New York. I won't take time to go into all of the details, because this has been more than documented in Kissinger's memoirs, and other people have gone on the record by now, but I think it is important to know that Kissinger was in New York at the time, and Joe Sisco was with him, and this is an amusing story. I was in Washington, so I only heard this afterward. Because of the time difference, since the war started early in the morning in the Middle East, it was of course in the middle of the night in Washington. We were all awakened. I was awakened and brought down to the Department of State to the operations center to be on the spot. Joe got word in New York and woke Henry Kissinger up, and he got Henry to try to call the Egyptian and Syrian foreign ministers or ambassadors, whoever he could reach in New York, and say: We're sure there must be some mistake. Just give it a little time, we're sure this can be worked out. Well, we were obviously light-years behind the power curve at this point. The war had started. The war caught everybody, except the Egyptians and the Syrians, off guard.

One of the first messages to come into the operations center was a message from Golda Meir, prime minister of Israel, to our government, before the actual fighting had started, by which time it seemed they no longer had any doubt that this was a serious attack, or that one was on the verge of being started. And the message was that Israel would not fire the first shot, would not strike if the Egyptians did not strike against them.

Of course that was quite different from 1967. The start of shooting in that war was the Israeli decision to launch a preemptive strike against the Egyptians, before the Egyptians could get the jump on them, assuming the Egyptians in fact intended to. And in 1973, they chose not to launch a preemptive strike, and the Egyptians and Syrians in fact did get the jump on them.

Well, by the time daylight broke in Washington, the fighting had started. All of the usual buttons were pushed. The Security Council was convened. Kissinger, being in New York, instructed Brent Scowcroft, as his deputy at the National Security Council in the White House, to call a meeting of the Washington Special Action Group, or whatever it was called in those days. It was basically the representatives of the National Security Council: Kissinger, had he been there, Scowcroft in his absence, and representatives from the Joint Chiefs and Defense and CIA and State, to my recollection.

This was very early on. The situation, as is always the case, was rather confused, and it wasn't quite clear at that point how the war had started. The assumption was made by a couple of the people at that meeting that, like '67, the Israelis had jumped the gun and had started the fighting. I recall one who put this theory forward was Jim Schlesinger, as then, I believe, Secretary of Defense. He had been CIA, but I think by then he was Secretary of Defense. This was his immediate conclusion.

Nobody at the meeting was challenging this, and so I had to speak up. Even though I was there with cabinet officers, feeling relatively junior, I said, "I think that you're wrong. This is, first of all, Yom Kippur, the least likely day in the year when the Israelis would start a war. Secondly, we had a message from Mrs. Meir that she was not going to start a war."

I saw no evidence to support a thesis that the Israelis, this time, had fired the first shot. I thought that they had been caught as much by surprise as everybody else. And so, in retrospect, it turns out that I was right, this was the right analysis, but it was not the initial reaction.

First of all, Kissinger, as always, was preoccupied with the fact that behind the Egyptians and the Syrians were the Soviets; behind the Israelis stood the United States. And you could not, as he liked to say, let Soviet arms defeat American arms. Therefore we had to be certain that the Israelis would not be defeated. There were of course other reasons as well for not wanting to see the Israelis defeated, having to do with our long term commitment to Israeli security.

But at the same time, Kissinger had another goal, which I think all of us who had a voice in trying to make recommendations were urging, which was the opportunity to see whether the war could not be turned into the basis for getting the peace process going. We knew that Sadat wanted to try to move towards a peace settlement. And so Kissinger's goals were really twofold. One, not to let the Israelis be overrun militarily, but at the same time, not to let the Egyptians be defeated and humiliated in a way that would make it impossible for them to talk about peace.

My recollection is that the initiative for this exchange really began with the Egyptians. At about the time the war started, a message came through saying that Sadat wanted the American government to understand that this was not a war to defeat Israel, it was not a war to destroy Israel, this was simply an attempt to reassert Egypt's right to recover its occupied territories. Sadat had no intention of trying to invade Israel proper.

Incidentally, the exchanges were between Cairo and Washington. I don't recall any exchanges with the Syrians at all during this period, though they had certainly launched a simultaneous attack. And in fact, at one point, the bigger threat to Israel came from the Syrian front. The Syrians did have a breakthrough and were very close to overrunning Israeli positions on the Golan Heights and threatening the coastal plains of Israel. The Egyptians had succeeded in the very early hours in getting a large number of forces across the canal and pushing the Israelis back. So you had, in the first part of the war, the Israelis militarily on the defensive, having to give some ground to the Egyptians in the first instance and to the Syrians.

But all of this time the messages coming through from Cairo were: "We have nothing against the United States. We hope the United States will understand that Egypt is only asserting our own right to our territory. And there is nothing for Americans in Egypt to fear. There is no need to evacuate the Americans, they will be protected." Very different from the atmosphere in 1967.

Now to go back to the story that I interrupted, the period during the early days of the October 1973 War, when these channels of communication were used. They were mostly messages between Henry Kissinger and Hafiz Ismail, the two national security advisors, that were being handled in this channel. So all during the war this channel of communication was open, to explore ways to bring the war to a stop so we could get on with the peace efforts and help Sadat achieve what he had told us he wanted to achieve.

But, of course, wars have a way of taking on a life of their own. The situation on the battle front in the early days had the Israelis with their backs to the wall. And therefore the Egyptians were demanding very stiff terms for a cease-fire. The Russians were supporting the Egyptians. We were trying to argue that the cease-fire should involve a cease-fire back at the lines where the fighting started, which would have meant, in effect, that the Egyptians would have pulled back across the canal, which they weren't about to do.

Well, of course, the tide of battle eventually changed. The Israelis began to first stabilize the front and then recover some of the territory that they had lost, which had been occupied territory anyway, on both the Syrian and the Egyptian fronts. The borders of Israel were never threatened during this period at all. There was no Arab military threat against Israel proper; the threats were against the Israeli military forces in Sinai and the Golan Heights.

The Israelis realized that they were in for a tough fight. They had lost a lot of airplanes in the early days of the war. One of the costs of not having a first strike was that they could not knock out the Egyptian Air Force on the ground as they had done in 1967. And the Egyptians had really been outstandingly effective in their anti-aircraft defenses, not only in fixed defenses but also in shoulder-held SAM 2's, I think they were called. The anti-aircraft missiles that were launched by individual soldiers were very effective, and the Israelis lost a lot of aircraft.

They began to get worried about their reserves and asked us to mount an airlift of equipment to replenish their losses. The Egyptians had also sent a request to the Russians. And pretty soon you had a situation in which the Russians were resupplying the Egyptians and we were resupplying the Israelis, and each of us accusing the other of keeping the war going. Henry Kissinger was saying, "Well, we must assure the Israelis enough to continue militarily, and at the same time we must try to stabilize the situation so that Sadat isn't defeated totally.

First of all, the Israelis recovered from the Syrians the territory they had lost in the Golan Heights, and had driven the Syrians even further back beyond where the cease-fire line had been, to the point where the Israeli forces were threatening the main approaches to Damascus. And they did a very daring thing on the Egyptian front, a military maneuver masterminded by General Sharon, which succeeded in putting some Israeli units back across the Suez Canal onto the Egyptian side. So the war had reached a point where in a way both sides were hurting. The Israelis had very heavy losses, and to get all of the Egyptian forces out of the Sinai would have probably incurred enormous additional losses. At the same time, the Egyptians had lost the initiative, and in fact had the Israelis across the canal behind their own lines. The Syrians were virtually out of the war, and the Israelis were in a position where if they wanted, they probably could have gone on to Damascus. So there was a kind of stalemate on the military front, or at least the signals coming from both the Israelis and the Egyptians were: Let's get serious about the cease-fire. And that was when a message came from Brezhnev to President Nixon saying in effect: We would like to negotiate a cease-fire with the United States and the two of us impose it;

this fighting must stop. Obviously the Russians were getting worried that the Egyptians were going to be defeated again as they were in 1967. So Brezhnev asked Nixon to send Kissinger to Moscow.

So we did go and have the meeting, and Kissinger strung it out, parried all of the attempts to get on with declaring the cease fire. The serious negotiations took place the next day, and they were completed in a day. Once we got started, we worked out the text of the cease-fire and conveyed it to the parties, conveyed it back to the delegations in New York and it was introduced jointly by the Soviet and American ambassadors in New York as a joint U.S.-Soviet-sponsored resolution to bring about a cease-fire in the conflict. Security Council Resolution 338, in addition to calling for a cease-fire, called for negotiations "between the parties under appropriate auspices" based on Resolution 242 of 1967. A side agreement stated that "appropriate auspices" meant U.S.-Soviet auspices.

There were some problems. The Israelis did not immediately stop their military movements when the hour came when they were supposed to. There are lots of details which I won't go into. They're all in Kissinger's book. It was a fast-moving situation. The net result was that the Israelis continued their advance west of the Canal even after the cease-fire went into effect on October 22. The initial impression given purposefully by the Israelis was that they were going to march on Cairo, when in fact they turned around and went down south towards the city of Suez and totally encircled and cut off the Egyptian Third Army, which was thereby, in effect, their hostage, without supplies, without not only military supplies but without food and medical supplies being able to get through to them. This left a somewhat unstable situation, after the fighting finally stopped. The recriminations went on and on about how the Israelis had taken advantage of the cease-fire to continue their advance.

Q: Which at that point were where?

ATHERTON: Well, that was what the argument was all about. The Egyptians and the Soviets were saying that the Israelis had to pull back to the lines of the hour on October 22, when the cease-fire was passed. The Egyptians and the Soviets were pressing us to press the Israelis to withdraw to the lines where they had been when the cease-fire was supposed to be in effect. That was the only point where there was an argument. The forces east of the canal had stopped shooting at each other, and they were drawn up where they had stopped fighting. There were still Egyptians east of the canal. They had crossed the canal and were on what had been the Israeli side of the canal, the Israeli-occupied side. But the Israelis, who had crossed the canal in the other direction, were on the Egyptian side. Nothing was happening on the Syrian side. The Syrians were totally stalemated by the Israeli presence within artillery range of Damascus.

But there was the problem of what to do about the Egyptian Third Army, which was still without a means of resupply. There were some preliminary discussions about this in Washington with the Egyptian foreign minister, Ismail Fahmy, and with the Israelis. And then it was decided that Kissinger should make a trip to the Middle East, that he should go to Cairo and meet Sadat, deal

directly face to face with Sadat. And that became really, in retrospect, a very historic, momentous moment and in some ways a turning point.

Kissinger had never been in an Arab country, he had never dealt with an Arab chief of state. He had been to Israel earlier in his life. He really didn't have much Middle East experience, but he was a fast learner. We all pumped him full of all the information we could about the people he was going to meet, their points of view, their perspectives, their hangups, their concerns. And he took off. We all took off. Again I was part of the team. We made quick stops in Morocco and Tunisia, to talk to our friends the King of Morocco and with President Bourguiba in Tunisia, to ask them to use their good offices with the Egyptians to be receptive to Kissinger and basically tell Sadat this is a man to deal with, because obviously there was a need for a certain amount of getting to know you.

We arrived in Cairo; I remember it was the 6th of November 1973. And Sadat, always a master of the dramatic, staged a meeting at the palace where he had set up his war headquarters. He was still in uniform because during the cease-fire it was still a wartime situation. We were all invited, the delegations, the Egyptian, the American, to sit out on the lawn while Kissinger and Sadat withdrew and had a totally private tete-a-tete. No note takers, nobody present.

And they did. They negotiated an agreement of a certain number of points to convey to the Israelis, the main elements of which were to open up the lines for medical supplies, food, and water, but no military, no arms, to go through the Israeli lines to the Egyptian Third Army, with U.N. troops brought from Cyprus to man the checkpoints through which the Egyptian supplies would go. It was a rather complex setup, but the arrangement was worked out fairly quickly, though with the usual hitches and distrust by each side or the other. Finally it became necessary to send Hal Saunders and Joe Sisco on to Israel to explain and to get the Israeli government's agreement with these points which had been negotiated with the Egyptians. The rest of us went on to Jordan and eventually on to Saudi Arabia.

WALTER B. SMITH II

Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1970)

Chief, Political Section

Tel Aviv (1971-1974)

Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1974-1978)

Walter B. Smith, II was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1929. He graduated from Princeton University in 1951 and subsequently served in the U.S. Army as an officer. Mr. Smith joined the Foreign Service in 1958. His career included positions in Moscow, Frankfurt, Tel Aviv, Warsaw, Berlin, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Q: What was the period when you were there [in Israel]?

SMITH: I was there from 1971 to 1974. So I saw the unrealism of Israeli thinking that preceded the 1973 War and the devastating psychological effect of the 1973 War which, as you know, the Israelis won. And if we had let them go, as often happens with those wars, they would have won it on both Syrian and Egyptian fronts with a resounding bang. We pulled their punches for them. They won the wars, but the Egyptians and the Syrians were not convinced that they were defeated. Henry Kissinger had "seen the light." In a very short span of time he realized that if there was any hope of reaching some kind of accommodation after this war, the Israelis could not be allowed to occupy Damascus and Cairo. So Kissinger had something to do with the fact that we and the Soviets -- as had happened in 1967 -- imposed a cease-fire just as the Israelis were finally regaining their strength and getting ready to do something.

Q: No, no, I think that it's important. Tell me, how did the war of October 1973 impact on you? How did you see it?

SMITH: I did not expect it any more than anyone else did. During the 10 days leading up to the outbreak the military attaché went in, under instructions, with a warning [that war might be imminent]. The Israelis laughed. Then the [CIA] Chief of Station went in to talk with his counterpart, under instructions, with a warning that we were afraid that [an Arab attack] might be coming. The Israelis laughed. The military attaché went back in again. Then, without instructions, I went in and talked with the head of the Arab Affairs Division of the Foreign Ministry and said, "I am afraid, not based on what my military colleagues are saying, but just from my reading of the tea leaves, that something very serious may be in the offing."

DAVID M. RANSOM

Jordan Desk Officer

Washington, DC (1970-1973)

Ambassador David Ransom was born in Missouri on November 23, 1938. He received his AB from Princeton University in 1960 as well as a BA from the School for Advanced International Studies in 1962. He served in the US Marine

Corps from 1962 to 1965 as a 1st lieutenant and entered the Foreign Service in 1965, wherein he served in Yemen, Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia , the United Arab Emirates, Syria, and Bahrain. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 2, 1999.

Q: Can you talk about the buildup to that and how the bureau-- you and others-- were reacting to this?

RANSOM: The Israelis were adamant in their view that there was no likelihood of war, that the Arabs wouldn't dare do such a thing, and they were only making feints to see whether they could energize the United States to play a more active diplomatic role and to put pressure on the Israelis to be more forthcoming. The bureau did not read the intelligence reports quite the same way. Eventually, we acquired intelligence reports from the Jordanians about Syrian and Egyptian war plans that were absolutely convincing. We went to the Israelis with these. They still refused to believe it. So, that war was not a surprise that can be laid at the feet of the Americans. We thought that was war coming. We had good, hard intelligence. We shared it with the Israelis. The surprise can be laid at the feet of the Israelis, who were simply so blinded by their own success in the 1967 War that they never really credited the Arabs with the nerve to resume the fight. The task then became one of keeping the Jordanians out of the war. They felt they needed at least some martyrs. We felt we didn't need any more battle fronts in the struggle. When the war opened, it opened with only two fronts.

Q: This was the Syrian front and the Egyptian front.

RANSOM: That's right. There were some skirmishes late in the war on the Israeli-Jordanian borders largely for show; there was no real Jordanian-Israeli war. The Jordanians claimed some casualties and claimed to have maneuvered mightily, but I don't think there was ever really the threat of a large third front.

In the early stages of the fighting, the Egyptians crossed the Suez Canal and the Syrians recovered most of the Golan Heights. The Israelis suddenly panicked and found that their airplanes which they had been used as artillery, thereby relieving the ground forces from dragging the artillery pieces around, were being forced to bomb from very high altitudes becoming relatively ineffectual. Arab armies were advancing against Israeli ground troops, both across the Canal and on the Golan. The Israelis were also caught short in their mobilization. They had maintained a very small standing army and it took them 48 or more hours to mobilize. There was a panicky period when the professional army could not initially hold or even inflict heavy casualties. So, a few days into the war, it looked very desperate.

The Israelis rose, however, magnificently to the military task. It helped a lot that the Jordanians were not deeply into the fray. An American military team went to Tel Aviv to give recommendations of how to conduct the war. Basically, it was to hold in the north, fight in the south to make sure that the Egyptians, once they had crossed the Canal, did not go deeper into

the Sinai Peninsula. These were dramatic days. I became a watch-stander in the Operations Center-- long stretches and at strange times of the day or night. Eventually, the Israelis ground out a victory. There was help from the Americans that led to a belated and reluctant decision on the part of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia to impose an oil embargo. But by and large, the Israelis did it by themselves. They began to push the Arabs back. Part of it was that the Arabs had very limited war-games and when their initial successes left them in good positions on land, they had no plans and no means to go further. They gave away the initiative to the Israelis, thinking that this was the time for diplomacy and that they would stop and talk. The Israelis were not ready to stop and talk. So, the war began to go against the Arabs.

Then there was this dramatic event when - and I was on duty at the time - a piece of intelligence came in from our watch stations on the Dardanelles. Soviet ships going through the Straits were detected by sensors to be carrying nuclear warheads. I thought rightly that the Soviets were shipping warheads to Egypt. That sent Kissinger into an extraordinary series of moves to bring the fighting to an end. It included a worldwide nuclear alert on our part and suggestions for talks which we knew the Arabs would accept. The war came to an end and the talking began. At this point, I went off to the NSC to work on different issues; so I wasn't as close to Jordanian matters after this.

Q: What were you getting from the Jordanians?

RANSOM: "We need martyrs." The Jordanians remembered what happened in 1967 and they weren't about to plunge into war the same way they had before, but they also didn't feel they could simply stand aside particularly when Arab armies were going down to defeat. So, they mobilized, maneuvered, and did all kinds of things to put off any major conflicts. They did feel that they needed to fire some weapons at least. In fact, they were in a very tricky situation. The Israelis did not want to get at the Syrians straight across the Golan, but to make a right hook through northern Jordan into Syria. That was not all clear sailing. The border city of Dar'a is a natural boundary and it is very hard to cross. There are ravines and lava fields. But if you can do that, you have flanked the Syrian defenses both in Damascus and on the Golan. You would then be in a position to drive the Syrians back to Damascus and maybe even out of Damascus. This scenario made the Jordanians feel that they had to position themselves in strength in the north. They said it was against Syrian entry from that direction, but it was also against Israeli penetration, too. It was one of those ambiguous situations in which the King of Jordan and his advisors had dealt with so well for so long.

Q: We were telling the Jordanians "Don't be aggressive?" on the Jordan-Syria front"

RANSOM: We said they could mobilize in the northern part of Jordan and defend their own borders against a Syrian attempt or an Iraqi attempt to bring forces in. We didn't want the Israelis to provoke them nor did we want these forces to be used against Israel. From the northern part of Jordan, you look directly down into the marshaling yards and the supply depots of the Israelis as

they funneled forces up onto the Golan Heights. We didn't want the Jordanians throwing themselves at the Israelis from there.

ARTHUR R. DAY

Consul General

Jerusalem (1972-1975)

Arthur R. Day was born and raised in New Jersey. He served in the U.S. Naval Air Corps during World War II. Upon completion of his military service, Mr. Day received a master's degree from Chicago University. His Foreign Service career included positions at the Palestine Desk, the National War College, United Nations Affairs, and in Japan. Mr. Day was interviewed by John A. McKesson in 1990.

Q: This was of course the period that Kissinger was active with his shuttle diplomacy. We know that Secretary Kissinger remained very, very involved in this whole issue. What were your general feelings and assessment of this issue, how Kissinger operated and how effective his policies were?

DAY:

There are some comments that I think I would like to add concerning my service in Jerusalem. One of them concerns the Yom Kippur war of October 1973 in which the Egyptians and Syrians attacked the Israelis on both the Egyptian front along the Suez canal and the Syrian front along the border of the Golan heights. During the week before the attack there had been rumors of troop movements and activity, especially in the Syrian sector. U.S. military officers had inquired several times of Israeli military intelligence whether these movements did not presage some kind of hostile action by the Arab armies. The Israelis, having been burned by predicting Arab attacks early in the year that did not materialize, dismissed the reports as groundless. Toward the end of the first week of October, though, they were sufficiently concerned that they began to move troops of their own up towards the Golan front with Syria.

Later that day, it must have been very shortly after two o'clock in the afternoon, I received a phone call from UNTSO telling me that their observers along the Egyptian-Israeli line on the Suez canal had just that minute reported an attack by the Egyptian forces past their observers,

their observation points, towards the Israeli lines. I was able to get a flash telegram back to Washington within minutes of this attack having occurred, which was the first time, but not the last by any means, UNTSO's presence along the borders and the good relations that existed between the consulate general and UNTSO headquarters enabled us to report quickly and accurately on the progress of the war. Throughout the next week or two as Syrian and Egyptian armies crossed the Israeli lines and then ultimately were driven back across the lines in the other directions, the UNTSO observers pinned down in their observation posts in the midst of the conflict kept up a stream of reports to the headquarters in Jerusalem about the progress of the war. The consulate forwarded these to Washington as they were received since the reports, especially in the early days of the war, reflected much more serious difficulties for the Israelis than the Israelis were publicly acknowledging. Our reporting was able to keep Washington more accurately informed of the true state of affairs, although I assume the Israeli government was informing our embassy in Tel Aviv a good deal more accurately than their press was informing the public.

The period of the Yom Kippur war in Jerusalem was a strange one. In the first week while no one really questioned whether the Israelis would really be able to defend themselves in the end, the fighting did strike quite close to the Israeli heartland in the north of Israel where the Syrians pressed down from the Golan heights. But there was an almost eerie atmosphere of business as usual at the same time, so swiftly had the war come. On one occasion an American religious tour group wanted to visit the Christian sites on the Sea of Galilee which were only a few miles from heavy fighting and which could conceivably have been overrun had the Syrians been more successful than they turned out to be. The group leader inquired of the consulate general about the situation and was told that this was just not the thing to do at that time. So far as I was aware at the time, he decided to proceed in any case, and disappeared in the direction of the front with his entire tour group. Within the city of Jerusalem there were several hundred American students, some of them Jewish students at Hebrew University, as well as a sizeable group of Christian students who were visiting the old city with its Christian sites for a period of study. I was kept busy the first week of the war briefing these students, as best I could, about the security situation and about how it affected them, especially in the case of the Jewish students, giving them assurance that they could pass along to their worried parents at home, that it seemed unlikely that the city of Jerusalem would come under attack. Living in the city was an odd experience in other ways, especially since it was blacked out at night with cars driving through the streets with their headlights dimmed by blue paint or laundry blueing. It so happened that it was a period of full moon and no doubt for the first time in a long, long time, it was possible to see the city from the hills around it with the moonlight shining on its domes and towers without the disturbance of any artificial light. It was a truly beautiful thing to see, although the circumstances were not so benign.

A second set of comments that might be worth making, although not as serious, concern a concert that the Israel philharmonic orchestra gave outdoors in a large square in Bethlehem,

known as Manger Square. I do not recall the date, but I believe it was following the Yom Kippur war, and it must have been in the following spring or summer. Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem, had apparently induced an American donor to provide a substantial sum of money to hold the concert, the purpose of which was to show the unity between Jerusalem and the Christian Arab town of Bethlehem, a short distance away to the south. As always in this complex occupation situation the effort cut both ways. My wife and I were sitting in the second row of the block of seats in Manger Square facing the Church of the Nativity in front of which the platform had been erected for the Israeli orchestra. The first item of the concert was a Brandenburg concerto, the violin part of which was to be played by a young man who had not too long before arrived as a Jewish immigrant from the Soviet Union. The orchestra had gotten well launched and the violinist was in full cry when suddenly the Arab minaret, in the Square, located just behind the audience, erupted with the recorded call to prayer that the mosques broadcast at regular intervals during the day. The volume had obviously been turned up quite high by the mosque authorities and the sound tore into the fabric of the Brandenburg concerto, somewhat like an iceberg tearing into the hull of the *Titanic*. The orchestra played gamely on for some seconds, but gradually one instrument after another gave up and before long Zubin Mehta, the conductor, brought it to a halt and all of us waited out the Moslem call to prayer. An Israeli authority told me that they had been well-aware of this possibility, but had thought they had induced the mosque authorities to tone down the sound so as not to create a disturbance, but obviously they had failed. Other cultural and political conflict was evident at the concert as well. We noticed that there was a certain amount of movement to and fro in the row ahead of us where Teddy Kollek sat with the Bethlehem mayor, Elias Freij, and on the following day at a lunch that Kollek gave for the consuls general we learned what had happened. Freij was scheduled to make a brief statement at the concert on the platform which had been erected for the purpose. Over the platform was the emblem of the Israeli orchestra, an unmistakable Jewish symbol, the menorah. It was quite clear to Freij that the TV broadcast of this event would catch him standing in front of the Jewish menorah, a situation which was not at all appealing to him. Kollek told us with some chortling that in order to get Freij's mind off the problem he had gone up along the row in which they had both sat and had brought Mrs. Mehta over to sit next to Freij. Mrs. Mehta was a very attractive woman and Kollek assumed that her beauty would cause Freij to forget about his political sensitivities. In the event, Freij did arise and make the statement, although there was no way of knowing whether Mrs. Mehta's presence had been responsible. As an aside, however, the consuls general were all a little soured by Kollek's obvious glee in how he had manipulated the Arab mayor and it revealed once again one of the less attractive aspects of the Israelis in their dealing with the Arabs -- an attitude of condescension and arrogance at times.

EDWARD G. ABINGTON

Political Officer

Tel Aviv (1972-1975)

Mr. Abington was born in Texas into a US military family and was raised in military posts in the US and abroad. An Arabic language officer and specialist in Near East Affairs, he describes his experience dealing with Israel-Arab hostilities and general regional problems while serving as Political Officer at Embassies Tel Aviv and Damascus. In his postings at the State Department in Washington, he also dealt with Near East matters. Mr. Abington was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: What was your experience when it broke out?

ABINGTON: In the week before the war, the Israelis were very concerned by military moves that they were seeing on the ground in Egypt and in Syria, particularly in Egypt, and they didn't know what to make of these moves. They asked us for our assessment whether these were just routine fall military exercises that happen when it's much cooler and before the rains start, or whether this really signaled that the Arabs were up to something. On both the Israeli side and the American side both on the political level, the State Department level, the CIA level, we had become complacent about how we looked at the Arabs. We felt that they had been so decisively defeated in 1967 that they would be very foolish to contemplate military action against Israel because Israel could defeat them just as quickly with as few casualties as in '67. And that certainly- (end of tape)

The day before the war started, it was the day before Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur the embassy closed down and everyone stayed at home. No one drove or anything. We did one last round of checking. The assessment continued to be that there were some questionable military moves going on but it really didn't signal a move towards hostilities. But there was a lot of uncertainty on the part of our military attaches, on the part of the CIA station at the embassy, on the part of the ambassador and the DCM. The ambassador was Kenneth Keating, the former senator from NY who had been ambassador in India and who had been defeated by Bobby Kennedy in NY. Nick Veliotis was the DCM. So, we all went home on Yom Kippur Eve. Everybody was pretty much housebound for the next 24 hours. Very early in the morning on Yom Kippur, October 6, at about 6:30 or 7:00, this jet flew over my neighborhood at a very low level. It sent shockwaves it was flying so low and slow. I just felt that there was going to be a war starting that day because I knew that the Israelis would not have done that if there had not been something very serious. As I got dressed and went outside, I could see that the reservists were being called up and neighbors whom I knew were coming out of their houses in their uniforms, getting ready to go. I

called up the DCM and told him this and he said the same thing was happening in his neighborhood

Q: Today is December 14, 2000. What do you do when you see the reservists coming up?

ABINGTON: The first thing was that the word went out to all of the people in the embassy that it appeared that hostilities were eminent between Israel and its neighbors. I know that late in the morning Veliotis and Ambassador Keating were called to see Golda Meir at the defense ministry in Tel Aviv. This was during Yom Kippur in which there is no traffic on the roads and cars that were on the roads during that day would be stoned. But this was a very different Yom Kippur for Israelis. Veliotis and Keating went to the defense ministry. Golda Meir informed Keating that Israel had information that it considered to be irrefutable that Egypt and Syria were about to launch military attacks against Israeli forces. Israel had decided that it would not preempt but that it would see what Egypt and Syria would do. Part of the decision not to preempt was that Israel simply wasn't prepared to do so because it had been so confused by deceptive Egyptian and Syrian military moves that it was not in a position militarily to preempt. What was happening on that day was a massive call-up of Israeli reservists. Veliotis called people into the embassy and we went through the process of organizing how we would handle this in terms of reporting. The office of the defense attaché was extremely important in terms of liaising with the Israeli military. But then the political and economic sections were also doing their reporting. The administrative and consular sections had responsibilities for getting the word out to people within the embassy community that hostilities were expected and more broadly to Americans in Israel, for which the consular section was responsible.

Hostilities started at about 2:00 PM on Yom Kippur.

Q: Was the feeling that the Israelis would take care of this as they always had?

ABINGTON: I think that opinions were mixed on this. The Israelis were very overconfident. Defense Minister Moshe Dyan that day or shortly thereafter made a very threatening statement that Israel would break the bones of the Egyptians and the Syrians and would really teach them a lesson. There was a great deal of overconfidence on the part of the Israelis in general but also the defense establishment and the intelligence establishment because they did not fully appreciate how the shipment of Soviet arms, particularly surface to air missiles that had much greater capabilities than in 1967 and especially the use of tow missiles by Egyptian soldiers, would change the battlefield. It's an optically guided missile with a shake charge on it that was used against Israeli armor. Israel depended very much for its victory in 1967 first on this air force and then secondly on its armor. The Egyptian and Syrian tactics were to deny Israel air superiority through the use of Soviet surface to air missiles, particularly the SA3 and the SA6, which were effective against low to medium flying aircraft, the Israelis did not lose a single aircraft in the '73 war to air to air combat. But they lost an awful lot of aircraft as a result of these surface to air missiles. They did not have the tactics that were developed later in terms of radar jamming and

stuff like that. This was a real shock to them. Unable to have air superiority, it meant that the Egyptian and Syrian militaries were able to advance their armor and it lessened the effectiveness of Israeli armor. Without the combination of air superiority and superiority on the ground with armor, the Israeli advantage was much diluted. In the Sinai, what surprised the Israelis there was not only the use of surface to air missiles but the discipline of the Egyptian soldiers who did not break and run as they did in '67, although if you're being attacked from the air with absolutely no defense, any army would break and run. Their previous experience had set up an attitude on the part of the Israeli military that led them to grossly underestimate the military capabilities of the Egyptians and the Syrians.

Q: After a cease-fire came into existence, what were we seeing in Israel?

ABINGTON: One has to recall that the cease-fire came about as a result of Kissinger's negotiations with the Soviets. Kissinger went to Moscow and worked out the details of a cease-fire acceptable to both sides and a Security Council resolution, 338, which called for a cease-fire and for a political settlement. The Israelis' feeling was mixed. On the one hand, they had really been bloodied very badly with very serious casualties, the worst since 1948 when Israel became independent, the worst casualties of any conflict, and they had been badly damaged by the Egyptians and the Syrians both in terms of people killed and wounded as well as equipment destroyed. On the other hand, I think that the Israelis at this point had really put the Egyptians under tremendous pressure. Some elements of the IDF and the political establishment thought that Israel should continue fighting against Egypt to destroy the Egyptian Third Army and to push the Egyptians out of the Bar Lev Line and out of the Sinai. But then this became wrapped up in power politics and in Cold War politics. The Soviet Union made it clear that an Israeli military move against Egyptian forces along the lines I just described would meet some unspecified Soviet response. This led to a tremendous amount of international tension. It caused President Nixon to increase the overall readiness of U.S. military forces around the world to a much higher stage. And it raised concern that the conflict, particularly the Egyptian-Israeli conflict, could lead to U.S.-Soviet military involvement. As a result, the stakes increased tremendously. Because of that, Kissinger and Nixon made it quite clear to the Israeli leadership that there had to be a cease-fire. There were assurances from Kissinger that the U.S. would be very mindful of Israeli security requirements and concerns. I think that that had been clearly demonstrated by the support both political and military that the U.S. had given Israel with the outbreak of the conflict. There was a clear commitment that there would be additional U.S. military assistance to Israel and there would be an expedited resupply of military equipment to make up for the losses that the Israelis had suffered. So, Israel accepted the cease-fire somewhat but not too reluctantly. Kissinger flew from Moscow to Tel Aviv and it was a six to eight-hour stop to brief the Israelis. Then he went on to Cairo to meet with President Sadat and to brief him as well. That was the 22nd or 23rd of October. The fighting stopped, although there were sporadic outbreaks, particularly in the Sinai or in Egypt proper across the canal, where there continued to be periodic low level fighting. The Egyptian Third Army, which at that point had been totally

surrounded... The Israelis kept up their military pressure and this continued to be a real flashpoint. The United States had to work out resupply arrangements and put some serious pressure on the Israelis to allow food and fuel and so forth to go to the Egyptian Third Army. Sadat was absolutely concerned that the Israelis would try to destroy the Third Army. He was appealing for Soviet and American help to keep that from happening. Kissinger and others realized the seriousness of that situation and pressed Israel very hard not to take further action against the Third Army.

Q: During the war, were you monitoring the Arabs within Israel and those in the West Bank? Was there concern on the part of the Israelis that they would rise up to support their fellow Arabs?

ABINGTON: Not really. We didn't spend any time at all... Of course, the consulate in Jerusalem had responsibility for reporting on what Palestinians in the West Bank were doing. But we essentially did nothing with regard to the Israeli Arabs or for that matter Palestinians in Gaza. I think that the main reason was that unlike in the Gulf War and unlike today, Palestinians were not politically mobilized and were not politically active in 1973. They were quiescent and the Israelis had the situation under control militarily with regard to the West Bank and Gaza. I don't recall that there were any particular incidents caused by Palestinians nor were there Israeli measures like 24-hour curfews as they did during the Gulf War. The Palestinians were not a factor in the '73 war.

Q: During this early cease-fire period, were you picking up a certain disquiet on the part of elements within Israel of the leadership of Golda Meir?

ABINGTON: Very much so, yes. The Israeli press traditionally has been vociferous in its criticism. There was a feeling that the Israeli political and military leadership had failed the country by not anticipating the attacks and by misreading the intelligence and by a mis-assessment of Egyptian and Syrian political and military intentions. There was a committee formed, the Argonaut Committee, headed by the chief justice of Israel, which did a very thorough review of the situation and essentially blamed the leadership for its failure. That led in early 1974 to Golda Meir's resignation. Yitzhak Rabin then became the prime minister. During that period-- November, December, January--ongoing negotiations continued, which had to be done by Kissinger and his Middle East team that included Joe Sisco, who at the time had become US for Political Affairs, Roy Atherton, who was the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Hal Saunders, who was the deputy; he had moved over from the NSC to assist Roy Atherton with responsibility for the Arab-Israeli issue, and Bill Klunt had replaced him at the NSC. So, you had some real heavy hitters. Kissinger had a superb team of diplomats and negotiators with him, although he really ran the show. But it was personal hands-on diplomacy by Kissinger negotiating between the Egyptians and the Israelis to bring about the Kilometer 101 Agreement, which stabilized the situation and led to the Israeli evacuation of positions across the canal, and then later the First Disengagement Agreement which led to a zone

of separation between Israel and Egypt. During that period, the embassy was totally involved in supporting Kissinger. Essentially the embassy moved up to Jerusalem to the King David Hotel and we were there in a staff and administrative support capacity, although Veliotos was involved, Keating was really no more than the symbolic presence. It was really a negotiation totally run by Henry Kissinger and by his staff in Washington. The embassy played very little substantive role in this process. It essentially was there to support Kissinger's efforts.

NICHOLAS A. VELIOTES

Deputy Chief of Mission

Tel Aviv (1973-1975)

Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1977-1978)

Ambassador Nicholas A. Veliotos was born in California in 1928. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of California in 1952 and a master's degree in 1954. He joined the State Department in 1955. Ambassador Veliotos' career included positions in Italy, India, Laos, Israel, Washington, DC, and ambassadorships to Jordan, and Egypt. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: During the war, obviously you were up to your neck in just staying afloat, but were you getting any impression, at the level you were dealing with, that there was panic on the part of the Israelis? How professional were they?

VELIOTES: No, I'll tell you, there wasn't panic on the part of the general Israeli public, because, fortunately, the general Israeli public didn't know how bad things were in the north.

Q: Where there was some room for maneuver, too.

VELIOTES: Room for maneuver. I remember, one day, Israel's leading gossip columnist (she'd die if I used that phrase) was in the embassy, and I was going down the elevator with her. And as she got off the elevator, she looked at me and said, "Look south." And she left. Three or four days later, the Israelis broke across the Canal. Which means a lot of people knew that was happening.

No, I think what happened in Israel was not in the first few days; what happened in Israel was in the weeks and months that followed.

One American Jewish friend of mine, who was a social psychologist, was on a sabbatical. And he came to see me, and as he was talking, he started to cry, because he had come to Israel with such high hopes. It was that period of euphoria that I described to you. And he said he couldn't take it, because the society had suffered a collective nervous breakdown, and he had to leave.

And it had. The casualty figures, for a little country, were just tremendous. I forget, 3,000 killed? At that time, Israel was three million people. Seventy times three, that would have been the equivalent of 210,000 Americans killed in two and a half weeks. The country went into mourning. There were no parties. There was no nothing. Every Israeli family was touched with tragedy.

Q: So, despite the fact that, militarily...

VELIOTES: It was a great victory. It was a great victory over incredible odds.

Q: But this...

VELIOTES: It destroyed Golda Meir, number one. It put Moshe Dayan's career into an eclipse. You had a reshuffle. You had a new government. The major military figures of the time went off to pasture. I think the head of military intelligence died of a heart attack shortly thereafter. And this was a new Israel that was bewildered, felt betrayed by its own people, had lost its sense of invulnerability. It was a vulnerable Israel again. And you had the rise of the right wing. And the only good thing that's happened since that time was Camp David and Jimmy Carter.

Sinai Field Mission

OWEN W. ROBERTS

Sinai Field Mission

Sinai (1976-1979)

Ambassador Owen W. Roberts was born in Oklahoma in 1924. He received his A.B. from Princeton University and his M.I.A. and Ph.D. from Columbia University. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army. Ambassador Roberts entered the Foreign Service in 1955, serving in Egypt, the Congo,

*Nigeria, Upper Volta, Ethiopia, Gambia, Seychelles, Chad, and Washington, DC.
He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.*

ROBERTS: In June of '76 I went off to be deputy director of the Sinai Field Mission. Kissinger had managed to stop the Israelis before they completely crushed the Egyptians around the city of Isma'iliya on the Canal. With a great deal of difficulty, he also got United Nations troops inserted to make the Israelis respect the cease fire and initiated a very intelligent peace-monitoring system for the Sinai desert. It basically set up a north to south empty zone about five miles wide and 85 miles long, with five more miles of limited-force zones on either side of it. This grid, as peace developed, would then slowly be shifted eastward across the Sinai until it reached the 1967 frontier between Egypt and Israel. The first of those demarcations, in which the U.S. Sinai Field Mission (SFM) was located, divided the Sinai north-south about 30 miles east of the Canal. The SFM was set in the empty zone north east of Isma'iliya in a strategic, rocky, mesa-like area through which ran the two main cross Sinai routes.

The particular arrangements for the U.S. managed SFM were accepted by both sides, who insisted that the United Nations alone wasn't competent enough to provide good peacekeeping. They wanted the United States to be responsible within the U.N. zone for the most critical area. This was the Mitla and Gidi passes, through which all significant traffic passed, whether they were caravans as in the old days, or whether they were the tank columns from Israel and Egypt that variously attacked each other. The SFM was given the job of monitoring the peacekeeping program in a 15 by 20 mile area of mesas, wadis, and rolling sand dunes.

Given that the UN was to have about 6,000 men in the peacekeeping zone, I wondered at first how significant our role, with 150 people, would be. I didn't have to be in the field very long to find out that 6,000 U.N. troops, spread along 15 by 85 miles of desert, did not actually amount to very much surveillance of the actual territory. The UN was supposed to assure that absolutely no one was in the neutral zone and that in the limited-force zones on either side there were only the agreed, limited number of tanks, artillery pieces, and military personnel. The U.N. established widely scattered outposts of five to ten men, mostly out of sight of each other. A very loose network indeed, particularly as they seldom patrolled. During nighttime, about ten hours of every day, these outposts could not see and were wholly ineffective. Then, during the day, there were sand storms and heat that limited visibility. While parts of this Sinai area consisted of open flat stretches that you could see over clearly with binoculars, other parts included a lot of gullies, big mesas, semi-mountains, and rolling sand dunes, that made monitoring very difficult. The UN would have needed maybe ten times as many people to watch over their area even adequately with its traditional outpost system. The Egyptians and Israelis were right: the UN system as designed could not assure the two parties that arrangements were fully respected. Finally, UN execution, given its political-bureaucratic operations, has always been inherently very fallible.

So I've come to think that the U.N. is a marvelous institution to discuss international issues and to authorize peacekeeping activities. This mandate is the first essential step. But a UN mission,

by its multi-national composition, is inept at the next stage, the operations of peacekeeping. For instance, in the Sinai, the UN mission consisted of five different national military units as monitors: Swedes, Indonesians, Ghanaians, Nepalese and Finns. There was also a Canadian administrative support group and a Polish road repair unit.

Q: Any Irish?

ROBERTS: No. The Irish occasionally send units, but mostly they send individuals, often for staff functions.

These five national military units varied tremendously in capability. In some, all the enlisted staff and officers were college or high school graduates. In others, the average educational level might have been fourth grade. Some had all necessary equipment, including vehicles and communications. Others had only sidearms, if that. Some units could communicate with their outposts by radio; others only visited them to bring a daily ration. None of these military units could communicate with each other. Often, most of them could not reach their local UN headquarters near Isma'iliya by phone line or radio. This abysmal level of competence was and is still common for UN operations. It does not represent serious operations but rather a costly farce. UN "peacekeeping" in the Sinai was reduced largely to being a "presence." That was and is totally unacceptable for serious situations. The UN's technical capability needs major overhaul.

The Sinai Field Mission (SFM) thus indeed had a serious assignment in supplementing the UN in monitoring effectively the terms of the demilitarized zone agreement. "Effectively" meant in fact to a level satisfying mutual Israeli-Egyptian suspicions. As such suspicions of outright flouting, cheating, or manipulation were very intense, the monitoring standard had to be extremely high. Even after two years of steadily improving our capability, and strong assertion of our role, I don't believe we earned their full trust, but we did establish ourselves as a serious element in the situation and helped move the system on to its final multi-national non-UN, monitoring stage at the 167 frontier.

The Sinai agreement fortunately was conceptually very sound. It did not make the UN or the SFM responsible for such a sensitive role as providing the two antagonists warning of military threats or maneuvers. Rather, it set up an elaborate system whereby both Israel and Egypt could watch for themselves what the other was doing in the monitored zones and beyond. The UN and US roles were rather to monitor the two countries' activities to assure they were in compliance with the agreement. If not, a violation was reported to all parties. Warning of a military threat is much too vital a concern to entrust to any third party. Even our monitoring of the terms of the agreement was barely acceptable to both parties.

In order to watch each other, both were authorized to fly up and down the neutral and demilitarized zones on alternate days and take any pictures they wished. They could only come down to, we'll say, 5,000 feet altitude, and they could choose to fly or not, but they had to stick

to their chosen schedules. To supplement the two sides' aerial monitoring, the US had the right to over-fly the same area. We did this about once a week with a Blackbird SR-71 from Cyprus. The US photographs were then promptly distributed to the U.N., and to both sides, so that they could check their results on emptiness of the neutral zone and the number of tents or pieces of equipment or what evidence there might be of activities in the two limited force zones.

Then, on the ground, both sides had combination observation/intercept stations overlooking the other's territory neighboring the zones.

Q: Was either side really trying to do anything, outside of individual officers or soldiers who were playing games, particularly on the Israeli side? Was there a "testing" problem really?

ROBERTS: There was no effort by either side to upset the overall system, but various situations that arose suggested they would try manipulate it. With many Israelis, if you drew a little line on the sand and said, "Now don't go over this," they'd shake your hand while pushing out a foot to see where exactly a call would be made. Done in a friendly way, but it was testing the system. Equally, there were accidental violations. And once we had deliberate cover-up. We reversed this by stringent enforcement of our violation call. It was perhaps our best handled peacekeeping incident.

We had one SFM State Department officer in a little monitor shack at the entrance for each of the two intelligence stations. An officer from each station was also assigned at each monitor shack to work with the American to coordinate with the intelligence command and its personnel. The two worked together screening everything going in and out to assure that no prohibited, offensive-type weapons went in and that the personnel level remained within the 150 allowed

Our officers worked rotating shifts at these stations. After weeks and months of living with their counterparts, handling routine matters most of the time, everyone got well acquainted if not downright friendly. At the entrance to the Israeli station, J-1, there was also an Israeli guard post of eight soldiers. Their meals were brought out from the administrative buildings by pickup truck. One morning, our officer walked over to say hello to the driver and he noticed that in the back of the truck, along with some pots of hot food, was a bazooka. This was outlawed. So he said, "Hey, you got a bazooka in there!"

"No, I haven't," said the driver.

"Oh, yes," said our guy, "look at it right there."

"My God," said the Israeli, and he jumped in his truck and drove off.

So our officer phoned in the presence of a bazooka, a clear violation of the Agreement. But the evidence was gone. I was in charge then, as the SFM director, Nick Thorne, was in Jerusalem. I sent our operations director, Jim Shill, over to J-1 to review the matter with our officer and with Colonel Dani, the head of J-1. This was not a time sensitive issue and we could carefully verify

the facts before issuing a significant violation. Colonel Dani met with Shill and said: "Yes, there was something in the truck, all right, but it wasn't a bazooka. It was a mock-up thing that we practice with, and it's rather realistic looking." He promised to produce it, which he did in about 20 more minutes. He showed Jim a piece of tubing as large as a bazooka with a plastic guard shield and a handle on it. He added: "Anyone could easily have mistaken it. You know we wouldn't have a bazooka on this place. We all understand that's not allowed."

Jim asked our officer, "Is this what you saw?"

He said, "No, I saw a bazooka. It was in the back of the pickup truck. I had my hand on the side of the truck; I wasn't four feet away. I know I saw it."

So Jim told the colonel, "I'm sorry. Where is it? You've got to send it back."

And Dani said, "No, this is it."

So we had a standoff. Jim and I reviewed the situation. On the Israeli side was that the mock-up was very realistic; also, had there been a bazooka they'd only had at most 30 minutes to make the mock-up, and we knew Colonel Dani to be a very dedicated, straight officer. On the other hand, Jim knew Dani well and felt Dani had been uncomfortable in presenting the mock-up story. Furthermore, which we had not mentioned to Dani, our man at the J-1 gate was an ex-Marine who had been in Vietnam. There was no way that he wasn't going to know, four feet away, what was a bazooka and what was a mock-up. This was more serious than just the infraction decision. We were also calling the senior Israeli officer a liar which would leave no room for compromise. But it was a violation, so we informed all parties of the bazooka finding (but not the of background discussions). Thorne was informed by phone. He approved and noted we now had to get J-1 to cough up the bazooka as its presence was an ongoing violation and we needed to enforce our call.

I went back to Dani and argued the matter. He said, "That's fine, but you're mistaken. Your guy, I'm very sad to say, is mistaken." When I reported this to Thorne, he said, "All right. One of the things we can do is to cut them off. You close down the station; don't let anyone in or out." This was daring. Under the Agreement, we had authority to assure that the flow of arrivals and departures never resulted in more than the permitted 150 personnel at the station. We had no written authority to stop arrivals and departures per se, but there was nothing saying we could not. Furthermore, there was a practical problem. It was by now noon on a Friday. The Israelis always sent out about 100 staff on eight or more trucks for their Shabbat at home; and an equal number were on their way across the desert to J-1.

But either we took the risk or we let the Israelis get away with flaunting the Agreement and undercutting the US monitoring role. So I phoned Dani and told him we were closing entry and departure at J-1 until he produced the bazooka. We told our officer at the gate to inform the Israeli guards and to stand in the road if necessary. We sent some extra officers as help and

witnesses. Then I went to the UN checkpoint on the road entering the Israeli side of the neutral zone and persuaded them to stop the Israeli relief convoy. I pointed out that we had closed J-1 and that if the Israeli military vehicles and personnel stayed in the neutral zone, that would be a violation. They protested that they had no authority to do this. Ultimately, to avoid being responsible for a violation in their area, they agreed to hold up the Israeli convoy pending instructions from H.Q. Jerusalem. As that was likely to be some time coming, we were spared potential Israeli pressure immediately outside J-1.

This worked out in part because we had good relations with all the UN units and personnel. We visited them regularly and they had standing invitations to visit and eat at the SFM. We had excellent food and the most reliable air-conditioning and plumbing for hundreds of miles. We were a much visited oasis. One of the UN checkpoint officers later explained to me that they were sympathetic with our move, and were suspicious of the Israelis in this instance, but as UN officials they could only follow their own rules. As there was nothing clearly applicable, it had been possible to cooperate while seeking instructions.

The Israelis were hopping mad. The excitable major at the neighboring Israeli army base phoned to say we would open J-1 or he would send out armor and overrun our Mission Headquarters and our J-1 outpost. He did indeed send vehicles as far as the UN checkpoint. But he did not cross the line into the neutral zone. That would have been a blatant violation. We discounted his threat to overrun SFM, but he might well have broken down our flimsy barrier at J-1. It was a dicey moment. As the major was volatile and unpredictable, we took initial steps to execute a frequently practiced hasty evacuation.

Meanwhile we began getting excited calls from further and further up the Israeli military chain of command, up to the HQ of their Southern Command, and finally the Ministry of Defense. Nick Thorne, whom we fortunately could contact frequently, told us to stand fast and to pass any proposals to him to negotiate. He was enjoying it. Originally, he'd sounded a bit doubtful about our violations call. Jim Shill knew him well and suggested that he was generally doubtful about judgments other than his own. So we agreed early on that Jim should drive to Jerusalem and explain things we could not mention on the radio or phone, particularly our assessment of Colonel Dani and the identity of our J-1 watch officer (whose military experience Nick knew personally). Jim made the three plus hour trip to Jerusalem in barely over two.

The Israelis first proposed that we open J-1 and that they would send an inspection group from Southern Command next day to review the situation. Then Tel Aviv said a general from the Ministry would come directly by helicopter. We said, "No" to all proposals and referred them to Nick in Jerusalem. We continued to get a lot of protest from J-1 and from the major. We could see his heavy vehicles at the UN checkpoint barely two miles away.

We were also in regular phone contact with our senior Israeli liaison officer in Jerusalem. He was a regular army officer, a colonel, had been on Peres' staff, and had direct access to the Prime

Minister's office. As the tension increased, it behooved us to convince someone outside the immediate military chain of command around us. So we explained to him that our watch officer was an ex-Marine from Vietnam who had used bazookas, had seen it from four feet away, and that there was no way that we're wrong on this. The standoff continued right up to dusk. Then we got a call from the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv. It was just a message: "The colonel in charge of J-1 will meet you now at his perimeter now and turn over the bazooka." He did that, we collected it, and turned it over to the UN checkpoint for removal from the Agreement zones.

Much relieved, I invited the Israeli military in the area, including Dani and the major, to have supper with us that night. After dinner was over, and temperatures were somewhat calm, one turned to me and said, "What was all this fuss about, for just a little old bazooka?"

Basically the fuss was about the integrity of the system. We had been able not only to identify an event correctly, but had enforced our finding and buttressed our referee role. Once players in a rough game can intimidate or disregard a referee, his role is much reduced. The same in peacekeeping. I would go further, considering the stakes and costs, and say that if peacekeepers are reduced to being just a presence, they should be withdrawn.

I also think Nick Thorne exercised a lot of courage and was correct in not asking Washington for instructions. He said: "This is our call. It's up to us to make it work. If we report to Washington, they will look at it politically and say, "Hey, you can't do this to the Israelis, we're negotiating something urgent with them. Also, the legal office will say there's nothing in your Agreement mandate that authorizes you to close off J-1 in order to break a deadlock. Furthermore, this should be negotiated; you are threatening disruption of a major international Agreement." All that is eminently reasonable. We were taking a real risk of disrupting the system. But if we let the Israelis get away with it, the system was also disrupted, but less visibly. At the heart of this was that as referee we in SFM were ready to walk off the field if ignored; I'm not sure the Department was willing to risk the operation in order to maintain it. I'm not aware there's ever been a decision on this point.

As for the other parties, we had reported to the United Nations and to the Egyptians that the violation had occurred. Then we followed up with general reports of on-going negotiations with the Israelis about resolving the problem. At the end of the day, we reported that the bazooka had been turned over and the matter was settled. So, for the outside world, there was just a small matter of a bazooka turning up where it shouldn't have been and it was turned over to the UN.

Later, I learned from a senior Israeli staff officer that the issue had gone up to the Prime Minister's office. The Israeli government, however, had negotiated the Agreement and they wanted to keep it alive. The senior political level also did not have quite the military's strong chain of command loyalty. Furthermore, all this was occurring pretty privately on phone and radio so there was less loss of face. Finally, I was chagrined to learn much later that the top Israelis knew the bazooka was there because some illegal weapons had been stockpiled at J-1

before we got there. Just in case the Agreement didn't work out. Security, for Israelis, is too vital to trust to anyone or anything except their own capability.

Q: I take it that the pressure from the Egyptian side was negligible. No problems?

ROBERTS: Very negligible. They were less concerned about territorial security than the Israelis. They had the confidence of thousands of years that they would always be around. They also had a single interest. They wanted the Sinai back. Right away of course; but the process could take time. Everything does. So they were more relaxed about operations out in the field. They did not act first and talk later; we discussed problems with them upon visiting their regional HQ near Isma'iliya and the Defense Ministry in Cairo.

There were some problems with the Egyptian supply of their intelligence station, E-1. Their trucks were in such terrible condition that it took them hours to negotiate the 40 plus miles from the Canal to the station. Then the trucks frequently broke down in the demilitarized zones. Once, several of them could not get up the last steep pitch to E-1 in time to meet the close-down dead line. We closed the E-1 gate, called a violation, and without saying anything over a radio or phone, sent over blankets and hot food for the soldiers who had to sleep overnight in their vehicle

C. WILLIAM KONTOS

Director, Sinai Support Mission

Washington, DC (1976-1980)

Ambassador C. William Kontos was born in Illinois in 1922. He received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from the University of Chicago. He served in the U.S. Army from 1943-1946. Ambassador Kontos had served in the USAID program throughout most of his Foreign Service career. His career included positions in Greece, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Pakistan, Lebanon, Israel, and an ambassadorship to Sudan. Ambassador Kontos was interviewed in 1992 by Thomas Stern.

Q: Then in 1976, you became the Special Representative of the President and Director of the United States Sinai Support Mission. How did that come about?

KONTOS:

Essentially, the Mission was one result of Kissinger's shuttle which took place after the war of 1973. At that time, the Secretary was able to persuade the Egyptians and Israelis to agree to a transition period before the Sinai was turned over to Egypt. The transition period was intended as a time when both sides could build confidence in the peaceful intent of the other. It enabled

Kissinger to lower tensions between the two foes and reduce the prospects of further clashes between them.

The Sinai Mission was established in the Sinai astride the traditional invasion routes -- the Mitla and Gidi Passes. Under the terms of the agreement signed by the U.S., Egypt and Israel, the U.S. was committed to deploy a civilian peace-keeping force in the Sinai that would protect the approaches to these passes from either side. This was to be done by setting up observation posts, electronic sensors and listening devices that would monitor any activity in the passes or nearby. Moreover, as part of the agreement, both Egypt and Israel were permitted a major observation point, which was to be manned by themselves. The Israelis already had one; the Egyptians were permitted to build one of their own. That allowed each side also to verify with its own people that no invasion force was approaching the passes. The Secretary and the NSC decided that the State Department would become responsible for the management of this observation effort. The Department decided to employ a civilian contractor who would work under the direction of the Department.

In the Fall of 1975, Joe Sisco, then Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Frank Wisner of the Secretariat and Bob Oakley of the NSC were assigned the responsibility for drafting the first mission statement. In December, 1975, I was asked by Winston Lord, on behalf of the Secretary, to take charge of the project. The man who had been working on the project had already brought in some people -- one from the Pentagon, a naval contractor, a couple from the research arm of the Army, a Marine Corps Colonel. When I was sworn in as Special Representative of the President, a partial staff was already in place and a request for proposals (RFP) had been publicized in a Commerce announcement. The proposals were for the establishment of a field mission, including housing for up to 200 people, observation posts at both ends of the passes, deployment of electronic gear, placement of the sensors, procurement of observation gear (telescopes, binoculars, night vision devices), and finally to construct a facility in the Sinai. The contractor also had to man this observation operation 24 hours each day. The responses were coming in as I took over the job. There was some urgency in making decisions because we were working on a deadline, which was sometime in the following Spring. A special appropriation had been made so that funds were not a problem.

My first task was to review each of the proposals that were already coming in. That was done meticulously and with great care. We set up a special board which included people with contracting expertise from various agencies to review the proposals. We established a dozen criteria that had to be met. Weights were given to those proposals that best met the criteria. In the end, the successful bidder was a Texas organization, headquartered outside of Dallas, called "E Systems". It, in turn, negotiated a subcontract with a Texas construction firm to build the facilities -- housing, offices, observation posts. The subcontractor, H.B. Zachary, was headquartered in El Paso and accustomed to building with pre-fabricated concrete units. They had used that process in the construction of motels. These concrete units were ideal for the Sinai requirements; each had living accommodations, kitchens, bedrooms. They were designed to be

placed one on top of the other, so that a building of almost any dimension could be put up. The contractor obtained these units from an existing job and put them on a ship leaving Corpus Christi, Texas to be delivered in the Sinai.

Meanwhile, a group, including two or three men from my office and some we borrowed from the Defense Department, went out to the Sinai to survey the situation. They went to both Cairo and Jerusalem and established links with liaison officials of both sides. They identified a site appropriate for the Sinai Field Mission. The Sinai was then still Israeli occupied up to the passes. Beyond those passes, towards the Suez Canal, the land was in Egyptian hands, although Egypt had no military presence there. Only nomads wandered around in the area between the Suez and the passes. The only Egyptian military presence in the Sinai permitted by the agreement was the personnel to man the observation post. We chose the site, the perimeter of which was to be patrolled by armed U.N. guards. Our personnel would be unarmed.

We are now in January 1976. "E Systems" and the construction contractor used a number of airplanes -- converted 747s -- to ship the construction material in order to build a temporary facility on the site we had selected. This temporary base was to be used by the construction workers and also to serve as the beginning of our operations. We established communications between Washington, Jerusalem and Cairo. There was a lot of work that had to be done in a short period of time. E systems was expert in loading the planes so that the material was unloaded in a proper sequence. We did have a crisis when the issue arose as to how the heavy concrete units would be brought into the Sinai; this required flat bed trucks. The passes were obviously much closer to Egypt and we thought we would use that route -- from Cairo to the Canal, across the Canal and to the site. But the roads on the Egyptian part of the Sinai were meager and primitive; also there were no facilities in any Egyptian port for unloading these heavy units. Even if there had been adequate cranes, the trucks might have had problems crossing the Suez and might have blocked the Canal. So we scrapped the idea of landing them in Egypt and took them to Haifa instead. The route was obviously much longer, but roads were paved all the way to the Sinai site.

As the ships were en route to Haifa, I got a call from my deputy in Washington. I was in Cairo on one of my frequent trips during this period. He told me that the construction contractor's shipping agent had said that if the ship docks in Haifa, he would be in violation of the Arab embargo. That would mean that no other ships of that shipping line would henceforth be permitted to dock in an Arab port. So we had to get involved in finessing the Arab embargo rules. We had our Ambassador approach the headquarters of the embargo enforcement agency, which was in Damascus, to see whether the Haifa docking would be a violation. We were able in the end to persuade the shipping line to dock in Haifa without penalty. I have a vague recollection that in order to avoid the embargo, the ship had to stop in a neutral port first (Nicosia, I believe) and then it could proceed to Haifa. I am not clear on the details, but some kind of legal subterfuge was worked out. That was one of the many, many difficulties that we overcame.

I must say that I had terrific cooperation from both the Egyptians and the Israelis. The Egyptians appointed a Major General to be the liaison officer and the Israelis appointed an Army Intelligence Corps Colonel. They both were skilled at cutting corners and through red tape. I shuttled between Cairo and Jerusalem and Washington.

The temporary camps were constructed. The first message was sent reporting to me and to the Secretary that the Mission was in business. The living conditions were far from ideal; winter in the Sinai in prefabs was not exactly a picnic.

We also had to establish a continual support system for the Mission. Most of the fresh fruit and vegetables came from Egypt and the rest of the food stuffs from Israel. E Systems was responsible for supplying all the provisions.

After the Mission was working, its main functions were to observe events around the passes and to maintain liaison with both sides to resolve any disputes that arose from observations -- ours as well as theirs. We had to report any trespasses into the neutral zone. We had a very elaborate reporting system to both sides and to Washington, so that if there were a violation of either the airspace or the neutral zone by any unauthorized vehicle or person -- we had occasional mistaken penetrations by people who did not know where the boundaries were or who may not have had appropriate authorizations -- there would be an immediate report made. There were a number of unauthorized penetrations, mostly by uninformed people. The more difficult aspect was air violations, which we did not handle as well as ground ones. We had a U.S. airplane monitor the Sinai periodically, that provided air cover for events in the Sinai and provided pictures to both sides from those flights. These planes had very good military photographic equipment on board; we used U-2s with the agreement of both parties.

Our main objective was to build confidence that the U.S. was serving both sides even-handedly and effectively.

We had a number of sticky moments. None of the Egyptian or Israeli observers were to have arms of any kind -- personal weapons or otherwise. There were some attempts made to bring arms into each side's observer posts. The Israelis had a very sophisticated observation point filled with the latest in listening and detecting equipment. The Egyptians were building a much more primitive post on their side of the passes. Both sides tried from time to time to pass our posts with guns, which they always said were with them inadvertently. We always checked the Israeli and Egyptian observers as they went to and from their observation posts. The Americans who did this checking were Foreign Service officers from State and AID. We had 12-15 young FSOs who were liaison officers to the two sides. The E Systems people manned the sensors and other observation equipment, but dealing with each side was left to the FSOs who were stationed at each observation post. The FSOs lived first in temporary and then in permanent barracks along with the E Systems people. They would go to their posts every eight hours where they observed what was going on in the observation posts of each side

SAMUEL W. LEWIS

Ambassador

Israel (1977-1984)

Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis was born in Texas on October 1, 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree in international relations from the Johns Hopkins University. His career included positions in Naples, Florence, Rio de Janeiro, Kabul, and an ambassadorship to Israel. Ambassador Lewis was interviewed by Peter Jessup on August 9, 1988.

Q: I would like to turn for a moment to the group of observers that were stationed in the Sinai passes. You mentioned earlier the unfortunate demise of the head of that unit, Ray Hunt. I would like to know a little more about that program, how it got started and how it operated.

LEWIS: That operation was called the "Multi-National Force and Observers" (MFO). The idea rose from the stalemate that had occurred in the Security Council after the signing of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. As we drafted that treaty, it was understood that the Israeli would insist that an international force be placed in the buffer zone once they had withdrawn from the Sinai Peninsula. They also insisted that, unlike the UN Peace-keeping Force that existed in Sinai between 1956 and 1967 (UNEF II) and which was withdrawn suddenly at Nasser's insistence, this new force had to be in the Sinai with a firm guarantee that it could not be withdrawn unless both Israel and Egypt agreed. As we drafted the peace treaty, we included a provision providing for a multi-national force of UN peace-keepers. But we were very much aware that the Soviets opposed the Camp David initiative and did not play any role whatsoever in that effort. We thought it very likely that they would veto in the Security Council any proposal to establish such a force. Nevertheless, the treaty calls for a UN peace-keeping force. Because we thought it highly unlikely that the Security Council would approve this provision, we drafted side letters for Carter to provide to Begin and Sadat, assuring them that the U.S. would see to the provision of a multi-national force outside the UN framework, if the Security Council could or would not approve it. As we suspected, the treaty, although widely approved by many countries, never received approval by the UN. That was one of the UN derelictions that have annoyed me since Camp David. The Soviets made it eminently clear that if any resolution relating to the peace treaty were brought before the Security Council, they would veto it. The US, for reasons that I then and now believe were quite erroneous, didn't challenge the Soviets. I always thought it would have been much better to table a resolution of support for the peace treaty, including a

mandate for a peace-keeping force, and leave it up to the Soviets to exercise their veto against a very popular agreement. They would have had to accept an international onus for their veto, but the US government decided not to force the issue. So the peace treaty never had a UN blessing until many years later.

Upon signing of the treaty, we started to form a peace-keeping force, outside the UN framework, as we had promised to do. We decided to use a UN force as a model, but to use a somewhat different structure. Michael Sterner, then Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA, was assigned to lead the negotiations between the three major countries involved: Israel, Egypt and the US. He was supposed to come up with a formula for a multinational force which would satisfy the requirements spelled out in the peace treaty and which would satisfy the Israelis who were the ones that were insisting on a force. Egypt really didn't want a force in Sinai, but Israel would not have signed the treaty without it.

Sterner did an outstanding job of negotiations. I was personally very much involved when the negotiations took place in Israel. I thought he handled himself extremely well. In the final analysis, we established a unique structure, headed by a Director General of the MFO, who was to be headquartered in Rome. That DG was to be an American civilian. He was in many respects the analogue to the UN Secretary General. The international force that was to be present in the Sinai would consist of approximately 3000 people, drawn from a dozen or more nations under the command of a non-American general. It was understood that we would seek for that position someone who had had some experience in leading a multinational force from the NATO command structure. In fact, we chose a Norwegian as the first commander. Each of his successors have been Scandinavians, although none of their troops were involved. The first commander was a brilliant soldier/diplomat. He had been on the NATO staff for a long time and was very skilled in the diplomatic side of his tasks. The major challenge was to get contributions of troops. One of the most important aspects of the negotiations was the agreement we managed to get approved that unlike UN peace-keeping forces which are totally funded by the UN budget, in this case Egypt, Israel and the US would each pay one-third of the costs of the operation. That provided major incentive in keeping costs down. It also was concrete demonstration that the force was being established for the benefit of the two signatories to the peace treaty. It was a formula that I have often argued should be adopted by the UN for all of its peace-keeping operations wherever the benefitting countries can afford it. These forces are established for the benefit of the countries involved and should therefore be supported financially by them, instead of the international community at large. Recently, the UN has taken that approach in one or two cases.

WILLIAM JEFFRAS DIETRICH

Press Attaché, USIS

Tel Aviv (1979-1982)

William Jeffras Dietrich was born in Boston in 1936. He received his bachelor's degree from Connecticut Wesleyan University in 1958 and then served in the US Navy. His career included positions in Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Italy, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Mexico. Mr. Dieterich was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999

Q: Let's talk about Sinai.

DIETERICH: As you know, the Camp David agreement called for further negotiations to bring about a staged withdrawal from the Sinai. In terms of background, we already had the Sinai field mission out there, which had come in after '73 as an early-warning peacekeeping operation. This basically put seismic sensors and television cameras into the Giddi and Mitla passes to make sure that neither Israel or Egypt would be subject to a surprise armored attack by the other. I visited that operation once. It is a really bleak and strange operation, run by foreign service officers and some military people, plus a contractor, E-Systems, who provides most of the logistics. E-Systems was also eventually involved in the Sinai Multinational Force also.

The Israelis and the Egyptians both, as we came down to the deadline for withdrawal from the Sinai began to get cold feet. Sadat was having second thoughts because he was getting beaten up by the Arabs all over the place and he was tired of it, and because he feared the limitations he had accepted on Egyptian military activities in the Sinai would only buy him more grief. The Israelis were deathly afraid, in retrospect, of establishing a precedent which would then be applied by somebody to the Golan and the West Bank. After the death of Sadat, and Sharon coming to power, it came down to "I know we have to give up most of it, but we can't give up everything, we have to keep something. We have to renegotiate this somehow. We just can't give up the whole Sinai."

This led to a whole bunch of really dumb disputes. The most egregious being Taaba, which was down on the Red Sea, just around the corner from Eilat. And there were other kinds of trial balloons - "Can't we hold onto the air bases? Why should we give up all this oil?" The department sent Walt Stoessel out, who was the undersecretary for political affairs, I think, to negotiate and to work with the Egyptians and Israelis on this. He did a fine job, and again it was one of those missions where I spent a lot of time cooling my heels in offices, waiting to see if anybody needed the press. It was finally worked out. An agreement was signed under somewhat

strange circumstances due to considerations of who was to sign and where. On the Egyptian side I think it was signed by the Egyptian ambassador in Tel Aviv, which is where he lived at least.

The withdrawal came to pass with a number of results. I think, in some ways, what Israel gave up has not been fully appreciated in the rest of the world. The Sharon tactic of trying to hold on to little enclaves was just silly. All it did was take away from Israel some of the international credit it should have gotten for a remarkable sacrifice. Who has ever given up a lot of territory without being beaten?

WILLIAM ANDREAS BROWN

Deputy Chief of Mission

Tel Aviv, Israel (1979-1982)

Ambassador William Andreas Brown was born in Winchester, Massachusetts in 1930. He joined the "Holloway Program" which was part of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Program and went to Harvard University, graduating with a Magna cum Laude degree. In 1950 he went to Marine Corps basic training in Virginia and later served in Korea. His Foreign Service career took him to a multitude of places including Honk Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, USSR, India, the UK, and Israel. His career includes an ambassadorship to Israel as well as several positions in the State Department, Environmental Protection Agency. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November of 1998.

Q: This cease-fire was basically with the Syrians, wasn't it?

BROWN: Yes, de facto it was with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization], although we did not deal with them directly, and with the Syrians leaning on them. Full compliments to Phil Habib in this respect. Therefore, it was a challenge to ensure that this new understanding was implemented. There was this fear that it might break down, and we would have a crisis in Lebanon.

There was also the aftermath of the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. There was the ongoing question of a deadline for the Israeli pullout from the Sinai Desert, which was a critical matter for Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. It was absolutely critical that the Israelis pull out on time. There was the complicating factor of the Palestinian autonomy issue, because the Palestinians wouldn't play, and wouldn't have anything to do with it. The Egyptians were very sensitive to the fact that they were negotiating on behalf of the Palestinians, who didn't want to play. So the Egyptians felt the need to put on the best face they could for the Palestinians.

However, they could see that the Israelis were not really going to give them what they wanted. That is, something that would be an Egyptian version of full autonomy, probably leading to self-determination and independence. There was no way that the Egyptians could get this, and they were frustrated on that score.

On the Sinai withdrawal we were working full blast to complete the airfields we had promised to build for the Egyptians to compensate them for the loss of their airfields in the Sinai area. This construction job was a very expensive proposition. We had a very large U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presence, with some of the contractors employing 2,000 Portuguese and 2,000 Thai workers and operating under demanding, desert-like conditions. They were working all out, 10 hours a day, in the Negev to build these airfields to Israeli specifications. These construction jobs were unparalleled as far as U.S. air base construction was concerned. The air bases had to be built to be virtually bombproof. We don't build U.S. air bases that way in the continental United States. We build U.S. air bases in the continental United States to operate from in flying to forward bases overseas. These bases in the Sinai Desert were built to withstand the heaviest kind of bombing attack. They were very expensive, and the completion deadline was sacrosanct.

We had the problem in that the Israeli Minister of Defense Ezer Weizman, said to us: "Do it and get it done. Don't get our unions involved." However, there was an understandable Israeli undercurrent of wanting to get the construction contracts. So there was this whole air base construction problem that I was involved in.

Then there was the question of setting up a respectable force in the Sinai Desert that would meet Prime Minister Menachem Begin's specifications. At the time the Soviets had made it clear that they would veto such a move and that they would not allow a United Nations force to perform this function.

Onto the scene came Michael Sterner, with whom I had entered the Foreign Service. He was an Arabist in the best sense of the word. He had walked the Saudi Arabian pipeline for Aramco before he came into the State Department. He spoke Arabic and had had a series of increasingly senior and responsible positions. He tells his story in another one of the interviews in your Oral History. I often went with him on calls on Begin and other senior officials and then followed up.

I will tell you one incident to highlight the sensitivity of this matter. What Prime Minister Begin wanted were American forces in the Sinai Desert. We couldn't agree to that, for a variety of reasons. It would have to be multinational if it couldn't be a United Nations force. We therefore had to set up something respectable and convincing as a substitute for a U.S. force.

In one conversation, one on one, with me, Prime Minister Begin said, "Bill, I'm not worried about the Sinai at present. We can handle the Sinai. I'm not worried about a year or two, or five years into the future. I'm worried about what happens 10 or 20 years from now. After I'm gone

from the scene and, who knows, after Sadat is gone from the scene, are we going to see another Nasser come to power in Egypt and do what he did in 1967: kick out the UN and threaten us? That's why I would like to have this a really stable, convincing, military presence." I said, "Well, Mr. Prime Minister, it can't be a solely American force." He said, "All right, but I don't want it run by a bunch of 'Banana Republics.'" That was a term that often came into his mind. He didn't want to be treated like a "Banana Republic," as he put it to Ambassador Sam Lewis. He said, "I'd like to see really respectable components for this force." I said, "What did you have in mind?" He said, "Well, people like the Australians, the New Zealanders, the Canadians. You know, people like that." I said to him: "How about the British?" He said, "Well," and he slipped away from that alternative.

We therefore had to go out and persuade the right kind of governments to put up the right kind of forces. Mike Sterner, Peter Constable, and others were engaged in setting this force up. It was fascinating to see what finally emerged. I ended up negotiating the follow up and at great length with Eli Rubinstein, who was the Secretary of the Israeli Cabinet, a lawyer who also had a Ministry of Defense background. [Addendum: He is now Attorney General.] Whenever I see Eli, we still joke about this. I'll never forget where he once had me pick up the phone in his office and negotiate on his behalf with Ray Hunt. In other words, he maneuvered me into a situation where I was in his office and sitting over there, feeding me what he wanted. I wanted to say, "Why the hell don't you do it yourself?" However, he had someone else on another phone. It was fascinating. Ray Hunt, by the way, bless him, was subsequently assassinated...

Q: In Rome.

BROWN: In Rome, by terrorists. I'll never forget going to his funeral. Anyhow, we set up, on time, a convincing multinational force for the Sinai. Even now most Americans and, indeed, most American Members of Congress, are totally unaware of the fact that we maintained a battalion of troops in the Sinai playing a crucial role and providing a quiet presence that has worked because the parties concerned want it to work. We negotiated an essential, as far as sharing the expenses were concerned. Basically, it violated the Egyptian amour propre to have a foreign force on their sacred, Sinai soil. So, over the years the Egyptians would chip away, incrementally, at the size and the composition of the force. However, it still remained a very, very important adjunct to a key treaty requirement of the time. Lessons were learned. We could set up, if necessary, a non-UN force. This arrangement created a precedent for such ticklish situations as might evolve. Look at the present situation in Kosovo, where we are using a NATO approach as opposed to a UN approach.

Q: There is a general feeling, and it really stems from Nasser getting U Thant, [the UN Secretary General], to pull out the UN force in the Sinai. A UN force is subject to so many political considerations on a worldwide basis that it is essentially unreliable.

BROWN: There is that factor. Now, the first military commander of this Sinai force was Bull Hanson, a Norwegian general and a very sophisticated gentleman. We always kept an American as the civilian head of this Sinai Force. This position was portrayed as an essentially administrative function for keeping the Force together. Fortunately, we chose excellent people, such as former Foreign Service Officers, to do this. They deserve full credit, to this day. (End of tape)

Camp David Accords & Egypt-Israel Peace Process

ALFRED H. MOSES

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Washington, DC (1956-1980)

Ambassador Moses was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. He was educated at Dartmouth College, Princeton University and the Georgetown University Law School. After service in the US Navy, Mr. Moses joined the Washington, D.C. Law firm Covington and Burling, where he dealt with matters concerning Middle East and Romanian Affairs. Prior to being named Ambassador to Romania in 1994, Mr. Moses served as Special Counsel to President Carter. He subsequently became Special Presidential Envoy for the Cyprus Conflict. Ambassador Moses was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: What was your impression of the whole Camp David negotiations?

MOSES: It was a bit surreal. For 13 days Sadat and Begin did not talk to each other except the first day and the last. Carter did the shuttling. Saunders did most of the drafting. He came out with a marvelous document. I later met with Sadat in 1980 in his home in Mit Abul Kom in the Nile delta. His only regret was that, in his words, Begin did not have the courage to go on with the Palestinian part of the Accords. The Camp David Accords had two parts. One, Egyptian-Israeli, the other Palestinian-Israeli, that called for Palestinian autonomy. Begin signed the document that recognized "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." He went quite far. It did not call for an independent Palestinian state as our policy is today, but it was the first

recognition by Israel of the political right of the Palestinians to govern themselves. Sadat was the most impressive public figure I ever met. He was a true visionary and a strategic thinker. It was he, not Kissinger, who orchestrated the disengagement agreements in the Sinai preceding his visit to Jerusalem in November 1977. Two weeks after Sadat was assassinated, I visited Cairo to meet with Hosni Mubarak, Sadat's successor. Mubarak reaffirmed Egypt's commitment to carry out the terms of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, which was important in itself, but in other respects he seemed wooden, lacking Sadat's forcefulness and charisma. From Cairo I went to Jerusalem to meet with Prime Minister Begin who talked at length about Sadat's funeral. The funeral was on a Saturday and, in order to observe the Sabbath, Begin arrived Friday afternoon. He stayed in what he termed "Egyptian army barracks." Lowering his eyes and wrinkling his nose, he said they were "filthy." He then proceeded to recount his walking in the funeral procession and having Sadat's son came up, kiss him on both cheeks and tell him, "I consider you my father." A week or two later I was talking with President Carter who also attended the funeral. He told me what moved him most was when Sadat's son came up to him, kissed him on both cheeks and told him, "I consider you my father." How many fathers can one person have?

ALFRED LEROY ATHERTON, JR.
Deputy Director, Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1965-1974)

Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near East Affairs
Washington, DC (1974-1978)

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(1978-1979)

Ambassador
Egypt (1979-1983)

Well, in any case, the stage was set. It was agreed that Carter would meet with Sadat and Begin at Camp David in September of 1978.

The Egyptians and Israelis both agreed. They had given us their views, and we would take into account if at all possible the principal concerns of both sides. Obviously it would not be acceptable to either side at the start, but at least it was a basis for the beginning of negotiations.

And that was basically how Camp David proceeded. There was an initial statement by Sadat, a formal statement that he read, that contained Egypt's maximum positions, and that was received very coolly, I might say, by Begin and the Israeli delegation. It sounded as though it had been drafted by lawyers in the Foreign Ministry. The Israelis also presented their position.

And then, the formalities out of the way, we broke up into smaller working groups headed by Cy Vance, Moshe Dayan and Muhammad Ibrahim Kamal, with their immediate advisors -- not the principals, not Begin, Sadat, and Carter. In fact, there was a tacit (maybe it wasn't so tacit)

agreement made early on, on the American side, that the chemistry still was not very good between Begin and Sadat, and that probably the best way to have Camp David proceed would be to keep Begin and Sadat from talking to each other and for the negotiations to be conducted through their foreign ministers.

In fact, I don't think there were any more meetings, until the end of the conference, between Sadat and Begin. The Israelis had their own cabins, and the Americans had theirs, and the Egyptians had theirs. There was a lot of American mediation back and forth between the delegates. There were also meetings of delegations, but not at the top. Not even socially. Sadat took all of his meals in his cabin. Begin used to come to the common dining room with his delegation, but Sadat really was quite aloof during this whole thing. He was obviously being consulted by his delegation, and President Carter met with him, but he was not a party to the direct talks.

It was a very strenuous week. The talks went on morning, afternoon, and well into the night. Those of us drafting and redrafting papers and having new texts ready for the morning session had a lot of very short nights without too much sleep. There were a lot of informal exchanges when we were out walking around the gardens and around the pathways, and over meals and over drinks, without sitting around the conference table with people taking notes.

But soon the real hangups began to emerge, the critical issues. What the Americans introduced was a single text which would deal with all aspects of a final peace settlement involving Egyptians, Israelis, and also the other Arabs. It became apparent that the Egyptians did not simply want to deal with bilateral Egyptian-Israeli issues, they wanted an agreement that would take into account the interests of the other Arabs as well. The Israelis for their part were much more interested in having a bilateral peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

The solution to this, in which President Carter was personally involved, was to have two documents. And the President himself sat down with a yellow pad and fleshed out one night what he thought should be the main elements of a bilateral treaty between Egypt and Israel, while delegations continued to work on a more comprehensive document, which would deal with the Palestinian problem and all the other aspects of a peace involving the other Arabs.

Several concepts became clear. One, the Egyptians wanted very much to have a linkage between progress towards a comprehensive settlement including a solution to Palestinian issues on the one hand, and progress towards an Israeli-Egyptian settlement on the other. For example, Egypt and Israel would agree to normalize relations, ending the economic boycott, establishing trade relations, etc. Each of these steps would be keyed to some progress towards agreement between other Arab states and Israel, so that Egypt would not be getting out in front.

Another issue was how do you deal with the basically unbridgeable gap between the Begin government's position that they could not commit themselves to anything that would undermine their claim to all of Palestine, and the Egyptian position that the commitment to withdraw from occupied territory in Resolution 242 included a commitment to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza. This was something we had all wrestled with, even before coming to Camp David, and had come to the conclusion that this was not solvable in one step, and therefore we had to find intermediate steps. And that led to the idea of transitional arrangements or interim arrangements which would not prejudice the final solution. The idea of this actually had begun to

emerge early on, and was developed further in a paper that Hal Saunders drafted after the Leeds conference. It was very much a part of the single negotiating text proposal that came out of our talks at the Harriman estate before Camp David. This was a concept which eventually found its way into the Camp David Accords.

So there were, in effect, now two negotiations going on -- one on the terms of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty and one on the terms of a comprehensive peace. At the end of something close to two weeks, the negotiations had come down to just a few final issues.

There was now agreement that there would be two documents, one on an Egyptian-Israeli settlement and one on a comprehensive peace settlement. Neither one in itself was a treaty. These were seen as frameworks to guide negotiations for peace treaties.

Two big issues remained. One was the Egyptian insistence to have some statement on Jerusalem. The other was to have a commitment by Israel that it would stop its practice of establishing settlements in the occupied territory, which was considered by the United States and by Egypt to be a violation of international law governing occupied territories, and which would create obstacles in the negotiations.

The last night at Camp David, Carter and Begin with a few senior advisors (not including Eilts, Lewis, Quandt or me) met to try to resolve these issues. And at the end of the meeting, it was reported to us by Vance on behalf of the President that Begin had agreed to a freeze on settlements for the duration of the negotiations. On Jerusalem, it was basically agreed to disagree.

The procedure had been well established early on at Camp David that both sides, the Israelis and Egyptians, would look to the Americans to do the drafts; we would prepare the documents, and they would then react to them with counter drafts, suggestions, changes in the wording. Our first drafts of all the documents were prepared after consultation with the two parties, and an attempt was made to hammer out agreements in advance of meetings with the parties. We would use the draft on which we thought we had fair agreement from both sides, with differences and possible tradeoffs in brackets. But on Jerusalem this was not possible. There was no way that you could come close to a position acceptable to both sides. The position of the Egyptians was that the status of Jerusalem remains to be determined, that Resolution 242 required the Israelis to relinquish control of East Jerusalem which they had occupied in 1967, that there had to be a place for Muslims and Arabs in the final settlement of Jerusalem. The Israeli position was that all of united Jerusalem was the capital of Israel and non-negotiable, and they would guarantee the rights of the three religious communities. The American position incorporated quotations from statements that had been made on the record in the Security Council discussions about Jerusalem, initially by Arthur Goldberg for President Johnson right after the 1967 war and then a statement by Ambassador Yost, Charlie Yost, our U.N. ambassador under Nixon, who stated our position that East Jerusalem was occupied territory to be on the agenda in peace negotiations. This was unacceptable to the Israelis, and it didn't go far enough for the Arabs, for the Egyptians. In the end, this issue was resolved by annexing three letters to the Camp David agreement stating the Egyptian, Israeli and U.S. positions -- in our case by reference to the Goldberg and Yost statements, without quoting them. Ours was a long-established bipartisan position.

There had been a couple of worrisome moments at Camp David. At one point, for example, President Sadat had announced that he was going home. He had ordered to have his bags packed and asked that the helicopter be sent up to take him and his delegation back to Washington. He felt that the conference was not coming to grips with the real issues and he was going to leave. He was very impatient with the lawyers and the details of the negotiations. He wanted to make sweeping statements of principle and then let the negotiators fill in the details. Well, how much of this was a bluff and how much was serious we'll never know, but the President personally went to his cabin and reasoned with him and persuaded him that he should give it a little more time.

Another thing at Camp David was that the Egyptian foreign minister finally reached the end of his rope. Sadat kept overruling him with instructions the foreign minister felt should not be given. The particular issue which was the breaking point for Muhammad Ibrahim Kamal was when Sadat agreed to give up any linkage between Egyptian-Israeli peace negotiations and the comprehensive peace settlement involving the other Arabs. Sadat agreed Egypt would not make agreement on a peace treaty with Israel dependent on progress on the other fronts. And this was too much for Muhammad Ibrahim Kamal, who privately tendered his resignation to Sadat and informed us. He didn't want to embarrass the President so it was not announced until later.

Q: At this point, had Egypt been thrown out of the Arab League?

ATHERTON: No. That came later. What the first Camp David Accord provided was that, to negotiate the bilateral treaty between Egypt and Israel, both countries would immediately send delegations to negotiations which would be held in Washington, and which were to be completed within ninety days, starting in early October, so that they would be finished in early 1979. The other Camp David document was simply a recommendation to the other Arabs as a framework for their negotiations with Israel. It included provisions about how the Palestinians would become part of the process with many ambiguities. To get agreement, there would need to be further negotiations with Israel. And this was where the Egyptian delegation felt Sadat had made too many concessions.

Anyway, to return to the very important issue of Israeli settlements. Carter said Begin's agreement to freeze settlements meant for the five year period for negotiating an agreement on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza. Begin said he had agreed there would be a freeze on settlements for the ninety days, within which Egyptian-Israeli treaty negotiations were to be completed.

The participants in the late night meeting at Camp David had different recollections of what was agreed. The U.S. side introduced a draft to record the agreement, but Begin never signed it.

About the time that Carter was announcing this agreement, Begin had gone to New York and was saying that he had only agreed to a short-term freeze. So there was already a difference on the table, and it was too late, really, to try to resolve it. The Camp David Accords had been signed, the President had reported to Congress and the nation. There was obviously a difference hanging out there, that at some point was going to have to either be dealt with, or simply

forgotten. But in the euphoria of the moment it was pushed aside. It was not confronted head-on at that stage.

One of the problems in terms of the other Arabs was that it was all negotiated in such secrecy and without consultations with the other Arabs that it had left a bad taste in the mouths of, particularly of King Hussein of Jordan, because the agreement basically included commitments or at least proposals that it was assumed would be acceptable to King Hussein and to the Palestinians and to the other Arabs as a basis for negotiation with Israel on what they hadn't been consulted.

This was not an easy task, though, because there were lots of suspicions that Sadat had been dealing with Israel behind their backs, with the Americans and Israelis. But Secretary Vance did, I think, a yeoman job. He had, fortunately, great credibility as an individual, and therefore we thought the Arabs would at least listen and give him the benefit of the doubt. He had difficult talks with the Jordanians especially.

There was no briefing in Damascus. The Syrians, as I recall, said they wanted nothing to do with this sell-out. After all, they had fought the '73 War with Sadat and it had laid the groundwork, and they suddenly felt that they had been totally discounted. The fact was that they had taken themselves out. They hadn't agreed to take part in the Geneva conference. They had been invited to the Cairo conference by Sadat and had not gone. So you can say that they had no one to blame but themselves.

ATHERTON: You know, looking back at this particular moment, I don't think many of us realized it at the time, or maybe we only perceived it rather dimly, but we were really, as it turned out, at this point, November '73, after the October War and the first meeting between Kissinger and Sadat, at the beginning of what turned out to be one of the most creative and productive periods of Middle East diplomacy in the whole history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It really began when Kissinger and Sadat met each other and decided that they had a common strategic vision and that they would work together. Sadat invited Kissinger, in effect, to be the peacemaker, and Kissinger agreed. This was a period that was to continue, with certain periods of hiatus but without any major breaks, right down into 1979, with the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel

It might be good to take a minute to stand back and try to summarize, to see what concept Kissinger had in mind, the strategy that had clearly evolved out of the experience of the war and the immediate post-war period, and particularly his meeting with Sadat, because it did really guide the policy of the administration, for the rest of the administration, towards the Middle East.

First of all, there were certain things that were driving the U.S. here. It's important to remember that the U.S. resupply of Israel during the '73 War had triggered something that had been threatened for a long time -- an Arab oil boycott against the United States and in this case against its friends as well, but particularly against the United States -- and that was still in effect.

So there was a certain amount of domestic pressure to get the boycott lifted. It was beginning to pinch. We were having long lines at the gas stations; there was a question whether there were adequate reserves for our military forces and our allies. It had lots of implications. It could lead possibly even to rationing. So there was pressure to try to get the boycott lifted.

And clearly that was going to require demonstrating to the Arab world generally, but particularly to the oil-producers (and the key country there was Saudi Arabia, obviously), that the United States really was going to work for what the Arabs would see as a just peace.

And by "just peace" they obviously meant a peace which would result in Israel's returning territory occupied in the 1967 War and in some way, undefined, recognizing what the Arabs called the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

There were also, of course, internal and built-in pressures on the Egyptians and the Israelis. The Egyptians still had their Third Army cut off by the Israelis at Suez. Kissinger had arranged for resupply, but the situation on the ground was still potentially unstable, which meant that the cease-fire could break down, you could have a renewal of hostilities. And neither Egypt nor Israel was ready for that. They both wanted to stabilize the situation. They'd had a very bloody war, and it was a very costly war for both of them. It was a particularly costly war psychologically for the Israelis. They had started off being on the defensive in this war and had suffered quite large losses of equipment and also of lives. So there was factors pressing all sides to try to work towards a solution.

The strategy that Kissinger succeeded in persuading Sadat to agree to and to follow was not to try to go for too much too fast. Don't go for a total settlement, all the territory at one time. Take it step by step, in order not to demand more of Israel, which was going to have to give up territory, than its own domestic political situation could handle. Start with limited steps, but limited steps that were seen as steps towards a larger goal.

So as this idea evolved, there were a number of elements to it. I think it might be useful to look at these because they tended to run through all of the diplomacy, not just at this stage, but through subsequent years.

First of all, establish the principle that Israel would withdraw from occupied territories, that these territories occupied in 1967 were not to remain permanently under Israeli control, that it had to find ways to return territories, with whatever security arrangements, and in some cases possibly adjustments in the frontiers, in the old armistice lines, could be negotiated. But the principle of returning occupied territories to the Arabs was part of the strategy from the beginning, with the goal of genuine peace between Israel and the Arabs, and not simply a reversion to the armistice agreement regime that had existed before.

Another element that was important, at this stage at least, from the American point of view, was to defer coming to grips with the Palestinian aspect of the problem. The Palestinian cause was very much a part of the Arab position. The Arab world, the Arab governments, including Egypt,

said that any settlement had to meet the legitimate national rights, as they put it, of the Palestinian people, without being very precise about what that meant.

To the Palestinians, it meant getting their own state. It meant that the part of Palestine that had been under Jordanian administration, plus a small part in Gaza under Egyptian administration, which was occupied by the Israelis in '67, should from the Palestinian point of view, not simply go back to Egypt and Jordan, but should become the nucleus of a proper Palestinian state.

But the whole idea of even dealing with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the PLO, which asserted that it represented the Palestinians, and of their claiming the right to have a sovereign state alongside Israel, was so beyond the ability of almost everyone in Israel to comprehend or to talk about even, that had this become the first item on the agenda, it was almost certain any attempt at negotiations would have been stalled.

So Kissinger's strategy was: Let's deal first with the problems of the armies that were fighting each other and get them disengaged. That means Egypt and Israel in Sinai, it means at some point Syria and Israel in the Golan Heights, and at some point perhaps Jordan and Israel in some part of the West Bank, to establish that the principle of withdrawal applies on all these fronts. But defer the question of how you work the Palestinians as a separate political factor into this process. Deal with the Arab governments and defer coming to grips with the Palestinian issue.

The next round on the Middle East at that point was to try to lay the groundwork for a possible international conference. This involved also enlisting the support of the Secretary General of the United Nations, who at that point was Kurt Waldheim, and keeping our European allies informed so they wouldn't feel they were being left out, talking to the Soviets. It was really keeping a lot of balls in the air at the same time.

But we began to put together a formula for convening the conference. Basically what this was, was to get the Secretary General of the United Nations to be the convener of the conference, to issue the letters of invitation, with the understanding that the United States and the Soviet Union would be the co-chairmen of the conference. We would have a convener and two co-chairs. Kissinger basically drafted the letter of invitation and the negotiating terms with the principal parties. But it was to be a letter from Waldheim to the parties, which basically would say: I understand that you have all agreed to come to the conference in Geneva to talk about a settlement based upon the principles of Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967 and 338 of October 22, 1973.

One issue that held it up initially was the question: Shouldn't the Palestinians be at this conference? The Egyptians, in particular, and the Syrians both raised this issue. And Kissinger said, "Well, that's going to complicate things very much if we bring them in at this stage. Can't we defer this until a later stage?"

So finally the language that was used in the letter (and this I do remember because we all worked very hard on it) was "the question of other participants from the Middle East area will be discussed during the first stage of the conference."

Now everybody knew that "other participants" referred to the Palestinians, and that this would be something that could be discussed after the conference was underway.

One final question that had to be settled before the conference convened was the seating plan. How were you going to have the delegations seated? Remember, this was a time when the Israelis and Arabs had not talked to each other since the armistice agreements, except for the Egyptians and Israelis who had had some meetings among military officers to try to negotiate implementation of the six-point agreement that had stabilized the cease-fire. These meetings had taken place at kilometer 101 on the Cairo-Suez Road. In Geneva it turned out that nobody wanted to be seated next to the Israeli delegation.

Finally, the solution to this, proposed by the Israelis and agreed to by Gromyko, was that the Soviets would sit next to the Israelis, and then there would be an empty table on the other side. Everybody was around what was, in effect, a seven-sided table, with Secretary General Waldheim, as the convener, in the chair, and with the Americans between the Egyptians and Jordanians. Basically what this did was to have the Israelis between the Russians and an empty place, which they took philosophically.

So the conference in fact opened, with opening statements by everybody and a statement by the Secretary General. And by prearrangement (and this, of course, is important to understand) it was agreed that after the opening statements, all the formalities, the conference would be declared in existence, and then it would be adjourned sine die, while the American Secretary of State was asked on behalf of the conference to try to negotiate the disengagement of forces between the parties, with the blessing of the conference, and then come back and report to a reconvened conference the results of his efforts. This is, of course, what Henry Kissinger wanted, which was to have the blessing of the conference and get the Soviets to be part of the formalities of it, but leave the substance to him. Of course, it was not just Henry, it was what Sadat wanted, too. So that's basically the way the process finally was launched.

ATHERTON: This was basically a military settlement about how to separate the military forces of Egypt and Israel. Two lines of separation were negotiated, with the Egyptians remaining on the east bank of the Suez Canal so they could say they had not given up territory they had recovered, the Israelis moving a bit east but still controlling the strategic Sinai passes, and a kind of no-man's land in between where nobody could be.

The other part of the agreement, and this was very important, was a commitment that this was only a step on the road to a just and lasting peace, and that it would be followed by further efforts by the parties to resolve all the differences between them. So built into the agreement was language that provided that this was simply a step to get the military forces separated and stabilized and create a better atmosphere, a better situation on the ground, so that Egypt and Israel could then contemplate further steps towards an ultimate peace settlement, without any deadline as to when that final settlement was to take place. It was a statement of good intentions.

The next step was to work out the very complicated technical annexes to the disengagement agreement, which would provide precisely in what steps and by what timetable the two armies

would pull back. This was obviously a job for military people, and so a military working group was established -- a military working group of the Geneva Middle East Peace Conference. It was to meet in Geneva, chaired by a representative of the UN secretary general, with a delegation from Egypt and a delegation from Israel, and observer delegations from the United States and from the Soviet Union to sit in while the two military teams together worked out the technical annexes, which would become the orders for the military commanders who were pulling back their troops.

The Egyptians and the Israelis had no hangups about sitting down together and talking. So they spread their maps out on the table, and the Egyptian and Israeli generals and their staffs would go at it.

Q: Were there any other European nations or any other nations at all at the conference and in the negotiations, or was it just the U.S., the Soviet Union, Egypt and...

ATHERTON: Well, the Syrians didn't show up, but the Syrians were carried as a participant in that there was always a place reserved for them at the table. And the Egyptians, Jordanians and Israelis. No one else. That was the conference. The western Europeans were not a party to that. They were kept briefed.

The Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement was completed. The parties were in the process of implementing it, which meant, in effect, pulling back their military forces. Eyes then turned to what the next step should be.

There was a general consensus. The Egyptians had very much urged that the next step ought to be a parallel disengagement agreement between Syria and Israel. There was general agreement, I think, that this would be the logical next step, since Syria had been the other belligerent in the '73 War, with Egypt, on the Arab side, and since the Israelis, as a result of that war, were in occupation of a larger part of the Golan Heights in Syria than they had occupied when that war began. They were, in fact, within artillery range of Damascus and very close to the main north-south highway that runs from Damascus down to Amman. It was not a situation that was tolerable in the long run, or stable, from the Syrian point of view. And the Israelis had indicated that they were prepared to try to negotiate some adjustments in this line, which would involve some disengagement of forces on the Golan Heights.

So the next month, really, was spent trying to lay the groundwork for this. Assad sent a representative to Washington, and we had discussions with him. He was a military officer, a general, who was one of Assad's trusted confidants. Then there were parallel talks in Washington with the Israelis. There were also constant conversations with the Egyptians to get their advice and support.

ATHERTON: Later in '75, there was an occasion to reopen the talks with Sadat at a very high level. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia had been killed by a deranged relative. There was a major funeral, and President Ford sent Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to be his representative at the funeral. I was sent along to be Rockefeller's political advisor for this event. He had been briefed ahead of time by Henry Kissinger about the issues, the status of the negotiations, and what the options were. He was well briefed.

As always happens at state funerals, there were bilateral talks between various combinations of senior people, and among one of those was a meeting between Rockefeller and Sadat, who was also at the funeral. In that talk, Sadat, in effect, said: Tell my friend Henry that I want to try again to have this agreement in Sinai; I think it should be possible. And he hinted at some possible formulas that might work.

So out of this meeting between Rockefeller and Sadat came a decision by the President and Kissinger to make another attempt for a second Sinai agreement. And that led to another shuttle.

It soon became apparent that there were going to be, in effect, two negotiations. One would be the Egyptian-Israeli negotiation on the terms for a second disengagement and the commitments that would be involved, by Sadat to Israeli security and further steps towards peace, and by Israel to further withdrawal. And it boiled down ultimately to this tough question: Where do you draw the line in the passes? It involved some very clever legerdemain and splitting hairs, if you will. The end result was that Sadat was able to say the Israelis were out of the passes, and the Israelis were able to say that they had still maintained strategic positions. It was a crazy kind of splitting of hairs, but it took.

Now the other negotiation was U.S.-Israeli. The Israelis were asking for certain commitments from the United States if they were to take what they saw as a major security risk in giving up land that they had won in battle and held since '67. It was still not going to be peace, but no longer war. There wouldn't be a peace treaty, although Sadat reiterated that his intention ultimately was to move to a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement, but in steps.

So we negotiated a memorandum of understanding, in fact two memoranda with the Israelis.

One had to do with further supplies of military equipment to Israel, some sophisticated equipment to help them compensate for the loss of the strategic buffer between Egypt and Israel in Sinai.

The other dealt with a number of political issues. There were lots of details to this, and I won't even try to remember them all, but the one that really came back to haunt us was the Israeli insistence that there be a commitment that the United States would prevent admission of the PLO to the negotiations, when we got back to Geneva to negotiate for an overall peace.

And that was the origin of this bilateral agreement between Israel and the United States, after a lot of haggling. The Israelis wanting us to make a pact that we would have no contact with the PLO. Kissinger kept saying, "I can't tie our hands that much. There may come a time when it's in our interests to have contact with the PLO."

The language finally agreed on was that the United States would not negotiate with nor recognize the PLO (which did not include Kissinger's interpretation of dialogue or contacts) until such time as the PLO accepted Security Council Resolution 242 and Israel's right to exist. That was basically the set of conditions. This later became reinterpreted into a much more rigid prohibition on having anything at all to do with the PLO. But at that time Kissinger argued that we would maintain some freedom of action on this.

Now the context of this, clearly, was with a view towards the resumption at some point of the Middle East peace conference. Remember when we talked about that earlier, the question of

possible Palestinian participation in the peace conference at some future date had not been ruled out, it had simply been deferred. In order to get the conference started, the language was that the question of future participants will be dealt with at a later stage of the conference, "future participants" meaning unmistakably the Palestinians and who would represent them. The Israelis were adamant that the PLO was not an acceptable negotiating partner. They believed then and still think today that its ultimate goal was the destruction of Israel and the recovery of all of Palestine, and that they should not give it any legitimacy. They certainly did not want to then. And remember this was a Labor government. The Likud government of today would be even stricter about dealing with the PLO. Some Labor people today have come around to say that there must be acceptance of the PLO as the representative. But in those days the Labor government insisted on no PLO.

So later, when this was used as a basis for preventing any contact between the United States and the PLO, by congressional pressures, by Israeli pressures, for other reasons, it was really out of context, and it became a problem for us in trying to retain some flexibility in the negotiations.

But at the time, Kissinger's judgment was that this was an essential commitment we'd have to make to the Israelis to get their signature on the Sinai II Agreement. They were, in effect, saying we can't sign this agreement with Egypt unless we get these side commitments from the United States.

There were lots of other political and military supply commitments. There was a provision about Israel's oil supplies, because one of the things it was going to have to do, when it made this second withdrawal, was to give up oil fields that it had developed during the long period of occupation in the Gulf of Suez, and in parts of the Sinai where it had exploited existing oil fields. These had become an important part of its oil supply, and it was going to have to give up some of them. So it wanted some assurance that the United States would be there to help it.

There were lots of bilateral commitments. And they all ended up in a marathon negotiation in Jerusalem to get the final bilateral agreement negotiated. The Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement had pretty well been completed, but we were still putting the finishing touches on this bilateral agreement before the Israelis would put a signature to the other.

Q: In your opinion, what prompted Sadat to do this? Why was he so eager to get this solved?

ATHERTON: There were several things. First of all, remember that Sadat planned the '73 War as a way of getting a diplomatic process going. He didn't plan the war to defeat Israel and win back all of the occupied territories. He wanted to create a situation where Egypt could hold its head high as having made a good show militarily against the Israelis, to get the attention of the Soviet Union and the United States, get the Middle East problem back on the front burner. He wanted to get Sinai back. He wanted to get the Suez Canal working. He wanted to divert Egyptian resources from military to economic development purposes.

He had a strategy at this point. He was to finally put an end to the unending war between the Arabs and Israel, with Egypt taking the first step. That's why he was pushing peace in any way he could. And he had finally, I think, become fed up and was frustrated at the slowness of these efforts through the summer of '77 to find formulas for Palestinian representation. He was angry

at the Syrians for making it more complicated. He thought Hussein was an additional complication.

And so he decided the only way to go was to go off on his own. One, he wanted the meeting. He had already invested a lot in laying groundwork and taken a certain amount of criticism for going that far with the Israelis. And secondly, he became quite frustrated about the prospects that U.S. multilateral diplomatic efforts would lead to a conference. But thirdly, and I think this is very important (we learned this later; at the time I didn't know it, and I'm not sure anyone in our government knew at the outset), he and the Israelis had been having private secret exchanges, through their representatives, under the auspices of King Hassan of Morocco. There were meetings between Moshe Dayan, representing Begin, and a very strange Egyptian named Tuhami, who was close to Sadat and a sort of Islamic fundamentalist mystic, as it turned out. Tuhami and Dayan had had meetings in Morocco, about which we were subsequently briefed by Dayan. And Sadat had also sounded out the one Eastern European leader who had relations with Israel -- Ceausescu of Romania. And Ceausescu had said Begin was somebody you could deal with.

So Sadat had all these signals, and he decided, in effect, here's a man I can deal with in Israel, the Israelis have given me certain signals through these meetings in Morocco that if we make peace, there will be a lot in it for us. That was the message he was getting from Begin, while the United States didn't seem to be able to make things happen. And so basically he just took a leap of faith and announced that he was prepared to go to Jerusalem.

Now this was an add-on to a speech in the Egyptian parliament; it was added to the prepared text. And I think most of us read it and said, "Well, that's grandstanding and rhetoric." But pretty soon there was a response from Israel that Sadat would be welcome in Jerusalem if he were to come. It was a sort of diplomacy by public statement.

And then the media got into the act. I can remember, sitting in Washington, a telephone call from CBS one evening saying, "We just want you to know, you can tell the Secretary that on the evening news tonight Walter Cronkite is going to air an interview he's had, back to back, with Sadat and Begin, in which they both say that they are prepared to meet." And that did come on the air that night. So I went around to Secretary Vance and said, "I guess maybe this is going to happen, Mr. Secretary. I think maybe we are going to actually see a Sadat trip."

Well, it took a couple of days for Washington to come out publicly and welcome all these developments and wish them well. But in private channels, after Sadat did this, we were asking what are you going to do next? Where do you see this leading? And Sadat, never at a loss for new ideas, said, "Well, I'm going to convene a conference in Cairo and we're going to call it the Preparatory Conference for the Geneva Middle East Peace Conference." And he issued invitations. Invitations to the Israelis to come to Cairo. Invitations to the Soviet Union, to the United States, to the Jordanians, to the Syrians, and to the PLO to come to a conference in Cairo, hosted by the Egyptians, a preliminary conference to prepare the way for Geneva. Oh, he also invited the United Nations, the Secretary General, to have somebody there.

Of course, the Syrians rejected the invitation, the Soviets rejected it, the Jordanians rejected it, the PLO rejected it. The Secretary General of the U.N. said he would send a representative as an observer. So the only delegations, in addition to the U.N. observer delegation were the Israeli, the Egyptian, and the American.

It was soon apparent that the action really was going to happen somewhere else. Begin had made a quick trip to Washington, via London, to unveil his ideas for solving the problem. He met with Carter and laid out a proposal which would, in effect, return all of Sinai to Egypt in return for peace, if Egypt would agree to certain security arrangements. This was more than Labor had ever committed to. Labor had wanted to retain positions at the Straits of Tiran, Sharm el Sheikh, and places that were seen as points of vulnerability for Israel's security. Begin was prepared to give back all of Sinai, subject to negotiation of the right kind of security arrangements, to ensure Sinai would not present a jumping off place for the Egyptian military.

The other part of Begin's proposal had to do with the West Bank. And there, he said, "We are prepared to talk about granting autonomy to the," as he called them, "Palestinian Arabs of Judea and Samaria and the Gaza district," which meant, in our language, the West Bank and Gaza. He said "Palestinian Arabs" because, he said, "After all, the Jews are Palestinians, too, so you have to distinguish between the Jews and Palestinian Arabs." This clearly was his attempt, as later became apparent (though it was not as clear at the time) to get a separate peace with Egypt and hold onto the West Bank by coming up with a proposal which offered autonomy for the Palestinians, while leaving open the ultimate solution. It was clear he wanted not to have to negotiate over withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza.

So he unveiled this plan to Carter and also to the British in London on the way through. Sadat had given an invitation to Begin to make a return trip, in return for Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. He had invited Begin to come and meet him on Egyptian territory, but not yet in Cairo. So they agreed that they would meet on the Suez Canal, in Isma'iliya, on Christmas Day, the 25th of December 1977, which also happened to be Sadat's birthday.

The Cairo Conference convened first. That is where I was with my little delegation, and with the Israeli delegation, headed by somebody that none of us had met before, Eliyhu Ben-Elizar, who was a member of Begin's Likud Party, who had a long history of working in the intelligence service in Israel, and who was a very ideological, committed Likud Party member and a confidant of Begin's. Incidentally, he eventually became the first Israeli ambassador to Egypt. There were also on the Israeli delegation some people we did know, who came out of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, some of whom we'd worked with on earlier negotiations.

The head of the Egyptian delegation was Ismat Abdul Majid, who had been the Egyptian representative in New York when he was designated to become the head of the Egyptian delegation.

The conference convened, and there were a lot of last-minute scramblings because, even though all of the other parties had declined to come, the Egyptians wanted to fly all the flags, including the Palestinian flag to which Israel objected.

The opening of the conference was one of the most spectacular photo opportunities I have ever witnessed. There were so many photographers that they couldn't all get in the great big plenary

room at one time. The photo opportunity went on for more than an hour, because they brought in one group and took them out, then brought in another group.

And finally the conference got under way. As things developed, it was known by now that Begin and Sadat were going to have a meeting a few days later at Isma'iliya, and clearly no delegations were going to preempt their principals, so there were very nice exchanges, speeches, and it was a pretty light conference schedule, I must admit. It was more of a PR event; it was really largely PR, but it did provide an opportunity for some of the Israelis and the Egyptians to get to know each other better. There was lots of socializing, and they had a chance to talk together and meet together and argue points together. It wasn't exactly collegial yet, but at least they were civil to each other.

But the conference did provide a symbolic bringing together of Egyptians and Israelis around the conference table. It did provide a chance for Egyptian and Israeli diplomats to begin to interact. It provided a lot of good feeling. The Israeli delegation, for example, was seen going down to the Khan al-Khalili, the bazaar in Cairo, shopping, and the Egyptian merchants would come up and say to the Israelis, "Welcome to Cairo, welcome to my store." A lot of bubbly warm feeling came out at that point.

The conference, in the end, only agreed, as I recall, on two major decisions. One decision was that we would observe the Sabbath of all three delegations, so the conference would not hold sessions on Friday, Saturday or Sunday, out of respect for the Muslims, the Jews, and the Christians. And secondly, while we were there we had received word that Philip Habib, who was well known to everybody there, had had a heart attack, and so the conference immediately passed a unanimous resolution to send wishes for a speedy recovery to Phil Habib. And those were the only two resolutions that were passed there, to my recollection.

There was a lot of effort to put together public statements, and I think we may have issued a bland kind of communique at the end. But on Christmas day came the real communique, out of Isma'iliya. And, incidentally, a lot of the press deserted us then and went down to Isma'iliya, to be present at the second Sadat-Begin meeting, which was Christmas day.

The Isma'iliya meeting agreed on a communique which basically said they would create two mechanisms to continue the negotiating: a military committee, which would be headed by ministers of defense and would deal with military questions of the peace settlement -- security, withdrawal, and all those things; and a political committee, which would deal with the political questions of the peace settlement, headed by foreign ministers. The first meeting of the military committee would take place in Cairo, and the first meeting of the political committee would take place in Jerusalem.

Sadat agreed to all this, much to the embarrassment and chagrin of some of his government, who did not want to go to Jerusalem. They felt that going to Jerusalem somehow recognized Israel's claim to it, so they didn't like the idea of having meetings in Jerusalem at all. But Sadat had agreed, and they all stood up and saluted.

So the political committee meeting convened in January 1978 in Jerusalem at the Hilton Hotel. The American delegation spent a lot of time going back and forth between the Israelis and the Egyptians, trying to help them sort out their next steps, what their objectives were, what they wanted to do next. And, of course, there was a problem getting a meeting of the minds. Sadat's instructions to his delegation were that he wanted them to work for a declaration of principles, which would be agreed with Israel -- principles governing a total or comprehensive peace settlement which then could be presented jointly by Israel and Egypt to the other Arabs as a basis for their negotiating their own peace settlement, principles such as Israel will withdraw from the occupied territories in return for Arab recognition, and the Palestinians have national rights. These were all things that seemed quite unexceptional from the Egyptian-Arab point of view, even perhaps making too many concessions for peace with Israel, but were anathema to a Begin government. Would Israel agree to withdraw from more territory? Certainly not from the West Bank. Palestinian national rights? Unheard of.

So the atmosphere at the Jerusalem conference was rather strained. And the final blow was a dinner party, at which Begin got carried away in his toast and said some rather critical things, and referred to Muhammad Ibrahim Kamal as "young man." He was rather condescending to Kamal. Kamal was offended and replied, with some dignity, very briefly. And the report of this meeting went back to Cairo.

That evening there was to be an American dinner as I recall, with the Egyptian delegation. Muhammad Ibrahim Kamal asked Vance for an urgent private meeting and said, "I've just been told by Sadat he wants to break off the meeting and summon my delegation back to Cairo. He's very unhappy with the way this meeting is going and with Mr. Begin's attitude."

And so Vance spent a lot of time trying to get Dayan to talk to Kamal and to try to persuade him that Begin had not meant to offend, that it was very important that this first serious meeting of the delegations after Jerusalem and Isma'iliya not be seen to be broken up.

But Sadat's orders were firm, and so the Egyptian delegation decamped, went off to the airport and flew back to Cairo.

Q: But you didn't have a blueprint of what...

ATHERTON: We didn't have a blueprint. Vance had general instructions from Carter, and he was the Secretary of State; he was there to influence and facilitate the Egyptian-Israeli talks and also to make American contributions. He had considerable carte blanche, he felt, to put forth American efforts to help the process along.

But there was no persuading Sadat to have the Egyptian delegation stay. And then the question: What do you do now? This was the one forum which was going to carry on what Sadat started when he went to Jerusalem, and it had now suddenly collapsed. What do we do next? How do we get from here to there? Nobody had a game plan. It was quite apparent at that point that Sadat really didn't have a detailed game plan. He had a vision of where he wanted to come out, and his vision had certainly achieved a major breakthrough... But still it was a long way from there to the peace treaty.

And the Israelis clearly felt that they had put their plan on the table. Their plan was a negotiated peace settlement with Egypt, and autonomy for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to

keep them happy, and keep the other Arabs out of the negotiations. Maybe make a separate deal with Hussein at some point. The Syrians weren't ready. So basically the Israelis were talking about a bilateral peace settlement with Egypt, with some cosmetics for the Palestinians.

Sadat was talking about a comprehensive peace. He really, I think, was genuine and sincere in saying that he wanted to bring all of the Arabs into this. He didn't want to make a separate peace with Israel and be accused of having deserted the Arab cause.

ATHERTON: We're in the period after Sadat's meeting with Begin at Isma'iliya, after the Cairo conference, in December, 1977.

You recall that there was an attempt to get a negotiating process started by convening two committees that Begin and Sadat had agreed at Isma'iliya should be convened: a political committee of foreign ministers and a military committee of defense ministers, Israeli and Egyptian, to talk about the basis for a peace settlement and security arrangements. As I discussed on the earlier tapes, the political committee ended up by Sadat's anger over Begin's position and recalling his delegation. So there was no negotiating process, really, in train, and the concern was that this had somehow to be restarted.

I had spent a great deal of time in the months right after the breakdown in January in my new role as Ambassador-at-Large shuttling between Jerusalem and Cairo to see if I could help formulate a statement of general principles that Sadat wanted to get Israel and Egypt to agree to as a framework for a more detailed peace negotiation. Something that would establish the principle of withdrawal from occupied territories, the principle of peace in return for withdrawal, the principle of self-determination in some form for the Palestinians, and a lot of others more detailed.

Anyway, this shuttling back and forth went on during February, March, April, May, and June without any visible progress, and tempers on both sides getting increasingly short. It was now a half a year since Sadat had gone to Jerusalem, and he felt he was being stonewalled by the Israelis. The Israelis felt that he was asking for more than they were prepared to give. They were at least talking about peace with Egypt; here he was trying to talk about the Palestinian question.

It was at this point that Secretary Vance proposed that he would like to bring the foreign ministers of Egypt and Israel together for a meeting, not to try to negotiate all of the details of a peace settlement, but to try to overcome some of these broad conceptual problems that they seemed to have in dealing with and in trying to talk to each other. They were really talking past each other. And also there hadn't been any direct meetings, at least at the political level, on the foreign ministers' side, as I recall, since the political committee had been disrupted, had been broken off in Jerusalem at the end of January.

The Egyptians had a problem in meeting in Jerusalem, which they would not recognize as the capital of Israel, and they felt that some of the other Arabs were critical of Egypt for going there, thus seeming to accept the Israeli claim to sovereignty. The Israelis wouldn't meet in Cairo if the Egyptians wouldn't meet in Jerusalem. Therefore the problem was to find neutral ground.

The Secretary's proposal was that the meeting be in London, and he asked the British if they would be prepared to host. The British said they'd be delighted to, but then they got to thinking about it and decided that London was perhaps not the place. There was great concern that some Palestinian extremists would attempt to disrupt the meeting, perhaps even pull off some spectacular terrorist act, and that therefore they needed a more secure place to meet.

The British offered at that point Leeds Castle, which had been converted into a conference center and had been modernized. By that time I think it was government property, but it had been owned for a while by a rich American lady with a titled English husband, and they had put in modern plumbing and electricity and all the amenities while keeping the ambiance of a medieval castle. It was a genuine castle and had been at one time Henry the Eighth's castle. It had a moat around it, grand dining halls, high-ceilinged rooms of enormous capacity for the guests, lots of space for all the principals to stay. So the decision was we would have the conference there. As I recall, it lasted the better part of a week, with one wing for the Egyptians, one wing for the Israelis, and the Americans had a third section of the castle for our living quarters.

One of the problems was, at the first meal in the dining room the Egyptians were at one table and the Israelis were at another, and the Americans scattered themselves in between, and it was decided that the first thing we would try to do was to get them to have a little more intermingling, a little more socializing, if you will, at mealtime. So Secretary Vance decided, as host, to try to arrange the seating so that there would be alternating American-Egyptian-Israeli-American-Egyptian-Israeli around each of the tables.

Q: There were no British at this conference?

ATHERTON:

One of the sessions I remember particularly well was when the Egyptian side made a full-dressed presentation of the Egyptian positions, going back to the decision to visit Jerusalem, a checklist of the reasons for that decision, Egypt's peace objectives, the reasons for them, the importance of its relations to the Arab world.

Anyway, he made the presentation on behalf of Kamal, the foreign minister, and at the end of it, I can remember Moshe Dayan, who was listening to him, saying in effect, "I want to congratulate you, Mr. El-Baz, on that excellent presentation. For the first time I think I have begun to understand the Egyptian position, what are your concerns."

And that was something of a breakthrough, because there was some reciprocity. I'm not so sure about Foreign Minister Kamal, who was uncomfortable meeting with the Israelis, but he was there because he was a loyal servant of Sadat's and Sadat had asked him to do it.

But some of the Egyptians heard what the Israelis were saying, and began, I think, to understand the Israeli concerns, where they were coming from, not only as Israelis, but as a people, as Jews with a historical memory of the war and the holocaust and what troubles they had had in establishing a right to security and a state.

So the conference didn't achieve any breakthroughs in terms of agreements on elements of a peace settlement, but it did, I think, constitute something of a psychological breakthrough.

In any case, the problem was what do you do next? There had to be follow-on. Vance suggested that the foreign ministers should continue this dialogue, without his having to be there, and since they wouldn't meet in each other's capitals, we would be glad to offer them the hospitality of the American Sinai field mission station, established in the Sinai after the second Egyptian and Israeli disengagement agreement, where we had an American staff, an American facility, an airstrip., all the things you could need for the conference. So we suggested that there be a meeting of the foreign ministers. I was to be there as Vance's representative while they continued this dialogue, hopefully hammering out some agreements on objectives, on where they were going. I was asked by Vance to go to Egypt and present this proposal directly to President Sadat.

We went into the meeting, I made my presentation, Sadat listened politely and smiling and, I thought, somewhat restrained, somewhat distracted. I wasn't sure whether he was listening as closely as I wished he would. But when I got all through, he said, "Thank you very much, Roy, for that very nice message from Secretary Vance, but I have already made the decision. My decision is that there will be no more meetings between my foreign minister and the Israeli foreign minister until the Israelis agree to a statement of principles which includes Palestinian self-determination and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories in return for peace with the Arabs." That's what this was all about. And he said, "Now I have made my decision, let's you and I go out and announce this to the press."

I said, "Mr. President, that's your decision, and I don't think it would be understood in Washington if I were seen with you while you made this announcement. I regret that this is your decision. I have to say I know the Secretary and the President will regret it. We feel very strongly that these talks ought to continue, the efforts should continue..." I made the effort and Hermann Eilts was backing me up.

Q: Who got...?

ATHERTON: Oh, I think it was his own idea. Sadat was a master of shock treatment and was very impatient with diplomatic bargaining. He felt that he had made the ultimate gesture by going to Jerusalem, conveying to the Israelis that the doors were open for peace, telling Israel Egypt would recognize and accept it, which is what it had always wanted and he was sure the other Arabs were going to follow. But in return Israel should keep its part of the bargain, which ever since Resolution 242 after the 1967 war was understood to be that the territories Israel had occupied should be held in trust until such time as the Arabs would accept peace. This was Israel's bargaining chip. Sadat also felt at this time that the Palestinians were a party to the conflict and they had to be seen as such and be given their legitimate rights as well. So Sadat was impatient. He felt that the Israelis, in effect, were not prepared to make the reciprocal gesture to the gesture he had already made, as he saw it.

The Israelis saw it differently, of course. You have to remember that it was now a different government. It was Mr. Begin, not the Labor government, whose whole lifetime had been spent in disagreeing with Ben-Gurion and all the Labor governments over the question of partitioning

Palestine. Begin always insisted that Israel had a right to all of Palestine, and should not agree to return any of the West Bank, any of Palestine as part of a peace treaty, which would be an abandonment of his lifetime ideology.

So there really was what looked at the time to be an unbridgeable gap. Sadat enjoyed dramatic moves, and clearly he thought the time had come. I'm sure that this was his own idea. He may have been urged by advisors to break off the talks, or to call the bluff of the Israelis, or to force the American hand, or whatever. But I think it was typical Sadat, these dramatic gestures, sometimes rather quixotic. But it did get the attention that he wanted. Although I hadn't realized it at the time, because I was out in the field, it led to a meeting at Camp David of President Carter and Secretary Vance and Brzezinski, perhaps other advisors, out of which came a decision to invite Sadat and Begin to a conference, under President Carter's chairmanship, at Camp David.

Sadat did not try to delay the beginning of the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. The delegations finally convened in Washington in October and began what were to be the negotiations leading up to the Egypt-Israeli peace treaty. The Blair House was made available for the negotiators. The parties both were staying, by the way, at the Madison Hotel. Both the Israeli and Egyptian delegations were on adjoining floors, which was convenient because there could be a lot of informal visiting back and forth by going up and down one flight on the elevator or the back stairs, and the press wouldn't know who was talking to whom, so it was a rather convenient arrangement.

But the formal talks were held at the Blair House when the negotiations opened. Very soon the habit developed of both of the parties having informal meetings in each other's suites at the hotel. And many of the talks that we conducted took place at the hotel -- to the point where the head of the Egyptian delegation, who by that time was a new Egyptian foreign minister, Muhammed Ibrahim Kamal, having resigned. The new foreign minister was a retired general named Kamal Hassan Ali, who had quite an illustrious military record and had also been head of Egyptian general intelligence. In him the Egyptian government had a very loyal soldier, but also a very intelligent man who had very good political savvy. He was the head of the Egyptian delegation. The deputy head was the Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, assisted by a very good professional delegation of advisors from the Foreign Ministry. The Israeli delegation was headed by Moshe Dayan, also assisted by a very able group of supporters from the Foreign Ministry. On our delegation, Cy Vance was the head of it and I was his deputy, with the backstopping of the State Department and NSC staff plus military advisors. We were in Washington, so our whole backstopping was right there.

The negotiations were to be concluded in ninety days for the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Well, it turned out that would not be possible. There were just too many issues. The issue of linkage came up again. The Egyptians wanted to reestablish the linkage between implementation of their treaty with the Israelis on the one hand and progress in the negotiations for a Palestinian settlement on the other.

On the bilateral treaty there was also what became known as the precedence of obligations question, which was a very technical legal question, but it was also very important to the Israelis. How do you formulate Egypt's obligation to make peace with Israel in ways that will override any obligation that Egypt might have with the other Arab states? The Israelis were saying that this treaty takes precedence over all other commitments and agreements, and the Egyptians saying that we have Arab League treaties with the other Arabs, to come to their defense in case they are attacked.

Well, that was resolved. The Israelis consulted an eminent American lawyer, Eugene Rostow, who then was a professor at the law school at Yale. The Egyptians consulted their own people. The person who finally came up with the formula that resolved this, and it became Article VI of the treaty, was Herbert Hansell, who was the legal advisor to Secretary Vance and had joined the delegation as legal advisor. He came up with the ingenious formula that, in effect, squared the circle, in lawyers' language, and was accepted by each party, with their interpretations. And the interpretations were recorded in footnotes to the treaty. It was, again, a case of having each side agree to an ambiguous formula, but it was the only way of getting an agreement.

Another issue was Israel's concern that once it began withdrawing, because in the end it would withdraw from all of Sinai, Egypt would renege on its commitments. So Israel wanted time to put the security arrangements in place and test them before leaving all of the Sinai. What they were giving up even before that were oil fields that they had taken over in the occupation in the Gulf of Suez and in the Sinai itself, plus new oil fields, which they had explored and developed during the occupation period, 1967 through 1973.

Q: No small sacrifice.

ATHERTON: It was a big sacrifice. This was Israel's principal source of oil. The other source was Iran. The Shah had been providing them oil. But just remember, this was 1979, and in late '78 and early '79 the question was how long the Shah would be in power. The Shah's regime was beginning to look very fragile, and they were concerned that if there was another kind of regime in Iran they might no longer be able to buy Iranian oil. Israel had developed very good relations with Iran -- not diplomatic, but they had a diplomatic non-mission in Tehran and a very good intelligence cooperation. And they felt quite confident as long as the Shah was strong and in place, but they had begun to get worried about the Shah's staying power and wanted one source of oil that they could feel confident of. They wanted an Egyptian commitment to continuing oil supplies from the fields they were giving up. They also wanted the company which had done the exploring and developing for them, an American company under contract to the Israelis, to be allowed to continue under the Egyptians. This had nothing to do with the company... oil in their territory under Israeli occupation...

In any case, the Egyptians did not agree that the American company could stay when Israel withdrew. Israel also wanted a commitment from Egypt that Egypt would continue to provide them oil, so they would have, in effect, the first claim on purchasing oil. They realized they had to buy it, but they wanted a guaranteed delivery of a certain number of barrels per day. And that was a tough one to get the Egyptians to agree to. Egypt had never entered long-term commitments in advance that oil would be available under any circumstances to anyone. The

Egyptians said in effect: "We're not a member of OPEC, we don't have long-term contracts. We look at the market prices every quarter and export to the highest bidders. Israel can bid like anyone else." So the Israelis came to us and said they needed a side agreement with the United States -- a contingency agreement that we would supply them oil if other suppliers failed. So we had to have a bilateral negotiation with the Israelis on this.

There was also the question raised by Moshe Dayan. We had made the assumption all along that, as the Israelis withdrew from the eastern zones of Sinai, there would be a limited armament zone and then there would be a demilitarized zone, and Egypt had agreed with this, and that the authority who would police these zones would be the United Nations, that the U.N. would be the one to provide peacekeeping forces in these zones to ensure that both sides were abiding by the military limitations in Sinai.

Moshe Dayan said one day, "What if the U.N. doesn't want to do this? What if the Soviets decide that they won't support this and they veto. Then we have no assurance that there will be anybody that we can rely on, to whom we can entrust our security, to keep the Egyptians from violating this agreement to demilitarize in Sinai." He said, "I think we have to have a fallback position..., and I suggest that be the United States."

Obviously, in the end, that's what we did, because we were too far into this treaty not to do what we had to do to make it work. So one article in the treaty provided that in the event the U.N. couldn't do it, the United States would undertake to put together the proper force and monitor the commitments of both sides to keep the peace in the Sinai.

These were the kinds of issues that came up. The linkage issue continued to be around. The ninety days were up, and the treaty had not been completed. It was agreed that there would be an adjournment for the parties to consult in capitals. We all decided to take stock where we were and where we had been, and what issues remained. I won't try to recount them all, because some of them, in retrospect, were really pretty technical and pretty small, but they loomed very large at the time in the minds of both sides.

Part of this process was, in effect, to negotiate side agreements with the Israelis and Egyptians, sort of bilateral memoranda of understanding, which would be interpretations of articles in the treaty which would satisfy the two parties. And we found that we were getting into a situation where one memorandum of understanding canceled out the agreement with the other side. In order to satisfy the Israeli government, their desire for a particular interpretation, we would come up with formulations which we showed the Egyptians, and they would want a bilateral understanding that would contradict the one we had just agreed on with the Israelis. And in the end this whole process came to naught. The whole idea of having these side memoranda was dropped. And Hansell and I came back to Washington, essentially having achieved no progress.

Q: How was the use of the Suez Canal by the Israelis handled?

ATHERTON: You know, interestingly enough, I don't recall that that was a major issue. The Egyptians had agreed from the beginning that once peace was in place, the canal would be open to Israeli shipping. It was a question of when that would start, the timing of Israeli access. But there was never any question that the Israelis would be given access.

There were lots of other issues. There was the question of timing of the exchange of ambassadors, opening diplomatic missions, bilateral agreements to implement some of the general provisions. The treaty had a general provision on normal peaceful relations between Egypt and Israel. The Israelis wanted explicit agreements on when observance of the Arab boycott by Egypt would be dropped, when the borders would reopen and when trade relations would be reestablished, banks would have offices in each other's territory, when there would be cultural exchanges, professors, students. They wanted all sorts of flesh on the bones of normal peaceful relations. And the Egyptians were trying to resist making commitments in such detail.

Q: Go to the head of the line.

ATHERTON: Go to the head of the line, without calling it that. And, in fact, that's how it has worked ever since. Israel never did get the commitment of a quota, but it's been able to buy all the oil it wants from Egypt ever since, as far as I know. Of course, the fallback, and the reason why Begin could accept something less than what he wanted, was the commitment from the United States that, if all else failed, we would be the supplier of last resort. They have never had to call on that commitment, because other sources, including Egypt in particular, have been adequate.

Well, this was March, and the treaty was signed with great fanfare on the White House lawn. Everyone basked in the glory of the moment. And then the question was: How do we now go on to the next stage, because the treaty included a side understanding, if you will, between Egypt and Israel, and which the United States had helped negotiate and, in a way, was a party to, that the two parties would move quickly to begin negotiations on the other part of the Camp David Accords having to do in the first instance with autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza -- the Palestinian question.

Remember that the other Arabs had not accepted Camp David. The Palestinians had not accepted it, and Sadat had said that if Jordan and the Palestinians, who were invited also to accept this agreement, if they didn't accept it, then Sadat said he would, in effect, become the representative of the Jordanians and the Palestinians. Egypt would participate at least in the first stage of negotiations for implementation of that part of Camp David which called for an interim agreement on the status of the West Bank and Gaza as a basis for giving autonomy to the local Palestinian inhabitants, with a degree of self-government, which basically would replace the military government, while Israel remained there as a security force, and to create breathing space during which the ground would be laid to negotiate the final status. Camp David provided that there would be autonomy and that once an autonomy regime was in place, then within three years the Palestinian representatives, Jordanians and Egyptians, would begin negotiating a final settlement for the final status of these territories and that would be completed within five years.

So Sadat said: Well, I'll help get this process started. I will ask my foreign minister and a delegation from Egypt to be the surrogates, in a way, for the Jordanians and Palestinians, and we will sit down with the Israelis and begin negotiating the elements of autonomy which we can offer the Palestinians, and hopefully it will be attractive enough so they will accept it, and then they can become a party with the Jordanians to these negotiations.

So the problem was to begin getting organized for what became known as the autonomy talks, which dealt with the West Bank and Gaza but were carried out on the Arab side by Egypt in the absence of any Jordanian or Palestinian negotiators.

The question, of course, also was: Who was going to conduct these negotiations for the United States? It was clear that the United States had to be a party to them, and everybody agreed that we would be at the table. They were Egyptian and Israeli negotiations, but the U.S. would be there as a friend of both sides and help bridge any gaps.

EDMUND JAMES HULL

Political Officer

Jerusalem (1975-1979)

Ambassador Hull was born in Iowa and raised in Illinois. He was educated at Princeton and Oxford Universities. After service in the Peace Corps, Mr. Hull joined the Foreign Service in 1974 and had postings in Amman, Beirut, Jerusalem, Tunis and Cairo as well as serving as Ambassador to Yemen from 2001 to 2004. In Washington, the Ambassador served on the National Security Council and as Advisor to the Secretary of State on Counterterrorism. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005

Q: So the Camp David process started – we are talking about after Sadat’s dramatic trip to Jerusalem. How did things work out?

HULL: Well, initially, the United States took a step back from the process, because Sadat had acted to a large extent unilaterally and this of course, had derailed our preferred course which was to Geneva. I think Washington decided we needed to step back and see what the Israelis and the Egyptians could accomplish on their own. Not much was the answer. When the summit occurred between Begin and Sadat at Ismailia, it became very apparent that the two sides left to themselves would get nowhere, and therefore Carter and his team re-engaged and finally got the parties to Camp David. I think from my perspective it seemed like very impressive diplomacy at Camp David. The Sinai was settled relatively easily, although the settlements were a significant issue. The real blood was spilled over what happened to the West Bank and Gaza, because that’s what Begin did not want to give on and where Sadat needed something to maintain his position in the Arab world. Of course, what we did was we took Begin’s suggestion of autonomy for the residents of the West Bank and Gaza, and we tried to push that as far as possible towards an interim arrangement of self-government which would then be followed by negotiations of the final status.

When I first read the Camp David Accords, I thought from a Palestinian point of view, it was thin gruel. After all the Egyptians had gotten virtually all of Sinai back, recovered the oil fields, the settlements would be uprooted. The Palestinians got what might look like a bowl of porridge, but the Department made a concerted effort to sell the Camp David Accords. Hal Saunders came out to Jerusalem, and we arranged a series of meetings between Hal and some of the best of the mayors, including Fahd Qawasmi and Mohammed Milhem. Hal made the rounds, or perhaps they came to Jerusalem, I'm not clear, and he made a very good pitch as Hal was always able to do. And again, as with Sadat's speech, the initial reaction from the Palestinians was interest. They didn't rule it out, but predictably in fairly short order the PLO came online from Beirut denouncing the agreements, denouncing the self-government proposal, and then we found our interlocutors scurrying behind the PLO's position, and we could never get self-government off the ground.

DONALD A. KRUSE

Deputy Principal Officer

Jerusalem (1976-1980)

Donald A. Kruse was born in Philadelphia in 1930. He later attended Wheaton College and majored in history. Following his graduation in 1952, he received a masters degree in political science at the University of Pennsylvania and then joined the army. Following his two year run in the army, Kruse joined the Foreign Service and served in posts in Canada, Luxembourg, France, Belgium, Jerusalem, Italy, and England. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 1997.

Q: What was the impact of Sadat's visit to Tel Aviv and the Camp David process?

KRUSE: When the Camp David Accords came out with the idea of autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, we finally had a program to present to the Palestinians as something that they should look at and hopefully find it greatly more attractive than their current situation under occupation. We essentially tried to sell it as being the end of Israeli occupation. The question of what it would lead to was open. We never could promise them a state, but we did say that, "You can participate in your own future." So, our sale was, "This is better than you've ever been offered. It's better than you have now. Join in." We had a very active program. Washington expected us to sell this to the mayors of Nablus, Bethlehem and Hebron etc. We tried that. But the essential answer, which, I have to say, is very understandable, was that, "You've come to the wrong party. We are not representing the Palestinian people. The PLO represents that Palestinian people. We are like prisoners in a cage. We can't talk for the rest of the Palestinians and we don't have any strength. So, we choose not to be involved." I think there were some Palestinian leaders who

would have joined in if we had made more clearly what the end result would be. They just said, "We're not going to take a leap off into the dark. We don't know where you're going to lead us. The idea of a ticket to the conference table is not enough for us. We want to know what the end is going to be." You see, we were not prepared to tell them what we wanted the end to be. Frankly, to this very day, we're not prepared to tell the Palestinians what we think they should have at the end. This continues to be one of the great failings of our policy.

Q: As you looked at this policy, did you see any solution?

KRUSE: Frankly, I didn't. Back then, I had the fear that the Palestinians would just be ground into the dirt, unless we changed our policy toward dealing with the PLO. So, I'm half way encouraged that it does seem that whatever happens now in the future, the Palestinian cause is not a completely lost cause. There were many who thought that it would become a lost cause. How the Palestinian cause can be fulfilled properly and happily is still not sketched out by our policy. I could say that the outcome is uncertain. When Golda Meir was around, she said, "Who are the Palestinians? Where are they? What are they?" Nobody says that now. The whole world now knows who they are. Whether they're treated justly or not depends largely on Israel and the United States.

SAMUEL F. HART

Economic and Commercial Counselor

Tel Aviv (1977-1980)

Ambassador Samuel Hart was born in Mississippi in 1933. He graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1955 and then spent two years in the United States Army. After attending the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, he joined the Foreign Service in 1958. He subsequently served in Uruguay, Indonesia, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Chile, Israel, and was ambassador to Ecuador. Ambassador Hart was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: You were there from '77 to '80. What was the situation while you were in Israel?

HART: It was a tumultuous time. You had the whole Camp David thing. You had the first invasion of Lebanon by Israel. And you had the breakdown in the talks with the Palestinians. Those were the three biggest events while I was there.

The lead-up to the Camp David thing? Really, I was always of mixed emotions and of a mixed mind about that. With the full commitment of Jimmy Carter, we were able to persuade the Egyptians that if they would make peace with the Israelis, and thereby remove the major military threat to Israel, they would (a) get back the territory that the Israelis had been occupying since 1973, in the Sinai, and (b) start a process whereby Israel would negotiate, in the West Bank and Gaza, some kind of arrangement which would give the Palestinians at least a measure of self-

government, and would perhaps, over time, lead to the removal of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. That was the deal which Carter was able to sell to Sadat. There were lots of negotiations leading up to Camp David, but that was the deal that Sadat bought, with a lot of arm-twisting by Jimmy Carter.

Menachem Begin at Camp David wanted very badly to get the Egyptians out of the military equation, for Israeli security, but in essence balked at the idea that Israel, over time, would in any way be committed to withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza. He had some problems giving up the Sinai. There was the hard right-wing faction of his party, led by Yitzhak Shamir and Ariel Sharon, who opposed that. So Begin had to spend some political capital even to give back the Sinai. He in essence said, "That's as much as I can pay." And I think, probably, within party councils, he said, "I will never agree to any meaningful negotiations with the Palestinians about self-rule."

So when the Egyptians made peace with the Israelis and got back the Sinai, and the negotiations with the Egyptians about how the negotiations with the Palestinians were going to take place began, they quickly broke down. Sadat felt betrayed. Begin had no intentions, ever, of seriously negotiating with the Palestinians.

And so the Israelis, I think, got the better part of that bargain. Those of us who were in the embassy watching this, who thought about what was going to happen, feared that this might happen. And we thought that Carter needed to drive a better bargain with Begin about what was going to happen on the Palestinian issue. But he didn't, and so the Israelis got a hell of a good deal out of it.

Now, in retrospect, you can say the Egyptians did, too, because it took them out of a totally awful political and economic situation where they poured most of their national wealth into an armed forces that couldn't fight very well. It got them out of the Palestinian/Arab box, and let them pursue a foreign policy and a domestic policy which made more sense. So it did free-up Egypt to some degree.

But did Egypt accomplish what they really set out to accomplish? No. They got about half of it. And the Palestinian issue was left there for a later date.

Would the world have been better off had Jimmy Carter not done it? I don't know. Idle speculation. We'll never know.

The fact that the Palestinian issue is still as difficult today as it was then says something about how difficult the problem is. But at least there hasn't been another war.

SAMUEL W. LEWIS

Ambassador

Israel (1977-1984)

Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis was born in Texas on October 1, 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree in international relations from the Johns Hopkins University. His career included positions in Naples, Florence, Rio de Janeiro, Kabul, and an ambassadorship to Israel. Ambassador Lewis was interviewed by Peter Jessup on August 9, 1988.

Q: Was Brzezinski aloof from all this? Did he let Vance handle it alone?

LEWIS: During the phase we are discussing, Brzezinski was in Washington with Carter. This was Vance's show. Roy Atherton, who was by this time had been designated by Vance as Special Middle East Negotiator, remained in the area after the Conference broke up and Vance had returned to Washington. Roy did a lot in the next few weeks to try to help Eilts and me to keep the process on the rails. The period between the break-up of the Conference and Camp David is a blur of Secretaries of State and other officials traveling around, Begin going back and forth to Washington, Dayan moving around, Weizman going to Washington and to Cairo to try to smooth Sadat's hackles. Vance made some statements in Washington that made the Israelis very angry by reaffirming earlier Carter statements concerning the need for a Palestinian homeland. During late January and early February, there was a lot of tension between the Israelis and us because it was clearly Carter's judgement that Begin had blown the whole affair after Sadat had come to Jerusalem risking everything in the Arab world. Carter saw Begin's response as very inadequate.

After about two or three weeks of this, Sadat suggested that he meet with Carter alone to figure out the next steps. Carter invited Sadat to Camp David where they met and I learned subsequently -- some of this is mentioned in Bill Quandt's book on Camp David -- reached some kind of understanding on how to deal with Begin's "intransigence" and how to get him to be more flexible on issues such as the declaration of principles, the future of settlements, the nature of the territories, etc. This understanding involved, as Quandt described it, a kind of game plan under which over the next weeks, Carter would make much clearer in public than ever before where he and Begin disagreed. In effect, they were trying to mobilize pressure on Begin through American Jewish leaders, through Congress and through public opinion to become more flexible. Sadat in urging this course said that he would stand very firm on his positions while we would publicly discuss our disagreement with the Israelis. At a certain point then, we would come forth with some kind of compromise which would not go all the way to Sadat's positions, but which Begin

would have been softened up to accept. That was apparently Sadat's concept with which Carter agreed essentially.

In any case, in January-February there appeared much more open statements from Washington -- Carter, Vance, Brzezinski and others -- almost continually, stressing Resolutions 242 and 338, the need to withdraw from all fronts, the question of Palestinian homeland and other issues which made Begin very angry because he always wanted these matters left out of the public dialogue and to the direct negotiations. Begin came to Washington in early March to meet with Carter. The atmosphere before he came was quite tense. It was made even tenser by the fact that a few days before he came -- I was already in Washington with Ezer Weizman for pre-visit preparations -- a very bad terrorist event occurred. A group of PLO commandoes landed on the coast south of Haifa and murdered Gail Rubin, a young American woman photographer taking some nature pictures. They commandeered a bus and ordered the bus driver to go to Tel Aviv with his passengers. The bus came careening down the Haifa Highway with 10-12 commandoes in it and with frightened passengers. It was finally intercepted and stopped just about three or four miles south of Herzliyya -- where our residence was -- and just north of the outskirts of Tel Aviv. There was a shoot out with the Israeli Army during which all the commandoes were killed and a number of the passengers were killed. There was a great deal of carnage. This event was a tremendous shock in Israel. There had been nothing similar to this in some years and it was a demonstration to a lot of Israelis of the problematical nature of negotiating peace with Egypt while the PLO was still around to act in its terrorist fashion. There was an outcry and within three or four days, while I was in Washington, the Israeli Army -- even while Weizman was in Washington, but in communication with his Ministry -- was directed by Begin and the Chief of Staff to move into South Lebanon to attack PLO bases in what turned out to be a very large incursion, called "Operation Litani" which was intended to clear the whole area up to the Litani River -- 26 kilometers north of the border -- of the PLO. That caused a huge furor in the United Nations and in Washington and led ultimately to the establishment, over Israel's strong opposition, of the UN Force -- UNIFIL -- which is still in South Lebanon today. The resolution of the Security Council called on Israel to withdraw inside its borders and established UNIFIL to monitor their withdrawal. The Israelis did not withdraw for about three months during which we were trying on the one hand to push the peace process forward and on the other, trying to deal with this huge Lebanese complication. A lot of the people around Carter were convinced that the incursion was deliberately timed to take attention away from Begin's intransigence on the territories. That view soured the visit preparation mood.

Begin came and we had frank, sharp but polite talks with him and his advisors at the White House. True to the game plan, Carter, as we can see in retrospect was following the game plan, was rather precise on the actions that Begin was refusing to take. At one point in the conversation, he said, "Mr. Prime Minister, if I understand correctly, your position is that you will not do this and that you will not do that, you will not do this and will not do that." Begin, not in hostile, but in an unsympathetic mode, tried to turn it around by saying, "Mr. President, I

would prefer to put our position positively. We will do this and we will do that, we will do this and this and I would hope that when you describe our position, you will describe it as I do, not as you do." But Carter persisted. One of the things that he was arguing about is whether Begin would accept the applicability of Resolution 242 to all fronts, not only to the Sinai, but also to the West Bank and Gaza. This is something Begin had never accepted formally. He accepted 242 but only according to his interpretation which was that it did not require Israel to withdraw from all territories -- that was also our interpretation -- but it did not require Israel to leave anything more than the Sinai which was the overwhelming portion of the territory. At the end of the meetings with Carter, Begin asked Carter very specifically that when he would speak to Congress and the press about these meetings, that he put a positive interpretation on Begin's position, not a negative one. Carter was noncommittal though Begin later interpreted Carter's response as signifying assent. Almost as soon as we had left the White House, there was a briefing of the press and a Carter briefing of key Members of Congress in which he characterized Begin's position of being very intransigent. Begin met with Members of Congress, as he always did when he came to Washington -- I was with him during those sessions -- who acting in response to what they had learned from Carter about Begin's position, questioned Begin in much sharper, assertive and aggressive manner than any Israeli Prime Minister had previously encountered. So when Begin left town to return to Israel, he was really mad, unhappy, angry and feeling very much abused. The press coverage was as Carter wanted it. It did depict Begin as quite intransigent.

That mood of disagreement, unhappiness and distrust between Jerusalem and Washington continued until the Summer. I spent a couple of months on Vance's instructions trying to extract from Dayan a formulation about 242 which would be closer to our view than to Begin's. I never succeeded; he was adamant. I had dozens of sessions with Dayan who was attempting to find a way of satisfying us about the matter, but at the same time keeping Begin happy because he knew where the power was. The timing problem dragged on; we had sharp disagreements with Israel about the non-withdrawal from South Lebanon. In fact, of course, when we finally pushed them to withdraw in May, they left behind in the territory -- now called the "Security Zone", just north of the border -- quite a bit of equipment to assist Major Haddad, the Lebanese Christian army renegade who had set up a little operation in South Lebanon to defend his area against the Moslems and the PLO north of him. They also left some sub rosa assistance for Major Haddad in the form of training and undercover people. So it was not a complete withdrawal. Furthermore the Israelis would not permit UNIFIL to patrol all the way to the border; they insisted that the UN had to stay outside of Major Haddad's area. That was not part of the U.N. resolution and it ultimately decreased the UN's ability to carry out a sensible UN peace-keeping operation because of this area of which it had no control. This area was governed by the South Lebanese Army, as it became to be known, and Israeli support.

That soured the mood that Spring. There were other matters like the PLO terrorist groups incursions into Israel, the lack of resolution on "Operation Litani" on our side. As the weeks

dragged on, another major problem arose in Washington which further attrited the relationship. Carter decided to proceed with an F-16 arms sale to Saudi Arabia, much against the arguments of Israel, the American-Israeli Political Action Committee (AIPAC) and Israel' supporters in Congress. There was a huge fight in the Congress over the sale of these weapon systems. Carter won the battle, but he used up a tremendous amount of Congressional credit in the process. The partial success of his strategy of turning public opinion against Begin was undercut by this fight over the aircraft sale, because Begin and Israel had collected a good deal of sympathy for their position on the sale. The sale made a considerable difference to the aircraft balance in the Middle East. These were the best planes we had and the Israelis saw it in very apocalyptic terms.

During Spring, 1978 there was a letter from a large group of Senators which undermined Carter's position. It was a letter to the President which supported a lot of Begin's positions. Carter's political situation had, if anything, been damaged by this effort to put Begin in a box. It had not worked. The bilateral relationship with Israel had become very tense. Sadat was more and more frustrated. Nothing was happening on Egypt's peace front. In late June, Carter decided to send Fritz Mondale, the Vice-President, to Israel. Mondale was known as a good friend of Israel. This was an attempt to try to improve the image of U.S.-Israel cooperation and friendship. Fritz came out and had a very fine speech prepared. I was with him in his hotel in Jerusalem when we got a report that President Carter, at a press conference that day, had made one of his unexpected comments which was calculated to drive the Israelis up the wall, just as Mondale was in Jerusalem trying to stroke them to get them into a negotiating frame of mind. Fritz was furious but there wasn't much he could do about it. He gave his speech, he did a good job in dealing with Begin and others, but it was clear that the relationship remained very, very tense.

At this point, Carter decided that it was time to try to get all the parties together again. It must be remembered that the Egyptian leaders had not met with Israeli leaders since mid- January. All communications had passed through U.S. channels. Much of it was about details of the negotiating positions and the process was not moving forward. So a meeting was organized to be convened at Leeds Castle in England. It was a conference of Foreign Ministers -- Vance, Dayan, Kamal and members of their delegations -- which met in late July. The British Government had offered Leeds as a neutral site since the Egyptians didn't want to return to Jerusalem and the Israelis didn't want to go to Cairo unless the Egyptians would also come to Israel. Washington didn't seem like a good meeting place at the time. The first order of business when we got to Leeds, to this Henry VIII's castle, was to restart some communications between the two parties. The castle was marvelous; it had been restored with a huge great baronial dining room with a table about fifty feet long. There was a considerable amount of negotiations first to decide whether the Egyptians were going to eat separately on the first night or whether we would eat together. We finally prevailed on the Egyptians to eat together with the rest of us. We arranged the seating so that there was an American, an Egyptian, an Israeli, then an American, then an Egyptian, then an Israeli etc. The total group was about twenty-five or thirty. It started very stiffly, but after that first evening, the kind of human interaction which made things easy at the

Jerusalem meeting had been restored. From then on, there was no question of eating separately. Even Kamal who was very leery of meeting with Dayan was prepared to eat with him and sit with him on occasions. But there were still a lot of tensions. The Egyptian delegation had come clearly under instructions to be stand-offish. The meetings were held around a small round table with only the principals at the table. Vance was playing the role of mediator throughout. He was very skillful. There were some very rough things said by Osama el Baz in particular which really grated on the Israelis. Some of Dayan's statements were not taken very well by Kamal. In fact, after the first meeting, everybody went back to their own wings -- each delegation had its own wing of the castle. Hermann Eilts, who had gone along with the Egyptians to sort of "schmooze" with them to test their mood, came around to tell Vance, me and the other Americans that Kamal was so upset by some of the things he had to listen to from Dayan that he was sobbing in his room. He wasn't planning to come to anymore meetings. He just couldn't bear to hear anymore of these dreadful things that the Israelis were saying, asserting their historic claims to Arab lands, etc. Vance pacified Kamal and the meetings went on, but concluded rather inconclusively. But there were very frank and, in a sense for the first time, direct exchanges of hard positions from both sides. That had not happened either at Ismalia or in Jerusalem. In some of the separate sessions, particularly the one Dayan and I had with Vance late one night, Dayan was very anxious to break the impasse. He saw the great opportunity for peace slipping away. He criticized Begin very much for his tactics and legalisms and his intransigent style, but had to be loyal to him as his Foreign Minister. Dayan was always looking throughout this year for some way around an obstacle, some formula that Begin could swallow that would get over a big bump in the road.

That evening, Dayan offered to Vance as a thought of his own, obviously not committing anything, a formulation that dealt with the question of Palestinian rights and he may also have dealt with 242 issue. I don't remember the precise formulation, but it was the germ of an idea which ultimately surfaced again at Camp David and is in the Camp David agreement. It was a way of getting over a major negotiating hurdle that Dayan had offered at Leeds. The whole meeting showed Dayan's crucial role in the process. He was conscious of having to be loyal to Begin's policies, but he had enough self-confidence, chutzpah and historic perspective to feel free to offer in private a lot of thoughts and ideas of his own and to explore avenues although he could not of course commit Begin at the time. This made it possible for him and Vance particularly to come up with some important breakthroughs. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that they would meet again at the Foreign Ministers' level in approximately another three weeks, perhaps in the Sinai -- at the Sinai field station that we had been operating since the Sinai II disengagement agreement in 1975 to monitor military movements on behalf of both sides. When Kamal's delegation returned to Cairo and reported, Sadat told them there would be no more meetings; Leeds had been the last one. He told us the same thing; he would not agree to any more tripartite meetings. In retrospect, this proved to be clearly a tactic. He had concluded that Begin was too tough a nut to crack without Carter personally getting in the act. He in effect put it up to the United States by saying that we had said that we could deal with the Begin

problem -- or you had led me to think so -- and it was time for us to put up or shut up. It was in that climate in late July that Washington decided that the peace process was clearly at an end, unless we did something very dramatic. Carter decided, against the advice of nearly all of his advisors, to invite both Begin and Sadat privately to come to Camp David so that the three of them could try to reach some agreements.

Q: Would you describe Vance as intuitively shrewd when dealing with people far afield from his Ivy League-New York background? Did he have a feeling for the Egyptians and the Israelis?

LEWIS: He came to have. Vance acquired a great deal of respect from the Israelis. I can't really say how the Egyptians viewed him, although I think they viewed him very well, but Begin and his colleagues really acquired an enormous regard and respect for Vance. They didn't like some of the things he said, they argued very hard with him, disagreed with him sharply, but they found him to be so honorable and straight and so dedicated that he really gained their respect. Moreover, they did become convinced over a period of months that he was genuinely sympathetic and empathetic to their problems. But he was a lawyer and could talk with Begin in a kind of legal language which was also useful, if somewhat less, with Sadat, but my impression is that Sadat rested very heavily on his personal relationship with Carter. He had faith in Carter. Begin was leier of Carter. He had a lot of confidence in Vance's rectitude; he admired Carter and wanted Carter to admire him, but he realized that Carter did not like him as much as he admired Sadat and this hurt Begin who in a strange way was very thin skinned. Begin wanted to be approved by Carter. He wasn't going to change to get that approval, but he felt hurt when he did not receive it. He thought that Carter with his understanding of history, the Bible and his missionary impulse about the Middle East, should have been more in his court. Of course Begin and Carter were so totally different in personality that it was remarkable that they got along as well as they did. Carter was extraordinary in the way he handled both Begin and Sadat, particularly at Camp David, but at various other times as well. All in all, it was a very unique performance.

Carter then sent Vance with a hand-written invitation first to Jerusalem and then to Cairo, inviting Begin and Sadat to Camp David. Begin, who had been hoping for such an invitation, accepted immediately and so did Sadat. The stage was set by early August for the Camp David meeting in September, 1978.

Q: Let us pick up from the time that Secretary Vance delivered a hand written invitation from President Carter to Prime Minister Begin to join him and Sadat at Camp David, which Begin accepted immediately.

LEWIS: In retrospect, it is clear that Begin and Sadat had concluded by this time that the negotiating process between their two governments had come to an end and that a meeting between the two of them hosted by Carter might be the only hope for progress. So they both

accepted the invitation with alacrity. There was about a month between the invitation having been delivered and the start of the Camp David conference, on September 5, 1978. That month was filled with the kind of events which continually intervened with the peace process -- terrorist attacks by one Palestinian group or another -- which raised Israeli's concerns and heightened the feeling of crisis. It also of course increased the sense of urgency for the peace process to come to some conclusion. There were several bombings in Israel; a huge one took place in Beirut at the PLO headquarters -- presumably an Israeli retaliatory attack. There were also a number of alarms and excursions about Jewish settlements -- a subject that was always highly provocative.

One of the terrorist incidents which had a major impact in Israel was an attack on an El Al airlines crew outside a London hotel on August 20. The Israelis mounted retaliatory strikes against Palestinian centers in Lebanon. There were rallies in Israel in early September by the so called "Peace Now" movement to encourage Begin to be flexible at Camp David. There were statements by Arik Sharon about Israeli intentions to establish new settlements on the West bank which angered both Sadat and Carter. Then, a week later, the Israeli cabinet announced that it was postponing any new settlements until after Camp David. This was both a policy of caution and a warning of what would happen if the Camp David negotiations failed.

I returned to Washington about ten days in advance of the Camp David meetings. I worked during this period on briefing papers for the President and the Secretary with our Washington negotiators -- Harold Saunders and Roy Atherton from State and Bill Quandt from the NSC staff -- and Ambassador Eilts, who was then our representative in Cairo. There were a number of preliminary meetings. Carter was mapping out with the White House staff a very careful game plan for the conference. He was calling all the shots and was trying to figure ahead of time how to handle this unique diplomatic venture. He decided to have only small delegations at Camp David from the three countries involved. He was going to "lock up" the three delegations for ten days or so until they had really reached agreement. He had trouble getting agreement from the Israelis and the Egyptians on this process, but they finally acquiesced and agreed that there wouldn't be any coming or going from Camp David and that no one would speak to the press except the American press spokesman who would clear ahead of time any statements that he might make with his Egyptian and Israeli counterparts. He would be the only channel to the press. In retrospect, this Carter decision, which he forced on the other parties, was instrumental in determining the outcome of the negotiations. The tensions in Israel and Egypt were so high, particularly in Israel's domestic turbulent political atmosphere, that had there been real-time information leaking out in the Israeli press -- this might have applied to the Arab world as well -- the pressures on Begin and Sadat would have been so great that one or the other would have had to leave before any agreements could be reached.

Q: Would you credit Carter for that strategy?

LEWIS: As far as I know, it was Carter's idea. I don't know for sure; someone else may have suggested it, but he certainly adopted it. It was a very shrewd move and quite central in the outcome.

With regard to the preliminaries, there were phones at Camp David, which the Israelis assumed, and the Egyptians perhaps as well, would be monitored. From what Carter and others said subsequently, I do not believe that to have been the case. It was suggested that the phone calls be monitored, but Carter decided that it would not be done. But the Israelis assumed that they would be monitored and thought that the Egyptians would make the same assumption. This also inhibited the "leaking" which might have occurred over the phones otherwise. There were a few bits that trickled out, but very little accurate information left Camp David during the conference.

On September 1 -- Friday -- Hermann Eilts and I were invited to have lunch with the President at the Roosevelt Room in the White House. Vance, Mondale, Harold Brown, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Hamilton Jordan also attended. Carter asked us to stay for the NSC meeting that would follow lunch. That NSC meeting consisted of the luncheon group plus Stan Turner (CIA) and General David Jones (JCS). At the lunch, after much jocularity and much good humor on the part of all, Carter then conducted a session in which he attempted to elicit from Eilts and me, alternatively, predictions on how Sadat and Begin might react to various proposals or situations that might arise during the conference. Carter was extremely well briefed; he was really on top of the material and was knowledgeable of all aspects -- having been immersed almost continuously with the problem for eighteen months. Therefore, he knew much about Sadat and Begin already; he had met them before and understood their political constraints. He was particularly interested in overcoming the psychological barrier that had been erected in the past six-eight months in the aftermath of Sadat's trip to Jerusalem -- things had gone off the track in that period and the Sadat-Begin relationships had become increasingly tense. They had not met since Christmas Day of 1977. The State officials were by and large rather pessimistic about what could be achieved at Camp David. Carter had asked State to prepare a set of goals for what might be achieved. I remember that during the lunch, Carter indicated that he thought the goals were far too modest and that he was setting his sights considerably higher. He was aiming for a full peace, not a partial or intermediary solution. I thought at the time that it was very wise for Carter to shoot high, although I also was not as optimistic as the President as what might be realistically expected. I notice from my notes for this period that I shared Carter's qualified optimism more than some of the other advisors. I felt that all parties had too much riding on the conference to let it fail, but it was still up to Carter to put a viable package together, which was terrifically difficult task. As we were leaving the Cabinet Room, Carter took Eilts and me aside and complimented us on how well we were representing him to our respective country's governments. That was a very nice touch.

On September 5, I met Begin at the airport. In the helicopter that took us from Andrews Air Force Base to Camp David, Begin was very keyed up. He was almost manic in the way he was approaching the conference. He was very excited. Ezer Weizman was very jumpy; he thought

that Begin was too confident and he was very worried. He thought if the conference went badly, Begin would become very defiant, which would have been characteristic. Weizman worried about the potential problems ahead. Dayan, as always, was very contained and reserved. He like all the other Israelis was very tense.

What actually happened at Camp David has been well described in Bill Quandt's book, which is the best single treatment of the whole negotiating process. I am not going to repeat what is in the book. Quandt, in writing his book, had access not only to all of Brzezinski's notes as well as his own -- he was there as a key player -- but Carter later made most of his personal notes available as well. The President took detailed notes in long hand after every session, so that if you take Quandt's book and Carter's and Vance's and Brzezinski's memoirs, you have a very exhaustive description of how the conference progressed from the American point of view. There were no great contradictions among these four books. Unfortunately, there is no analogous record from the Egyptians -- there is nothing at all from there -- and from the Israeli side whose views are only included in Dayan's and Weizman's memoirs, both of which were censored by the Israelis themselves. At least in Dayan's case, the description of the negotiating process is not as frank or open as it might have been -- he was a very careful man about what he wrote. Begin has never written a word. The key problem in understanding Camp David from the Egyptian and Israeli points of view is the absence of any indication of Begin's thought process. We don't have a first hand view of that at all. We had to infer it from conversations. I doubt whether Begin will ever write his views.

In light of this wealth of information about Camp David, I am going to limit my comments to my own perspective, without trying to describe the conference in any detail. The U.S. delegation consisted of Carter, Jordan, Brzezinski, Quandt, Vance, Saunders, Atherton, Eilts and myself. Off and on, Harold Brown would join for a session and then return to Washington. Mondale stood in for Carter at meetings in Washington, but he also came up on several occasions, particularly when things were getting tense with the Israelis because he had a very good relationship with them. Carter thought that Mondale might be helpful with the Israelis. Dennis Clift, who was in Defense at the time, was there on occasions. Eilts and I were the designated liaison officials with the two other delegations, although we all intermingled. The Camp David cabins were quite confining. Initially, the main meeting was the Carter-Begin-Sadat session which was attended only by the three principals. There were only two or three such meetings during the first couple of days. Carter concluded after the initial round of meetings that the more they were together, the more difficult it would become. Sadat was expressing the extreme Egyptian position; Begin was presenting the extreme Israeli positions. They were talking past each other and angering each other. Carter was trying to keep the meetings constructive and soon concluded that it was essential to work through the delegations. He would shuttle back and forth between Sadat and Begin, but would not bring them together again until there were some constructive results foreseeable. That was a brilliant decision by Carter. The end result was that the Camp David conference developed into "proximity" talks which was a familiar pattern in

Arab-Israeli negotiations. Although we were all together in Camp David and did eat together in the same dining room, the Egyptians would sit at one end of the room at their own table and the Israelis at the other end at their own table. Ezer Weizman and one or two other Israelis tried hard to engender some spirit of conviviality and moved around the room. He had some success, but not a great deal. Sadat remained in his cabin the whole time except for walks in the woods. He never came to the dining room; he never went to the pool hall; he never went to the movies; he didn't socialize at all. Begin did come to the dining room most of the time with his delegation, but he didn't get a chance to interact with Sadat. I assume that in part is why Sadat didn't come to the dining room; he didn't want to participate in any more unpleasant bilateral discussions. Carter would typically eat in his own cabin with his wife who was with him

Q: Would you say that Eilts was a highly professional career officer representing the United States and was not an advocate for the Egyptians? And same for you and the Israelis?

LEWIS: I think that was the case. Inevitably, our particular contribution was the intimate knowledge of the governments and countries to which we were assigned. We could explain to the American delegation the limits that both Sadat and Begin were working within. I am sure that on occasion I have been regarded by some as pro-Israeli, but I believe that I have been very professional. Hermann and I got along extremely well; the American delegation had worked together for eighteen months and by this time had become a close knit team. Carter was clearly the quarterback. He was setting the strategy working closely with Cy Vance. Brzezinski was also closely involved in the whole process, but at Camp David he was less prominent than Vance by a wide margin. Vance relied heavily on Saunders as the chief draftsman of the various proposals which we ultimately began to submit. Atherton, Quandt, Eilts and I made our contributions especially on the way to shape the proposals to become more acceptable to the other parties. The process operated in alternative meetings. Carter was very good about debriefings. When he met with Begin or Sadat, he often had Vance with him. If he didn't, he would immediately brief Vance and Brzezinski. Then Vance would debrief the rest of the American delegation. Since it had become apparent early that neither the Egyptian draft proposal nor the Israeli one had any chance of acceptance by the other side, Carter offered to have the U.S. delegation draft a proposal. From that point on, all negotiations were based on the "single draft" which essentially required the Americans to produce a draft of a set of principles. Then the American delegation would meet with one of the other delegations to discuss it and then would follow the procedure with the second delegation. Sometime, we would just present the draft and let the other delegations sit in their cabins to discuss it for hours on end. Then we would meet with one delegation to get its reaction and then with the other for the same assessment. Then we would modify the draft to take into account the reactions of both the Egyptian and Israeli delegations. The draft went through thirteen or perhaps even more revisions in this way before the final version was agreed.

There were some very interesting sessions in this thirteen days and nights. In between sessions we held tennis matches to relieve the tensions. On the second night, Carter joined the American

delegation at about ten o'clock after having watched the movie. He spent about two and half hours with the whole American delegation, describing his impressions of the initial meeting between Sadat, Begin and himself. He outlined what he saw the strategy for the rest of the conference to be; he described the personalities and their positions and assessed the prospects. He also told us at that time about some very sensitive concessions that Sadat had made to him privately for Carter's use with Begin whenever Carter felt that they would be effective. It was an extraordinary meeting. Carter dealt with all of us as part of his team. That was flattering to me and to Eilts. He revealed a lot more about his views, his strategy and other people than he had done previously, except perhaps to his own immediate inner White House circle. I think Carter had become over the months since taking office, considerably more understanding of and sympathetic to Begin than he had been at the beginning and certainly since he had seen him in Washington in March in one of those dreadful meetings mentioned earlier. He had acquired a personal respect and admiration for Begin even though the latter often drove Carter up a wall with his legalisms and his rhetoric on Jewish history and his other preoccupations. It was clear that Carter was insisting that Sadat and Begin remain if at all possible at Camp David until the end of the road had been reached.

Sadat had adopted what I considered a brilliant strategy in dealing with Carter; that strategy culminated at Camp David. Sadat was uninterested in details; he was interested only in the broad principles. Begin was very interested in the details and every language change was significant to Begin. So Begin took a real interest in the drafting and re-drafting of every document; Sadat took less interest, but listened to his staff. His staff, which had unanimously objected to Sadat coming to Camp David at all, felt he was in a very tough position and didn't really want to agree to anything. Begin's staff was very eager for an agreement and their strategy throughout was designed to bring Begin around to something that was acceptable to others and viable from the Israeli point of view. Therefore, the strategy of the two delegations were almost mirror images. Camp David succeeded in part because Sadat over-ruled all of his advisors. Begin ultimately acquiesced in certain concessions that his delegation had urged on him and which Carter was pressing for. Sadat's technique was to express full confidence in Carter's understanding of Egypt's situation and full reliance on Carter's unwillingness to do anything that would hurt Egypt. He implicitly and explicitly put himself in Carter's hands which of course was very flattering to Carter. Begin on the other hand looked with a very gimlet eye on the crosses on the "t"s and the dots on the "i"s of anything that Carter would suggest, which did not create the same sympathetic attitude that Sadat's approach did. Apparently, in the course of the early meetings, Sadat given Carter a number of specific fall-back positions that he would agree to if Carter told him that they were necessary to achieve an agreement. He left the tactics entirely up to Carter.

Q: Were either the Egyptian or Israeli delegations hamstrung at all by the curse of lawyers or were they diplomats mostly?

LEWIS: That is an interesting question. Everybody in the Egyptian delegation except Sadat was a lawyer. There were several lawyers, including Begin, in the Israeli delegation and they were

very legalistic. The American delegations had only one lawyer -- Cy Vance. He had decided not to take the Department's legal advisor. Of course Vance is a renowned international lawyer himself and he felt that he was enough for our delegation. In retrospect, I am not sure that was good decision. The American delegation should have had a lawyer who was not the chief negotiator who kept his trained eye on the texts, but that was Vance's decision. In fact, because Begin was so legalistic and the Israeli delegation contained one lawyer in particular by the name of Aharon Barak, who had just resigned as Attorney General and had just been appointed to the Israeli Supreme Court, but had been assigned to the delegation before taking on his new responsibilities, made the difference in the conference's success or failure. The reason is very interesting. As we got half-way through the conference and there were still some unresolved issues -- essentially we had reached a stalemate -- Carter developed a brilliant tactical idea. One day, he approached both Begin and Sadat separately and told each of them that the conference was not progressing and that time was running. He asked that each President designate one person from each delegation to become a member of a working group with him to see whether those three people could not develop a draft which would satisfy all parties. It is rare, if indeed it ever happened for a Chief of State to chair a working group consisting of subordinate members of other delegations. This must have been unique even in diplomatic history. Begin designated Barak, in whom he had enormous confidence because they both had legal minds -- Begin had great respect for legal language and lawyers. Having seen Barak work as Attorney General, Begin knew him to be a man of great integrity. He also knew that Barak was rather more dovish than he himself was and that he would be working to get an agreement, rather than accepting failure. It may have been that subliminally Begin chose Barak for the right reasons. In any case, it was a significant choice. Osama el Baz was selected by Sadat. Carter met on several occasions with the two of them; sometime he would also add Vance, but there were no other Israelis or Egyptians. What the this informal group was doing was to focus on the sticky issues in the drafts that the larger delegation meetings were unable to resolve.

Clearly, Barak and Osama el Baz were often in an awkward position. They acted "ad referendum" for their bosses, but the presence of the President of the United States weighted heavily on them to reconcile their differences. It had its effect. Some of the key problems that confronted Begin had to do with language -- for example, the question of the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians" which had to be in the final text from the Egyptian point of view in order to assure the Palestinians that they were not being double-crossed. The language however could not imply acceptance of an independent state for the Palestinians. Begin was not prepared to accept that. There were several phrases which had to meet Begin's legal views. Barak crafted language which met Carter's and Egyptian concerns and then he would explain the language to Begin in legal terms which would persuade Begin that he was not making any fundamental concessions to his basic principles. Begin could accept such language as long as it didn't imply more than he was prepared to imply. I think only Barak could have done that. So it was crucial that Barak was there -- at the right place and at the right time. I am not a great fan of lawyers who involve themselves in foreign policy, but in this case, having an Israeli lawyer was essential.

Carter was very rough on the subject of Israeli settlements; he always had been. He viewed them as illegal and unjustified, but he had become much more realistic about what could be gotten from Begin on this subject. That of course was one of the major issues in the conference. At the meeting of the American delegation on September 6, which I described earlier, he said that a freeze on settlements was the most that he could expect from Begin. There was no hope of obtaining Israeli agreement to withdrawal or dismantle them. He was convinced that Sadat would not give up on getting all of Sinai back. There was no chance that the Israeli settlements could be left there. Carter was also realistic about Israeli security and political problems. I felt after that meeting that Carter was over-optimistic about the chances of changing of Begin's mind based on his own persuasiveness. As it turned out, I was wrong. He had succeeded by the end of the conference to move Begin away from a number of his long held views.

Q: Were the settlements genuine at that time? That is to say were they settlements that Begin favored for solidification purposes and not just expressions of right wing views of history?

LEWIS: The history of settlements is a long and complicated one. By Camp David time, there were only perhaps ten thousand settlers on the West Bank. Sharon had pushed the settlement process during the Begin regime quite vigorously. We had been screaming and demanding that the process be halted, but had been ignored. There had been some periods of freeze, some periods of double-talk. Settlements had always been a sore subject between us. There weren't nearly as many then as there are today. The settlements then were sponsored by the Gush Emunim religious right wing groups and others. Nevertheless, in 1979, there were relatively few settlements for an area as large as the West Bank. It was apparent to us and to Sadat that if settlements continued to be developed it would be increasingly difficult to get agreement on the Palestinian issue. Begin was determined not to yield an inch on the right to settle; Jews could live anywhere -- New York, the West Bank, their ancient homeland. In his view, the right of Jews to live anywhere in Palestine was unrelated to the ultimate political decisions; that right could never be surrendered. It was a difficult argument that had gone on for months and years and at Camp David. It was clear that Begin was prepared to slow down and perhaps even stop for a while in order to get a peace treaty with Egypt, but he was never prepared to agree to a permanent freeze or cessation of settlements, which is what Carter tried to get from him. This was the issue, as we shall see, which most soured the Carter-Begin relationships after Camp David.

There were some amusing side-lights to the conference. For example, one member of the Egyptian delegation was a General Touhami -- the same gentleman who had met previously secretly with Dayan twice in Morocco. He had been an original member of Sadat's officers group. He showed up at dinner on the first night and sat at the American table. He was a fascinating character -- a real mystic -- who took great pleasure with relating his success as a young man in mastering his bodily functions. He described the time when he confronted a lion in a cave; by the sheer force of his will and his burning eyes, had cowed the lion into submission. He claimed that he had also trained himself to stop his heart at will for as much as two minutes at a time. He offered to demonstrate at the table, but the Americans were not too enthusiastic,

although there was a doctor on the premises. All in all, the General was a very unusual participant in the conference. I never knew what role he played behind the scenes, but Sadat had a lot of confidence in his discretion and I am sure he played some role.

Interspersed in these days and night of meetings -- they often went late into the night because either Begin or Sadat would meet with Carter in the early evening after which we would get debriefed and then spend hours trying to redraft based on the latest assumptions as to where the Israeli and Egyptian leaders stood. Carter also organized entertainment in addition to the movies. One evening, we had a fabulous performance by the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps including the silent drill with fixed bayonets which they did on the near-by play ground. There was not a lot of joviality that evening because the negotiations were quite tense; so the Marines offered a welcomed change of pace. One evening, the Carters gave a beautiful reception at the Laurel Lodge with strings. Sadat and Begin even exchanged a few friendly words on that occasion. I had a good chat with Sadat that evening. I found him very dejected with Begin's preoccupation with what he called "old language and old concepts". I tried to point out to Sadat how much Begin had moved since June, 1977 when I first met him. I also told him that i thought that the Israelis were anxious to reach a settlement, but Sadat was quite pessimistic at that time. He was not persuaded.

The preliminaries took place between September 5 and 8. We produced our first draft on September 9. Then the American papers began to be shuttled back and forth between delegations. The weekend was spent at Gettysburg, where Carter had taken Sadat and Begin. That was the only time we left Camp David during the conference. That was a nice diversion and provided an opportunity for all to ponder the cost of war. It was a good psychological touch.

Q: Would you say that Camp David or similar a site was an essential imperative?

LEWIS: Absolutely. The site had to be isolated. On Friday night -- the eighth -- things were going badly. The Israelis had a Shabbat dinner that night and had invited Vance, Brzezinski and me to join them. It was a very nice, relaxed, religiously-tinged evening which helped to improve their relationships with Brzezinski especially, who was somewhat ephemeral in his moods about the Israelis -- he was sometimes very critical, sometimes very understanding. Late that Friday evening, after dinner, at about one o'clock, I got into a long and probably too candid conversation with Simcha Dinitz who was at that time the Israeli Ambassador in Washington. He was part of the Israeli delegation. He was playing a somewhat parallel role to mine. We compared notes about the ominous situation that seemed to be developing and what might be done about it. I told him something that I had heard from Carter and that was that it had been Begin who had insisted on continuing the trilateral meetings among the three leaders, long after they were obviously counter-productive. Begin had not suggested that Weizman be brought into the discussions. Dinitz was thunder-struck and apparently on the next day he told Dayan what I had said. Dayan then told Begin, who called me Saturday evening in clear anger, categorically denying that he had ever insisted on continuing the trilateral meetings. That episode says something about the

virtue of candor late at night during negotiations. I still think that my report was correct, but it exposed the problems within the Israeli delegation. Both Dayan and Weizman were anxious to reach an agreement; Begin was unhappy with a lot of their advice. They were pressing him a great deal in their own different ways, although Dayan was the much more important player at Camp David.

Weizman's main role was to keep some kind of relationship with the Egyptians particularly when tensions were high. He was the only Israeli, for example, who saw Sadat outside the receptions and the general meetings. He went more than once to Sadat's cabin and tried to explain some of the nuances of the Israeli concerns. He also asked Sadat to meet with Dayan. Sadat had, ever since his visit to Jerusalem, a kind of estrangement with Dayan. He liked Weizman; he never trusted Dayan which may be explained by Dayan's role in the wars and his reputation as a somewhat tricky fellow. In any case, Dayan, who was constructive and helpful in trying to reach an agreement, was alienated from Sadat while Weizman wasn't. Weizman wanted to change that and he finally persuaded Sadat to invite Dayan to his cabin for a conversation. That ultimately happened, but didn't produce much change in the views held by either. That complicated psychological relationships because Weizman had access to Sadat, but it was Dayan who was favored by us as the negotiator. Begin was standing on principle and resented somewhat the role that his lieutenants were playing. That may be one explanation for the outburst I received from Begin Saturday night.

Q: Were Sadat and Weizman communicating in English?

LEWIS: They were talking directly to each other without interpreters. Everyone was talking in English. The conference was conducted in English, which was another interesting dimension. Among themselves, the Israelis obviously spoke in Hebrew and the Egyptians in Arabic, but all the interactions were in English. All the Israelis had a good command of English; Begin's was excellent and Dayan's, although somewhat rough, was perfectly serviceable.

The conference went on for days and days as did the tennis games, the walks in the woods, the meals, the pool games, the drafts, the meetings. At a certain point, Carter decided that he would take in his own hand a part of the problem. There were two sets of issues. One concerned the final deal that could be reached in the peace process over the Sinai and the other concerned the nature of the framework of principles needed for the settlement of the broader conflict with Syria, Jordan, the Palestinians. It had to be a framework that Egypt could endorse and would encourage the others to ultimately enter into negotiations with Israel. This framework included the autonomy concept which made it very difficult to hammer out. Most of the negotiations were about the framework. The question of the Sinai after a few days became fairly clear. Carter himself produced a brief draft of a framework for peace between Egypt and Israel. He worked on that draft separately with Barak and El Baz. The delegations continued to struggle with the broader principles and related issues.

There was one event that occurred that I remember still vividly. We had met with Carter after dinner and he was very frustrated, particularly with Begin's obstinacy. As Carter left the cabin to return to his own, he asked me to walk with him. He said in a very frustrated and angry manner: "I don't think Begin wants peace. He really doesn't". I told him that he was wrong, that Begin and all Israelis wanted peace above all. They had been wanting nothing else for years. I told the President that the issue is not the objective, but the price that the Israelis were prepared to pay in addition to the political risks that Begin was prepared to run. Those were the problems, not whether they wanted peace. Carter mumbled and said: "I suppose you are right". He had almost reached the conclusion at that point that Begin was looking for a failure of the conference. That view was beginning to affect Carter's psychology. But I think he accepted that his emotional view may not have been correct and his reaction was a matter of a moment and had caused an outburst, but that intellectually he accepted my analysis.

On about Wednesday of the second week, September 13, lengthy meetings had been taking place and Carter had spent hours and hours with his drafting group of Barak and El Baz -- while others were just marking time -- we began to get hints from members of the Israeli delegation that Begin might indeed sign eventually. That was not the impression that he had given Carter on Tuesday night, which had been a very difficult meeting concentrating on the settlements issue and on a phrase in the preamble of the ultimate framework on the unacceptability of the acquisition of territories by force, which was very important to the Egyptians, but an anathema to Begin, because it suggested that however you obtained territory -- even in a legitimate war of defense -- you would have to surrender it. He had always argued that there had been a lot of other cases in the world in which wars had ended with transfer of territory. The question for Begin was how the territory was acquired -- what had led to the acquisition. But the Egyptians had picked up a phrase from the U.N. and insisted on having it in the agreement, implying that the Israelis would eventually have to surrender the whole of the West Bank and Gaza. Begin found that very hard to accept, although eventually the phrase was included in the preamble because Barak had convinced Begin that its inclusion there did not make it binding. That episode is an illustration of the point I had made earlier about Barak's role.

There was another interesting event that came to light that Wednesday evening. After lunch, I was sitting with Begin and several other Israelis. Begin said to me: "Sam, do you know what the President said to me last night? He told me that Sadat had told him that he would never sign an agreement as long as I was Prime Minister. He was asking Carter to have me removed". Begin showed great indignation and obviously had had his pride hurt severely. He then told me that he had told Carter to make it clear to Sadat that the Israeli Prime Minister is elected by the Israeli people and that would continue to be the case, whether that pleased the Egyptian President or not. Begin was furious when he heard Sadat's real views of himself from Carter. He categorized Sadat as a hypocrite because Sadat had been warm and friendly when they had been together. I wondered myself why Carter had repeated Sadat's comments to Begin because it was bound to be a very incendiary statement. It was bad enough that Begin had heard it, but it was made worse

when the other Israelis heard about it. If the Camp David conference would have failed, Begin had a perfect vindication to use when he returned to Israel. If the Sadat comment had in fact been made, it would also have blackened his reputation in the U.S. I thought Carter may have made a major error. In the same conversation, Begin also recounted an exchange he had with Brzezinski the previous morning. He had asked Zbig who had developed the phrase "Palestinian aspirations". Zbig said that it had come out of the Vienna formula and that Peres seemed to have liked it. As background, you should know that only a few weeks before Camp David, but after the conference had all been arranged, Peres, as leader of the opposition had met with Sadat in Vienna, under the auspices of Chancellor Kreisky. Peres and Sadat had reached an understanding on a formulation of principles for peace which was much more forthcoming than anything that Begin was prepared to endorse. Peres immediately leaked this understanding as soon as he had returned to Jerusalem and had told his colleagues that if Begin could not make peace with Sadat, he just had proved that he and Sadat could reach a meeting of minds. In any democratic system, such a ploy would have been provocative, but it was very destructive in Israel, given the history of the tense relationship between Peres and Begin -- the latter having succeeded the former as Prime Minister and having insulted him in the Knesset. For Zbig to have quoted to Begin language that Peres approved and that we were pushing was clearly tactically very unwise. Begin was scathing; he wanted to know what the Socialist International was doing in these negotiations. He wondered how Zbig would feel if the Republican party was drafting the U.S. position for the negotiations. When the history of the phrase was checked later, it was found that it had not been included in the Vienna declaration at all. It had been a statement that had been dropped during the Sadat-Peres consultations, but Peres asserted that he believed that Sadat wanted to keep that language in as a fall back. In retrospect, I believe that the phrase was actually adopted by the Socialist International at a meeting in Vienna which had been the cover used by Sadat and Peres to have their consultations. Since it was in an international declaration, both Sadat and Peres could accept it as a basis for an agreement. It looked to me at the time as another tactical goof which could have had some deleterious consequences. I checked later with Vance on Begin's comments and he agreed that the President had made a bad error in repeating Sadat's words. He said he had talked to Carter about it, but I don't know that any damage repair efforts were ever undertaken. But these are illustrations of the kind of events that take place in lengthy negotiations; you have to always keep the nuances in mind. On the other hand, it is surprising that there were no more slips during the thirteen days.

During this whole period at Camp David, there was a major diversion -- the big blow up in Lebanon. That sort of thing often seems to happen during peace conferences. There was also a lot of trouble in Iran -- this was the beginning of the Shah's period of decline. Carter was therefore distracted some of the time, but didn't allow himself to be distracted for any length of time. The conference was marked by hills of optimism followed by valleys of pessimism. By September 13, the Israelis are in despair and the Egyptians are feeling better since the latest drafts had begun to move in their direction. I remember that I noted to myself that I was arguing the "Israeli problem" too consistently with my colleagues while discussing the drafts. I thought

that my credibility was ebbing with my delegation. We had prepared a new draft to take care of Sadat's concerns that the final document refer to something close to self-determination. I had told everybody that I didn't think that Begin could swallow such thoughts and that he might explode. And indeed he did, during a conversation with Vance that evening. Vance pressured Begin very hard when he was invited by Begin to join him in the latter's cabin to get his reaction to the new draft. At one point Vance told Begin that it might be better to drop the whole thing and leave. Begin backed off a little at that juncture. Begin was something of a bully; if he thought he had someone on the ropes, he was not adverse at pushing hard. That evening, everybody in the Israeli delegation was discouraged and were seriously discussing leaving. Meanwhile, in private, Sadat was continuing to give Weizman a very hard line. He also gave Dayan a very hard line. Sadat continued to stick with his strategy -- no concessions directly to the Israelis, but giving some to Carter which then could be used with the Israelis if he chose to do so. For example, Sadat had told Carter that the resolution of the future of the settlements in Sinai could be postponed -- the Israelis wanted to retain them after withdrawal. This issue could be discussed when the peace treaty itself would be discussed; it would be sufficient that the Israelis at Camp David would just agree to dismantle them at some time.

On Thursday, September 14, the leit motiv had been set during a Carter-Sadat morning walk. Sadat had drawn his bottom line. We tried during the day to draft a document that would meet Sadat's needs. When Begin saw that draft, he exploded as I mentioned earlier. We made no progress on that day, except to leave the Israelis very depressed. By the morning of Friday, the 14th, it looked like everything would slip away. There may have been parts of the draft that Begin would approve; he certainly would not sign the document as it then stood. It didn't look like a deal could be struck. Begin was very grim and defiant that day. Barak, Weizman and Dayan were working very hard to save something. Vance relayed to us Carter's instructions to prepare to wrap-up on Sunday. He wanted the chronology prepared, a speech prepared, a "Questions and Answers" paper for press interview, talking points for Congress, etc.

It should not be forgotten that it was clear to the Israelis at the beginning that if the conference were to fail, some one would be blamed. Carter had decided that failure would be blamed on the Israelis. Bill Quandt had been assigned to write a speech, on which he worked throughout the conference, in which Carter would explain what had happened and why the conference had failed. The burden of failure in that speech was put on the Israelis. The Israelis knew that or at least they sensed it. So on Friday, everyone was beginning to work on the end-game assuming a conference failure. In the meantime, Foreign Minister Kamal and the Egyptians were considerably more up-beat, probably because they hoped for failure. Carter had told everybody that the conference would end Sunday evening regardless. During Friday afternoon, he sent Mondale to see both Begin and Sadat, asking that their final suggestions be provided by that evening so that the U.S. could put together a final proposal on Saturday. That proposal would be a "take it or leave it" draft to be either signed or dismissed on Sunday. On Monday, Carter would deliver an address to the nation before a joint session of Congress. Begin was expecting to stay in

the U.S. for a couple of days after the conference in Washington and New York and would therefore be in the country when Carter would make his speech.

By Friday midnight, there were a few glimmers of light, although I recall that none of us had been invited to Sabbath dinner that night. Barak had made a super-human effort with Begin on the language dealing with the Palestinian problem and had made some progress. The question of the Sinai settlements remained intractable. Everybody realized that Saturday was to be "crunch time". I had breakfast Saturday with Weizman and Barak who were very critical of our draft because of the effect it had had on Begin. They were very frustrated, especially Weizman. Dayan, typically, during the night had been trying to find a way to convince us and Sadat to postpone until later the resolution of the Sinai settlements. Dayan always looked for a way around an obstacle if it couldn't be removed. He went to see Carter along with Vance Saturday mid-morning. This was part of a long series of meetings -- Mondale-Weizman, Mondale-Sadat, Vance-Sadat, Mondale-BEGIN -- intended to deliver Carter's views. It was the President's intention to give the U.S. view of what happened at Camp David before Sadat and Begin had a chance to give theirs.

On Saturday afternoon, there was a meeting with Weizman and Dayan concerning the Sinai security issues. We had agreed tentatively to build a new military airfield in Israel if the Israelis would agree to give up their airfields in Sinai within three years and if the settlements issue were resolved. I spent the day, very frustrated, working on a number of relatively minor problems. In the evening, we got together with the President to review the situation. He outlined his strategy for winding up the conference still hoping that a deal could be salvaged, but he was obviously exasperated with Begin and didn't mind showing it. After dinner, Vance and I met with Barak and Dinitz to discuss some alternative language about the West Bank and Gaza issues that the Israelis had provided. Barak conveyed some significant movement on Begin's part which they said that they had extracted from him with great difficulty. Weizman burst into the meeting to give an emotional account of an half-hour meeting he had just held with Sadat during which he had pleaded that the Sinai settlements not be the stumbling block which would send everyone home empty handed to "prepare for war". He argued that all other issues could be resolved and that time was necessary to convince the Knesset to move the settlements -- at least that was what it sounded like. Weizman thought that he had made an impact on Sadat, although we found out later that Sadat was apparently confused by Weizman's presentation. Nevertheless, it produced a good reaction. Weizman thought that Sadat was at the point of leaving the conference before their discussion. We now know that Sadat was apparently prepared to leave Thursday night, but was dissuaded by Carter.

We worked through most of Friday night in redrafting and sat around most of Saturday waiting for the conclusion of a climactic Carter-BEGIN meeting that was also attended by Vance and Barak and Dayan. That meeting broke up at 12:30 a.m. Sunday morning after about five hours. It was this meeting that sealed the deal at Camp David. It also planted the seeds for the break-down of relationships between Carter and Begin not very much later. The two reached a kind of

agreement on a draft, but as we were debriefed at one o'clock in the morning, it was not immediately apparent that a deal had in fact been struck. We understood that some polishing was necessary, but didn't realize that Carter had made the essential break-through. For the Sinai agreement, it was agreed to leaving the settlements question to be put to the Knesset. That was a formality since Begin had said all along that he would not agree to remove the settlements, but would be prepared to put the issue before the Knesset as a make-or-break issue on an otherwise sealed agreement. It was actually a way for Begin to save face because he knew perfectly well that if he had peace with Egypt in hand, the Knesset would not allow the Sinai settlements to stand in the way of final signature. But Begin would not take the responsibility of making the decision himself. The general framework that was agreed upon was pretty good. I think Begin would have come out ahead had he accepted the declaration of principles that Sadat had offered back in December at Ismalia. He would not have accepted at that time the phrases that he so much disliked, such as "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people", and a procedure on autonomy which led more in the direction of independence that he was willing to accept.

It was clearly a great achievement. Carter, Vance, Barak and all the others were rubbing their eyes at the success. The next morning, Sunday, Sadat went for a walk with Carter. Carter apparently told him at that time what he had achieved with Begin the night before. He told Sadat that he had gotten Begin's agreement to freeze settlements during the negotiation period following Camp David. Carter understood Begin to agree that this freeze would last until the negotiations about autonomy were completed; i.e., until autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza was in place. That was a misunderstanding and that is what subsequently soured the relationship.

During Sunday, we were putting the final touches on the draft. Carter was preparing to launch his campaign with the other two leaders to get them to the signing point. Sunday, in fact, turned into a cliff-hanger, not a wind-down as it should have. That I gather is common to many conferences in which you think you have a deal, only to find out at the last minute that there are still issues to be resolved. That is what happened at Camp David on the final day. We thought everything had been pretty well resolved. Then the all of a sudden, the issue of Jerusalem exploded unexpectedly. Since no meeting of the minds was possible on the issue, it had been agreed by the three delegations that each would state its own view of the problem in a letter to be attached to the agreement. Actually, we had all agreed on some language at one point -- a simple statement that Jerusalem should remain undivided, the rights to the holy places should be respected and that Jerusalem's ultimate status should be left to further negotiations -- all very vague and general -- but Sadat was persuaded Saturday night by his advisors not to agree to that because it was giving away too much for Arab sensitivities. Sadat was convinced that it would have been better to be silent on the subject than to have a the minimal agreement that was achievable. On the basis of our understanding, we had drafted a letter on our position on Jerusalem, addressed to Sadat and Begin. We delivered that letter to the Israelis so that they could see it in advance before they delivered their letter to us. The difficulties arose because Carter and Vance thought that it had been clear to Begin that the U.S. would restate our view on Jerusalem -- that our views

would be stated in addition to the Israeli and Egyptian views. The fact that we had to state our views is because that was the understanding we had reached with Sadat in exchange for his approval of dropping the whole issue out of the final Camp David agreement. He knew of course, that our view was somewhat closer to his than it was to that of Israel's and he wanted our view on the public record, even if were to be in a side letter. This was one of the two topics that was discussed in the marathon meeting Saturday night. It is there that the misunderstanding started which is not surprising in light of the weariness of the participants which may have made them miss the nuances. It is a lesson why negotiations should not be carried on too late at night.

So on Sunday morning, Vance read to Dayan the text of our draft letter on Jerusalem which was essentially a summary of statements that Arthur Goldberg and Charles Yost had made to the U.N. previously in 1967 and 1969. Dayan was very upset to hear our position restated so baldly - namely that the status of Jerusalem was subject to later negotiations, which along with other nuances, implied that we viewed Jerusalem as occupied territory and not an integral part of Israel. Dayan went off to explain it to Begin. He was particularly upset by a phrase which identified East Jerusalem as occupied territory. (We should note that the same issues have recently arisen again and this is now 1990.) Shortly after that meeting broke up at about 12:30 and the Israelis went off to lunch, I got an agitated call from Meir Rosenne, the legal advisor of the Foreign Affairs Ministry and a member of the Israeli delegation. He wanted a copy of our letter immediately, which I brought to him, after carefully marking it "First draft-uncleared". When I arrived at the Israeli cabin, I found Begin fuming angrily to his colleagues, all of whom looked very worried. Dayan took me aside and described to me Begin's explosion at the idea that the U.S. would put forth its position at this last moment. He urged me to try to convince Vance that our draft had to be killed or that the conference might break down. Begin was furious when he spoke to his delegation. So I went back and reported to Vance, who insisted that Begin had been told of our intentions the night before and had not objected. Carter had given assurances just that Sunday morning that we would state our position in a side letter. The public restatement of our position on Jerusalem was *sine qua non* for Sadat's signature to the final agreement. It was Vance's view that Begin would just have to swallow it. I told Vance that I didn't think he would; he didn't seem to be bluffing. I also told Vance that none of the three Israelis who were present at the Saturday night meeting -- Begin, Dayan and Barak -- would admit that they had heard anything about our intention to restate our views on Jerusalem. I went back to Dayan; Begin was adamant. Finally we got Dayan and Barak to meet with Vance in the pool hall in Holly Cabin. Carter and Mondale suddenly joined in. Then Jordan and Dinitz and Weizman and Saunders and I also joined. It began to be a crowd. Carter was polite, but cool and tough. He said he could not go back on his word to Sadat. He had made known his intentions to make the letter public the night before. He tactfully pointed out that it was not the Israeli responsibility to tell the U.S. whether or where or how it should state its views and policies. The meeting broke up in a pessimistic view. Then Carter picked up a hint from Dayan. He asked Vance to look at the language of our draft letter again to see what could be done to ease Israeli concerns without breaking his commitment to Sadat. In fact, Vance had already realized by then that the original

language could not stand and had already commissioned a new draft. It was practically ready when Carter asked for it. The new draft merely said that our new position was as had been stated by Goldberg and Yost, but didn't restate it. This version was eventually accepted by both Begin and Sadat. So the "Jerusalem crisis" was contained and didn't raise its head again at Camp David. This episode was a good illustration of the last minute unexpected events that can blow up towards the end of a conference, which can be resolved, but that at the moment looks like a sure tragedy. In retrospect, I think that the Jerusalem issue could have wrecked the conference because on Sunday morning, although the Israelis were so close to achieving peace with Egypt and would not have wished to have it slip away, Begin might have driven Sadat out of the game inadvertently if he had dragged the meeting out further.

There were more meetings to get the final wording on the Sinai and other issues. At approximately 5:30 p.m., that Sunday afternoon, after the deal had been sealed, we were deluged by a cloud burst which delayed our departure for about an hour. We then took all the documents and got on helicopters to the White House. The Israeli delegation, which I accompanied on their helicopter, was euphoric. Everybody was very happy. The Egyptians were putting up a good front, but they were essentially very unhappy and scared. Many members of the Egyptian delegation genuinely felt they were committing suicide by being party to this peace agreement. They felt that eventually they might lose their lives because of their participation. Kamal had told Sadat two days earlier that he would resign because he couldn't support Sadat's determination to reach agreement. Sadat prevailed on him to stay through the conference. It was clear that Begin's rather obnoxious and difficult negotiating strategy had paid off. I thought then and I still believe now that Israel got a somewhat better deal than Egypt did, but that both sides had made a good many concessions. It was obvious that neither side was totally satisfied which I consider a good negotiating outcome. Begin would have some political problems at home about what he had given away in Sinai -- the settlements -- and other issues, but I was sure that he could overcome the problems because Labor would certainly support him even if all of the Likud didn't. That is what ultimately happened in the Knesset.

Q: During all of these frenetic days, was anything said to the press? Were there any press available?

LEWIS: The press was not inside Camp David. There were a number staying at the nearest town, but they couldn't get a snip of anything. Approximately once or perhaps twice a day, Jody Powell, who was Carter's press spokesman, would make an agreed-upon statement to the press about progress. It was very anodyne, saying nothing about what was transpiring. There was a press center in that near-by town which he would visit, but essentially never told the press anything.

That Sunday evening, we landed at the Washington Monument helipad at about 9:45 p.m. and motorcaded to the White House. Most everyone went to the East Room for the formal announcement to the world. No one outside the delegations knew that success had been

achieved. All the hints coming out of Camp David in the few previous days had been pessimistic. So the outcome of the conference came as a terrific bomb-shell for the press, the Congress, the various publics in Israel and Egypt. Interestingly, when we went up to the East Room, only a couple of members of the Egyptian delegation went. El Baz was one of them, being very faithful to Sadat and happy that the agreement had been reached. Two or three others drifted away so that they wouldn't be photographed. The Israelis were all there. Carter, Begin and Sadat sat on the rostrum. Begin stole the show; he made a warm and witty speech. Sadat gave a formal speech, praising Carter, but not mentioning Begin at all. Then the famous picture was taken; this is the one that got a lot of press play. Begin embraced Carter and then Sadat for a photo opportunity which he was anxious to have on the record. He mouse-trapped Sadat into that picture; Sadat couldn't avoid it. It was a very smooth performance.

It was a great triumph for Carter, but as it turned out it was not to be a happy start for a new Carter-Begin relationship.

Almost immediately after the joyous announcement, we got into an argument with Begin about the interpretation of the framework agreement. The elements became subject to controversy. One was whether any or all of the Israeli forces would withdraw during a five year period -- the language was not entirely clear on this subject. And then came the question of how long the freeze on new settlements on the West Bank would last. As I mentioned earlier, at the climactic Saturday night meeting, Carter had pressed Begin to freeze settlements for the duration of the negotiations. Carter's own notes and Vance's recollections make it clear that Carter, believing that Begin understood, used the term "negotiations" not to cover only the treaty negotiating period -- which were supposed to last only three months -- but the whole subsequent negotiations which include discussion of the autonomy of the West Bank and Gaza -- a negotiation that was never completed. Carter's notes said that Begin had agreed. Carter had asked, according to the notes, Begin to give him those assurances in writing. Begin's recollections, supported by Barak's notes and remembrances which I discussed with him at great length later, was that he had said that he would consider the matter overnight and that he would give Carter his answer in the morning. Dayan's recollection was somewhere between Carter's and Begin's accounts. But Carter and Vance are absolutely sure that they were right.

The next morning, Sunday morning, a letter from Begin's cabin was delivered to Carter which essentially said that in accordance with their prior night's discussion that he would agree to settlement freeze for the period of the peace treaty negotiations. Carter gave that note to Saunders and said: "That isn't what Begin agreed to last night. The settlements are to be frozen for the whole period of the autonomy negotiations. Take this back to the Israelis and get the right language!". Then Carter went off to his walk with Sadat and told Sadat that he had Begin's agreement to a freeze until the autonomy issue was resolved. In the meantime, Begin, either directly or through an intermediary, told Saunders that he had not agreed to a freeze during the autonomy negotiations, but only that he would consider Carter's proposal and that he would give his answer in the morning. And the letter that morning to Carter was his position. When Carter

learned of this, he made what I consider an unfortunate tactical mistake. He was convinced of his own recollection and convinced that a deal had been struck which needed to be sealed right away. He didn't confront Begin directly; he didn't try to clarify the differences. He told Saunders to get the matter straightened out when they returned to Washington and to get the right language then. He left the disagreement unresolved.

When Carter returned to Washington, Carter and Vance continued to rely on Saunders to negotiate with Begin and the Israeli Embassy to resolve the dispute. They were unable to do so. In the meantime, Carter was telling everybody that he had Begin's assurance on the settlements' freeze. He reported so to Congressional leaders. That of course was immediately reported in the press. Begin, either leaked or gave out directly, a contrary version, reflecting his own view of events and agreements -- i.e., that the freeze would only cover the period of negotiations for the peace treaty. It therefore became clear to Carter, Brzezinski and everybody that Begin had not changed his mind. Yet Carter proceeded in a speech to the Congress to state his view of the "freeze" agreement. This only made the disagreement worse. At no point, did Carter try to engage Begin in a dialogue on this issue. He was convinced that he had made a commitment to Sadat that Begin had approved. For whatever reason, he decided not to confront the issue directly, but after I returned to Israel, I kept getting messages to see Begin to "straighten" him out on this issue. I had a number of conversations and talked to all the Camp David principals. I sent messages back trying to explain that I thought there was a genuine misunderstanding on what happened that Saturday night and that there had been a failure of communication in that late night, blurry meeting. I reported that Begin maintained that he had not said what Carter thought he had said; that it was not a matter of bad faith, but a genuine failure of communication in a tough moment in a tough negotiation. Carter became convinced that it was a matter of bad faith and that Begin had changed his mind by Sunday morning. Carter felt that Begin had made a commitment and then welshed on it. To this day, he has not changed his view. Carter's feeling of bad faith and Begin's feeling of injury which grew as time passed poisoned the U.S.-Israeli relationships for the remainder of the Begin administration, during Carter's presidency and even after. The issue is raised in Carter's books and therefore remains an unresolved and nasty element. Moreover, it gave Sadat reason to charge the Israelis with bad faith, which soured the peace treaty and autonomy negotiations which started the following year. It was this Begin "commitment" that governed the psychology of the negotiators.

And another thing happened after the Camp David agreement. Vance was very tired and suffered from back problems. He had to get on an airplane soon after that final Sunday to visit the Middle East to try to sell the agreement to the King of Jordan and the King of Saudi Arabia. Sadat had promised King Hussein that he would keep him informed during the Camp David meeting. He had not done so. He then made an arrangement to see Hussein in Morocco to brief him, but when Hussein saw what the agreement contained, he was so apprehensive and unhappy that he canceled the Morocco meeting. So Sadat didn't play any personal part in persuading the other Arabs to support Camp David. In fact, he made a number of disdainful public statements about

how Egypt, the great Arab leader, had found the road to peace which the other Arab states would also have to follow. He was quoted around the Arab world making very disdainful comments about Hussein -- "that dwarf in Amman" as he used to call him. He considered the Saudis as kind of barbarians and not worth a lot of effort for their support. He felt that they should understand that they should follow his lead. So Vance and Roy Atherton, who accompanied him, did their very best to bring the Saudis and the Jordanians aboard immediately to see the opportunity that the Camp David accords provided the Palestinians if they would only accept the idea of autonomy and their future after five-years of self-rule. They were unsuccessful.

Hussein kept his powder dry for a while. While Vance was in Amman, Hussein asked him how the U.S. interpreted this clause or that clause. Vance made what I consider a grave tactical error. He should have said that each side may have somewhat different interpretations on a number of clauses, but that the text stands and speaks for itself. The accords were the beginning of a process during which the various interpretations would be melded. Instead, Vance told King Hussein that if he were to give us the questions, we would take them back and provide him with authoritative American interpretations. Those were drafted and approved by Carter. Hal Saunders was sent to the Middle East to deliver them to the King. Hussein found some reassuring, some not; in any case they were not reassuring enough to convince him to join the process, but at least the door was kept open. The agreement itself called for Jordanian participation in the next phase.

After Amman, Saunders came to Israel and met with Begin. I had already given Begin a copy of our position papers which were given to Hussein. Saunders had come to Jerusalem to try to discuss our positions with Begin. But Begin saw the whole exercise as a complete betrayal and an undermining of his position. He thought that the U.S. had no right what-so-ever to give authoritative interpretations of language that had been so carefully tailored to the concerns of two other parties. He was angry with us. So while Carter was angry with Begin over the settlements freeze issue, Begin was angry with us over our statements to Jordan. Within a month, the U.S.-Israel relationships went into a nose dive after a tremendous triumph.

Another reason why the relationship took such a bad turn is that after Camp David, Begin stayed in the States for several days. Weizman and Dayan, unfortunately, went back to Israel immediately. Begin met with many Jewish and Congressional groups to which he made statements tailored to his domestic audience. He tried to justify to his own party in Israel through the press that he really had made no concessions and that he had come out a victor. He took a public line in the U.S. which was tough, bellicose, defiant, trying to convince himself and his followers that he had not conceded anything to the Egyptians. Carter talked to him about this line just before his departure for Jerusalem, trying to convince Begin that it was very important to put the best image on the accords for the Arab audiences because it was crucial that the Arabs support Sadat, who was very vulnerable. Begin couldn't focus on Sadat's problems; he could only concern himself on his own political vulnerabilities at home. Carter's pitch had no effect on him. Begin put priority on dealing with his own perceived political problems before he got home. He also had a polemical style anyway; his reaction to debates was essentially confrontational. These

factors produced further irritations on Carter's part and made Vance's job of selling the accords to the Arabs much more difficult. Vance was trying to emphasize what the accords meant for the Palestinian future; Begin's statements were designed to assure the Israeli right wing that nothing was going to change. The press of course was carrying all of the statements all over the region.

So within a month after the Camp David agreement was signed, a great many seeds of discord were planted before its implementation had even begun.

LEWIS: As I said earlier, right after Camp David, a serious disagreement between Carter and Begin erupted over what Begin may or may not have agreed to at Camp David on freezing the settlements in the occupied territories. In my view, that was a very unfortunate misunderstanding and I am convinced still today that it had indeed been a misunderstanding, although Carter has never changed his mind that the tensions arose due to Begin's bad faith. This misunderstanding soured their personal relationship to a significant degree for the rest of the Carter Administration. Begin insisted then and always thereafter that he had promised to suspend the settlements for the duration of the peace treaty negotiations which we all assumed would take only about three months after the signature of the framework agreement at Camp David. Carter insisted that Begin had agreed to freeze the settlements until negotiations on the autonomy of the West Bank and Gaza would be concluded, which obviously would have taken considerably longer. In fact, those negotiations were never completed. Carter believed that Begin just changed his mind overnight.

After our return from Camp David, Hal Saunders, who was then the Assistant Secretary for the Near East and South Asia Bureau in the Department of State, was supposed to get it all straightened out with Begin. He didn't succeed because Begin felt that he knew what he had committed himself to. Begin returned to Israel with the issue unresolved. I was then instructed to resolve matters by getting the letter from Begin with the right wording that Carter thought he had been promised, as a replacement for the one that had been delivered in Washington. I discussed the matter with Begin several times and with Dayan several times. I also went to Barak, who was the other key Israeli participant at the meeting on that last night at Camp David. He was by then a Justice on the Israeli Supreme Court, but had acted as notetaker at that Carter-Begin meeting. His version of events were somewhat closer to Begin's recollections than Carter's. I could never obtain any change in Begin's position so the issue remained unresolved. Begin announced to the Knesset that he had agreed to a settlements freeze for three months. And that is what happened. Carter felt double-crossed.

Immediately after the signing ceremony and Carter's address to a Joint Session of Congress, it became very important to the United States to get support for the Camp David accords from other Arab countries particularly, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately, Sadat had made matters considerably more difficult by snubbing King Hussein whom he had allegedly pledged before Camp David to keep fully informed during the Conference. That had not been done. Sadat had also arranged to meet Hussein in Morocco on the way back to Cairo, but when the agreement was announced, Hussein was so upset by what he understood the nature of that agreement to be about -- especially as it concerned the West Bank -- that he canceled the Morocco meeting. That made Sadat unhappy and disdainful of the King. So Secretary Vance, who was completely worn out by his work at Camp David, was immediately put on an airplane and sent off to the Middle East in an effort to sell the Camp David accords to the Saudis and the Jordanians. As Vance went about this business, Sadat made some public statements which made Arab acceptance even more difficult because they suggested that he had made the peace and then it was up to all the other Arab countries to fall into line to follow him.

Q: In retrospect, would you say it was a tactical mistake to show Begin what we were giving to Hussein? Or would the Israelis have found out anyway?

LEWIS: The tactical mistake was made when Vance agreed to provide Hussein in writing our interpretations of the agreement, especially in the detail we did. Although the written material must have been made available to all parties, the second mistake was made when we did not foresee that by being as specific as we were we would engender the debate all over again. We should have kept our answers, if in fact we needed to provide them in writing at all, as general as possible. It may have made it less persuasive to Hussein, but in any case, even our detailed answers did not persuade the King anyway. The end result of the process was to make Begin very suspicious about Carter's intentions on implementing the accords, and not succeeding in getting Hussein into the act. So we failed in our main objective while exacerbating tensions with Begin. Saunderson's trip was very sad because during it he also met with a group of West Bank and Gaza residents in an effort to get their support for the agreement and participation in the autonomy system. They were not persuaded either, partly because the PLO had already issued a blanket denunciation of the agreement and was putting on a lot of pressure on all West Bank and Gaza residents to reject Camp David.

From that point on, the Israelis and Begin in particular, for several months, as we were trying to negotiate the details of the peace treaty and subsequently the details of the autonomy agreement, which could only be done after the peace treaty was completed, became more paranoid about what they saw in the U.S. response to Hussein along with other perceived signals from Carter. He felt that our real intention was to make Palestine independent and that our acceptance of full autonomy for a specified period was just a smoke screen. At the same time, the Palestinians didn't see enough assurances in the Camp David agreement that Israel would ultimately withdraw and give Palestine its independence. They saw autonomy as the end of the process. The agreement was artfully drafted to leave that issue open; it could not have been solved at Camp

David in any case. King Hussein hesitated and wouldn't join the process and the Palestinians were under severe pressure from the PLO and were being told all sorts of exaggerated interpretations of the agreement. Our ability to contact the key Palestinian leaders was very limited; Saunders, our Consul General in Jerusalem and I met with them here and there, but we were not really in any position to make much of an impact on Palestinian opinion in competition with the PLO's successful propaganda. Sadat was doing nothing to try to sell the agreement to either the Palestinians or the Jordanians. He was reveling in his own achievements and in the peace treaty which was his major goal.

There was a period therefore of six-eight weeks when things teetered in the balance in whether we were going to succeed in getting Palestinian and Jordanian participation in the process based on the Camp David framework. By January, it had become clear that Hussein had backed off and would not be persuaded and the PLO had succeeded in convincing Palestinians to have nothing to do with the accords -- despite the fact that in the beginning a number of Palestinians had seen some very positive elements in the autonomy parts of Camp David and if left alone might well have participated in the negotiations for autonomy. In the meantime, Begin had made a major effort with the Knesset and with his own party to convince them that Sadat had made all of the concessions at Camp David and he, Begin, had given away nothing -- that autonomy would mean very little change. Since Israel was a very open society, the speeches and press conferences received maximum exposure and therefore were widely known to the Jordanians and Palestinians, all which confirmed what the PLO was saying about the Camp David agreements. Moreover, Begin's efforts to obtain his party's support had raised Sadat's suspicions that Begin was trying to suck him into just a bilateral treaty and had no intention of pursuing the Palestinian part of the agreement.

That was the atmosphere at the time the negotiations opened in mid-October in Blair House in Washington between the Egyptians and the Israelis. They were supposed to draft the peace treaty whose outlines had been agreed to at Camp David. The first week went very well and then the mutual suspicions began to arise. The Israeli Cabinet played a very damaging role by slowing down the negotiations. Ezer Weizman and Moshe Dayan were the two chief negotiators for the Israelis; Begin did not come to Washington. Both Dayan and Weizman were eager to conclude the negotiations quickly and were moving along very nicely. After ten days, Weizman went back to Jerusalem to attend a "brit" for his first grandchild and took with him an offer which he wanted to introduce into the negotiations. Essentially, Weizman wanted to propose that Israel would accelerate its withdrawal from El-Arish and some other areas as a token of good intentions -- this was a move in which the Egyptians would have been quite interested. The Cabinet turned Weizman down. Sadat then felt betrayed because he thought he had been promised such acceleration informally, but Weizman couldn't deliver. Sadat further felt betrayed because Carter had persuaded Sadat to exchange Ambassadors before the negotiating process had been completed. This was a move which the Israelis had urged on an expedited basis and Sadat had agreed on the explicit understanding that the *quid pro quo* would be this partial

withdrawal from the El-Arish area. When Weizman was not able to get Cabinet approval, Sadat withdrew the offer for an early exchange of Ambassadors making Begin feel double-crossed. Each side began to feel that the other was welshing on deals made. Dayan during this period made some moves that didn't help. Begin had gone to Canada on a visit while Dayan and Weizman were in Washington. So while Begin was out of town, Dayan returned to Jerusalem to get Cabinet approval for certain key negotiating points. This was not a smart move on Dayan's part. The Cabinet took the opportunity to berate both Weizman and Dayan for giving away too much and repudiated the *ad referendum* agreements that they had reached with the Egyptian delegations. I should note that we were involved in these negotiations as sort of honest brokers. Dayan and Vance had worked until about two o'clock in the morning drafting a side letter between the Egyptians and Israelis intended to set a very vague target date for the completion of the autonomy negotiations. For some reason, there was a communication break-down and the draft letter didn't get to Begin immediately as it should have, but only as he was entering a meeting with Vance at Kennedy airport in New York as he was heading back to Israel. Begin became furious with Dayan for proceeding on this letter without checking with him and then confronting him with it at the last moment and he therefore repudiated the letter in front of Vance and then engineered his Cabinet's disavowal of the letter upon his return to Jerusalem. Dayan became so angry that he threatened to resign, but was persuaded not to. These unfortunate mishaps in the Israeli delegation, to which I was closer than those that occurred in the Egyptian delegation as well, went on for weeks. Finally, the U.S. got dragged further and further into the middle of the negotiations -- drafting formulations -- which should have been a rather simple task of translating agreed principles into detailed implementation steps; they became much more complicated. On November 11, 1978, a full treaty was finally completed. It was a good draft. Vance tried to get both sides to say that this was the best they could do and that the text should not be reopened lest the delicate compromises reached be all jeopardized. First, the Israeli Cabinet would not go along, but finally on November 17, at Dayan's urgings, it withdrew its reservations to the preamble and accepted the treaty text and the annexes. But it didn't accept the "side letter" which included the target date for the completion of the autonomy negotiations. Part of the problem was that from the beginning there had been a long argument about the linkage between the peace treaty and autonomy negotiations. The Israelis were eager for the peace treaty and the Egyptians were eager to get the autonomy negotiations on behalf of the Palestinians. So the Egyptians wanted linkage, the Israelis didn't. Ultimately there was kind of linkage build into a side letter but the two were not made totally dependent on each other.

When the Egyptian delegation, which was led by Boutros Ghali, the Minister of State then and now and Hassan Ali, then Minister of Defense, returned to Cairo, they found a very unhappy Sadat who was not entirely satisfied with the work that they had done. He balked at Article VI. He felt that the U.S. side letter was much too vague for his purposes. He had become more cautious because since Camp David, when he was very confident that all of the Arab states would follow his lead and that once Egypt had spoken all would see the wisdom of Egyptian diplomacy, he then began to perceive opposition from the Arab states. They had all met in

Baghdad in late October and had unanimously agreed to reject the Camp David accords. Even Morocco, Jordan and Saudi Arabia joined the condemnation of Egypt. The Iraqis, incidentally, had applied maximum pressure on the Saudis through personal intimidation on the Saudi leaders in Baghdad. So Sadat was more concerned at this time than he was at the end of Camp David that there be a treaty package agreed upon that he could defend in the Arab world. He had to have a document that would prove that he had not given away any Palestinian interests and did not look like a separate peace. That made the side letter, which linked the two negotiations, an essential part of the peace treaty negotiations. In the meantime, in Jerusalem, Begin's colleagues were becoming more suspicious of Sadat and worried about whether the Egyptians intended to conclude a peace treaty.

These issues created a sort of a stalemate between mid-November until early December. The atmospheres in Cairo and Jerusalem were very unpleasant. I had conversation during this time with Dayan and Begin, trying to get them to refocus on the "big picture", but I was not very successful. Carter was getting increasingly frustrated and also became diverted by other issues, such as the increase of difficulties in Iran. At Camp David, it had been agreed that the peace treaty would be signed within three months, during which the Israelis would cease new settlement buildings in the West Bank and Gaza. That three months period would have expired on December 17. As that day came closer, everybody got increasingly nervous and upset. Roy Atherton, who was at this time the special Middle East negotiator, came to the area to try to break the impasse and failed. Secretary Vance then persuaded the Egyptian Prime Minister and Israeli Foreign Minister Dayan to meet him in Brussels. The three had dinner and made some progress on the side letter. Then in desperation, Vance went to Cairo. He spent three days during which he had some very tough talks with Sadat. He finally got Sadat to accept the treaty text that we felt was the best that could be done with the understanding that we would add certain interpretive notes to some of the articles and if the side letter were strengthened on the linkage between the peace treaty and the autonomy talks and if the letter included linkage between exchange of Ambassadors and the inauguration of the governing authority which was to be established by the autonomy agreement.

During the November-December deadlock, Golda Meir, the ex-Prime Minister of Israel, died on December 8 at the age of 80. As in other moments like this, there was a high level U.S. delegation sent to the funeral. It was co-headed by President Carter's mother, Miss Lillian, and by Cy Vance; the delegation included a lot of dignitaries who had known and worked with Meir, like Henry Kissinger, Justice Goldberg, and Pat Moynihan. There were so many people in the delegation that when the special plane landed at Ben Gurion airport, we had the insolvable problem of sorting out the protocol. There were just too many high level people to figure who would ride in which car. We decided to solve the problem by putting Miss Lillian, who was formally the head of the delegation since Vance had not yet arrived, in the car with the Israeli personage who had been sent to meet her, namely the wife of the President -- Mrs. Navon -- and my wife and I. So the four of us left in a limousine to head up the hill to Jerusalem. Everybody

else -- all the dignitaries -- were put on a bus. That way we avoided an argument on who would precede whom. In any case there were so many. The question was: Who would tell Henry Kissinger that he was riding on the bus? That task was given to my wife Sallie. She went up to Henry as he got off the plane and said: "Henry, I want to tell you that we have so many VIPs that protocol has become so complicated that you have to get on a bus to Jerusalem". Kissinger looked at Sallie in his inimitable fashion and in his best Kissingerian tones said: "Sallie, you must be kidding?". My wife, nevertheless, escorted him to the bus listening all the while to his grumbling and wit. She got him on the bus and Henry behaved pretty well. For weeks thereafter, he kept telling the tale of how Sallie Lewis had shoved him on a bus -- the first time in his life he had ever been treated like that. Vance arrived later and met the delegation in Jerusalem. The funeral was held in a downpour the likes of which I had never seen in Jerusalem before. This just added to the Israeli depression which had already taken a beating from Meir's death. She represented something very important. Also the peace treaty was on hold and it appeared that the great achievements of Camp David were coming apart.

Vance arrived in time for the funeral; he had come from Cairo where he had held discussions about the deadlock. In Jerusalem, we had one meeting -- rather frosty -- with Begin. Then Vance returned to Egypt for a day. He met with Sadat and then returned to Israel. He then had another session with Begin. At that point, Carter made a few public statements back in Washington based on Vance's reporting. Those statements did not help Vance's efforts because they referred to Sadat as "very generous" in accepting a certain formulation. Begin didn't regard Sadat's acceptances as a matter of generosity at all and therefore more than ever didn't appreciate Carter's public praise of Sadat's flexibility. He saw it essentially as a pressure on Israel to compromise.

Vance once again returned to Egypt -- this was his third trip of the "shuttle" -- and Sadat finally agreed to the text with the interpretive notes. Vance came back to Jerusalem on December 15th. - two days before the deadline -- and was almost completely rejected by Begin and the Israeli Cabinet. They just wouldn't approve the package that Vance had finally got Sadat to approve. They were not persuaded by Vance's argument that it was very important that the deadline not be breached. Begin always had an antipathy to negotiating within a certain time frame. He believed that if you allowed yourself to be effected by a deadline, then you would surrender considerable negotiating leverage -- I suspect that he may have been correct in that attitude. So every time we would mention a deadline, he would get his back up and would drag out the negotiations. The tactic of time pressures did not work with Begin. In addition to running into Begin's resistance to time limitations, we also ran into a problem created by the state of global communications. Vance and his party -- Atherton, Saunders and others -- who had worked long and hard hours over a period of weeks, trying to bring the peace treaty to a successful conclusion, had to accept in mid-December the fact that there just wasn't going to be a peace treaty at that time. Begin had been quite proper with Vance and had complimented him on his hard work; he certainly was cordial. Their relationship had become rather strained as a consequence of the "shuttle". Vance

and his party, after their last visit to Jerusalem, boarded their Air Force plane to return to Washington. During the flight, while still over the Mediterranean Sea, Vance talked to Carter by phone from the plane. The technology at the time had not sufficiently progressed for that conversation to be in a secure mode. It was an open phone call that the Israelis were able to monitor through their quite sophisticated technical capability. They had a private contractor, who had acquired the most modern equipment available in the world, who had monitored all the radio broadcasts in the Middle East for the last twenty-five years from his own home. He worked for the Israeli national radio and television company. This capability permitted Israeli intelligence to get advance notice on many events through this one man SIGINT (signal intelligence). They often got advance warning through this method of events faster than Washington or anyone else in Israel. By spinning his radio dial, this man picked up the Carter-Vance telephone conversation and overheard comments that Vance made which were less than complimentary about Begin's intransigence during the negotiations. Immediately after the phone conversation there was a press story filed from the plane quoting a "senior U.S. official" -- a euphemism always used for the Secretary of State when he is giving off the record or background interviews -- to the effect that the Israelis had been very stubborn and that their position had really blocked the completion of the peace treaty. The story in short blamed the Israelis for the failure of the negotiations. That hit the Israeli press the next morning, in combination with the intercepted phone call. That really hardened attitudes in the Israeli Cabinet and soured Begin's view of the role the U.S. was playing. He became increasingly convinced that we were supporting the Egyptians and were essentially for Sadat and that we were trying to push Israel into a corner.

Christmas of 1978 was a very unpleasant period. The peace negotiations were frozen. The deadline came and passed and nothing happened. Carter first apparently decided that it would be best to let matters cool for an extended period and not to push anybody. Then he decided that this was too dangerous because at the same time, the Shah's position in Iran was beginning to seriously erode. He may in fact have already left the country by this time. It was also becoming obvious that Egypt and Israel were beginning to harden their positions and although the treaty was 95% finished, it appeared that it would not be concluded and Carter's achievement would evaporate. So at the end of January, 1989, he sent Atherton and the Department's legal advisor, Herb Hansell, to the Middle East to see whether a new Article VI of the Treaty could be formulated. Article VI concerned a very esoteric legal issue dealing with the question of what took precedence: Egypt's responsibilities in case of a conflict under its treaties with other Arab countries, or the Israel-Egypt peace treaty. Begin, who was perfectly capable of making legalisms into major issues, began to say that Article VI was the vital heart of the whole Treaty. No one else ever thought it was, but he now made it the most important matter in the whole Treaty. Hansell, Atherton and I and Meir Rosanne, who was then the Foreign Ministry's legal advisor, and the Israeli Attorney General and Ben Elizar, who was Begin's chief of staff, and Ruth Lapidot who was then a law professor and now is a Peace Fellow at the Institute for Peace negotiated until three o'clock in the morning on Article VI, Paragraph V. This discussion was supposed to produce some kind of side agreement to counterbalance a legal opinion that Hansell

had given to the Egyptians in December. He had spent seven days then negotiating over something that disturbed them. The whole treaty negotiations had deteriorated to a very detailed discussion of legal minutiae. That state of affairs had resulted from the almost total break-down of trust among the three principals who participated in the Camp David process. The desire to reach agreement had frayed so badly that one could find million of reasons why a Treaty should not be concluded. We had almost reached agreement with the Egyptians, but when they heard that we were about to give the Israelis a side letter, they were horrified and wouldn't accept it. So the whole negotiating process came to a stop. It was clear by then that the technical negotiators couldn't resolve the remaining issues. The impasse was political and could only be resolved at that level. Dayan argued that Begin had to be put back directly together with Carter and Sadat. He felt that this was the only way the deadlock could be broken. The other possibility would have Dayan be the main negotiator but then the discussions would have to be close to Jerusalem because he needed to be close to Begin who had gotten so suspicious of Dayan's negotiating ability as consequence of the Washington-Blair House round that he would not have trusted Dayan if he were far away. Carter on the other hand felt that he couldn't spare Vance and couldn't let him leave Washington for another extended round of negotiations. There were too many problems around the world.

So with great misgivings, Dayan and I set out for Camp David again for what I call "Camp David II". Unfortunately, the second round was not as successful as the first. By this time, we believed that this might be the last chance to conclude a treaty. Begin was hinting to me that he was really concerned that he might lose the Treaty. Dayan was concerned about the instability of the region. Sadat was anxious to conclude a treaty, particularly as the Shah had just fallen from power. However, we all had our fingers crossed and prospects were not great. We got to Camp David and Carter wasn't too anxious to become personally involved again, but realized that he must. Carter was the host at Camp David; Dayan and Prime Minister Khalil and Vance were present.

We went to Camp David February 20, 1979. The day before, Washington had been paralyzed by a snow-storm. I was staying with some friends in Cleveland Park. We were supposed to go up to Camp David on Tuesday. The snow storm came on Monday -- George Washington's Birthday. I was called on Monday morning from the Secretary's office telling me that Vance wanted to meet downtown that day to discuss the up-coming negotiations. I looked out of the window and told the office that there was no way I could get to the Department. We had something like 25 inches of snow the previous night. The voice at the other end told me that the Secretary was on his way in and that he would pick me up at Wisconsin Avenue if I could get there. So I trudged through the snow for four blocks. I stood out on a deserted street and after a little while, there appeared a big snow plow moving down Wisconsin. I peered and sure enough, there was the Secretary of State sitting on the passenger side of the plow. He gestured to me to get in with him and that is how we got to the Department that Monday morning.

The Camp David II conference was a real mess. We spent five days and nights there in the snow. I got into an awkward situation at one point. We had thought that Khalil, Sadat's Prime Minister, was the right person to meet with Dayan at this time. It turned out that neither Khalil or Dayan had much flexibility. So Carter was banging his head against two stone walls for a couple of days.

He was not able to move them. Then Carter decided that the only solution was to get Begin to Washington. He asked Dayan to call Begin to invite him to come to see whether he could help in breaking the deadlock. Begin was highly offended by this invitation because he thought that he was being summoned to Washington to meet Egypt's Number 2 official -- not the Number 1 man-Sadat. He let us know his views in no uncertain terms. Dayan was aghast by Begin's reaction. He argued with Begin to no effect. Carter was furious and told me and others that if Begin did not come, he would wash his hands of the whole negotiation and would tell the world who was to blame. The President was fed up. I think he was serious; I think he was considering making a speech, blaming the collapse of negotiations on Begin, which was the last thing that Begin wanted. He had tried throughout this period to keep the onus on the Egyptians. Dayan then said to me: "Look, I have tried my best with Begin. You talk to him. see if you can persuade him! Convey to him Carter's feelings".

I tried to reach Begin, but he wasn't available. So I talked to Eli Ben Elizar who was Begin's chief of staff. I asked him to give Begin a private, personal message from me. The substance of the message was that I was personally deeply concerned about the state of affairs and that the Prime Minister would be blamed for the collapse of the negotiations. To be blamed in such a manner would be bad for Israel and for Begin. I told him also that I thought he should come to Washington to make one more try. Ben Elizar relayed, as I learned later, my message to Begin in a very tendentious way -- in a incorrect, distorted and trouble-making fashion. It was put to Begin in such a way that the Prime Minister felt that he was being given an ultimatum. It complicated my subsequent relationships with Begin considerably. Worst of all, my message did not have the intended effect; Begin still refused to come. He sent a message back, rather haughtily, that he would not consider meeting with anybody but Sadat and Carter. But he did pass a hint that if Carter would invite him to Washington -- just him -- he would certainly never turn down an invitation from the American President. By this time, Carter had his back up and it took several anguishing hours to persuade him. Vance and all of us worked to try to get Carter to swallow his pride and to try Begin's way. None of us wanted to lose the treaty. Ultimately, that is the way the issue of Begin's coming to the U.S. was resolved. Carter invited Begin for a visit to the White House. Of course, while in Washington at the President's invitation, he could have some discussions on the side with Khalil. But the main reason for the visit was to meet with Carter at the latter's invitation.

Begin came and had some meetings in the White House and some side meetings with Khalil. Unfortunately, the visit didn't solve anything, although some hints were dropped. In any case, Begin's ego was assuaged. Carter handled him quite well so that Begin began to see that it was

not the U.S. and Egypt vs Israel. That had been the real problem throughout these weeks and that perception had stood in the way of progress. But even by the end of the visit, we didn't have an agreement. The atmosphere had improved, but the problems were not completely solved. We were now in early March, 1979. The region was in terrible shape. Carter was trying to decide what to do after Begin's departure. Sadat had just sent a message that he would like to come to Washington to mirror Begin's visit. He didn't want to meet with Begin, but wished to take his case about Begin's intransigence to the U.S. Congress, the media and the American public, preferably while Begin was still in New York. He wanted to fight the public relations battle with Begin on American soil while the U.S. President sat on the sidelines, watching the debate. The vision that Sadat and Begin would be firing high explosives on each other over Carter's head in the U.S. was just too much to swallow. This prospect drove Carter to decide that he had to bite the bullet and go to the Middle East personally to obtain approval of the treaty once and for all. All of Carter's advisors, except for Hamilton Jordan, were against this trip. Everybody else thought that the President was risking too much political and personal prestige. They were afraid that he would be perceived as traipsing around the Middle East, hat in hand, when the two major leaders in the area could not reach agreement. The possibility of failure was very high and most of the advisors saw it as a bad idea. Jordan saw it the other way. Carter had invested so much prestige on the Camp David agreements that if the implementation steps were not taken, it would be seen by the American public as an empty victory. The President's standing could only be maintained if he made a major personal effort so that he could not be accused of not having tried everything possible. No possible avenue should be spared. Carter followed Jordan's advice.

After his return from the United States, Begin had convinced his Cabinet to make a few concessions on some of the articles that Carter had discussed with him. There were also further discussions about the target date. Then came Carter's announcement about his trip to Egypt and Israel. All the professionals in the State Department and other places were astounded because the trip appeared as an act of desperation. There were no pre-arrangements; Carter's reputation was tottering somewhat at that stage for other reasons beyond the peace treaty. But everybody turned out to be wrong. Carter's gamble succeeded. In any case, Carter, Vance, Secretary of Defense Brown, Brzezinski and many more came out. The whole foreign and defense policy leadership of the Administration was on that Presidential plane. Carter first went to Egypt, where Carter and Sadat had another of their "love feasts". Although Khalil and his colleagues were tough in their bargaining, Sadat essentially gave Carter a blank check. He told Carter to do the best he could; he would trust the American President not give away Egypt's interests. That was a technique that Sadat repeatedly used with Carter and used very successfully.

So after getting pretty much of a blank check from Sadat, Carter arrived at 8 o'clock on Saturday night, March 10, 1979, at Ben Gurion airport. The American delegation was still very moved by the fact that millions of Egyptians, undoubtedly spurred on by Sadat, had come out to cheer Carter's train as it moved from Cairo to Alexandria. At Ben Gurion, there was an arrival ceremony, which looked very much like the Sadat arrival of November 1977, although there

were far fewer people to greet Carter than there were for Sadat. Fortunately, my sons' school, the American International School, were there in great numbers, cheering widely which was of considerable help. The arrival was a moving moment. It was the only time an American President had visited Israel, except for Nixon's visit in 1974 in the last days of his Administration. We had had a discussion with Teddy Kollek, the Mayor of Jerusalem, about a ceremony that he wanted when the party would reach the entrance of Jerusalem. He wanted to hold a full arrival ceremony with the traditional wine and salt. I got Teddy to promise that there wouldn't be any speeches (at White House insistence) and there weren't. Everything went smoothly though our people from Washington were sure that Kollek would double cross them. There were all sorts of frenzies with the Secret Service people. The head of the detail saw a mike standing near Kollek and all during the "Star Spangled Banner" kept yelling at me about it. The motorcade came off without hitches. Everybody was pretty much up-beat through the buffet that evening that Weizman hosted at the King David hotel for the whole delegation. There was a kind of electric mood in the room. In the meantime, Carter was having a private dinner upstairs in the hotel with the Begins. He came down to where we were at about 1:30 and the bubble just evaporated because he told us that the trip to Israel was a complete waste of time. Begin had just said no to everything; Carter was tired and frustrated. He quoted Begin as saying that he could not even initial a treaty publicly with his two counterparts -- Carter and Sadat -- which was the scenario that Carter had desired, until after the Knesset debate and ratification. Begin had told us after Camp David that he had made a pledge that he wouldn't sign a treaty until the Knesset had worked its will, even though under Israeli Constitutional practices, it was the Cabinet that could ratify treaties. The fact that Begin wanted Knesset approval was an indication of the importance of the peace treaty. But we never dreamed that Begin wouldn't at least initial it prior to Knesset approval. So the whole scenario of a major public event with the three principals initialing the treaty had been shot down, much to the dismay of the public relations people in the White House. So Carter was at least quite grumpy at this stage.

On Sunday morning, we went to President Navon's, we went to Yad Vashem, went to the Unknown Soldiers Tomb at the Knesset -- all the kinds of things that State visitors do. There was a church service at the Scottish Presbyterian church in Jerusalem. All that went well. The first formal working meeting was at 11:00 o'clock and lasted two and half hours. It was a disaster. Begin was at his most hyper-defiant, oratorical, preachy, dramatic -- repeating all the "nos" that he had given Carter the night before. He insisted that we stand by our "agreements" that we were supposed to have concluded during his last visit to Washington on joint U.S.-Israeli language on Article VI and the accompanying side notes to which he had gotten Cabinet approval. Another issue that had become important related to oil supplies which had become important during the treaty negotiations because the Israelis began to worry about guarantees for future oil supplies. They were surrendering their oil wells in the Gulf of Suez which they had exploited since their 1967 occupation. The Israelis wanted some guarantee that they would be able to buy their oil from Egypt or some other producer -- those were the days when the Arab states would not sell oil to Israel, except Iran which by now had become very unstable and unreliable. So the Israelis

were looking to the U.S. for the guaranteed supply if they couldn't buy it on the open market. So the working out of this arrangement became another sticking point. Begin was insisting at this time that Egypt guarantee in writing that it would sell Israel two and half million tons of oil per annum for five years, but the Egyptians were not willing to do so. There was no agreement on the language about Gaza and a lot of other issues.

Carter barely kept his cool at the meetings. Then there was a big working lunch downstairs that helped to thaw the atmosphere a little bit. That was followed by another working session and Carter stepped up the pressure. Begin sensed by this point that he had to respond somehow to Carter's insistence for faster action. We adjourned at three o'clock for an hour and a half during which each delegation held separate meetings. We stayed in the Prime Minister's Cabinet Room, which was probably bugged. Carter stretched out despondently over two chairs making some unguarded wise-cracks about Begin. We met again with the Israelis until 5:30. Begin was really worn out at this point. He suggested a halt. Carter had just completed a very tough summation of his position. One of the issues that was being discussed concerned Egypt's need for access to the people of Gaza through the establishment of a consulate or an open border or some means. Sadat was very interested in this. Carter told Begin that this contact was a matter of his own personal honor and of direct interest to the U.S. He obviously had promised it to Sadat. So we provided some appropriate language to be included in the treaty. Begin then agreed to call his full Cabinet into session after dinner to discuss this new proposal. Up to this time, we had been dealing with only seven Ministers -- the so-called Security-Defense Committee -- out of approximately twenty. As he was about to leave, Dayan agreed to remain behind to talk informally with Vance on further language refinements before the draft was to be submitted to the Cabinet. That helped a little to make the language a little more acceptable to the Cabinet.

After that, we changed clothes quickly at the hotel and went off to the Knesset for a beautiful, fancy State dinner in the big hall decorated by the magnificent Chagall tapestries hanging behind the rostrum. After dinner, Isaac Stern and Pinina Salzman played some duets. The toasts by Navon, Begin and Carter were very gracious. I got drowsy during dinner and napped during one of the toasts. It was about ten o'clock and I was tired. After the toasts, came the Inbal dance group to entertain, but fortunately their performance lasted only about seven minutes. Dinner ended about eleven o'clock. The whole Israeli Cabinet went back to the Prime Minister's office for a meeting. I slipped to Dayan as he was leaving some new improved text -- our latest draft -- which Vance had worked on in an office while dessert was being served at dinner. He then asked me to pass it to the Israelis, which I did.

The U.S. delegation sat around the hotel after dinner rather gloomily until about 2 a.m. Monday morning. Later, we found out that the Cabinet meeting had gone on until 5:30 a.m. We met for a working breakfast and learned of the Cabinet decision from Rosanne and Evron. There had been some progress, but not enough. Begin was expecting praise from Carter for what he had been able to accomplish, but he didn't give much. Carter kept pressing for new flexibility on the Gaza access issue and on oil supplies. Begin was tired and offended, but polite. He agreed to meet with

us after lunch for another attempt. Carter then said that he would leave for home that Monday afternoon; he couldn't stay any longer. He had talked to us about leaving even sooner; he was worn out with the negotiations about matters that he regarded essentially as very trivial. For weeks, he had thought that all the key issues had been solved and that Begin was really quibbling over small details that didn't make a bit of difference. That perception made Carter increasingly angry.

After breakfast, Carter went to a Knesset session which had been previously scheduled. Before delivering his speech, there was a singular incident. Geula Cohen, a formidable renegade member of Begin's own fighting family who had taken issue with the Prime Minister over Camp David and opposed the treaty, heckled Begin -- as was done all the time in the Knesset -- as he was introducing Carter. Carter of course wasn't sure who was being heckled and had to be reassured that it wasn't him. She was warned three times by the Speaker, but she kept yelling and screaming about how Begin was selling out Israel. She was finally expelled from the Knesset floor. Carter watched all this and then finally was allowed to deliver his speech -- passionate and very eloquent -- which had been drafted in part by our Political Counselor, Bob Blackwill. He had convinced Carter's speech writers to use a good deal of his text. Unfortunately, Carter had penned in one line that didn't help. As he looked directly at Begin, he said that the leaders of our nations had not lived up to the aspirations of their peoples. That didn't go over very well. But the speech overall was a fine speech, in part because the Embassy, and in particular Robert Blackwill, our Political Counselor and I, had such major involvement in its drafting. It was about the most eloquent statement about U.S.-Israel relationships that I have heard or that was ever delivered by an American President. It was well received except for that one line I mentioned earlier. Begin made a very poor impression; he was being heckled by a lot of people in addition to Cohen. The extreme left and the extreme right were very unhappy. Peres gave a very eloquent statement on behalf of the opposition with considerable emphasis on Palestinian rights which of course was not well received by Begin, but delighted Carter. During both Begin's and Peres' speeches, Carter got a good sense from the heckling, the rowdiness and the raucousness of how tough Begin's problems were in the Knesset. Afterwards, Carter asked whether the Knesset behavior wasn't deliberately staged for his benefit as evidence of Begin's political problems. I don't think it was staged at all and said so.

After the Knesset session, we had lunch with the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committees. In the meantime, the Cabinet was meeting to reconsider our latest draft. The lunch with the Knesset Committees was very good. Carter was excellent in rebutting the suspicions and arguments from the Israelis about Egyptian reliability. He had a strong impact on the Knesset members with respect to Sadat's problems on the oil issue, the U.S. commitment to Israel and the risks to all participants of failure of the peace process. Carter then went to take a nap; he was very tired. The departure plans were put on hold pending the completion of the Cabinet's deliberations. We met with Begin and eight other Cabinet members after the completion of their session to hear the results. From the first sentence of Begin's report, it was clear that we had pushed the Cabinet into

a kind of negative psychology -- they were tired, having been up all night and having had three meetings within 24 hours. Begin announced essentially that they had stuck to all the positions they had developed the previous night; they gave no ground. They were sick of being whittled away by Sadat's continuing demands that were made every time they had laboriously agreed to new American proposals. We tried to probe Israeli stand on other issues; Begin was not willing to go any further on any. So finally, around 7:00 p.m., we left the meeting with the Cabinet, very discouraged.

I learned later from some Cabinet members that the sentence that Carter had penned himself into his speech about "leaders not living up to the expectations of their people" had become one of the major reasons why the Cabinet had been so negative. Begin had taken such offense at that that he had used it to work up a lot of animosity. This is a good illustration of how very tired people can act and react.

In the meantime, while we were in session with Begin, Carter had completed his nap and decided to postpone his departure until noon the following day. He called Begin to thank him for all the efforts he had made and invited him and his wife to breakfast the following morning -- Tuesday. That pleased Begin a great deal. On Monday evening, some of us went out to dinner trying to forget how things were going. When we returned, I felt that the mood had changed. A group of seven Cabinet members led by Dayan and Weizman and including Sharon had gotten together after the Cabinet meeting and agreed that Carter shouldn't be allowed to leave under existing circumstances. I don't know whether Begin was aware of this informal meeting; I think the seven probably got together without Begin's knowledge. After the seven had met, there was a lot of scurrying around. Dayan talked to Begin by phone about a different approach on the oil guarantee issue which had festered continuously. Then Dayan and Evron went to see Vance, who felt immediately that the Israelis didn't want Carter to return home empty-handed. Vance told us that he began to smell that the pieces were beginning to fall into place. The U.S. delegation then went to work until the early hours of Tuesday morning on a new set of proposals to be used by Carter at his breakfast with Begin. These proposals were based on the Dayan-Vance conversations.

To everyone's pleasure, the Israeli position became more flexible at the breakfast. After a while, Carter and Begin asked Vance and Dayan to join them. Initially, Dayan was not very optimistic because he found out that Begin had changed his mind once again on the oil issue. The irascible Israeli Energy Minister, Moday, was pushing very hard and was very difficult to deal with. After they had been with their leaders for a while, Vance and Dayan met with Weizman and Harold Brown. We found out later that Weizman had threatened during the night to resign unless a treaty was concluded. He was very upset with Begin's tactics; they were just too risky for him. At 11:30, as we were entering the motorcade cars to go to the airport, I still wasn't sure what had happened in the previous hours. I had not gotten a full debriefing from the four persons meeting. I learned from Vance in the car that Begin had given Carter a little more on the formulations -- not a lot, but little -- but it was something. Carter had agreed to take it to Sadat to see if he could

sell it. Begin showed again that he was a very tenacious bargainer. At the airport ceremony, everyone looked very strained and concerned. Roy Atherton thought Sadat would accept the new formulations. Everyone else was very dubious. I told Dayan that the odds were three out of four that the new package would sell, but I wasn't sure that I really believed that. Begin's strategy was clear; he wanted to force Sadat to reveal his bottom line on all the outstanding issues and then, and only then, to ask the Cabinet to decide on those issues. Had this strategy failed, Carter would have been the big loser.

Carter knew that he could sell the new package to Sadat because he knew how much of a blank check he had received from Sadat. We, the rest of the U.S. delegation, didn't know it at the time so it appeared to be a risky strategy. In retrospect, it really wasn't. Furthermore, I have also found out subsequently from my Israeli friends that Begin clearly never had any intention of allowing Carter to return to Washington empty-handed. Once he had invited Carter to come to Jerusalem, he wasn't going to destroy him and the treaty. Begin was simply and purely bargaining; he was going through his usual, very tough, emotional, tenacious, legalistic, annoying bargaining tactics. Begin was a very tough and effective negotiator. He drove everybody crazy, but usually got 90% of his objectives. And that, after all, is the test.

Q: The last interview ended with the signing of the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel in March 1979, which was the culmination of an intensive 18 months of negotiations which started with the advent of the Carter administration. What happened next?

LEWIS: There was obviously a great deal of joy and enthusiasm at the ceremonies. As we all sat on the White House lawn watching Carter, Sadat and Begin signing the Peace Treaty on a beautiful, cool afternoon, I was struck at the time as highly significant -- and indeed it became more significant as years passed -- that during the ceremony there was a small group of protestors across Pennsylvania Avenue in Lafayette Park which held up signs and chanted: "PLO, PLO, PLO". Indeed many of the following years of my involvement with Israel increasingly focused on the problem of the PLO and Israel's refusal to have any contact with it, either directly or with any Palestinian who had any connection with the organization.

After the Treaty was signed, the next step in the process was to be the formal ratification, which under differing Constitutional systems, would be handled differently by each signatory. Since the U.S. was only a witness to the Treaty, we did not have to send to the Senate, but in Israel, ratification is formally provided by the Cabinet, rather than by the Knesset. Nevertheless, because of the importance of the Treaty, Begin did send it to the Knesset for approval. The debate was spirited but approval was a foregone conclusion since the Labor Party joined most of the Likud in supporting it. Then the Cabinet ratified it. There was a good deal of euphoria in Israel, although it was somewhat reduced by the difficult preceding months which followed Camp David and which were devoted to negotiations of the detail chapters of the Treaty. That took some of the bloom off the rose, but still there existed in Israel a great hope for the future.

There was also an expectation that once Egypt had made peace with Israel, then other Arab states would surely follow one by one.

Q: Was this classic nit-picking?

LEWIS: It was classic and of course it was nit-picking, but the footnote effected a phrase that contained a great deal of substance to Begin. Our legal advisor, Herb Hansell, who had been instrumental in the formulation of the final documents, in working with the other two legal advisors, recognized that there was a problem. I believe that it was related to something that had happened at the signing of the Treaty itself, when for about two hours just before the signing ceremony the delegations discussed a footnote. It was finally only resolved by Carter shortly before the signing of the Treaty took place. It was a question of how one identified such words as "Palestinians" in English or in Hebrew or in Arabic or whether the Gulf of Aqaba was called the "Gulf of Elat" or the "Gulf of Aqaba" -- these were the sorts of issues that caused last minute flurries. There were not many footnotes; the one I discussed might have been the only one that was relevant in the instruments of ratification.

When we finally got Begin's agreement, the ceremony proceeded about three hours late. But by that time the sun was setting and it sets pretty fast in the Sinai. We were on a rocky promontory with a strong wind blowing. It was a beautiful, barren and rugged country side, but it was getting chilly. The flags of the three countries were flying over a rostrum; the press was arrayed below with the TV and still cameras ready. You of course can't have a ceremony without speeches. There was an Israeli speech; there was an Egyptian speech; and then there were two American speeches, since there were two of us. The U.S. delegation consisted of two or three of my staff, two or three from Hermann's staff and several people from Washington, but we were fewer in numbers than the Israelis or Egyptians -- there must have been fifty or sixty officials in addition to a couple of hundred media representatives. I wear contact lenses; when I rose to give my remarks which I intended to read off some cards on which I had written quite carefully -- this being a very historical occasion -- I was looking right into the sun and facing a rather stiff wind. Just as I stood up, a grain of sand lodged behind one of my contact lenses, which as all contact lens wearers know, can be one of the most excruciating experiences that one can suffer. My eyes began to tear and I could hardly stand the pain. I couldn't see the cards because of the tearing. Somehow I stumbled through it, but I will always remember that experience as being one of my most excruciating ones of my life. It had of course to happen on such a memorable day. It was very ironic.

As I mentioned earlier, the hang-up of the previous six months was in great part caused by something called the "joint letter". This was a letter to President Carter that ultimately Begin and Sadat jointly signed -- it had been carefully negotiated -- in which they described their intention to enter into the negotiations on the autonomy arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza immediately after the signing of the Peace Treaty. That was a part of the Camp David agreement that dealt with the Palestinian issue -- it was of great, great significance to Sadat. This letter had

been fought over endlessly. The Egyptians wanted very much to have a strong linkage between the Peace Treaty and their withdrawal from the Sinai on the one hand and the autonomy arrangements for the Palestinians on the other. This would have permitted the Egyptians to argue that they had not sacrificed the Palestinian cause for return of the Sinai and that they had been able to achieve a temporary autonomy on the way to a final negotiation on the status of the West bank and Gaza. The Israelis had resisted such linkage for a long time. The final letter provided for a kind of provisional linkage. The Egyptians wanted a date certain for the conclusion of the negotiations so that the Israelis couldn't string them out indefinitely and never get around to providing autonomy for the Palestinians. The Israelis didn't want a deadline; they preferred an open ended negotiation. Eventually we ended up with a one year "target" date, which was not a deadline but a target. This was something, incidentally, that Cy Vance had very much advised the Israelis and the Egyptians against, having had some bad experiences with such "targets:" in other negotiations. Nevertheless, they agreed to this "target" date and to a commitment to start the negotiations within a month after the exchange of the instruments of ratification. So the autonomy talks were due to begin in late May, 1979.

Vance, who by this time had spent the first sixteen or seventeen months of the Carter administration in the Middle East negotiations -- sometimes fully engaged for weeks on end in his role as mediator -- had concluded that it was just impossible for him to continue to be the chief U.S. mediator in the autonomy negotiations. Too many other foreign policy issues in other regions were not being properly attended. By mid-1979, the Shah had been forced out of office and our whole position in the Persian Gulf was being substantially eroded; then there was China, USSR -- which was beginning to be difficult again -- and many others. It was becoming clear to Carter and Vance that the Secretary just had to step back and let someone else carry the ball. That was the origin of the idea of appointing a special Presidential representative as the U.S. intermediary for the autonomy talks. It was clear to everyone, based on our experiences in the Peace Treaty negotiations, that the U.S. would have to be an active player. We would have to have a delegation on site; we would have to keep prodding, pushing and brokering. A number of names were considered including Robert Strauss, who had just concluded successfully a very important trade agreement during one of the multilateral trade negotiations which had been quite a *tour de force*, particularly since he managed to get the package approved by Congress with almost no dissent. He had won the President's admiration as a skillful negotiator; he was also an important political figure in the Democratic Party. So Strauss was chosen as the U.S. representative. In private, Vance was very much opposed to Strauss' appointment; he didn't think that Strauss had the right temperament or background on the issues. Strauss had never really had any involvement in the Middle East, although he was known as a very skillful Texan style horse-trading negotiator with very sophisticated political skills. Despite Vance's skepticism, Strauss was appointed as a representative of the President, not of the Secretary, or of the Department of State. This caused some difficulties in the Department because Strauss was quite independent, formed his own staff and viewed himself as reporting to the President directly and in a collegial way, consulting with the Secretary. The staff was very small, consisting primarily of a couple of

young lawyers from his law firm in Washington. Vance insisted on -- he and I discussed this at considerable length -- giving Strauss some professional, experienced staff to support him. We agreed on and Vance was successful in recruiting Ambassador James Leonard, who was then the President of the United Nations Association, after his retirement from the government. Vance had been active in the association and knew Leonard well. In his earlier incarnations, Jim Leonard had been a senior official in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and had been involved in several international negotiations, particularly on arms control. He had had some Middle East experience, not of recent vintage however. He was a very able professional. He was persuaded to return to government and serve as Strauss' deputy with the rank of Ambassador. During the remainder of the Carter administration, Leonard played an important role. He and his wife essentially resided in the region -- in Israel most of the time, but sometime in Cairo as well. He worked out of our Embassies, while Strauss remained in Washington, as did Sol Linowitz, who succeeded Strauss later. Both of them played their roles as Presidential envoys from Washington; they had offices in the State Department; their staffs were there. They would travel to the Middle East for the negotiating rounds and then return to Washington. In between, Leonard would shuttle between Cairo and Jerusalem and tried to push the process along. It became a pretty good team operation. There were two or three other State Department employees attached to the delegation; they were stationed in the region. One officer from the Political Section of our Embassy in Cairo and one officer from the Political Section in Tel Aviv were part of the Strauss-Leonard team. That allowed the two Embassies to play a significant role as well. Both Eilts and I were deeply involved particularly when meetings were taking place in our countries. The meeting place for the negotiations alternated between Egypt and Israel; if they were in Egypt, a member of my Tel Aviv staff would attend and vice-versa. This insured that the perspective of our Embassy and Israel would be available to and understood by Strauss and Leonard.

Q: Bonhomie was not a good basis for relationship with Begin ever, was it?

LEWIS: No. The Texan approach to creating rapport didn't work very well with Begin. I did think that Strauss would also have problems in Cairo, but I have been told long after the fact by Ambassador Eilts and others who were in a position to observe that Strauss got along quite well with Sadat. He was probably more effective with the Egyptians than he was with the Israelis. The round of negotiations began one month after the exchange of the articles of ratification when a meeting was held in Beersheba. We had agreed that the autonomy negotiations would start in Beersheba in the presence of Secretary Vance, Begin and Sadat. This was the occasion of the first Begin visit to Egyptian occupied Sinai and the first occasion for Sadat to visit Israel after the famous trip to Jerusalem. It was quite an event and the two sides arranged it well, operating through their liaison people in both capitals and the hot line between the two Defense Ministers which had been established sometime earlier between Weizman and Gamasy. It was agreed that the initial meeting between Begin and Sadat would take place at El'Arish in the Sinai and that from there the opening session of the autonomy talks would take place at Beersheba. Vance and

Strauss, Dayan from Israel and Boutros Ghali from Egypt would head up the negotiating delegations. I flew with the Israelis to El'Arish in a very uncomfortable Israeli Air Force transport -- it had long wooden planks running along the sides of the plane with small windows - nothing fancy for the Prime Minister and most of his Cabinet. We landed in El'Arish and met the Egyptian party. Vance was also there.

A special event had been arranged ahead of time which was truly moving. It had been Begin's idea. He had suggested it to Sadat, who agreed. First there was a reception in the morning during which Egyptian officials, both civilian and military, mingled with Israeli officials and members of the American delegation. Then Begin and Sadat, accompanied by a few senior officials, and a few members of the American delegation -- I think Vance was there, although he may have gone directly to Beersheba -- went to another building on this military base. There, we found some food buffet style. It was not very fancy. We were met by approximately 150 disabled war veterans, both Egyptian and Israelis, who had been victimized by the various wars between the two countries. There were people in wheel chairs; there were people without arms or legs; there were the blind. They had been brought together for a reconciliation meeting to mark the beginning of an era of new relationships between the two countries. Begin and Sadat circulated among the group and asked about where they had fought and been maimed. It was very, very moving and made a deep impression on everybody there. It was the kind of event that was very important to Begin, particularly. It showed the human tragedy of the a war. Sadat was also very moved.

After that ceremony, we all were taken to two planes to be flown to Beersheba and that was fascinating. The senior Egyptians and the senior Israelis and I were in one plane. There could have been one or two other Americans on the same plane, but I am not clear on that. The more junior Egyptians and Israelis were in the second plane. The plane I was in, which also had Sadat and Begin on board, was the same uncomfortable military transport which had brought us to El'Arish. Begin and Sadat were sitting next to each other in the forward area. Dayan was sitting with Boutros Ghali somewhere in the middle; Weizman and General Gamasy were sitting next to each other. There was a lot of joshing going on. At one point, Begin, who was very fastidious about his appearance, looked at his black shoes, which were always very formal, which had gotten sandy and dust covered. He took out his handkerchief, put one foot on top of the other and polished his shoes. He then turned to Sadat and asked him whether he would like to use the handkerchief to polish his shoes. Sadat very graciously declined. Then Dayan went to Begin and took the handkerchief and cleaned his own shoes. He then took that handkerchief and went down the plane and cleaned two or three other people's shoes. It was a most unusual gesture for Moshe. It was all done in a kind of jocular fashion to symbolize, I guess, the new era. It made quite a picture.

We landed in Beersheba about thirty minutes later and went to the University, where the formal meetings were to be held. Before the formal session started, an event was staged outside the building. The Egyptian and Israeli flags flew together and lot of speeches were made. There were

a number of Sadat's associates who had never been to Israel. I remember especially one who had sat next to me -- Mr. Osman Osman, an Egyptian contractor, who had built half of the buildings in Cairo and was a great pal of Sadat's. He commented about the very modest nature of Beersheba, which is a nice, but not fancy city. There was a lot of talk about how the experiences and talents of the two people could be combined; lots of ideas were being kicked around such as bringing the waters of the Nile to the Negev and the joint construction of nuclear power plants in the Sinai which would serve both countries and the development of a chemical industry based on the natural gas in the fields of the Gulf of Suez which would serve the needs of both Israeli and Egyptian industries. None of these ideas have ever come to fruition, but in those days there was a lot of hope that there would be cooperation between the two countries which would produce such joint economic projects.

The negotiations started ceremoniously with various people making speeches. They agreed on the date for the next meeting and then everybody went home. The Egyptians flew back to Cairo and we returned to Israel. Vance came back to Jerusalem for some additional discussions. During the period prior to the beginning of the autonomy talks, the die had been cast in many ways. Events took place which led to the ultimate failure. On the Israeli side, the problems were Begin and Dayan. Dayan, who was indispensable to Begin, was a proud man who chafed under the short leash that Begin had him on, but in the prolonged period leading up to the peace treaty had lost Begin's confidence. Begin was convinced that Dayan was prepared to accommodate the Egyptians to a much greater extent on a number of issues that he, Begin, was willing to do. Therefore, the Prime Minister was no longer willing to let Dayan act as chief negotiator without constraints from other ministers. Dayan of course assumed that he would continue in that role since he was still the Foreign Minister. But he discovered, shortly after the Peace Treaty was signed, that Begin did not intend to allow him much freedom as chief negotiator, but preferred to have a Cabinet committee of six Ministers including Ariel Sharon as the negotiating team. Dayan then recognized that his chances of succeeding in the autonomy negotiations, under constraints of a Cabinet committee consisting primarily of conservative Ministers, would be pretty slim. He didn't want any part of such a process. He initially told Begin to appoint another chief negotiator. Begin named Dr. Yosef Burg, who was then the Minister of Interior and who had for many years represented the national religious party in the Cabinet. Burg had not had any real foreign policy experience, though he had traveled widely all over the world among Jewish circles. He was a very distinguished Orthodox Jewish scholar -- he was funny, erudite and a conciliator by instinct -- not a leader. But the idea that Dayan, the Foreign Minister, would sit on a Committee headed by Yosef Burg which would steer the Israeli position on the autonomy talks, boggled the mind. It could never have worked. Formally, as long as he remained Foreign Minister, Dayan had to be part of the Committee and after a good deal of foot-dragging, he allowed his staff to participate in the Committee's staff work. In fact, however, I am convinced now in retrospect that Dayan had already decided to leave the Cabinet. He believed that Begin was already regretting some of the concessions he made in the Peace Treaty, particularly on the definition of "autonomy" in the Camp David Accords. Begin was determined to retreat from the agreed phraseology in some

manner during the course of the actual autonomy negotiations. He wanted to maintain a tighter Israeli control over the territories than might have been understood in the Accords. Dayan did not believe that this was an appropriate course and didn't want anything to do with it. In the Fall of 1979, Dayan resigned from the Cabinet and broke formally with Begin at that point. He went into political exile for a while, became quite ill; then he tried to form his own political party and ran in 1981 as the leader of a small splinter party for the first time in his life. He only got two seats in the Cabinet and died soon thereafter.

The fact that Dayan took himself out of the game after seeing the hand-writing on the wall meant that Begin was going to keep personally very tight control over the negotiations. He would work through Dr. Burg and his Committee, but he would be in control. All the Committee members would sit on the negotiating sessions -- six Israeli Ministers appeared at these meetings, which on the face of it was not a very efficient method of operation. On the Egyptian side, the die had been cast by the fact that after Camp David, despite the efforts that I described earlier, we had been unable to get the Jordanians or Palestinians from the territories to agree to take part in the post-Camp David process -- i.e. the autonomy negotiations. The Egyptians therefore were left in the position of having to represent the Palestinian interests in these negotiations. Sadat had once said grandly that there was no problem if the Palestinians were not involved; he would represent the Palestinian cause and defend their interest most adequately. The formula was unworkable. The Egyptian delegation knew very little about what really was happening in the occupied territories; they had had no representation in Gaza since 1967; they had very limited knowledge of how those territories had changed from that time. They knew little about the inter-mingling of the economies of Israel and the occupied territories; they knew little about the water problems; they knew little about security problems. They did not have an adequate grasp of the situation. Moreover, even after they began to visit the territories during the negotiating missions -- they tried to familiarize themselves about what the land and people they were negotiating about -- they felt totally constrained since there were no Palestinians with them. They were deathly afraid of being attacked by the PLO or by other Arab States for selling out Palestinian interests. The Egyptians therefore were in not in a position to bargain or to make any compromises. They could only take rhetorical positions on issues -- positions of principle which could be defended to the Arab audiences. In the period after Camp David and particularly after the signing of the Peace Treaty, it must be remembered that Egypt was being ostracized by the Arab world. In fact, after Camp David, they were partially ostracized, but no one broke diplomatic relations with them. The Saudis and others hoped against hope that the Egyptians would not proceed with the Peace Treaty, but when that was signed, there was a summit convened in Baghdad. The Iraqis put on a great deal of pressure. In fact, throughout the period the Syrians, the Iraqis and the PLO...

Q: The question that came to mind is, Arafat and other PLO factions, were they sideswiping Sadat or were they....?

LEWIS: Yes. Throughout this period, particularly after the treaty was signed, there was a full-court press by Syria, the PLO and Iraqis, in particular the Iraqis, to attack Sadat. The Iraqis

hosted this Baghdad meeting at which Arab League's decision to ostracize Egypt was agreed. It was a summit that was very tumultuous; the Saudis were still hanging back about severing all ties with Egypt, and we learned later that Iraq's Saddam Hussein, in particular, put some very brutal threats and pressures on the Saudis to force them to go along, including crude personal threats to Prince Fahd himself.

Q: Sam, I believe you wanted now to add some inserts into previous discussions. Where would you like to start?

LEWIS: I would like to start with interview 8, dated April 30, 1991. During that interview, I dealt with the period right after the signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979. I want now to complete that period through the end of the Carter administration -- end of 1980.

This was a period that began with a lot of hope in light of the signing of the peace treaty. There was hope that in a very few months we could complete the negotiations on the second part of Camp David -- the autonomy agreement. That would have completed the whole Camp David framework. That aspiration ultimately came to naught. I mentioned earlier the role that Bob Strauss played as the first U.S. Special Representative. He in fact took over from Secretary Vance. I suggested that Strauss was not very well suited for the role. He came to the same conclusion himself soon after taking the job -- after one or two rounds of negotiations. So he spent most of the summer of 1979 maneuvering to get himself out of the job. By early Fall, he had succeeded and was replaced by Sol Linowitz. Sol carried the negotiations through the rest of 1979 and 1980. Sol was a much better choice for the job. We all believed that although the odds were very much against reaching agreement, had Linowitz been appointed first and had he been able to carry the negotiations from the beginning, there might have been a chance that we might have achieved success in the autonomy talks. As I said, we recognized that the odds of success were slim because the Egyptians were hamstrung because they had no support from the Palestinians or the Jordanians; they could not afford the risk of making any concessions on matters of primary interest to another party. They would have been severely criticized in the Arab world if they had been perceived as giving away any Palestinian rights. It is quite likely that Linowitz would not have achieved success, but he had a better crack at it than Strauss.

Early on, Sol established a highly professional negotiating style with both Sadat and Begin. He managed to win their confidence. He worked hard; he used his staff extremely well. He was determined to achieve success and as I said, he might have done so had he been in on the process from the beginning. One of the problems he faced was that we had agreed, albeit reluctantly, to place a deadline in the famous joint letter that Sadat and Begin ultimately sent to Carter. The target for negotiations was one year. I should note that the Egyptians had initially been the party that had insisted on a deadline and that it be tied closely to the peace treaty. The Israelis also wanted a deadline, but for different reasons. Cy Vance tried to talk them out of it. His

experiences as a negotiator had led him to the conclusion that deadlines were usually counter-productive. The Israelis wouldn't agree to a tight deadline, but did agree to a "target" date; they wanted to be sure that the completion of the peace treaty was not dependent on reaching agreement on the Palestinian issue. There was a connection, but it was very loose -- much less than the Egyptians wanted.

It became apparent soon after the beginning of the negotiations that such a deadline was self-defeating. In the first place, both sides became quite wary about moving too rapidly. They both felt that they had lots of time. We had very little luck in encouraging them to move faster. We were always worried that unforeseen events -- like eruptions in Lebanon which had occurred often -- could derail the whole process. So we were anxious for an early agreement. But we were unable to convince the Israelis and the Egyptians. Maybe we didn't try hard enough although we discussed the issue of pace often enough.

The first few months of the negotiations went very slowly. As we approached the "target" date, we ran into another effect which also slowed any potential progress. Particularly the Israelis, but also the Egyptians, became very nervous about making decisions under the pressure of an impending deadline. They feared of course making the wrong decisions under time pressures. So in the Spring, 1980, there came to be a tacit understanding between the two parties to essentially ignore the "target" date. During the Summer, 1979, as the negotiations struggled to begin, Dayan bowed out of the process. He had a cancer operation, which put him out of action, although never relinquishing his position as Foreign Minister. He resigned in early fall. Dr. Burg headed the Israeli team, with great caution, deference and care. Begin was actually pulling the strings. He had become convinced that he had given away more at Camp David concerning, the Palestinians, the West Bank and Gaza, than he had intended. So he was determined to enforce the strictest and narrowest interpretation of the autonomy concept. That made it even more unlikely that an agreement could be reached.

In the meantime, on an intermittent basis, the administration had been conducting very quiet, surreptitious probings of the PLO views through unofficial and clandestine representatives. CIA was involved in some of them. There were also some American private citizens who were carrying messages back and forth. These contacts were often probes intended to clarify the limits of PLO acceptance of certain formulations. Hal Saunders, who was then the Assistant Secretary for NEA, was an important player. He did not have any personal contacts with the PLO, but knew what was going on; he was the principal expert in the U.S. government about PLO attitudes.

One of these contacts became known early August, 1979. That was the one that involved Andy Young, then our Ambassador to the UN. He had attended a social gathering in July, which was also "unexpectedly" attended by a PLO official. The two of them held a conversation, much to the displeasure of Vance and Carter. There was in existence at the time a prohibition against any U.S. government official having contact with any PLO representative, even though there had

been some clandestine contacts. This meeting finally forced Young to resign, primarily because Vance was so angry. When the meeting became public -- after the Israelis heard about it and publicized it -- Young was asked about it. He gave an inaccurate version of events; he essentially denied that such a meeting had taken place and later had to explain the meeting and his first version of events. Vance became furious and made an issue, not so much about the meeting, but of Young's not leveling with him initially. I think Vance insisted to the President that Young be relieved of his duties. Young was very close to Carter, who was very happy that Young had taken the Ambassador's job. Vance's insistence must have created considerable friction between himself and the President. In any case, Young resigned in the middle of August. It was clear that the contact he had made with the PLO was on his own initiative. It was the subsequent attempt at "cover-up that made Vance angry.

The questions of contacts with the PLO kept being repeated throughout the Carter administration. There was some indirect relationship involving Vance, the Saudis and the PLO in 1977. Whenever the Israelis -- and Begin in particular -- suspected any U.S. relationships with the PLO, they would generate a flurry of press leaks and attacks. That put Carter always on the defensive, having to deny any such occurrences. He was very unhappy about this situation, as many of us were. It forced us back to a strict interpretation of "PLO contacts" commitment that Carter had promulgated early in his administration. The original commitment on this subject had been made by Kissinger to the Israelis in writing in connection with the second Israel-Egypt disengagement agreement of 1975. That agreement included a provision that the U.S. would have no negotiations with the PLO. At the time, that was not interpreted as preventing the U.S. from talking to the PLO, but Carter, upon taking office, had publicly interpreted the limitation to be much more severe. That, in the minds of many U.S. officials, became self-defeating; it would have been helpful to have at least the possibility of having conversations with the PLO.

But the PLO issue kept raising its head. It came up again later that year -- November, I think -- when Brzezinski, while in Algiers, accidentally met Arafat at a large diplomatic reception. They shook hands and a photograph was taken. It was barely a contact, but it set off a huge flurry of Israeli news reports and speculation that put Carter on the defensive again. Losing Andy Young over this issue embittered Carter. It was one of the issues that beginning in 1979 and spilling over into 1980 soured Carter's views of the Israelis and Begin particularly.

Our main contacts with the PLO were taking place in Beirut, through the CIA station there. There were also people in New York, working for non-profit organizations, who had very good contacts with the Palestinians. They also played a diplomatic role which was useful, but would have been disavowed had they become public.

By early Fall of 1979, the autonomy negotiations were essentially stalled. Jewish settlements were continuing to be developed on the West Bank and Gaza, giving rise to our continuing concern which had started almost immediately after Camp David, where the issue had never been resolved. There were also troubles in Lebanon and along the Israel-Lebanon border. That

forced Strauss, in his trips to the area, to discuss Lebanon as well as the autonomy negotiations. An interesting dinner was held at the Israeli Embassy on September 18 in honor of Ezer Weizman, the Israeli Defense Minister, who was in Washington at the time. He was there to discuss co-production issues, especially opportunities to co-produce fighter aircraft in Israel. He also was in Washington to discuss other weapon acquisitions. Hal Saunders attended the dinner and was attacked by Weizman publicly in front of a number of journalists -- that was his modus operandi -- on the issue of Israel's bombing of Lebanon and the U.S.'s reaction. That was only one example of the increasing number of arguments that we were having with Israel about its conduct in the post-treaty period. We had anticipated a much smoother relationship after Camp David.

In October, Strauss stated that he was not at all certain that the autonomy negotiations could be completed by the following May, as had been planned. Shortly thereafter, Dayan resigned. Linowitz became the chief U.S. negotiator in November-December, 1979. That meant that for about six months the negotiations had really stalled. So when Linowitz started his work, he only had about five months left before the target date was to be reached. That is why I say that he really had his hands tied behind him when he took the assignment. Linowitz became very active in December; he held meetings all around the region. In Israel, he saw Begin and other Cabinet officials. He brought a lot of fresh ideas and energy with him. So there was a brief period of a couple of months when there was a spurt of hope that the negotiations might be successful. Linowitz was assisted primarily by two people: Ned Walker -- a very able young career officer, now our Ambassador in Cairo -- and a young lawyer, Andy Marks, from his law firm. Both were extremely able. In addition, he relied heavily on Jim Leonard, who was his deputy, on the staff left over from the Strauss days and on our two Ambassadors to Egypt and Israel and their staffs. He also worked closely with NEA. He fit very well into the bureaucratic framework. Having negotiated the Panama Canal treaty, Linowitz was very familiar with the Washington scene and how to navigate successfully between the White House and the State Department. He used his close connections with Carter very effectively, but he worked closely and well with Vance. The Secretary never felt threatened by Linowitz as he had by Strauss.

Despite Linowitz' infusion of new ideas and energy, time passed rapidly without any discernable movement. Many other events were taking place in other parts of the world -- the USSR was becoming a threat in Afghanistan, Iran was tottering and the Iranian "student" take-over of our Embassy triggered the hostage crisis which ran on throughout the rest of Carter's term. So Carter was preoccupied with many other issues. The urgency had in fact gone out of the autonomy negotiations, as far as the U.S. administration was concerned. Periodically, the Israelis would take some actions which would upset Carter -- new settlements, some Begin dyspeptic comments. Linowitz was working very hard trying to make progress, but he did not have the energetic support that Carter had given prior peace accord efforts. By Spring of 1980, the Iran hostage crisis became the critical issue and caused Vance's resignation.

We were rapidly approaching the May 26 target date. In early 1980, we were beginning to acknowledge that there was no chance of an agreement. Carter had finally agreed, after considerable discussion, that there was no alternative except to slog ahead, trying to get around the target date as best we could. An effort was being made in the Security Council, led by the Europeans, to amend UN Resolution 242. The question for us was whether we would veto that effort. That issue generated considerable argument within the administration. The President finally decided that we would veto any effort to amend 242 at Begin's insistence, although by this time, Carter had become very disenchanted with Begin. The latter had gone to Washington in mid-April; I went with him, as I normally did. That visit turned out to be a stand-off. Begin tabled four principles that had to be met if the autonomy talks were to proceed. Carter tried, against my advice, to finesse the whole issue; he wanted Linowitz to discuss these matters with Begin, although the principles were not to be confronted, but rather skirted. That enabled Begin to return to Jerusalem thinking that Carter had accepted his preconditions to further negotiations. Carter did get Begin's commitment to "continuous intensive negotiations over the next forty days" to try to narrow the existing differences on the autonomy agreement by May 26. That commitment fell by the wayside as soon as the Israeli party returned. There were about four or five days of negotiations, but when Begin's four preconditions became known to the Egyptians, they were furious. The talks began to disintegrate. Begin then withdrew them as preconditions, but they remained as principles. This was another illustration of Begin's very annoying, but brilliant negotiating tactics. He would make a major issue of a procedural point -- e.g., a "precondition" -- ; he would grudgingly retreat from the procedural point, but essentially not change the substantive nature of his approach. He would therefore, while taking credit for making a concession, not change his substantive position one iota. He used this ploy repeatedly and we were never able to cope with it diplomatically. Finally, the Israelis became serious during the discussions in Herzliyya at the end of April about one issue that had been Begin's fourth principle. That question concerned how Israeli security would be treated in the autonomy regime. Begin insisted that Israel had to have full responsibility for both external and internal security. Agreement was finally reached that there would be two ministerial level discussions, which turned out to be very explosive, largely as result of a massacre of a group of Yeshiva students that had just taken place in Hebron. There was a major uproar, as you can well imagine, in Israel. General Hassan Ali, who was leading the Egyptian delegation, chose the day of the funeral for the massacre victims to table the Egyptian plan. Weizman, Abrasha Tamir, Burg, Sharon and the rest of the Israeli delegation were amazed and dismayed by this poor timing. Weizman, as Minister of Defense, the chairman of the Israeli team, was statesmanlike and careful, but the Egyptians had presented their security formulation at the worst possible time. That episode was another illustration of how some discussions that might have looked even slightly promising immediately atrophied because of outside factors, the "devil in the details", and lack of cultural empathy between Israelis and Egyptians.

The negotiating parties were preparing for another meeting when Sadat canceled it. That, among other things, led Sol Linowitz to send some very discouraging reports to Washington. Carter and

Muskie, now the Secretary of State after Vance's resignation, decided to have a full review of the Arab-Israeli negotiations. I got a call on May 9 requesting me to return to Washington as soon as possible. Roy Atherton in Cairo received a similar call. On Sunday afternoon, I met with Hal Saunders, Mike Sterner -- his deputy for the negotiations -- David Korn -- the Director of the Office for Israel Affairs -- Roy Atherton, Linowitz and others. We reviewed a paper that had been drafted in NEA which was going to be discussed with the President on the following morning. The paper postulated essentially two options: a) try to overlook the target date and find some means to keep the negotiations going or; b) try to bring the negotiations to a head, forcing an agreement in the very near future. All of us believed that the second option was a non-starter. We all preferred option (a), but we believed that Carter really preferred option (b). That forced us to consider various formulations for implementing option (b).

On the Monday morning, we met for breakfast at 7:00 a.m. with Muskie and others. We then went to the White House and met in the Cabinet Room with the President, Mondale, Brzezinski, Jordan and Bob Hunter of the NSC staff. Muskie asked Roy and me to state our views on the options, in light of the potential reactions in Egypt and Israel. I made a flat prediction that we would be dealing with the Begin government for at least the rest of 1980, though Peres and Weizman had been trying to bring the government down and to force new elections. I said that any efforts that we might make to force an immediate agreement had absolutely no chance for success because Begin was not about to make the necessary concessions. U.S. pressure would probably strengthen Begin's political support. Atherton reported that Sadat was not interested in a show-down at the time; he wanted to continue the process in a deliberate way, awaiting a possible change of government in Israel. Muskie endorsed our analyses and took the position that option (a) was the only feasible approach. Carter was very unhappy; he wanted to try to force an agreement. Carter was concerned by a comment that Brzezinski had made, which was that we had to find some way to explain to the American public and the Europeans. Some one -- either Mondale or Muskie -- would have to give a speech explaining our position. It was clear that Muskie intended to give the speech. Muskie was very much in charge and I was very impressed with the command that the Secretary had of the situation, even though he had been in office only a month. He was quietly, but firmly, asserting his authority. He put Brzezinski back in his place on a couple of occasions when the National Security Advisor seemed to get off the track. I liked the way Muskie listened and asked the right questions; he came to sensible judgements. He was very self-confident in a very quiet and effective way with the President, which also was impressive.

This entire period was sheer torture for Carter. The hostage crisis worsened right after the deplorable Begin visit to Washington. Then came Vance's resignation over the hostage rescue mission. Muskie's selection was a brilliant choice which reestablished some confidence in the country in our foreign policy. I think that had Carter been re-elected, Muskie would have continued as Secretary and would have shaken up the Department. He was an excellent Secretary for the brief period he was in office and had he been given a chance, I think he would have been

a very successful one over a longer period. I don't think he has received much historical credit for his stewardship, but he steadied the President and the administration in a very rough period.

I and my State Department colleagues had been very troubled that in the wake of Vance's resignation, Carter had made a few gratuitous remarks about Vance in public which were not called for. That was very petty, which reflected a negative side of Carter that was not pleasant. Those of us who knew Vance to be an extraordinarily able, hard-working, loyal, dedicated Secretary were upset by Carter's comments. Cy characteristically did not respond, but I think they really hurt him.

Eventually, the President made the right choice on the U.S. position on the autonomy talks. He endorsed a tactic that I had urged, which was to make clear to the Europeans that we would oppose any efforts to modify UN Resolution 242 as long as negotiations were still on-going. Any veto of an amended 242 at this time would have had grave consequences in the Arab world. Any change in the UN status quo would have derailed all of our efforts, both in the Arab world and in Israel. So keeping 242 as it was was very important if any progress was to be made in the negotiations. Carter finally agreed with that position, although by this time he was completely skeptical of any progress being made on autonomy talks. He was convinced that Begin was hopeless and no agreement acceptable to us or the Egyptians would ever be developed as long as Begin was in power. On the other hand, Carter's domestic political situation, which he understood well, prevented him from confronting Begin. So grudgingly, he agreed with us to just keep matters afloat; he left the Cabinet Room after the meeting very unhappy.=

I made some notes during this meeting about Carter. He looked terribly old and tired. That was of course understandable in light of the events of the previous two weeks. At one point, we discussed the oft postponed visit of King Hussein to Washington. The King had been invited several times; he had accepted and then at the last minute, he regretted. So by this time Carter was pretty well fed up with the King. The darker side of Carter's personality came to the fore during a "stream of consciousness" diatribe during which he characterized Hussein as a three time back-stabber, a prostitute who took money from everybody, a worthless individual, etc. Everyone else around the table tried to make the point that Hussein remained very influential with the Palestinians; regardless of whether one liked the King, he had to be dealt with. Hussein was obviously distancing himself from the Camp David Accords, as the Jordanian and Arab politics dictated. Finally, Carter, after much muttering, agreed to allow Phil Habib, who happened to be in Amman at that moment, to probe whether His Majesty would entertain another invitation to Washington. Carter was reluctant to invite him again, fearing another last minute embarrassment if Hussein again did not show. Carter could not see the world through Hussein's eyes; he did not understand why it would be awkward for Hussein to come to Washington immediately following Begin and Sadat, under circumstances then existing. Hussein saw such a visit as just too politically dangerous. That meeting did not show Carter's best side.

Just before I left Washington to return to Tel Aviv, I had lunch with Sol Linowitz, who unburdened himself about Warren Christopher's ambivalence about remaining as Deputy Secretary -- after Carter had publicly chastised Vance. Muskie wanted Christopher to remain, but Carter's comments had shaken Christopher. So he was undecided, but ultimately stayed on. At that lunch, we also discussed what Muskie might do as the Department's senior manager. We agreed that he would probably make a lot of changes if he were still Secretary after the Presidential elections. We discussed some of the personnel changes that Muskie might make.

I had barely returned after the Washington review and the Presidential decisions to move along when Sadat pulled one of his classic double maneuvers. Carter had telephoned him after our policy review and was able to convince Sadat to say publicly that he was willing to continue negotiations, even after the target date of May 26. The day after making that statement, Sadat announced that he was so shocked by an action taken by the Israeli Knesset concerning Jerusalem that he had decided to suspend negotiations. In fact, Sadat overreacted to an erroneous press report from Israel which suggested that the Begin government had just passed a new law affirming that Jerusalem was Israel's capital. The ultimate outcome of this story became very destructive to the negotiations and other factors in the U.S.-Israel relationships.

The story went something like this. Ms. Geula Cohen, an old Begin side-kick now opposing his government, was very much opposed to the peace treaty and had voted against it in the Knesset when Begin submitted it for ratification, thereby breaking with her friend. She was always thereafter trying to find some way to sabotage the autonomy negotiations. She submitted a "private member" bill which asserted that Jerusalem, in its post 1967 boundaries, was Israel's sole and sovereign capital. That bill was totally unnecessary because in fact that claim had already been staked out in 1950. But she took this route to provoke her enemies. Both the Likud and the Labor leaders in Knesset tried to get her to withdraw her bill. She resisted. A "private member" bill has to be sent to a committee of the Knesset to be reviewed and judged. When the question of referring her bill to a committee arose, everyone had to vote in favor because no member of the Knesset, even Labor parliamentarians, could vote against considering a bill that dealt with Jerusalem without wishing to commit political suicide. Of course, everyone expected that "the fix" was on and that the bill would languish in committee. The bill was referred to the Law Committee, chaired by David Glass who belonged to the National Religious Party. He was a major "dove" and opposed the bill. He was opposed to anything that might interfere with the negotiations. So the vote to send the Cohen bill to his Committee was understood to be the way to kill it. No one expected the bill to come out of that Committee for years, if ever. Glass had in fact assured many people that this would happen. However, a distorted version of events was reported in the press, generating that strong Sadat reaction to suspend the negotiations. I suspect of course that Sadat used the Cohen bill fiasco as an excuse. At the time of this uproar, a conference of the Islamic League was being held in Islamabad. Egypt was certainly going to be denounced there in strong terms for its participation in the Camp David process and for making peace with Israel. I therefore felt that Sadat may well have seized the Cohen bill as an excuse to

suspend the negotiations, distancing himself thereby from Israel and perhaps putting Egypt in a better light at the Islamabad conference. In any case, the whole affair became a big mess.

There was considerable diplomatic activity in an effort to get the autonomy agreement negotiations re-started. There was a shake-up in the Egyptian government. Mustafa Khalil resigned as Prime Minister; Hassan Ali was appointed as Foreign Minister. The new Foreign Minister told Roy Atherton that the Egyptians would continue the negotiations if they had assurances from the Israelis that the infamous Cohen bill would not be supported by the Begin government if it ever were reported out of Committee. Sadat sent Begin a long letter covering this and other issues (e.g., Sharon's drive to build more settlements on the West Bank, actions of a repressive nature that the Israelis were taking on the West Bank in the wake of the Hebron massacre, etc.), in very polite terms -- the matters that were making it difficult for the Egyptians to continue the negotiations. Sadat left it up to Begin to do what he could to improve the negotiating atmosphere.

Begin's response was essentially to point out that it was the Egyptians who had broken off the negotiations and therefore it was up to them to propose a way to re-start them. Begin took the same position in a letter to Carter. I talked to many people in and out of the Israeli government. I discussed the status of the negotiations with Shamir and Burg, but there wasn't much movement. Muskie, while in Europe, tried to get agreement from the French, the British and the Germans that they wouldn't pursue amending Resolution 242 in the Security Council, so that we would have maximum flexibility in pushing the negotiations. He did not get much satisfaction, particularly from the French, but all of the Europeans agreed to a temporary cessation of their UN initiative.

At about this time, Weizman resigned as Defense Minister. That was very sad because he had been the last strong voice in the Israeli autonomy talks team and in the Cabinet against Begin's hard line position. But Weizman had finally become disaffected and abandoned his hope to become Begin's chosen successor one day. Begin was fed up with him for all the arguments he was putting up and Weizman was fed up with Begin. The ostensible rationale for his resignation was that the defense budget was being cut -- the Israeli government was going through an economy drive. Weizman insisted that the defense budget be approved at the level he had requested; when it wasn't, he resigned. Begin didn't try to persuade him otherwise. The gap between the two had by this time become so sharp -- on such issues as the settlements, the West Bank policy in general, the autonomy talks -- that Weizman was not much of a factor in Cabinet discussions. I had a very nostalgic farewell meeting with him on a Friday afternoon, as he was packing his personal belongings in the office and writing his letter of resignation, an emotional attack on Begin which, of course, soon became public. The appointment of a replacement became a major issue. Sharon desperately wanted the job, but the Likud Liberals and the Democrat Party, which was a member of the coalition, were unalterably opposed to Sharon. Moshe Arens was a possibility, but Sharon was strongly opposed to that. Eventually, the issue was resolved by Begin keeping the defense portfolio for himself, following the precedent that

Ben Gurion had started many years earlier. Begin stayed as Defense Minister for the remainder of that government's term, which was well over a year until the election of 1981. He would not have given Sharon the post even then if he could have avoided it because he was worried about having Sharon in that job; he didn't trust Sharon even then. However, after the 1981 election which Begin won by a whisker, Sharon threatened to pull the two or three Likud Knesset members that he controlled out of the coalition if he was not appointed as Defense Minister. That election had been almost a dead heat, forcing Begin to form a government with only a majority of one or two members in the Knesset. That made the Sharon people swing votes that Begin could not afford to lose and therefore he had to appoint him as Defense Minister.

But from May 1980 to July 1981, Begin served both as Prime Minister and Defense Minister. He spent about one day each week in Tel Aviv at the Defense Ministry. He was supported by a very able military assistant, General Poran, who had been in that position for several years starting when Peres was Defense Minister in Rabin's cabinet. He was a moderate, serious, thoughtful individual. He kept Begin fairly well advised about on-going matters in the Defense Ministry. But it was not a very satisfactory arrangement. Begin's lack of familiarity with defense issues made it very awkward. Begin loved to play the role of Defense Minister; he enjoyed presiding at meetings of the generals; that gave him a big kick. He did make a number of mistakes as Defense Minister because the job required full time attention that Begin could not give it, even if he had the necessary background. Nevertheless, it was better to have Begin as Defense Minister than Sharon as we all learned later before and during the Lebanon war. Weizman just decided to go into "exile" at home, hoping to be recalled at some stage, like de Gaulle.

Time passed; we did not manage to get the negotiations back on track for several weeks. In the meantime, the Cohen bill did not turn out to be as simple a matter as we had hoped, as I had been assured. As often happens in Israeli politics, the unexpected tends to dominate the headlines. The best plans of mice and men go astray. After Sadat had first suspended the negotiations, citing the Jerusalem problem, the issue became a major one in the Arab world and in the world press. That forced a lot of the world's public attention on Cohen's bill. It was discussed in the Security Council. That triggered a chain of events which ultimately produced a result 180% opposite of that desired by Sadat. In fact, the Committee had to discharge the bill and bring it to the floor, where it was passed, despite the sotto voce opposition of all of the Knesset members. I had been urging by phone, by cables -- that both Washington and Cairo not get embroiled publicly in the Jerusalem issue. I had hoped that Sadat would avoid it because public debate about the issue would not serve the cause of peace and certainly would derail the negotiations. Both the White House and the Department of State understood the problem, but Sadat had dramatized it, making it into a sort of Greek tragedy. No one could stop the furor. The Israeli government had no strategy for handling the debate. It had anticipated that putting it into Glass' Committee would be the end of Cohen's bill. The Labor Party dithered; it obviously opposed the bill, but didn't want to be perceived to be on the wrong side of the issue if a vote were to be taken. It couldn't afford to be against the law while the Likud supported it. Because the bill had been introduced and

because Sadat had highlighted it, the Arab block then insisted on a full debate over the Jerusalem issue in the Security Council. The Arab countries also wanted a separate and full debate on the whole Middle East-Palestinian issue. After much debate, the U.S. delegation finally decided to veto any Security Council resolution that might call for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Our international legal position on Jerusalem, which we had held historically since 1948 and had postulated more often than any can remember, was that the Jerusalem issue was a matter for the parties in the dispute, who had to resolve the question themselves. Our position had always angered the Israelis even though we had stated it many, many times. Once the Jerusalem issue was raised in the Security Council, the U.S. government had to restate its historic position. By the end of July, a Jerusalem resolution had been introduced in the Security Council and a vote had been scheduled. The Arabs had drafted the resolution carefully to reflect the traditional U.S. position. That made it very difficult for us to veto it. I sent in several messages urging that we veto the resolution in order to defend the Camp David process; I thought that nothing should pass which would undermine that process.

My position was reinforced by the White House political operatives who saw Carter's re-election campaign already in deep trouble with Jewish voters. They also argued in favor of a veto; the State Department was torn, to put it mildly. As so often happens, the suicidal instincts of Israeli domestic politics surfaced and won the day. I learned later that Carter was in the Cabinet Room on Monday morning, July 28, 1980 agonizing with Muskie and other advisors on how the U.S. would vote in the Security Council. The practical choices were a) veto or b) abstain. At that very time, David Glass folded after very effective demagoguery by Ms. Cohen. He allowed his Committee to vote whether to bring the bill to the floor of the Knesset for a first reading. He later explained to me that he thought he had enough votes (8 against vs 6) in the Committee to favor his plan which was to hold extensive hearings and thereby delay any action for several months. But he miscounted the votes and lost a procedural vote in the Committee by 8-7. The Labor Party members, having lost on that vote, then switched sides and voted to bring the bill to the floor. Two members that Glass had counted on -- a Liberal, and a very dovish member now a leader of the Meretz Party -- were not present for inexplicable reasons. They would have voted with Glass, but Glass obviously was a very inept chairman. He couldn't control his own Committee's agenda. He was under considerable pressure from the religious parties not to be perceived as "soft" on Jerusalem; that was an important factor politically for him. So on that Monday morning, a UPI ticker story was handed to Carter while he was deliberating the U.S. position; that report stated that the bill had just been sent by the Committee to the floor of Knesset. One of the participants in the Cabinet meeting told me that the ticker story hit the table with a loud thud and the debate stopped. Carter immediately saw that there was no way that the bill would not be approved by the Knesset; my arguments thereafter fell on deaf ears because its assumption was that the bill could be kept in Committee if the U.S. would veto the resolution. So Carter approved a U.S. abstention in the Security Council.

Our abstention in the Security Council gave rise to another series of events which increased the difficulties in restarting autonomy negotiations. A little later in September, Sol Linowitz achieved an extraordinary success. He persuaded Sadat to agree to a vague joint statement to the effect that negotiations would resume, that a summit would be held between them at a time and place to be agreed upon later. That statement was well received in the White House. Carter heard about it by phone from Linowitz a couple of hours before Reagan was to appear before the B'nai B'rith conference. He had the news put out publicly, slightly upstaging Reagan. That raised Linowitz' stock with the political operatives in the White House. The three days that Linowitz had spent in Jerusalem and Cairo were a tour de force. I later wrote that he had been both sympathetic, tough, and long suffering. He took the worst that Begin could dish out and then in return shook Begin up. He used background sessions with Israeli editors and American correspondents very skillfully. He gave the Israeli negotiation team a real earful about what they were risking. Linowitz' performance in Israel was very skilled and he was ably supported by Ned Walker and Andy Marks.

I thought the matter would rock along relatively smoothly until after the U.S. elections, after which I hoped that negotiations would be restarted. But during August, U.S.-Israeli relations had sagged badly. The UN resolution, in which we abstained, not only condemned Israel for its actions in Jerusalem, but called on all countries to remove their Embassies from that city. Beyond that, it generally expressed the historical U.S. position. The fact that the U.S. allowed that resolution to be adopted was not well received in Israel to put it mildly. Across the political spectrum, the Israelis resented our position. Within a few weeks of the passage of the resolution, eleven Embassies, out of thirteen, had moved from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. That included the Dutch who had been the first to open an Embassy in Jerusalem. The net effect of the Jerusalem controversy, which Begin had tried to use to bolster his own domestic political support, resulted in isolating Israel internationally. That was a totally unnecessary outcome. The deputies that had voted in favor of the Cohen bill then began to comment that they really had been against it all along. I noted at the time that there was never any greater accuracy to the old Kissinger adage that "Israel had no foreign policy; it only has domestic politics".

The White House and the State Department were furious with Begin, but they could not express their frustrations publicly because of the Presidential campaign which was going badly for Carter. The Jewish vote in New York was absolutely crucial if he had any hopes of re-election. In August-September, Reagan and Carter were running neck-in-neck. The whole series of events surrounding the Jerusalem tempest convinced me that if Carter were re-elected and as long as Begin remained as Prime Minister, it would be very difficult to have a useful U.S.-Israel relationship. A summit meeting was being planned for November; if Carter had won re-election, it would have been a very difficult meeting for the Israelis because I was sure that Carter would have read the riot act to them. I also thought that if this scenario were to develop, Begin would relish standing up to American pressures because that would have helped boost his domestic political support which he needed for the 1981 Israeli elections. In early September, I was

predicting that the following ten months would be a very rough period for Israeli-U.S. relations. Of course, Carter lost to Reagan.

I wrote some notes on November 16, 1980 right after the final Carter-Begin meeting. I reflected on the beauty of Washington as a city, the mood of the city now that a transition in the White House had been ordained by the American public, the significance of the departure of such Senate stalwarts as Church, McGovern, Bayh, Stone, Javits, Ribicoff, Talmadge, Magnuson and others. I also speculated about who might be included in a Reagan administration. Shultz and Haig were the front runners for the position of Secretary of State. As it turned out, it was Haig first to be followed by Shultz eighteen months later.

My ostensible purpose for returning to Washington in mid-November was to accompany Begin for his last meeting with Carter -- the tenth. First I went to New York to meet Begin upon his arrival. I sat on the dais at a black tie dinner celebrating Jabotinski's 100th birthday. He was the political leader who competed with Weizman for the leadership of the world Zionist movement. We are now talking about the '20s and '30s when he led the "Revisionist" wing movement of the movement. It was a great event for Begin, who always described himself as an apostle of Jabotinski and also had tried to model himself after him. Begin had written a very long speech for the occasion. He told me that it was only one of three speeches that he had ever written personally. I had only heard him previously speaking from notes. But this occasion was so important to him that he wrote out the speech in full text. It turned out to be deadly dull -- no punch; it put a lot of people to sleep during the hour that it took to deliver. It was the worst speech I ever heard Begin give and I attribute that to the fact that he had written it out. There were 3,000 people at the dinner in the huge Waldorf Astoria Hotel ballroom, each paying \$500 for a seat. All of us had to sit from 6:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.(!) listening to various speeches from Jewish leaders and Begin. Then, and only then, was dinner served. Begin -- wisely as it turned out -- wanted to speak before dinner. That meant that all the other speakers had to precede him. There were dozens of people on the dais, all of whom had to be recognized and many of whom had to say something. I was sitting right next to Begin, facing the huge audience. Cameras and lights were whirring away. The only food on the table were some olives and a little bit of cantaloupe which I devoured quickly. Sometime during Begin's speech, I dropped off to sleep. The long trip, jet lag, no food finally caught up to me. I am sure that I appear in some photographs napping away right next to the principal speaker, who had characterized his remarks as the most important in his life. I don't know whether Begin noticed; at least he never mentioned it, but a lot of other people did.

After this difficult evening, we flew to Washington, where I attended the last of the Begin arrival ceremonies. I had persuaded Muskie that he should come personally to the airport to greet Begin; he normally would not have done that. I was concerned that unless the Secretary was there, the Israeli press would be writing stories about the Carter administration being so angry at the minimal support it had received in the election from the American Jewish community that it had snubbed Begin. Muskie weighed my arguments and did go to the airport; I think it was the

appropriate gesture. That night, I attended a reception at Ambassador Evron's house -- I think there were more press and Secret Service agents than guests -- a sad affair. The next morning, we met at the White House. I went in the motorcade with the Israeli delegation because often the American Ambassador plays the role of "meeter and greeter" for such official occasions. As was the practice, I went to the hotel to meet Begin and to escort him to the White House. The other members of the American delegation went to the White House directly. As we walked past the Rose Garden through the South Lawn into the President's residential quarters, there we saw Carter grinning ear to ear, all teeth. He put on a fantastic show of good humor and friendship. He very graciously took Begin into the Oval Office for a one-on-one meeting for about forty minutes. The other members of the American and Israeli delegations sat in the Cabinet Room talking with each other. Brzezinski was very subdued; Jody Powell was very quiet, looking very sad. Linowitz and Muskie were very quiet. The Israelis seemed nervous. Ambassador Evron was worrying about his own press problems; he was in some difficulties with some Cabinet officers over some alleged slights he was supposed to have made toward some Republicans during the campaign. He also had been unable to arrange for a meeting between Reagan and Begin on this trip. Fortunately, both Begin and Foreign Minister Shamir soon confirmed that Evron would remain as Israeli Ambassador.

Carter and Begin came to the Cabinet Room for a further meeting that lasted about twenty minutes. There were some ceremonial exchanges around the table, with reference to some of their achievements like Camp David. Muskie made some gracious comments about both Carter and Begin. The only substantive comments were actually made by Linowitz. Both Carter and Begin had mentioned that they hoped that the autonomy talks would begin again soon and be completed. Muskie suggested that a joint summary document be drafted. Both Carter and Begin reluctantly agreed, but it was actually intended to provide the remaining members of the peace team -- Ned Walker et al -- something to work on during the transition. In fact, we could not reach agreement on such a document. Instead, Linowitz and his staff drafted their own summary which the U.S. made public. Linowitz concluded that in fact 80% of the issues had been resolved in the autonomy negotiations; he detailed the matters that had been agreed upon. He somewhat exaggerated the degree of achievement. The percentage may have been technically correct, but all the really difficult issues remained unresolved so that the toughest work remained. He urged that the new administration make a concerted effort to conclude them.

After the White House meeting, Carter and Begin met the press on the driveway. Both made warm valedictory statements. Begin was very eloquent in expressing his admiration for the way Carter was accepting the will of the American people and what that said for the strength of democracy. Then they shook hands for the last time. Carter stood with what I thought were a couple of tears in his eyes, waving goodbye to the Israeli delegation. The Camp David hopes remained unfulfilled. The Americans went back into the West Wing and I talked to the President for about five minutes. I again noticed how visibly worn out he was. His mask had dropped off. He had handled himself with great dignity which was even more impressive because we all knew

how bitter he was. He really blamed Begin for his defeat. To this day, Carter is convinced that Begin was responsible for his loss of Jewish support, starting with the primary defeat in New York by Ted Kennedy and then the election. During our conversation he was both bitter and calm. He regretted that all of his peace making efforts -- Camp David and its aftermath, non-proliferation, Panama Canal -- had brought him nothing but political grief. He was convinced that he had been beaten because he had done the right thing. He was very kind in his comments about my work and contributions. I was pleased that I had been able to make some contribution to the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, which was an enormous achievement.

He also told me that during the private meeting he had been very blunt with Begin. He hadn't seen any reason to hold back. He described for Begin clearly the disastrous consequences if the Knesset were to adopt any legislation annexing the Golan Heights, because it would destroy Resolution 242 and the peace process (NOTE: that is exactly what Begin did a year later in 1981.) Carter said that Begin had listened carefully, but didn't respond. Carter said that he had also gotten Begin's agreement not to send any military equipment to Iran until our hostages had been safely returned; and even then, he wanted the Israelis to consult with us before any shipment occurred. (NOTE: that issue was key to the Iran-gate crisis three years later.) As usual, Lebanon did not arise during the meeting between the two principals. Carter never liked to take on more issues than he had to. Even though Lebanon should have been discussed, Carter decided that it would not have served any useful purpose. At the end of my session with the President, I was impressed with his show of dignity throughout what must have been a very trying experience.

Linowitz agreed with my assessment that Carter blamed Begin for not having quietly passed the word to the American Jewish community that Carter was a true friend of Israel, which he indeed was. I noted at the time that I thought that Begin was genuinely sympathetic towards Carter during the campaign. I believed that the poor perception that the American Jewish community had of Carter came at the instigation of others in Israel -- not Begin. Later, however, I learned from conversation with some of Begin's close advisors that he had indeed concluded -- long before the election -- that Carter had outlived his usefulness. He secretly hoped for a Reagan victory because he viewed him as being more understanding and sympathetic of Israel. Begin undoubtedly felt that he and Carter had had too many disagreements by 1980. Whether Begin's personal views were communicated to the American Jewish community and therefore influenced the outcome, I don't know. But it was clear that that community in 1980 had come to the conclusion that although Carter had accomplished much at Camp David, he had expressed some very negative views about Israel subsequently and therefore was probably not worth their trust. There is no doubt that the Jewish vote swung heavily toward the Republicans, which was certainly a factor in a moderately close election.

I should note one other interesting aspect of that last Begin-Carter meeting. Up to the day before they met, Carter was toying with the idea of a summit meeting with Sadat and Begin. He had hoped thereby to conclude the autonomy negotiations and cap his foreign policy stewardship

with a singular achievement. He tried to ignore that as a "lame duck" he had no leverage over the other two to persuade them to make any concessions. Muskie had somewhere gotten the notion that Begin wanted a summit and in order to achieve that, might be willing to make some major concessions to make a successful meeting.

Before returning to Tel Aviv, I spent considerable time discussing Lebanon with Roy Atherton, our Ambassador to Egypt, Nick Veliotis, our Ambassador to Jordan, Talcott Seelye, our Ambassador to Syria and John Gunther Dean, our Ambassador to Lebanon. It was a sort of small Chiefs of Mission conference at the end of the Carter administration. We were trying to develop recommendations for the new administration. We, as usual, disagreed sharply about Lebanon, especially Dean and me. Warren Christopher had attended one of the meetings that Muskie had held with the six of us. Dean and Seelye argued that the PLO was the essential interlocutor for the administration. They felt that an American administration had to deal with that group if it were to prevent a disaster. Christopher noted sarcastically that if he had just come from Mars, he would have assumed that Carter had been firmly opposed to negotiations involving the Palestinians and that Reagan had been saying that the negotiations with the PLO should be started! That was another indicator of Carter's frustrations of not being able to deal with the PLO; he felt that his hands were tied by domestic political considerations and by precedent and prior commitments. We all agreed that nothing further could be done about negotiations until after the Israeli elections which were to be held in June, 1981. We believed that if Peres won, the chances of bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion would be more promising. But in the meantime, there was nothing to do, but hope that no new major barrier would arise and try to educate the new administration.

We did not agree with Linowitz' argument that negotiations could be resumed immediately in January and could be brought to a successful conclusion soon thereafter. We saw that Begin was too firmly planted and could not or would not move during a pre-election period. John Dean was concerned that a hiatus of a year might bring greater instability in Lebanon that he thought might only be prevented by contacts with the PLO. Seelye tended to support that thesis, although he had to admit that the Syrians were not in any position to cause much mischief for the next year. Furthermore, he also thought that the PLO was in such disarray that perhaps the U.S. position might not be too damaging to overall stability in the region. We five Ambassadors had many disagreements about strategy and tactics. Seelye particularly pushed relentlessly the thesis that until the U.S. brought the PLO into the negotiations, there would be no way to achieve a comprehensive settlement. He voiced concern that the Saudis, under PLO blackmail, might return to an oil embargo. John West, our Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, argued that the Saudis were at that moment at the point of using the oil weapon because they were so frustrated about U.S. reluctance to sell them advanced fighter aircraft and other issues. He also argued in favor of a U.S. dialogue with the PLO partly to keep the Saudis from doing anything rash. I disagreed with that position as well as Dean's views of Lebanon. He and I argued frequently and vehemently about the state of that country, all during our tenures as Ambassadors. Dean detested

Bashir Gemayel and he tried to ignore the Phalange as much as possible. He always tried to find ways to force the Israelis to withdraw their support from Gemayel and to clamp down on Major Haddad in the south on the assumption that would have some undefinable positive impact in Beirut. We never managed to agree about very much.

At this point in my career, I didn't have any idea about my future. I assumed that I would be replaced in Israel, as customarily happens with a change in administrations. A number of people asked me about my wishes and I told all of them that I would like to stay on in Israel for at least a couple of years more. I thought that the Camp David process was only half completed and I wanted to see what further progress we could make before leaving. There was no other position that I was really interested in. I had decided that I would retire if my appointment as Ambassador to Israel were terminated. In fact, I did retire from the Foreign Service in January, 1981 when, just having turned fifty with more than twenty-five years of service, I became eligible. But I remained Ambassador as a Presidential appointee for the rest of my tenure in Israel to 1985.

In fact, Haig decided -- very wisely, I thought -- to keep on all the professional Ambassadors to Middle East countries. That enabled the new administration to maintain some continuity in policy in that region. As it turned out, I stayed the longest, all the way through the first term of the Reagan administration. That Haig decision was unusual, but he was a professional himself and understood the benefits of maintaining continuity. I think he has been somewhat maligned as Secretary of State; he was a better Secretary than he has been credited.

Q: After Dayan's death on October 16, 1981, what happened next?

LEWIS: Two days later, on Sunday, Sallie and I drove to Nahalal, the Moshav where Dayan was raised and where his oldest son, Udi, still ran the family farm. There we attended Dayan's funeral. There was an official American delegation led by Attorney General French Smith, but Dayan's death was a very personal sad occasion for the Lewises because both Sallie and I were very close to Moshe and his wife, Rahel. Dayan's first wife, Ruth, the mother of his three children also attended the funeral. The relationship between the two of them was quite strained. The Dayan family has been subjected to a great deal of written scrutiny. Both "yellow" and regular journalism covered it fully; in some sense the Dayans are a star-crossed family. Sallie managed to be good friends with both Ruth and Rahel, which was quite a tribute to her ability to get along with various people. Moshe's death brought all the players together, including two other children -- son Ossi, a Bohemian, rebellious actor -- and daughter Yael -- author, ex-journalist and now an active left-wing Labor politician in Israel. The cemetery was on a hill among a grove of trees overlooking the Galilee Valley, in which Nahalal lies.

The funeral was attended by the greats of Israel -- Prime Minister Begin, Ezer Weizman, who was married to Ruth's sister, Rauma. Dayan and Weizman were brothers-in-law through Moshe's first wife; it was not a comfortable relationship between the two men. I had a number of opportunities to watch that relationship when one was the Foreign Minister and the other the

Defense Minister. It was always very puzzling and sad that Dayan, who was considerably older and had been a hero long before Weizman was prominent, never took his brother-in-law very seriously; he considered Weizman as a "fly boy" -- a pilot, neer-do-well playboy. Weizman, on the other hand, almost hero-worshipped Dayan; he tried very hard when both were in the Cabinet to work closely with Dayan, only to be tolerated at best; Dayan never concealed his disdain for Weizman -- unfairly in my view. The end result was that the Foreign and Defense Ministries didn't work together very well at the staff level primarily because of Dayan's disdain.

In a Jewish funeral, the eldest son reads the *Kaddish*, the prayer for the dead. Udi, who was very estranged from his father, refused to perform. That was just one of the under-currents present at the funeral that afternoon. Nevertheless, I had a sense sitting on that hill-side that part of Israel's history was being buried. I also felt that a lot of the dynamism of the peace process had also passed away. It was a very sad afternoon.

A few days later, Egyptian General Hassan Ali arrived to continue the autonomy negotiations. There had been staff level negotiations before his arrival. Soon thereafter, ministerial level negotiations were convened again. Two ministerial sessions were held during the following month. As I mentioned before, Roy Atherton, our Ambassador to Egypt and I acted as co-chairmen of the U.S. delegation. Later Ambassador Wat Cluverius, who was the head of the U.S. working level team, joined us (he later became Consul General in Jerusalem and now is the head of the MOF (Multi-lateral Observer Force in the Sinai) in Rome). Only a little progress was made in these sessions and it was clear that all momentum had dissipated after Sadat's death.

At the end of October, the AWACs package, which had been the subject of the bitter political Congressional debate during the summer, was approved. In order to sweeten the blow for the Israelis, the Administration decided to extend some additional assurances that Israel's technological edge would be maintained. I delivered a letter to Begin in late October which reiterated U.S. support for Israel and recommitted the U.S. to maintain the military technological edge over the Arab adversaries. Nevertheless, the Israel Cabinet expressed regrets over the AWAC sale, but ultimately the controversy died out, even though the new Administration took a lot of lumps for having forced the package through Congress over Israel's objection. This was a period of "fawning" over Saudi Arabia. Earlier the Saudis had proposed their eight point peace plan -- the Fahd Plan; we had expressed the view that it included some positive signs. Reagan noted that it did include the fact that the Arabs recognized Israel as a sovereign nation to be negotiated with. Of course, that statement did not appear in the Fahd Plan at all; Reagan was merely expressing his impression of the briefings that he had received! That statement gave the Israelis some heart-burn. In the meantime, Israeli Ambassador Evron was warning Secretary Haig in Washington that our support of the Fahd Plan would completely sabotage the autonomy negotiations.

During my tour in Israel, as I mentioned earlier, I found that the only way to escape the constant pressure and to find some relaxation was to go scuba diving. I did that in early November when I

flew to Sharm el Sheikh for four or five days of terrific diving at the tip of the Sinai. We drove back to Elat. On the way back, we stopped at a famous diving spot called the "Blue Hole" near Dahab. It is huge hole in the reef in the shape of a cookie-cutter, about 100 yards in diameter; from the air it looks like a giant circular hole in the center of the broad, light colored reef along the shore. I am very proud of the dive I took at the "Blue Hole" that day and that is why I am going at some length to describe the environment. With me, was the Embassy's Naval Attaché, Pete Peterson, who was my frequent diving buddy. He had been a Navy Seal, although as a Seal, he had never done any deep diving; he had mostly dived close to the surface. I had dived to depths considerably deeper than he. Thirty meters (110 feet) is supposed to be the limit for sport divers; in fact, I have gone as deep as 75 meters -- well over 200 feet -- which is very deep -- as a matter of fact, much too deep. Pete had dived primarily between the surface and 20 meters down. With us also was a friend who is an underwater photographer, Jeff Rodman, now well known internationally for his work. He had never dived in the "Blue Hole" but he was an accomplished diver. I had dived there twice before and therefore I led the dive on this occasion. It is a fairly tricky dive and a very exciting one. This was the first time in my life that I had led two more experienced divers. We went down 40 meters into the blue cavern with the hole getting darker and darker. As you approach the bottom, you see the faint outlines of a huge golden arch. As you approach the arch, you see sunlight coming through it. You swim down to 48-50 meters and then you see the opening of the arch; you swim through the arch, through the outside part of the reef and then out into the open sea. The arch is a tunnel that connects the hole and the open sea. It is a very exciting dive. I wouldn't do it now, but it was great fun then. It is a dive that is done frequently, but there have been a number of casualties. About six weeks ago, three Israeli diving instructors were killed diving in the "Blue Hole"; their bodies were found three days later and I don't know the cause of their deaths. It is of course not unknown that experienced divers do crazy things before they dive like drinking beer or diving in the middle of the night by the light of the moon just to show their machismo. If you dive below 35 meters, you can have narcosis which is like being drunk. You lose your sense of self-control, you lose your orientation, your vision blurs (that has happened to me), you feel totally impervious to any danger and you will take crazy chances as the result of the nitrogen's effect on the brain -- it dulls your judgement. That is how people get into trouble; they dive too deep, ignoring rules they know well, then they may have a narcosis attack and lose their sense of judgement -- e.g., they will dive down instead of coming up. Equipment failure is a very rare phenomenon. The problems arise usually from very good divers behaving as they know they shouldn't or from beginners or from divers in very bad physical condition -- they get exhausted and are not able to perform as they should.

I have dived off Papua New Guinea and in the Caribbean; there are many interesting places in the world, but the tip of the Sinai is very special -- it is one of the top two or three diving areas in the world. It has more varieties of fish and corals and clearer water than in most other parts of the world. There are bigger fish elsewhere -- the Pacific, for example, but the Red Sea has the variety.

Diving is what permitted me to live through eight years in Israel; I would not have been able to last that long without it. The opportunity to slip away every two or three months to enjoy a few days of diving made the rest of time bearable; when you dive, you forget everything else. Divers don't discuss politics; they barely know who is the Prime Minister and know little about his views. They discuss diving and fish and it is a great change for anyone in a pressure cooker such as Israel.

I was in Cairo in early November for the last round for a long time of the autonomy talks. The discussions did not make any progress. During the whole month of November, there was a steady drumbeat of concern about Lebanon. The cease fire between the PLO and the Israelis was holding, as far we could see; there had not been any incursions across the northern border, but there had been an increasing number of attacks on Jews elsewhere. People were slipping across the Jordan border and the Israelis reported them to us as violations of the cease fire. The difference of opinion on the definition of the cease-fire was becoming increasingly dangerous. We were still trying to put together a multinational force to police the Sinai. The Israelis continued to balk at the idea of European participation in the force because they felt that Camp David had not been supported by Europe as vigorously as it should have. I kept repeatedly arguing with Begin and Shamir, the Foreign Minister, to little avail. November was a complicated period. Yet it seemed to be in, its own way, a deceptive time because matters were progressing normally -- there were no great crises, which in itself, was unusual.

At the end of November, the Fez Conference was held in Morocco -- an Arab League meeting which expanded further the Fahd Plan, but in fact, weakened it and made it even less interesting to the Israelis. On November 26 -- Thanksgiving Day -- Begin broke his hip in his bathtub, or getting out of his bathtub. He was in considerable pain and had to stay at home for several weeks, bed ridden. He brooded and worried; he became angry. I saw him on a number of occasions in his bedroom. We transacted some business, but he really was not in adequate physical shape particularly in the first couple of weeks to be able to focus very long on any subject. This accident had a significant impact on U.S.-Israeli relationships. I left the day after Begin's mishap to escort Foreign Minister Shamir on a visit to Washington. Sharon was there as well, trying to finish that ill fated "Memorandum of Understanding" on strategic cooperation that he and Weinberger had been drafting for months. It was finally signed on November 30. Shamir went to Washington to meet with Haig, Habib and others to discuss the Fez Plan, the Lebanese issue and the tension created between the two countries by Israel's overflights of Saudi Arabia. The Saudis had deployed tanks and some F-5s at a base near Tabuk in North-west Saudi Arabia, not too distant from Israel. The Israelis were always concerned by what types of planes were stationed at Tabuk because of the very short warning time for Israel that the proximity of the base would provide. Therefore, periodically, without any announcements, the Israeli Air Force would reconnoiter the base and photograph the planes on the base. The Saudis with their AWAC planes were now in a position to detect the Israeli flights, increasing the danger of air encounters because the Saudis might decide to challenge the Israeli flights. We therefore began to intercede

with the Israelis to cease these reconnaissance overflights; they felt that they were not harming anybody, but were necessary for their defense. So this issue was on the Washington discussion agenda. Begin angrily rejected the right of the U.S. to raise the issue, although we always made our arguments quite vigorously. Another item for discussion was our continued urging of Israel to permit European countries to participate in the multi-lateral peace-keeping force; ultimately, Haig did obtain Israeli agreement after considerable discussion. The Israeli Cabinet insisted that all European countries that participated would have to formally endorse the Camp David accords and the peace treaty -- that was not an unreasonable demand.

While in the United States, I visited Boston to give a speech to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' annual convention. This group represented the liberal wing of American Judaism. Sallie was with me. My speech was a summary of the history of the peace process to date. I remember the occasion well because while we were in Boston, it was hit with an incredibly large snow storm which snowed us in for the next day and a half in our hotel. We did manage to stomp out and use the subway a couple of times, but that was the extent of our ventures. I have never seen Boston or any other city as paralyzed as it was on those days; the only similarity in my experience was a snow storm in Washington which had similar effects.

Habib left the U.S. and went to Damascus to try once again to calm the choppy Lebanese waters. He also tried to soften Syrian violent opposition to the peace process between Egypt and Israel. After Syria, he went to Jerusalem, arriving in early December. In the following week, two extraordinary events took place. I was still in the U.S., having finally gotten out of Boston and having gone to New York and seeing some theater -- along with giving a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations on the Israeli situation. We flew out of New York, arriving back in Israel on December 13. I faced a big mess immediately. An extraordinary event had taken place on December 6, 1981 which was connected with the build-up prior to the Lebanon War. This episode was also directly related to events that took place upon my departure five years later, which I will describe in detail later in a special section dealing with the long-running confrontation between General Ariel Sharon and me.

When Habib got to Jerusalem, he brought many complaints from Assad concerning Israeli provocations in Lebanon. We were getting increasing evidence of rising tensions between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The cease fire was still in effect. During early December, my DCM, Bill Brown was in charge of the Embassy. On December 6, there was a meeting at the Foreign Ministry involving Habib, Morris Draper (Habib's Deputy), Bill Brown, Paul Hare (the Embassy's Political Counselor) as note taker, and Fred Raines, our Military Attaché on one side; and Sharon, the Defense Minister, Abrasha Tamir, the Defense Ministry's chief planner and almost alter-ego, a couple of Israeli military officers, Eytan Ben Tsur, the chief of the North American section of the Foreign Ministry, and Hanon Bar-on, the Deputy Director General of the Foreign Ministry on the Israeli side (Bar-on was the Foreign Ministry official we worked with most closely). There may have been some additional participants, but I have mentioned the key ones. The meeting was held at the Foreign Ministry for convenience because Habib was in

Jerusalem and Sharon also was there for some other meeting. Shamir was not involved because he was in Washington and had not yet returned. There have been some suggestions made later that Shamir attended, but I do not believe that to be correct. I was briefed fully upon my return about the meeting by Brown, Hare and Raines of my staff as well as by Habib and Draper. I also read the detailed reporting cables they had sent to Washington.

At the meeting, Sharon launched into a diatribe on events in Lebanon, repeating over and over again that the cease fire wasn't working and that there had been innumerable violations. Habib argued about the interpretation of the cease fire; i.e. which activities it covered and which it didn't. At one point, Sharon reared back and said that he wanted to make some things eminently clear. He noted that the U.S. had complained vigorously when the Iraqi nuclear reactor was bombed by the Israelis, even though the U.S. had been clearly warned prior to the event. He then went on to say that he did not wish that there be any more surprises. He said that he was convinced, although the Cabinet might not be, that the solution to the Lebanon problem was to solve it once and for all by driving the PLO out of Lebanon, allowing the government to rule once again over its total country. He continued his presentation, always noting that the ideas were his own and did not have Israeli government approval. His view was that Israel should conduct a major military operation in Lebanon, unless the "violations" ceased. He described in considerable detail what in fact became subsequently the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. It was not an operational plan; he never mentioned going as far as Beirut, but all the other key elements were presented. It was certainly clear that Sharon had a very large military operation in mind which would have driven the PLO out of Lebanon. It would have gone quite far north, driving the Syrians north of the highway between Beirut and Damascus and out of South Lebanon. All of these goals were clearly part of Sharon's plan.

Habib and everybody else was thunder-struck by Sharon's plan, although I think our Embassy staff were not quite as surprised, except for the fact that Sharon was being so open about his views. Maury Draper was absolutely stunned. Habib has been quoted as saying, "You flabbergast me", although that doesn't sound like Habib. What he probably did was to ask some questions such as what the Israelis expected to do with the thousands of Palestinians. Sharon is alleged to have responded, "We'll hand them over to the Lebanese. In any case, we expect to be in Lebanon only for a few days. The Lebanese Christians will take care of them". Habib reacted to the presentation in very strong terms. He said that the Sharon plan was absolutely out of the question. He said that it should not even be contemplated, particularly at that stage of history. He predicted that the whole region would react, probably starting another war. He was very upset and had angry exchanges with Sharon.

The Foreign Ministry officials who attended the meeting were also astounded. They couldn't imagine that the Minister of Defense would discuss with American representatives a military operation of such scope which had never even been whispered to the Cabinet. They wrote up their summary of the meeting very carefully and rushed back to the Foreign Ministry. They immediately called Yehuda Ben Meir, who was the Deputy Foreign Minister, who was a good

friend of the U.S. and mine. He had been an American citizen; he was a sociologist; he was a member of the Knesset from the National Religious Party. Yehuda was thunder-struck as could be easily imagined. He reported what he had been told to Shamir -- that is why I am sure that Shamir did not participate in the Habib-Sharon meeting. Yehuda Ben Meir also briefed his two Religious Party colleagues immediately -- Education Minister Hammer and Minister of Interior Burg. Shamir did not react after being briefed. I feel confident that some one briefed Begin, although there is no documentation which speaks to the issue when and how Begin found out about the meeting. He may have read the Foreign Ministry's summary. Bill Brown, who was the acting ambassador, despatched an agitated message to the State Department; it had been drafted by Paul Hare. Habib sent a private message to Haig expressing extreme concern about the scope of Sharon's enterprise, even though Sharon had clearly said that the plan was only hypothetical, it was his personal plan and would probably not receive Cabinet approval. In retrospect, it was clear that Sharon had used the meeting with Habib to prepare the Reagan administration for a large Israeli operation in Lebanon which was likely to occur; he was trying to condition us to accept it when it went into effect.

Sharon's subsequent comments on the Lebanon war makes it clear -- he made his view clear in the meeting with Habib -- that he intended to get the PLO out of Lebanon, thereby safeguarding the northern border, enabling the Lebanese Christians to pacify the country and moving the Syrians out of south Lebanon, sufficiently removed so that they couldn't influence all events in Beirut. In their book on the Lebanon war, Ze'Ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'Ari discuss the Habib-Sharon meeting quite accurately. Schiff is the leading military commentator in Israel. He wrote in 1985 that he had learned about the meeting a few weeks after it had taken place or about the same time that he had gotten his first inkling of the fact that planning for a war in Lebanon was well under way. It is important to note that at the time of the Sharon-Habib meeting, no one in the Cabinet, as far as I know, had any idea of the concept or even that Sharon was about to discuss it.

Q: Was the concept Sharon's own or might it have come from some options presented by Defense Ministry staff?

LEWIS: The concept was Sharon's. There was staff work to support it, but the idea was Sharon's. That is my belief.

In any case, the Habib-Sharon meeting of early December 1981 was an omen of a long diplomatic shadow that would be cast in the future. But there was another event about that time that was more immediately related to U.S.-Israeli relations. Begin, while laying in bed in pain from the broken hip, was listening to the radio and heard President Assad of Syria give a speech in which he rejected the notion of making peace with Zionists, not in a 100 years. Begin brooded about that comment and began to consider that if Syria were never to make peace, Israel should just annex the Golan Heights. The argument went that there would never be any negotiations about the area in any case, and if Assad were going to be so intransigent, why shouldn't Israel

proceed with its legal incorporation? I returned to Israel on December 13. The Embassy staff had begun to pick up rumors on Friday, December 11 about something being considered for the Golan. Bill Brown filed a report alerting Washington to these rumors and suggesting the language of a very tough message that he could deliver quickly to the Israeli government before any action could be taken to annex the Heights. In fact, the annexation was announced at a Cabinet meeting on the morning of December 13. Begin actually left his house and this was his first Cabinet meeting after having broken his hip. He surprised everyone in the Cabinet by proposing that Israeli law be extended to the Heights. Technically, that was not the same as annexation but the extension of Israeli law to the area; it was the same formula that was used in 1948 on the status of Jerusalem; that was repeated in 1980 when the Jerusalem law was approved. This legal device has the same effect as annexation, but it is not so named. It theoretically, leaves the door slightly open to subsequent negotiations. The Cabinet was taken aback; Begin was at his most fiery; he denounced Assad. He said that it would be ridiculous not to proceed; it would show the Arabs once and for all that Israel could not be trifled with. At the time, the Golan Heights was occupied territory under military control. There were only 10-12,000 Druze inhabitants from Syrian days in addition to the more recent few thousand Israeli settlers. The Cabinet adopted Begin's proposal. I reached Begin by phone after the Cabinet meeting to attempt (without any formal instructions from Washington) to try to slow him down. It was useless. He was impervious to my arguments. The next day, very quickly before any national debate could develop, or perhaps more importantly, before the U.S. could respond -- which was clearly part of Begin's game plan -- Begin's proposal was put before the Knesset. There was a debate and then the Knesset approved the implementing legislation -- the law passed all three readings in the same day, which was almost unprecedented. It was approved by 63-21 count. The Labor Party boycotted the vote -- they abstained. That was not a very courageous act, but it must be remembered that Labor had been responsible for the Israeli kibbutzim on the Golan. The kibbutz members on the Golan were nearly all Labor supporters. Furthermore, there was a compelling security argument because the Golan was a threat to Israel as shown in the 1950s and 1960s. The Labor Party leaders had always been as tough on the Golan as had the Likud, even though the two parties differed on the West Bank and Gaza. In any case, Labor abstained and did not oppose the Begin proposal because presumably to do so might have left them politically exposed.

The Cabinet and Knesset actions created a fire-storm in Washington, as I had warned Begin they would. There was real anger in the White House. Haig felt double-crossed. Meetings were held to decide on a U.S. response. One of the arguments that had been made by Secretary Haig in support of the Israeli "strategic cooperation" concept, which impelled Reagan to ask Weinberger to take on the task of negotiating with the Israelis, was that once such a formal strategic relationship was in being, events such as the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor would not take place; the assumption was that the Israelis would consult fully with us before taking any aggressive actions. The Haig thought had been implied by Begin and Sharon, if not actually expressed. The Israelis had never made any commitment of that kind, at least not in so many

words. They never had promised to consult with us before taking any actions, but we had good reasons to infer that the new relationship would be a closer working one and that as strategic allies, we could reasonably expect the Israelis not to surprise us with an action as far reaching as they proposed for the Golan Heights. That was the White House view and the staff there felt completely double-crossed. The Administration tried to think of an appropriate response which would not weaken Israel's defense capabilities but would get Begin's attention. Finally, Washington decided to suspend implementation of the new "strategic cooperation" agreement, signed only two weeks earlier. The agreement would stay in suspension while a full review of Israeli actions was undertaken with the Israeli government. My friends in Washington said that the ground rules had to be straightened out with Begin so that in the future we would know how to deal with each other. I received a message from Haig which I was to deliver to Begin in which the suspension was announced. It also raised serious questions about the application of Israeli law on the Golan Heights. The message was polite, but we knew that it would not be well received by Begin. But Washington honestly felt that this kind of message was in order to try to convince Begin that he couldn't take actions of this kind unilaterally and with impunity. The alternative courses of action, such as suspension of military aid, would undermine Israel's security. The policy option chosen was the softest, but clearest message that Begin might understand. Begin had put personal great store in this strategic cooperation agreement.

I called the Prime Minister's office for an appointment. I went to see him, although he was still convalescing after his release from the hospital. He was still in bed and not mobile, although greatly improved from the time of his operation. He still had some pain. I took Paul Hare with me as the note-taker. On December 20, we went to Begin's residence in Jerusalem at 9:30 a.m. When we reached the upstairs bedroom, we were met not only by Begin and his assistant, but also by Sharon, Shamir and a couple of others. They were all glowering. Begin was sitting in a chair with his foot up. He was sitting next to a table covered with papers. By this time, Begin already knew about the suspension because it had been announced in Washington two days earlier. He had plenty of time to consider his reaction. The Haig letter had been sent to Begin earlier. I wanted to make sure that Begin understood that we were not canceling the agreement, but only suspending it pending further discussions. My talking points started with that issue.

When I entered the bedroom, it was clear that Begin was in a lot of pain; his face was drawn. He greeted me very cordially; as always he called me "Sam". He told me about his physical condition in answer to my question about his health. He discussed his wife, who was not well. It was an obvious effort on his part to separate his comments on the U.S. action from his relationship with me. His outrage would be with Reagan and Washington. After about five minutes of small talk and pleasantries, he stiffened, he sat up straighter, his face became steely. He reached for the stack of papers on the table and put them on his lap -- he never looked at them. Then he began his lecture. He first said, very somberly, "I have, Mr. Ambassador (when he was angry, he always called me "Mr. Ambassador" so that I always knew when I could expect a blast), a very serious, personal private message to President Reagan which I want you to transmit

immediately". So Paul Hare takes out his notebook to record Begin's message. Begin launches into a lecture that lasted about one hour and ten minutes non-stop. His comments were completely extemporaneous. He never looked at a note. He gave a *tour de force* of Israel's relations with Syria, including all the perfidies that Syria had perpetrated, including the attacks on Israeli territory, the Yom Kippur war and how Israel occupied the Golan Heights in the first place during the 1967 war. He talked about the Israeli casualties, the Holocaust. It was a typical Begin performance when he was in good form; he was at his most scathing. He reviewed the history of "the alliance" with the United States, emphasizing how he and Reagan had reached a most important agreement which would make the U.S. and Israel allies in the future. He then noted that suddenly, without justification, the U.S. had "canceled" the agreement -- he insisted on using the word "canceled". I tried to interrupt to clarify the U.S. action and was just brushed aside. The highlight of the Begin performance was the colorful language used; that became well known subsequently. He said something along these lines' "Do you think that we are teenagers to be punished, slapped on the wrist? Do you think Israel is a vassal state of the United States? Are we just another "banana republic"? Let me tell you, Mr. Ambassador, that this is not Israel!". He went on this vein for 70 minutes and although I tried, I was unsuccessful in interrupting. At the end, I managed to talk about five-ten minutes, trying to clarify the U.S. action which was a "suspension" pending discussions between the two countries to clarify what each could expect from the other. I pointed out that the Israeli action was a strange surprise to spring on an ally, but Begin wasn't having any of it. So we parted. Paul went with me downstairs so that we could return as quickly as possible to Tel Aviv to send a reporting cable -- Tel Aviv being about an hour's drive from Jerusalem. As we walked down the stairs, I looked into the living room of the residence. The whole Cabinet had assembled there along with the Chief of Staff, the Chief of Intelligence -- the high command of the Israeli armed forces. I decided to enter the room and chatted with a couple of them. They did not seem to know why they were there, but they were waiting for Begin to hold a Cabinet meeting. I took my leave, somewhat uneasily. As I left the residence, I ran into a herd of journalists, who had been summoned, as they often were in swarms whenever I came out of the Prime Ministry; there was always a battery of journalists waiting for me. They asked me what had happened and I told them that the Prime Minister had given me a message for President Reagan and that I was on the way to Tel Aviv to send it. Then I left and got into the car with Paul. We started down the hill and had gotten down about half way down when we turned on the news. We heard the Prime Minister's press spokesman giving in English for the foreign media a summary of what Begin had told me, including all the colorful phrases. The briefing was rather lengthy, about fifteen minutes, and very accurate, practically word for word.

The White House was furious at this broad-side attack, not only because of its treatment of the U.S. Ambassador, but more importantly for the tone of the attack on the United States. The temperature of the U.S.-Israel relationships plummeted to sub-Arctic levels immediately. I found out later what the Cabinet meeting that I had stumbled into was all about. That is an interesting story in itself. Years after the fact, it became clear that Begin's anger about the suspension of the

Memorandum of Agreement resulted first in his lecture to me, but also in the first proposal to the cabinet for a Lebanon invasion. Sharon had asked all the military leaders to attend because he had been asked by Begin to brief the Cabinet on the whole operation called "Big Pines" -- the full version that eventually took place. Although in very much greater detail, it was essentially the plan that Sharon had presented to Habib as his "personal" idea two and half weeks earlier. It was however, the first time the Cabinet had ever heard of it at all, except Shamir who had been briefed by Foreign Ministry staff after the Habib-Sharon meeting.

At the Cabinet meeting, Begin was still angry and livid; he was all fired up. They carried him downstairs to the living room where he chaired the Cabinet meeting. I am told that he asked for Cabinet approval of the Lebanon operation to be initiated at whatever moment seemed to be appropriate in light of PLO actions. The Cabinet was thunder-struck and a number of them asked Sharon a lot of questions. Simcha Erlich, who was the Liberal Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister and a well known "dove", and others, raised serious questions about the whole concept. During the discussions, it was Sharon who defended the operation; Begin apparently just listened to both sides. After a while, it became clear to Begin that he didn't have a majority ready to vote on the proposal. So with a lot of anger, he closed the debate, adjourned the meeting and was taken back upstairs. That was the first of several Israeli Cabinet meetings on the "Big Pines" proposal. Each time, it was deferred or not approved; there was enough opposition to forestall Begin and Sharon from bringing the proposal to a vote lest they seriously splinter the Cabinet. There were at least two or three other occasions between January and June during which inconclusive Cabinet discussions were held. After a while, Begin and Sharon concluded that their Cabinet colleagues were "weak-kneed, lily-livered faint hearts" who could not be persuaded to accept the total proposal. At that stage, Sharon recast the nature of the operation and convinced Begin that the Israelis needed only to project their force 50 kilometers into Lebanon to clean out the PLO artillery and Katusha rockets; thereafter, the Cabinet discussion until the war started was about a much smaller and less frightening operation than had been originally presented. It became, for discussion purposes, only an incursion, slightly larger than the one that took place in 1978.

Not only was the U.S. angry about the substance of his lecture, but I was personally furious at Begin for the manner in which he handled the "private" message to Reagan including a serious breach of diplomatic protocol by giving me a message that had be transmitted "immediately" when in fact the press was to be briefed before I could even return to Tel Aviv. I should add parenthetically that the mechanics used by Begin tells us something about the Prime Minister's extraordinary memory. I understood later that before the "Big Pines" briefing, Begin started the Cabinet meeting by recounting, from memory and without notes, precisely what he had said to me upstairs. His lecture to me was in English; his description of events to the Cabinet was in Hebrew. His press secretary made notes of his comments to the Cabinet, went outside to brief the press in English, and despite the double-translation, the press got almost a verbatim version of

what I had heard. It was a technically extraordinary feat. In any case, I was thoroughly angry with Begin about the way he had toyed with me and the United States.

Senator Percy happened to visit Israel right after Christmas. Percy had been briefed on recent events, had met with Foreign Ministry staff and was greatly concerned with the drift of the situation, particularly about the cooling of U.S.-Israel relations. At the same time, he was also angry with Begin and the Israelis as we all were. Moshe Arens who was to be the Israeli Ambassador in Washington hosted a dinner for Percy on the night of December 29. Before that dinner, I took Percy to see Begin at the latter's residence. They met for more than an hour with me essentially taking notes. Toward the end, Percy, while trying to stay cordial, was attempting to convince Begin that he needed to take into greater account, U.S. -- both administration and Congressional -- feelings in matters such as the recent events. When Percy finished, I said, "Mr. Prime Minister, there is something that I wanted to talk to you about before we leave. It concerns me personally". I then really laid him out for the handling of the "urgent and private" message to the President. I described in unmistakable terms what normal diplomatic practices were and how he had violated them. I told him that I felt that I had been treated like an idiot by his performance. For the only time in my recollection of my relationship with Begin, he apologized; he really was quite contrite. He said he had never considered events in that light; it had never crossed his mind that he was violating diplomatic protocol. He was so intent on getting his point across publicly in the most dramatic manner that he just didn't consider the potential negatives. He was so contrite, which was so unlike Begin, that I will never forget it. Percy was the only witness.

1981 ended with U.S.-Israel relationships in a deep freeze.

Q: That brings us to January 1, 1982. What happened next?

LEWIS: As the New Year dawned, I received a message requesting that I return to Washington for consultations. Our Ambassador to Egypt, Roy Atherton, received a similar request. We were to return to the U.S. to discuss what could be done about the autonomy negotiations and the peace process. I was also to discuss the perilous state of U.S.-Israel relations. I returned on Sunday, January 3. I spent all day Monday in a series of meetings with the NEA Assistant Secretary, Nick Veliotis, and his staff. We discussed various ways to re-start the autonomy negotiations which had been postponed since the November round at the Israeli request. By this time, it was clear that both Israel and Egypt were far more preoccupied with the completion of the peace treaty. Egypt was especially concerned with the final withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Sinai by the end of April as provided by the treaty. The autonomy talks were of second priority. The U.S. administration, and Secretary Haig specifically, had not yet completely abandoned the notion that the Camp David process should be pushed. He was of the opinion, however, that the focus would have to be on the peace treaty and the withdrawal of Israeli forces, although he also would have liked to keep the autonomy talks moving. He said that he would visit Mubarak and Begin to see whether he couldn't get the two parties to continue their

negotiations, particularly the Israelis. I had discussions with Haig, the White House staff, the Pentagon, CIA and other places in Washington. I was principally interested in getting a sense of the inter-agency view of Israel at that stage. Everybody was mad at the Israelis because of the Golan affair and Begin's comments about the United States. At the same time, there was rising concern about Israeli plans for Lebanon. Habib's reports on his conversation with Sharon had been taken very seriously in Washington. No one, however, had any idea about slowing Israel's momentum; the Palestinians were restive. The situation was very tense.

In response to a question on January 9, the Department's press spokes-person said that we were unwilling to reestablish strategic cooperation with Israel because of the Golan Heights matter. We wanted clarification of the situation before we would end the suspension of the agreement. Haig left for the region the following day. He first visited Cairo, where he said publicly that Mubarak had given him a clear and firm commitment to intensify efforts to reach agreement on the autonomy talks. I later was given to understand from Haig, via Harvey Slickman, his special assistant who was with the Secretary, that in fact when Haig left Cairo, he knew from Mubarak that the Egyptians wanted to put the autonomy talks on ice; they wanted to concentrate on getting the Israelis out of the Sinai. Haig's comments were actually a smokescreen.

When Haig reached Israel on January 14, he met with Begin, Sharon, Shamir and others. In his meeting with Begin, there was some discussion of the autonomy talks. The Israelis were much more anxious to keep them going than the Egyptians; they pressed Haig to urge Mubarak to join in. They wanted us to intervene on their behalf with Mubarak so that the Egyptians would make a high level commitment to the autonomy talks. But Mubarak was elusive; he had other more important issues to attend.

The main subject of the Haig visit was Israel's intentions toward Lebanon and associated with that, what was to be done about the Golan Heights. The meetings were not entirely satisfactory on either subject, but Begin did give some assurances that Israel would not attack anyone in Lebanon without clear provocation. He urged the U.S. to do everything possible to make the cease fire effective and to warn the Syrians not to complicate matters. When Haig returned to Washington at the end of January, he did tell the press that he didn't believe that any autonomy agreement would be concluded in the near future. He did not give any indication of a diminished U.S. interest in the issue. This period was a busy time for the Embassy. There were a lot of visitors -- Congressional and others.

Toward the end of January, Haig decided that he would make one more trip to the region. He asked Atherton, Cluverius and me to meet him in Geneva, prior to his arrival in the region. So on January 26, I flew to Switzerland and met that evening with the assembled group. The next morning, I flew back to Israel with the Secretary and his party which included Richard Fairbanks, the to-be appointed U.S. representative to the autonomy negotiations. Fairbanks had been the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs and was well connected politically with the Reagan team. I thought at the time that he was a strange choice to replace Phil Habib; he had

little experience; he was a lawyer; he was active, smart, self-confident, but no Middle East experience and little diplomatic experience. I learned much, much later that Fairbanks' appointment, although somewhat cynical, was very sensible. Haig knew nothing was going to happen on the autonomy talks for many months, but he didn't want to admit that the process was dead because that might create tensions between Israel and Egypt. He knew Mubarak didn't want any action and that Begin was increasingly preoccupied by other issues such as Lebanon and Syria. Fairbanks was appointed essentially as a holding action, keeping the position as negotiator filled, and to tour around the region periodically to give the appearance of diplomatic action. It was never intended to be a serious appointment. Nevertheless, Fairbanks was with the Secretary on his January, 1982 trip; it was an opportunity for the Secretary to introduce him to the Israeli and the Egyptians. That would give him some status. Fairbanks was insecure and knew that he was not equipped for the job, but he played the role adequately, particularly since little was expected of him.

Towards the end of January, troubles erupted in Syria. Assad's forces were attacked by Muslim fundamentalists in a number of cities. These were serious terrorist-guerrilla operations against the Syrian regime. The end result was that in a matter of a few weeks, Assad sent the Army into Homs, Hama and Aleppo. The Army shelled these towns and in Hama especially it leveled the town. In the process, according to the information we received, 20-25,000 people were killed by the Syrian Army -- mostly, if not all, women and children -- the families of the Muslims. The Muslim Brotherhood was effectively squashed and their rebellion was over. The cities became ghost towns; they have never been rebuilt in the same way. It was an excellent illustration on how to extinguish a rebellion with cold blooded brutality. Assad was in very bad health at the time and his regime was quite shaky, but he held on tenaciously. The Israelis took very careful note of Assad's action and later made prominent mention of the lack of international reaction to this brutality in contrast to the international comments on Israeli behavior in the West Bank and Gaza.

Fairbanks was not formally appointed as the U.S. representative until the Haig party returned to Washington. Mubarak went to Washington in early February for reassurance that we would insist that the peace treaty would be fully implemented. There was an increasing amount of nervousness in Egypt that Israel, in the final analysis, would refuse to withdraw completely from the Sinai. Indeed, Sharon had been making suggestions along these lines, which made the Egyptians very nervous. In mid-February, Fairbanks made his first official visit to Israel. It was very formal and little was accomplished. He did test the waters.

Q: Who supported Fairbanks?

LEWIS: He had the same team that Habib had been working with. In the absence of any active negotiations, Fairbanks went around and consulted, trying to find any means to get the autonomy negotiation started again. Everybody was polite, but no one really cared. There were still at this

time a lot of exchanges between Cairo and Jerusalem; Shamir and Sharon both went back and forth. There were a lot of efforts being made to agree on the final withdrawal details.

In early February, Sallie and I visited Jordan at the invitation of Dick Viets, our Ambassador in Amman. He had been my first DCM in Tel Aviv (1977-79). It gave me an opportunity to become better acquainted with the Jordanians; I had been there once before when Tom Pickering was Ambassador. I again found King Hussein and his people very eager to talk to me about the Israelis; the Jordanians were always anxious to know what the Israeli leadership was like and what it thought. I had a long lunch with the King and General [Sharif Zaid] bin Shakar and later I met with the Crown Prince and other Jordanian leaders. They were very nervous about events in Israel and particularly about Israeli intentions in Lebanon. The King was convinced that a plot was being hatched which would include an attack on the Palestinians which would once again complicate his life by driving some of them back into Jordan; in light of the Jordan-PLO history, that was a troublesome prospect. He wanted to know to what extent the Sinai withdrawal was likely to take place, although he did indicate some skepticism. All Jordanians were suspicious of Israeli intentions, particularly on withdrawal.

Sometime in February, Shamir had visited Cairo with the express intent on making arrangements for a Mubarak visit to Israel. He had never been there and the Israelis were anxious to expose him to their country. Unfortunately -- I believe at Begin's initiative -- the Israelis assumed that if the President of Egypt would come to Israel, he would come on an official visit and would visit Jerusalem. Sadat had set that precedent, but Mubarak was too faint-hearted and was greatly concerned by Arab reactions. Therefore, he postponed the trip making his reasons eminently clear -- he did not use some vague diplomatic formulations, which would have been much wiser. Instead, he made it clear that he would not come to Jerusalem. Once the issue had been raised, the anti-Egyptians and those who were sensitive to Jerusalem's status, immediately advised Begin that no one should be welcomed in Israel on an official visit unless they visit Jerusalem. Begin fully agreed. In effect, they shot themselves in the foot by insisting on a Jerusalem visit, thereby eliminating any possibility of a Mubarak visit, which still hasn't taken place although we are now in 1991. This issue remains a very sore subject between Israel and Egypt.

The spring of 1982 was filled with disagreements on the cease-fire in Lebanon -- its extent and application. We continued to try to smooth matters over and to stave off trouble. There were an increasing number of incidents outside of Israel between Palestinian elements and Jews, with each one being considered by Israel as a major violation. The Israeli press increasingly beat the war drums, using each one of these "major violations" as an excuse for the policy of cleaning out the threats from South Lebanon. On April 3, an Israeli diplomat, Jacob Bar-Simenthal was assassinated in Paris; the PLO was blamed. That Spring, there was also an attack on a Jewish synagogue in Paris during which a number of people were killed. These incidents did inflame Israeli views toward the PLO. Cap Weinberger had planned a trip to Israel during this time, but on April 5, Shamir gave a very fiery speech at Bar-Simenthal's funeral, saying that Israel would strike at the PLO without reservations if these acts of terrorism did not cease; the next day,

Weinberger canceled his trip, although I don't know how closely the two events were connected. State had recommended the cancellation because it was felt that Weinberger's presence in Israel could only complicate matters. Throughout April, we were increasingly focusing on the final Sinai withdrawal arrangements which had become more difficult with every passing day. Sharon was becoming more and more obstreperous; he was accusing the Egyptians of not fulfilling all of their treaty obligations. Both Begin and he were discussing publicly the need for Egypt to meet all of its commitments before Israel met all of its. A "chicken" game was developing and we were extremely concerned that the whole treaty would fall apart at the last minute because the Israelis would not complete their withdrawal. In retrospect, we were probably overly concerned; I am convinced that Begin never had the slightest doubt about fulfilling Israel's treaty commitments, but he was determined to squeeze as much out of the Egyptians as he could; it was clear that they were not meeting all of their obligations. Begin was a tough bargainer and may have bluffed us into being more concerned than we needed to be. He certainly did worry us; we were also concerned about developments in Lebanon which appeared to be increasingly likely to lead to a major clash; so we had two major concerns on our hands simultaneously -- the situation in the area could have been greatly upset by either, not to mention both. We had a scare in mid-April when we spotted Israeli troop movements near the Lebanon border; we had intelligence warnings all the time. I went to see Begin to show our concerns and he assured me that no decision had been made to attack Palestinian targets; that did not mean that such a decision might not be made. The atmosphere was tense; I had repeated meetings with Begin and Sharon -- sometimes together. Since December, Sharon had become increasingly difficult to deal with; he was abusive; he didn't listen; he made no effort to try to resolve real or perceived problems; he was defiant; essentially, he was sticking his thumb in our eyes every time he got a chance. He kept repeating, "Don't think we will surprise you; if these Palestinian acts continue, we will clean them out". He was in fact making his view clear that we would have to swallow what ever Israel decided to do. Both Washington and I continued to send warnings, argued and rebutted, although I must say that the Embassy was not getting a lot stern messages from Washington to support our position. I believe that Haig had concluded as early as January/February that at some point, the Israelis would be sufficiently provoked that they would invade Lebanon and clobber the Palestinians. Haig didn't really like the PLO and therefore may have considered the Israelis' idea not so bad.

In the middle of April, another unanticipated event occurred which raised tensions a great deal. An American-Israeli, Aaron Harry Goodman, went crazy and shot his way up unto the Dome of the Rock. He was an Israeli soldier. He killed two Arab guards, wounded a number of worshipers. There were protests during which rocks were thrown. It was a terrible mess. Goodman was indeed out of his mind. The Arab world seized the event as an opportunity to show how unreliable Israel was in safeguarding the Temple Mount. Tensions rose drastically. We made some tough public statements in Washington, but we soon understood that the act was that of a madman. No one else seemed or wanted to understand that. There was a major debate in the Security Council. Israel was condemned by all sides which put us in the position of both

defending and denouncing Israel. On April 12, Nick Veliotis, who was in Israel on a brief visit, returned to Washington and on his recommendation, the Administration decided to appoint Deputy Secretary Walter Stoessel as a kind of trouble shooter. He was to go to Israel and Egypt to try to ease some of the tensions that were generated by the Israeli retreat from the Sinai. His appointment was intended to get us over this rough period because he was a high level official.

The problem was that Cairo was dragging its feet on the treaty violations that Israel alleged; some in Israel were talking about not completing the Sinai withdrawal. Stoessel's job was to mediate and to make sure that the complete withdrawal would take place. He had never been involved in Middle East affairs, but was an old pro, a fine person and an experienced diplomat. He was very gracious, proper and formal, while warm at the same time. When he came to the region, he essentially put himself in Roy Atherton's and my hands. We worked very closely with him during the following couple of weeks. He met with Begin, who took a liking to him. Stoessel essentially shuttled between Cairo and Jerusalem. During his visit, we worked out some language for an informal memorandum of understanding, covering the points at issue. That document was negotiated with both sides and became a cover for the political leadership. It in effect made the United States the guarantor of all that was to happen. Begin over-ruled Sharon, who was arguing that complete withdrawal be delayed. Begin, as I said, had complete withdrawal in mind all along, but needed a senior American mediator to help him in his internal arguments. Sharon had raised so much fuss about these alleged treaty violations that Begin needed this help. Many of Sharon's allegations were insignificant in any case, but he seemed determined to thwart the treaty, although I do not know why. It may have gone back to the questions which stalled the Taba negotiations for so long. Sharon and others, including Begin, were always very unhappy about the fact that at Camp David the Israelis had to agree to total withdrawal from the Sinai. They gave up airfields and settlements near the border. They had to give up the last inch of territory. There was considerable criticism in Israel of Begin and Sharon and the administration after Camp David for accepting total withdrawal because that policy might set a precedent for the Syrians and the Golan Heights and for the Jordanians and the Palestinians and the West Bank. The argument went that once it was agreed to withdraw entirely from the Sinai, then there could be no compromises for any other occupied territories. Sharon apparently had bought that argument fully and was therefore determined not to evacuate the Sinai completely. Begin was also sympathetic to the argument, but was ultimately governed by a sense of honor which bound him to a treaty that he had signed. Both would have preferred to find a way not to return all of the Sinai, even if they were just small pieces that were under dispute; they thought that might be helpful later when other agreements had to be negotiated with other Arab countries. That is how the Taba affair began. Sharon staked out about 14 different points along the demarcation line where there was disagreement between Israel and Egypt on where the boundary should be. Sharon was determined not to give on any of these areas at issue. Ultimately, the negotiators put off the settlement of these border disputes; that allowed the withdrawal to be completed. That was Stoessel's achievement. It was hard work, late nights; we worked in the Consul General's offices in Jerusalem since we were working with the Israelis in

Jerusalem and needed a secure phone to talk to Atherton in Cairo. At one point we had the Israeli negotiators, including Eli Rubenstein and David Kimche, come to the Consulate General which is something that they had never done. The Israeli government has never recognized the existence of that Consulate General and therefore is reluctant to deal with it at all. That attitude stemmed from the *Corpus Separatum* concept of 1948 which suggested that we didn't recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; that is why our Embassy is in Tel Aviv. That concept created great "angst" for the Israelis; they were unhappy that our representation in Jerusalem was a Consulate General and not an Embassy; they have never quite recognized the existence of our representation. But in 1982, the Israelis were so anxious to get the withdrawal issue resolved by April 25 that their Civil Servants -- the professionals with whom we worked closely and well -- actually came to the Consulate General for the first time. Not only did they visit the CG's residence, but they actually went upstairs to the offices and were present as we spoke over secure lines to Cairo -- just as the Egyptians were with Roy at the other end of the line. At that point, Stoessel was in Cairo, hammering out the language on the informal memorandum that was to serve as the bridge for withdrawal. The Israelis were very curious about the Consulate General; what it was like, how it looked. They had never been inside. They admitted that it had never occurred to them that they would be there; sometimes diplomatic requirements must override political sensitivities.

The Stoessel shuttles were completed on the night before the final withdrawal was to take place, which was April 25. Stoessel had returned from Cairo at 1 a.m. on the morning of the 25th. He slept in Jerusalem for about four hours and had his first meeting of the day at 7:30 a.m. I met him there having driven up from Tel Aviv early that morning. We met with Begin at 8 a.m.; Stoessel had a *tete-a-tete* with Begin which was important to the Prime Minister because it gave an impression to his political colleagues that there had been a private message for him from the Egyptians -- which in fact there hadn't been. But it helped him to close the loop in the Cabinet. The private meeting was followed by a Cabinet meeting with Sharon *et al.* There had to be a signing ceremony for the document that closed the Sinai withdrawal chapter which dealt with how the disputed areas were going to be handled. The Egyptian Ambassador to Israel, Saad Mortada, had been authorized to sign on behalf of his country so that the signing could take place in Israel. The ceremony which was to take place on the 25th kept being delayed; around 1 p.m. we sent the Israelis' final text to Atherton in Cairo. We then waited for Egyptian approval; withdrawal would not start until the document had been approved by all parties. The 25th passed and we still didn't have the Egyptians' reply. Technically, the peace treaty had been violated, which is something we all wanted to avoid -- except maybe Sharon. So we moved the clock back as is often done in international conferences. Eventually, the Egyptians replied positively and the Ambassador was authorized to sign the document. Shamir was spending that night at the Plaza Hotel; we, the Americans and Ambassador Mortada, took the document to the hotel from the American Consulate General where we had all been waiting. Shamir was asleep; so Mortada signed and left the paper with us to get Shamir's signature! The Egyptian Ambassador was a very cooperative diplomat. At 1 a.m., we did get Shamir's signature although it was dated April 25.

We then turned the clocks back to their right times. Stoessel flew back to Washington and the Israelis began their withdrawal from the Sinai. But the whole episode was a cliff-hanger.

One of the most difficult parts of the withdrawal was the movement of the Israeli settlers from the Sinai. That was one of the more dramatic episodes of the whole affair. Israeli TV gave it full coverage. Sharon, as Defense Minister, had to send the Army to drag the settlers, one by one, away from their homes and back into Israeli territory. They fought like tigers, attacking their own soldiers who had to use foam; all of this appeared on TV. Many settlers from the West Bank went down to the Yammit -- a settlement in the Sinai -- to help the people there to defend themselves from the Israeli army. much of the fighting stemmed from the provocative actions of the West Bank fanatics. It reminded me very much of the worst scenes we had in this country during the anti-Vietnam demonstrations. It was terribly traumatic for an Israeli Army to be attacked and to attack some of the finest Israeli youths, who were all wearing their yarmulkes. The pictures had a great psychological effect on the Israeli population. It seared the Israelis' public soul; I believe it was calculated to do so. The leaders of the groups that defended Yammit were cynically determined to make the withdrawal of the settlers so painful to the government and the public that it could never be repeated on the West Bank or other areas if withdrawal would be required from those areas in the future. It did have that effect; the forced withdrawal and the subsequent demolition of Yammit by the Israeli Army were not soon forgotten and is still remembered today. Sharon insisted on the destruction of the settlement, despite the fact that the Egyptians had indicated a willingness to pay for the buildings. Sharon spuriously argued that it was too close to the border and that it would be much safer to have just a ruin there so that it could not become a terrorist base in the future. Sharon rejected the Egyptians' offer and Begin for some reason supported him. Yammit was an exception; the settlements further south along the Sinai coast were turned over to the Egyptians intact and due compensation was paid. Yammit was turned over in ruins, after the population had been dragged out screaming and kicking. But it had the effect that Sharon hoped to create. Today, Israeli public sentiment about forced evacuation is governed by its memory of Yammit. I doubt whether anything like it will ever be repeated. There may be voluntary evacuations, but no forced ones, especially if the Army is required.

Otherwise, the evacuation of the Sinai went very smoothly. The pull-back was executed on schedule; all the detailed agreements were followed to the letter. Parenthetically, at about this time, Begin took a couple of demonstrative steps which in fact said that Israel had withdrawn this time, but would never do it again. For example, he gave a speech in the Knesset on May 3 in which he said that after the interim period specified by the Camp David agreements, Israel would assert its claims for sovereignty to other territories as authorized by the agreements. He was putting all on notice that Sinai was not a precedent for other occupied territories. The Knesset voted 58-54 in favor of a Begin proposal which opposed any dismantling of settlements which might result from future peace negotiations. The Knesset also approved Begin's proposal that after the interim period Israeli sovereignty should be extended to the occupied territories. That

just a demonstration of Begin's defiance and bitterness about the Sinai withdrawal; the action had an effect on the Egyptians and other Arabs. The Cabinet passed a resolution which rejected any efforts not to hold future autonomy talks in Jerusalem -- the Israeli position being that if they were to be held in Cairo, they should also be held in Jerusalem, not in Herzliyya or other cities. That just increased the difficulties of having autonomy talks in the future.

These actions were just part of a large Israeli campaign to minimize the Sinai withdrawal and harden the Israeli position on other matters. It was driven by the bitterness and frustration felt by the Israeli leaders. It certainly made it clear to Egypt that the chances of completing the Camp David accords were very slim, if at all. Egypt got the Sinai back, but the Israelis were making it clear that it was not a precedent for the West Bank or the Golan. That was the tacit statement being sent by these statements.

On May 21, Sharon went to Washington. This was the climactic moment before the Lebanon war. It was the last chance for us to block the invasion. We now know that during the preceding three months, as I have said, Begin and Sharon had brought the Lebanon plan before the Cabinet at least a couple of times, but did not obtain a consensus. Then Sharon laid before the cabinet the more modest plan, which called only for an incursion to a depth of fifty kilometers, to eliminate the Katusha rockets which were indeed a threat to the Israeli towns close to the northern border. The Cabinet was lulled into approving that "limited" operation as necessary. It left the timing of the operation to Begin and Sharon, presumably depending on further Palestinian incursions. But the gun was cocked when Sharon arrived in Washington. It had not been fired yet. Sharon's purpose for the visit was to sound out Haig and to make an assessment of possible U.S. reaction which he was to report to Begin upon his return. The question was, "Could Israel "get away" with it without any massive American reaction?". I went back to Washington on May 24 to participate in the Sharon meetings; I did not assume that the meetings would go smoothly. I had long before concluded that the Lebanon war was one that was just waiting to take place. The chances increased with every Palestinian attack.

But I had never fully understood how committed Sharon was to his original plan. All the press leaks, of which there were many, discussed only the more modest plan. Our intelligence had not picked up any indication that the press was not correct. We knew that the Cabinet was divided, with a number of Ministers opposing any Lebanon operation.

While in Washington, I met with Charlie Hill, Larry Eagleburger, Nick Veliotis, and Secretary Haig to discuss how Sharon might be handled. Sharon had a meeting with Weinberger in the morning which was a stand off -- very formal, but with little substance. In the afternoon of May 25, we met in the Secretary's conference room on the Seventh Floor. Sharon made a presentation of his bellicose views of the Lebanon situation -- the Palestinian threat, Israel's unwillingness to allow further violations of the cease fire, Israel's interpretation of the cease fire. Sharon made the same statements that had been made several times previously, "We are not going to surprise you. We are putting the U.S. on notice. We are not looking for trouble, but we can't accept current

conditions much longer. So don't be surprised if we respond in a massive way to these dastardly attacks". Haig clearly followed the line that we had agreed upon. Sharon had taken the maps out so that he could show what might happen if the Palestinians didn't desist. The maps of course only showed the southern Lebanon area. Haig repeatedly said that we considered the situation very dangerous; that we did not consider the cease fire to have been violated; we believed that Israel had a legitimate right to self-defense, but that international sentiment had to be considered. Haig's view was, which I believe was supported by Reagan, that any country had the right to self-defense. The U.S. would therefore not tell Israel that it couldn't do so, preemptively if necessary, although he didn't use that phrase. But all actions and reactions had to be weighed against a framework of proportionality. Haig emphasized that if Israel were threatened or actually attacked, its response would have to have international understanding that it was proportionate. That was the central message to Sharon which was given several times during the meeting. Sharon was never told that Israel could not or must not strike at the PLO, but he certainly should have understood that anything like we now know he was planning was totally unacceptable. The conclusion that Ze'Ev Schiff -- a writer -- and others drew -- namely that Sharon had gotten a green light -- was incorrect. One might argue that he got an amber light, but certainly not a green light, at least not while I was present. Unfortunately after this meeting, Haig met privately with Sharon. I have to assume that the Secretary used the same line. Although it is conceivable that there might have been some other nuances, I find it hard to believe. Haig may have shown more sympathy for Israel's dilemma in private because he was in fact sympathetic to Israel's problems with the PLO and the Syrians.

After the meeting, Veliotis and I met with Hill and agreed that the Secretary had not delivered the message in sufficiently tough terms. For us, it raised a serious question on how Sharon would describe the meeting to Begin after his return to Israel. When we had a chance to meet with Haig, we suggested that he write a letter to Begin stating in clear terms what the U.S. position was, so that Sharon's report couldn't be distorted. Nick and I drafted such a letter which Haig signed and I carried back to Israel. The letter was very clear; it followed the policy that had been given to Sharon in good strong terms. Subsequently, from a number of sources, we found out that when Sharon got back he went to see Begin and reported that the Americans would not bother Israel and that Israel should proceed to do what it had to do. The U.S. would make some noise, but wouldn't take any adverse actions. We would swallow Israel's attack. When Begin read Haig's letter, he had Sharon's oral report and therefore leaned to Sharon's interpretation. Objectively, one would have to conclude that at this stage, the only way Begin and Sharon could have been dissuaded from their venture would have been for Reagan to write a very tough letter which would not have left any doubt in any one's mind that the U.S. would react forcefully and strenuously if Israel invaded Lebanon. Such a letter would have had to convey clearly that if such event would occur, the U.S. would suspend all assistance, etc.; in fact, it would have had to contain a real *ultimatum* of the kind we have never delivered to Israel, even during the Lebanon war. I did deliver one *ultimatum* to Begin at a later point after the war had begun to warn about making any further attacks on the Syrians. It was, however, written in very polite language and

didn't include any specific threat beyond the general one that our relationships would be adversely effected, which carried some meaning, but lacked specificity. Even an *ultimatum* of that kind probably would not have been sufficient in May, 1982; there was too much momentum behind Sharon's operation. If we had been willing, we might have sent a real red light, but it was not realistic to expect that, given the U.S. politics, the history and the relationship. It was not the kind of message that any American President, at least since Eisenhower in 1956, had ever given Israel and may never do so. In any case, Sharon returned to Israel and matters unraveled quickly. I returned on May 29 and delivered the letter. Begin read it and said he understood, but reiterated the standard arguments about the PLO increasing threat which could not be tolerated much longer.

On June 4, Shlomo Argoff, the Israeli Chargé d'Affaires in London, was attacked by an assassin, shot in the head and almost killed. He is still alive, but in a vegetable state. It was a very sad event. The PLO denied all responsibility; the slim evidence that does exist suggests that the assassin probably belonged to another Palestinian group -- an extremist gang like Abu Nidal -- and not the main line PLO. But it was certainly a Palestinian attack. On the next day, the Israelis bombed Beirut and the PLO headquarters very heavily with quite a few deaths. Then PLO signed its own death warrant. Arafat, despite a considerable number of warnings not to provoke the Israelis, apparently felt he had no option because of his honor and the morale of his men. He ordered his men to fire on Kiryat Shimona and other northern settlements with Katusha rockets and artillery. That caused retaliatory Israeli air strikes; the PLO then increased their counter artillery fire. I must say that I have never understood what might have been going through Arafat's mind at this moment. It was clear by June 4 and 5 that Israel was just waiting for an excuse to invade Lebanon. Nevertheless, the PLO responded in such a way to make an invasion inevitable -- it may have been that anyway, but the PLO through its actions made it a certainty. The invasion began on June 6. That was the beginning of the Lebanon war, a war which didn't reflect well on anybody -- not on the Israelis, not on the PLO, not terribly well on the U.S.. We knew it was coming, we tried to stop it, but our efforts were not sufficiently threatening. They were not halfhearted, but they were inadequate for the challenge -- no major and very tough *ultimatums*. We couldn't put any breaks on the PLO. The Lebanon war was a tragedy for all concerned -- the Palestinians, the Lebanese and for Israel. It led to a national crisis which in many ways has never been resolved.

Q: You have alluded to the severe depression that Begin experienced. Tell us more about that.

LEWIS: As I think about the period we are discussing (end of September 1982-Summer 1983), there are about four major areas of my professional life in Tel Aviv that took up almost all of my energies. the first was dealing with Menachem Begin as he entered his state of depression which ultimately led to his resignation. The second was trying to get the Israelis to withdraw their forces from Lebanon -- an effort that Ambassador Habib, Maury Draper and I were very deeply involved in. The third was what happened to the Reagan initiative and the effort to start peace

negotiations, which began in early September. The fourth was an upheaval in my official life due to a very bitter personal feud with Ariel Sharon.

Let me start with the Begin story. I didn't really know until later that throughout his life, he had been subject to periodic bouts of depression, followed by a sort of manic phase subsequently. These periods lasted from a few days to a few weeks. By this time, I had already observed him in two or three of these periods. They were very striking phases. Each time, he would become listless; he would lose interest in the kind of detail that he normally found fascinating. He would become very morose. I don't know what his doctors believed about the causes or the origins. He was under medical treatment for other ailments. I was never told that he had ever consulted a psychiatrist, but he may have done so secretly. I never heard any reliable stories if in fact he was under psychiatric care. That Fall, the pressure of public opinion -- thousands and thousands of protesters in the streets -- forced him and the Cabinet to set up a National Commission of Inquiry, under the chairmanship of Supreme Justice Kahan, to investigate the massacres in Sabra and Shatila and pin-point responsibility if possible. The Commission was set up much against Begin's will. Almost immediately after the Commission was established, Begin went into one of his depression periods. It lasted for several weeks. At the same time, Mrs. Begin, to whom he was extremely close -- closer than any other person -- was suffering from emphysema and other serious ailments, from which she had suffered from time to time. She was in and out of the hospital during this period and the Prime Minister was very concerned. He was also very anxious to be invited to Washington to meet with President Reagan to try to rebuild the friendship and the bilateral relationship that the Lebanon war had so seriously tarnished. But he didn't feel that he could leave the country while his wife was in the hospital. At the same time, he was angling for a meeting with Reagan. Eventually, after a couple of months, a meeting was arranged. Yet, Begin was torn about whether he should leave Israel. Mrs. Begin's doctors assured him that her condition had stabilized, that she was not in danger and that he could proceed on his trip. More importantly, Mrs. Begin urged him to take the trip, assuring him that she was fine. I remember that he was still in doubt about the trip even up to the night before he left. He was a tormented man both because of the personal dilemma and his state of depression which had dragged on, leaving him somewhat disengaged from politics. He was always somber when he met anybody officially. But, as I said, he was so anxious for the meeting with Reagan because he was convinced that if he could only sit down with the President, he could convince him that the Lebanon war had been a wise and justifiable action which had forced the evacuation of the PLO from the area and that the Sabra-Shatila massacres were not Israel's responsibility. He firmly believed that he could get the US-Israel relationship back on the high plane it used to occupy.

So he decided to go to Washington in early December 1982. The trip required him to go first to Los Angeles, where he was supposed to give a speech before a huge gathering of the area's Jewish organizations. I had already returned to Washington, preparing for his visit to the Capital which was to follow immediately after the L.A. stop. I met with people in the Department and the White House to prepare for Begin's meeting with the President. One evening -- Saturday, I

believe -- I got a call from someone in Begin's entourage to tell me that Begin had just received a telephone call from Jerusalem transmitting the news that Mrs. Begin had just died. He had received the call about an hour before he was to make his L.A. speech. With his characteristic discipline, he proceeded to give the speech. But then he returned immediately thereafter to Israel, canceling his Washington visit. I tried very hard to find a way to rendezvous with his plane in New York and accompany him back to Israel, so that I could attend the funeral. But somehow, we were not able to make the connection and I went back separately. I arrived unfortunately after the funeral. The death of his wife was a shattering blow to Begin as you can well imagine. It greatly increased his depression. Mrs. Begin was only in her early 60s at this time; she was not an old woman, but she had been a very heavy smoker and had had emphysema for a long time. I don't remember the actual cause of death, but it was unexpected. The doctors were startled; Begin was devastated. Thereafter he carried a load of guilt because he had been out of the country when she died; he was never able to rid himself of that burden. As is the Jewish custom, he grew a beard for thirty days as sign of mourning. He went into complete seclusion; he saw no one except his immediate family -- his son and daughters.

He came back to work in January 1983 with a beard and still in a deep state of depression. He was also very thin. Over the next several months, he tried very rigorously to do his job. He came to the office early in the mornings, he stayed at his desk during the day and went through his papers. He rarely initiated any conversations. He listened a great deal and assented. This state lasted from January to May during which very complicated negotiations between Israel and Lebanon over Israeli withdrawal took place, mediated by Habib first and then George Shultz. Members of the Israeli delegation would visit Begin periodically and brief him; Habib and Shultz did the same thing. He would chair Cabinet meetings and other high level meetings, but he was always very passive. Instead of cross-examining people about the details of the negotiations and getting involved personally as had been his style in drafting Israeli positions, he was almost an observer. Shamir, who was the Foreign Minister, Arens, who became Defense Minister in February and the chief negotiator, David Kimche and other team members carried the ball. They kept Begin informed, but he gave very little guidance. He made no public appearances for months. He didn't speak to the press. He kept the Cabinet meetings going, but they were very short; he did not really participate. He was functioning, but only at 20-30% of normal activity. He apparently wasn't eating well during this period; he got thinner and thinner until his clothes hung on him, pathetically. His daughter had moved in with him and was looking after him, but he just wouldn't eat.

People became very worried about Begin. He was still in his state of depression. They tried to get him to see other doctors, but he resisted that. His medical records were reviewed by some foreign doctors and he may have been examined by other than his family doctor. He was on some kind of medication for a while, but nothing to make much difference. He didn't snap out of his depression. He was functioning well enough to run the government, but he was well aware of how far below his usual capacity he was. He lost completely his zest for political life. Begin had

always enjoyed being Prime Minister. I think I mentioned earlier how pleased he was to become Prime Minister after his many years in the political wilderness. He got a kick out of attending public events, out of chairing Cabinet meetings, out of being "in charge". But after his wife's death, he lost all interest, and just went essentially through the motions.

Begin's condition made the responsibilities of other government officials somewhat easier, particularly Shamir and Kimche, because he didn't argue with them so much. On the other hand, he didn't provide the kind of leadership that at times they undoubtedly would have liked to have. His state may have made it easier to reach an agreement with Lebanon than had he been in full action.

He seemed somewhat better and stronger towards the end of May and the beginning of June 1983 after the agreement with Lebanon had been reached. His office sounded us out about scheduling another visit to Washington. The White House agreed for around mid-July. But oddly enough, we could never quite pin-down the exact dates. We would propose a time; they would counter-propose, but no time was ever agreed upon; there was some uncertainty in Jerusalem that became more and more apparent. A couple of Israelis told me at the time that they didn't believe that Begin would ever go to Washington. I didn't accept that evaluation. I knew how much importance he had attached to a Washington visit and a meeting with Reagan and I believed that he would come out of his depression.

During this leaderless period, the Cabinet was divided continually over what Begin viewed as very petty political domestic issues. There was a lot of in-fighting within the Likud. The Cabinet would come to Begin to resolve and arbitrate these minor squabbles. He was totally uninterested; he thought it was ridiculous that they kept bothering him with this stuff. He was upset by the apparent lack of understanding that he was still in mourning and couldn't understand why they couldn't resolve these issues among themselves. He felt very put upon by his own party particularly since he was presented with issues that he wasn't really interested in dealing with. Eventually, a date for a Washington visit was established. Reagan had issued a formal letter of invitation, but Begin had never answered the letter. This was another signal that he was uncertain. About 10-14 days before the meeting, he told the Cabinet that he wasn't going to go to Washington. He told me that he was unable to go. That was the only way he ever explained his change of plans in a message to Reagan; that for "personal" reasons he would be unable to meet in Washington. He left it open for a possible later meeting, but was very vague. It was an obvious tip-off that he had decided to resign, although it was unclear to his colleagues that that had been a decision. Shortly after, on his 70th birthday, which was towards the end of July, he announced his resignation, also for "personal" reasons, to the Cabinet. He didn't make any speech to the country; he just expressed his regrets to the Cabinet that he couldn't continue. They were all up in arms; they were desperate because they felt that without Begin the party would fall apart. It had been his creation; he had been its only Prime Minister; there was no obvious heir-apparent; there was a lot of in-fighting; Likud was already rendered asunder by the Lebanon war with Sharon having been forced out as Defense Minister as a result of the Kahan Commission's

report. The events of the previous two years had left the Likud in bad shape. So the Cabinet pleaded with Begin to stay on, but he was adamant. He gave no reason other than he just couldn't continue, although it was quite clear that physically he could have handled the Prime Minister's job. He was in reasonable physical shape and his mind, even after his wife's death, was as clear as ever. But he had lost his will to continue. He had no inner drive left. Begin had a great sense of responsibility so that he felt that really for many months that he wasn't doing the job he should have been doing. So he had reached the conclusion that it would be better if he resigned.

The party was desperate. They finally persuaded him to defer his resignation while the succession issue was sorted out. August was filled with a lot of scurrying around among the Likud leaders looking for another candidate for the Prime Ministership. Every week, at the Cabinet meeting, Begin would be asked to extend his tenure a little further; he finally realized that the party would not make a decision until he actually left office. He then insisted in submitting his resignation to the President and indicated, although I don't remember how widely, that Shamir would be a logical successor, even if only temporarily while the party leaders fought out their battles. Shamir was not viewed as a heavy-weight. He had been brought into the party by Begin in the 70s. He had never been particularly active in party affairs. He had been Foreign Minister for some time and not involved greatly in domestic political matters.

So Shamir was viewed as a stop gap. He was the one person that the other aspirants -- Arens, Levy, Sharon, etc. -- did not view as a serious rival. So they agreed readily to his succession to the Prime Ministership until a permanent successor could be elected, which they all expected to be within a few months. Of course, Shamir out-foxed them all because eventually he served longer as Prime Minister than any other Israeli except Ben Gurion. He became a much more formidable politician than anyone expected. Begin left very sadly; went into his house and total seclusion. He did not appear for a year. He refused all phone calls; he rejected all press inquiries. An extraordinary event happened on the first anniversary of Mrs. Begin's death when he didn't go to the cemetery. That was an extraordinary omission and showed how deeply immersed he was in an unalterable state of depression.

I spent a lot of time with Begin in official meetings during the 1982/83 period. There were a few times when he would talk to me privately, on a one-on-one basis, on how much he missed his wife and how inadequate he felt, but he didn't "let his hair down" with me; he had never done that. He was a very private man. In fact, his wife was the only person with whom he was totally candid and open. There may have also been one or two of his old cronies. A lot of people have wondered -- and have asked me -- in retrospect, what had happened. It is my belief that the crucial reason why he never left his state of depression was related to his wife's death, but in a very complicated fashion. In the first place, there was the issue of guilt of not having been at her bedside when she died. In addition, he felt guilty about the Sabra/Shatila massacre, although he refused to admit it. But above all, I think his problem was physiological. During his previous bouts of depression, Mrs. Begin was available to get him out of it. She made sure that he ate properly; she would rebuild his self confidence. But in 1983, she was not available and there

wasn't anybody else to do it. I have also learned from some doctors that when someone is in a deep depression, diet is quite important in determining the length and depth of the disease. The fact that he didn't eat properly and that his daughter couldn't force him to do so, undoubtedly contributed to the extent of that last bout, making it much more difficult to ending or easing it. So it all comes back fundamentally to Mrs. Begin's availability; had she been around, she would have made him eat and she would have convinced him that the country needed him and that he had no alternative except to pull himself together. It was a very, very poignant end to a long political career; in many ways, it was a tragic end coming, as it did, after the momentary triumph of driving the PLO out of Lebanon.

The second major theme for that year was the issue of Lebanon. That is a very complicated story which is not worth retelling in all of its details. It involved several factors: a) after Sabra/Shatila, the U.S. administration had rushed into Lebanon a second wave of an international military force, together with the British, Italians and the French. There was a great American wave of anger against Israel for allowing the massacres to take place. That anger was felt particularly strong by Phil Habib, who, during negotiations about PLO withdrawal, had made certain oral statements to the Lebanese to be passed on to the PLO to the effect that if the PLO fighters were withdrawn from Beirut, the Israelis had assured him that the Palestinians left behind would not be mistreated. Habib had received those assurances from the Israelis. The Palestinians interpreted Habib's statements to be commitments on behalf of the United States and not only messages from the Israelis. So when the Phalangist troops massacred many women and children as well as some remaining fighters in the Sabra/Shatila camps, the Palestinians blamed the U.S. in addition to the Israelis for allowing the Phalangists to have free rein. Habib felt anger especially since he had passed on the Israeli commitments which he felt had been broken. Thereafter, his ability to function as an intermediary in the Lebanon negotiations was somewhat affected by his new view of Israel and the unreliability of its government. I mentioned earlier that Habib had returned to the U.S. completely exhausted, after the PLO withdrawal and therefore was not in the area when the massacres took place. Morris Draper, who had been in and out of Israel during the last part of September 1982, returned for another series of meetings with Begin and Sharon on October 5. He wanted to discuss the Kahan Commission and the disposition of Israeli troops still in Lebanon. Those meetings in Jerusalem on that day were the beginning of U.S. efforts to negotiate Israel out of Lebanon. Those efforts went on until the final withdrawal in 1984.

As I have said, the initial American effort, led by Draper with whom I worked closely, started in early October 1982. Shamir had made a statement at the U.N. Assembly meeting that year that Israel expected that all foreign forces would have left Lebanon by the end of 1982. Habib had a meeting with Syrian Foreign Ministry officials in early October, while Draper was in Israel, in which he was told that Syria would take its troops out of Lebanon if and when Israel withdrew its forces from the country. At this point, Syria was feeling very battered. The Syrian Air Force had been overwhelmed by the Israeli Air Force. The Soviets had not come to their aid; no one had. Israel was sitting astride the Damascus-Beirut highway. So in the early weeks after the PLO

withdrawals, the balance of power in the area was very heavily weighed on Israel's side -- psychologically, politically and militarily. The Syrians had lost considerable amount of equipment that had not been replaced by the Soviets who did not want to get involved. There were a number of us Americans who saw that Syria at that time was not in a good position to block peace agreement negotiations between Lebanon and Israel. Such an agreement would have permitted Israeli troops to withdraw. So Draper was pressing to get negotiations started while the Syrians were in such a weakened position. He felt even more strongly about starting the process after the Syrian statement to Habib about their willingness to withdraw; that position added a sense of urgency to our interest in starting negotiations.

Sharon was still the Defense Minister at this time. He was determined not to have the negotiation, or at least to have it move on a very slow track. He wanted to find a way to keep us out of it. He always preferred to deal directly with the Lebanese leaders and especially with the new President, the brother of the assassinated Bashir Gemayel. It was really Sharon and his allies who put Amin Gemayel in office; they had been also responsible for Bashir's election in August 1982. Sharon always believed that the Phalangists, who controlled the Lebanese government with the support of the Lebanese troops, were in a position to conclude a peace treaty. He thought he could negotiate that treaty with Gemayel and then present to Begin as the spoils of victory. He knew that Habib and the U.S. were much more concerned with Israeli troop withdrawal and with the protection of the Muslims in Lebanon. The U.S. was interested in a more balanced outcome in Lebanon than Sharon's plan would have brought about. On October 7, there was a radio report that Sharon had announced that Israel would not relinquish control over a twenty-seven mile zone in southern Lebanon, unless security arrangements were negotiated directly with the Lebanese government. Lebanon was insisting that it would not negotiate directly with Israel, even though the Phalangists were Israel's allies. The Lebanese government was still too nervous about Arab opinion to be seen to be negotiating openly and directly with Israel. The U.S. was trying to put together a negotiating process in which we would play the broker's role. Draper spent the first part of October in Israel. We had a series of meetings discussing all these issues.

On the side, the U.S. was trying to follow-up on the Reagan initiative trying to bring together the Palestinians, the Jordanians and the Israelis to try to resolve the future of the West Bank and Gaza. This was another version of the autonomy negotiations. The Begin Cabinet had rejected the Reagan initiative completely, but the Arabs had not. During this period, Hussein and Arafat were having discussions in Amman in which the PLO was trying to get Jordanian backing for a negotiating position, which included the right of Palestinian self-determination, but would not insist on a Palestinian independent state and would agree to recognize Israel within its pre-1967 borders in exchange for a federation of the territories with Jordan. This dialogue between Arafat and Hussein went on for several months. Eventually they reached an agreement, although the Syrians insisted that Arafat could not negotiate an agreement without approval of the PLO Executive Committee. At the same time, Syria said it would recognize Israel if it withdrew all its

forces from occupied territories, including the Golan Heights, and if it recognized Palestinian rights to self-determination. The Arafat-Hussein agreement was then repudiated by the PLO Executive Committee meeting in Kuwait. In January 1983, I believe, Hussein gave a formal "No" to the Reagan initiative. Arafat had, on October 12, rejected the Reagan plan, although he did say that it had some "positive elements" in it. Before that, the representatives of the U.S. government were working assiduously in the Arab and Israel capitals to get concurrence to the Reagan plan, while at the same time trying to get Lebanon-Israel negotiations started.

On October 11, Columbus Day, Sallie and I went up to Nahalal in the Galilee to attend a memorial service for Dayan. That was one year after his death -- the first anniversary. I remember thinking as we stood by the tomb how much we and Israel had missed him, particularly at this juncture of its history. There was also a memorial service for him in Tel Aviv that we attended on the evening of October 13. Throughout this period, we were engaged in a variety of activities which had nothing to do with the major issues. We took a little diving trip on Sunday, October 17 to the caves of Rosh Hanikra on the Lebanese border. I went with my friend Howard Rosenstein, the Red Sea diver, who had taught me to dive. The waters in the caves were relatively shallow because they were just under cliffs. They are suffused with light which makes them seem almost like snow climbing; they are a lovely spot, something like the Blue Grotto off Capri, Italy; the water has a very similar light composition.

Shamir was in the United States for the General Assembly meeting in the Fall 1982. I was in Israel. Normally, I did not go to the United States for visits of the Foreign Minister; I saved those trips for Prime Ministerial visits. There was a time honored Israeli tradition that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister did not travel together anywhere; that had to do with the internal competition for the spot light. Shamir met with Shultz on October 13. They agreed that the U.S. and Israel would convene a working group to discuss the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon so that the two countries could have a coordinated approach to this issue and so that both Syria and Israel would withdraw their forces from Lebanon. It was during this period that efforts were being made in the U.N. to force Israel out of Lebanon as a response to the Sabra/Shatila massacre. Shultz threatened to withhold U.S. contributions to the U.N. and some of its agencies if the General Assembly were to take any actions against Israel, including depriving that country of its membership in the U.N. agencies. On the surface, the chances for negotiations seemed pretty good. There were meetings between Arabs and Reagan and others in Washington. In late October, the Israelis permitted the Lebanese forces to take over certain positions in the Shuf Mountains from them in order to maintain the truce between the Druze and the Christians. At the end of October, Draper returned to Israel to start the negotiations. The plan was for him to shuttle between the parties.

Draper met with Begin and me on October 29, after a session with Dave Kimche and Shamir at the Foreign Ministry. Draper made an announcement that Israel and Lebanon had agreed to assemble negotiating teams to start working out arrangements for the withdrawal of Israeli forces along with appropriate security arrangements in southern Lebanon. On the same day, Assad

made a public statement in Damascus, restating that Syria would not withdraw from Lebanon until Israel had done so completely. In Beirut, the American Marines were stationed as part of a multilateral force and were beginning to make some limited patrols and expanding their coverage of East Beirut. Also, on the same day, as a harbinger of the future, a car bomb exploded near Marine positions in southern Beirut, killing one Marine and wounding two Lebanese. That was a sign that the Marines were no longer being viewed as peace-keepers, but as partisans on one side and as enemies by the Muslim side. I had left right after the Draper meetings on October 29 and had gone to the Sinai for my first diving trip there since Israel had returned that territory to Egypt. I went with my old friend David Friedman and a couple of other divers. We crossed the border at Taba and drove to the water. The waters seemed unchanged; the land was different. The multinational force that we had deployed after the peace treaty was in control of the area along the coast. It was a fascinating trip and the diving was superb. It was a good break for me.

I returned to Tel Aviv on Monday. Tuesday I met with Draper in Jerusalem and had a long session with Shamir about moving the negotiations with Lebanon forward. There was a lot of activity during this period behind the scene. For one thing, Israel was developing plans for additional settlements on the West Bank. The U.S. administration in Washington was increasingly dismayed by that prospect and issued a couple of sharp public criticisms. That scenario was replayed in 1992. On November 6, 1982, administration officials put out public statements that President Reagan planned to step up pressure on Israel to freeze West Bank settlements and to withdraw from Lebanon during the meetings that Begin and Reagan were to hold in the near future. From the American point of view, the main justification for the Begin trip was to "talk turkey" to him about these two issues. The meeting, as we now know, never took place. On November 11, a car bomb exploded at the Israeli military headquarters in Tyre in south Lebanon. Dozens of Israeli soldiers and security personnel were killed and lots of civilians wounded. That was a precursor of the attack on the American Marine barracks in 1983. The November incident stirred enormous outrage and concern in Israel. Begin had left for the U.S. the previous day, but Mrs. Begin died three days later and he returned without going to Washington, as I have noted earlier.

I need to clarify why the Lebanon/Israel negotiations were so slow in developing. Draper was very busy flying back and forth between Beirut and Jerusalem. We pressed both parties to get down to business, appoint negotiators, decide on a time and place, etc. We couldn't figure out why it was so hard to get the process started. We got a lot of technical excuses. Draper and I got the distinct impression that he was being "given the run around" especially by Sharon. The big argument was about the location for the negotiations. The Israelis wanted to meet both in Israel and in Lebanon. Then there was a Cabinet meeting about mid-November, just as agreement was about to be reached about the two sites. Sharon suggested during the Cabinet meeting that it would be necessary for the negotiators to meet in Jerusalem when it was Israel's turn to be the host. Jerusalem as a negotiating site was a red flag for the Arabs because of its disputed status. The Egyptians, for example, had been very reluctant to come to Jerusalem for the autonomy

negotiations and in the final analysis, did not. When Sharon threw this diplomatic bomb shell in the Cabinet meeting, he must have realized that Begin, with his special devotion to Jerusalem as a symbol, would have to agree with him. He must also have recognized that the Lebanese would have found it very difficult to agree to that site and that is in fact what happened. So for the next six weeks, there was a continuing argument about where to hold the triparty negotiations. The Jerusalem was a very divisive issue, so I suspect Sharon had raised it deliberately to block progress. We only found out in December what had occurred. Then it became apparent that while on the surface Israel seemed to be cooperating on starting the negotiations, in fact Sharon was conducting a private, secret dialogue himself with an emissary of Amin Gemayel. We knew nothing about it. He was trying to make a direct deal with the Phalangists which would present us with a *fait accompli* which we would have to accept. It was not in his interest for the formal negotiations to start, while he was working behind the scenes unfettered by our involvement. That is why he introduced the Jerusalem issue out of the clear blue sky.

I had planned to be in Washington with Prime Minister Begin for his meeting with President Reagan in Early November -- a meeting which never took place because of Alisa Begin's death. I had left for Washington on November 12. As it turned out, I tried to return with Begin on his flights when he returned to Israel for the funeral, but we could not make connections. I could not get a commercial flight in time to get back for the funeral. So I decided to remain in Washington for an extensive period of consultation, which I had planned to do in any case after the Begin-Reagan meeting. So I was in Washington November 13-28, 1982 while Maury Draper was continuing to negotiate off and on in Beirut and Jerusalem in an effort to jump start the Lebanon-Israel Negotiations. He had been blocked by inexorable road blocks.

While in Washington, I had a chance to see every person in the State Department even remotely involved in US-Israeli affairs. I met with Secretary Shultz, Habib, Veliotis and others. I spent time at the Pentagon and the CIA; I met with various Members of Congress and their staffs. I was in New York to attend a couple of events sponsored by Jewish organizations. All of these contacts gave me a good opportunity to measure the American political climate in relationship to Israel, from the White House down. Since Thanksgiving came during this period, I also had an opportunity to be with one of my children, who was then living in the U.S.

I returned to Israel on November 28. I had reached some clear conclusions, based in part on some informal guidance I had received from my bosses and colleagues. They gave me a sense of a deteriorating mood in Washington resulting from Israeli obstruction to the beginning of Israel-Lebanon negotiations and from the growing anger generated by the renewed Israeli drive for expanding settlements on the West bank and Gaza, spearheaded by Begin and Sharon. This settlement policy was Israel's way to signal its unhappiness with the Reagan September initiative and furthered also Israeli views that the more settlements, the better. It had been my standing practice to brief the press, on background, within a few days after any of my trips to the U.S. I

would first brief the Israeli journalists and then, a couple of days later, the American and some British correspondents -- particularly the BBC which had a wide and important audience in Israel. I briefed the press every six weeks or so under any circumstances, but trips to the U.S. gave me an opportunity to provide a more authoritative sense of the mood in Washington. In part, this was an effort to counter some of the more tendentious reporting that was a normal part of Israeli media content. American purposes and motives were often misstated, usually maliciously, for the Israeli readers.

I held this briefing on December 8 in the afternoon. It was a long briefing; I have had an opportunity to review the transcript. It generated considerable press reaction, including some angry, although veiled, rebuttals from government sources. As usual, I gave the briefing on "deep background", so that the attribution had to be to "informed sources". But it would not have been a great mystery for any Israeli who followed politics to figure out who the source might have been -- namely me. But by using that briefing technique, I could avoid a possible diplomatic confrontation that might have been difficult to deal with, once the government had reacted. I did not brief on instructions from Washington. My colleagues in the Department knew that I followed a pattern of briefings and never tried to discourage me from that course.

The main subject of the briefing centered on a number of allegations that were almost omnipresent in public discourse in Israel at the time. Allegations were being made that the U.S. was trying to steal the fruits of Israel's victory in Lebanon by opposing a peace treaty which would have essentially upheld the status quo. That was a line promulgated by Sharon and his supporters. Another allegation was that the U.S. was blocking the beginning of negotiations between Israel and Lebanon because we wanted to have the Reagan plan accepted by King Hussein first. There was also a good deal of concern about a Congressional proposal to add \$1 billion to the Israeli assistance package for FY 84, despite the fact that the administration had requested just a modest increase. Understandably, the administration had opposed the Congressional initiative because it would have required offset cuts in other assistance programs and because such a huge increase might be interpreted as rewarding Israel which at the time was not in a mood to cooperate on the negotiating process; we were also concerned that the new aid package would discourage the Arabs from pursuing the Reagan initiative. All of these concerns had essentially been acknowledged in various statements made in Washington, both on the record or on "background". The charge that the U.S. was trying to pressure Israel into accepting the U.S. strategy through the foreign assistance package was made often in Israeli circles. I tried, in the background, to deal with all these issues; I went in each of them at considerable depth. One of the most ridiculous arguments that I tried to lay to rest was that the U.S. was trying to slow down the Lebanon negotiations. I told the press some of the things I heard in Washington, trying to convey the impressions I had come away with after talking to many people in our government. I did not try to reach my own conclusions, but the press of course reported that the views expressed in the briefings were all mine. Of course, I did in fact pretty much reach the same conclusions, but never said so. I did say that when the U.S. expressed unhappiness about

the negotiations it was primarily concerned with some of the procedural obstructions that were being built. I had in mind such things as, for example, Israeli Cabinet insistence that the negotiations had to take place in Jerusalem and Beirut -- the two capitals. That requirement was an invitation to blocking any further discussions because it was very clear to the Israelis that the Lebanese would not be able to risk politically conducting negotiations in Jerusalem when no other Arab state had ever done so. I made the point that it was rather difficult for Washington not to be suspicious. We had very belatedly come to understand that in mid-October -- at the very beginning of the discussions between Draper and the Israelis on starting the negotiations -- the Israelis had at that point adopted secretly that demand that Jerusalem be one of the negotiating sites. We were not informed of that decision; we did not learn of it until late November when it appeared suddenly just as Habib and Draper had completed a package of proposals which they thought would start the negotiations. I emphasized in the backgrounder that this development that caught everybody by surprise did not engender an atmosphere of great confidence in Washington that Israel was very interested in the Lebanon negotiations.

We now know, as I mentioned earlier, that the reason the Israelis were stalling was because Sharon was conducting a private, secret bilateral negotiation with Amin Gemayel through a Lebanese emissary; he wanted to wrap up the negotiations all by himself in order to keep us entirely out of it until a deal had been made. I think our intelligence was woefully inadequate in this matter; we had no clue what Sharon and Gemayel were up to. We did know of course that the Israelis were stalling; Washington was increasingly upset as the days and weeks passed. I had learned, and I mentioned this to the press which used it in its stories, that there were a good number of officials in Washington who were by this time convinced that, despite everything that Begin had been saying about Israel's interest in leaving Lebanon as soon as possible, the Israelis were planning to stay in Lebanon for a very long time; these Washington officials saw the procedural roadblocks as just another delaying tactic in discussions of Israeli troop withdrawals. Washington also suspected that, by stalling the Lebanese negotiations, Israel was making it impossible for us to pursue the Reagan initiative because it had been clear between September and December that King Hussein, while not having rejected the plan, was trying, eventually unsuccessfully, to obtain Arafat's agreement to incorporate PLO participation in the Jordanian negotiating team. The King had told us directly that it was very difficult for him to enter broader negotiations under the Reagan plan until there was some good faith sign that Israel would withdraw from Lebanon. He needed that sign for his own political survival. The Israelis knew this which heightened the Washington suspicions. So Washington felt that the Israelis were stalling both to continue their occupation of Lebanon and as a way of forestalling the Reagan initiative. I highlighted all of these factors in the backgrounder.

The backgrounder produced some very accurate reports in *The Jerusalem Post* and several Hebrew language papers. Of course, there were also tendentious reactions. There were some tortuous and angry rebuttal stories. Once again, I was brushed with my old nickname "The High Commissioner", who was telling Israel how to run its affairs. On the whole, I believe the stories

had a very salutary effect. A number of Israelis, particularly in the center and on the left, who picked up the same themes and began to argue publicly that it wasn't really necessary for the negotiations to take place in Jerusalem; they could proceed elsewhere.

This is the background that Habib found when he returned to the area. He arrived mid-December and brought with him another package of procedural proposals to try to break the impasse. He was strongly supported by President Reagan and Secretary Shultz who were anxious to see some progress. First, Habib, Draper and I held meetings with a number of senior Israeli officials just to cover the ground. Then we met with Dave Kimche and some of his Foreign Ministry colleagues. On the afternoon of December 16, a Thursday, we met at the Prime Ministry for two and a half hours starting at 5 p.m. Habib, Bob Flaten, Paul Hare and I sat in the Prime Minister's conference room, adjoining his private office. Across the table from the American delegation sat Begin, Sharon, Shamir and their staffers. This meeting was set up to permit Habib to lay out formally the proposals that he had developed to break the stalemate. While he was doing so, I looked at Sharon and noticed that he looked like the cat that had swallowed a canary. He looked uncharacteristically benign; in fact I would say that he was smirking. Begin did not respond to the Habib presentation. He asked Sharon to speak. Sharon opened by dropping a bomb shell. He described with some glee that negotiations he had been conducting for months with Gemayel's emissary. He described the outline of an agreement he had reached and which had been signed by both the Lebanese and Israeli governments. Sharon concluded by essentially saying that the U.S. was not needed; the deal was done. As far as he was concerned, it only needed to be publicly formalized; he thought that that could be done in the following week. In the course of his discourse, Sharon inserted some gratuitous insults. He was obviously intent on totally humiliating Habib and the American team. It was obvious that Begin knew all about this, but he left it up to Sharon to make the presentation for the Israeli side. Begin, throughout this whole period, was in a state of depression and quite passive in general. He had just finished the month of mourning for his wife's death. He was unshaven and drawn. He was lucid, but not really involved. Shamir characteristically sat and said nothing. The conversation was essentially between Sharon and Habib.

Phil Habib exercised enormous self-control; he showed great professionalism. He essentially said that he would leave for Beirut immediately to verify with Gemayel that an agreement had been reached. If he had confirmation, the U.S. would then support the agreement and provide whatever help might be necessary to put it into effect. On first hearing the outline, we did believe that it sounded something that would be easily sustainable from the Lebanese side. During the meeting, Sharon was called out of the conference room for a phone call. When he returned, he spoke with Begin; the Prime Minister summarized it for us. What Begin said was that there had been a leak about the agreement and that *Mariv* would run a story the next morning. That bit of news made it even more important that Habib reach Beirut as soon as possible to at least warn the Lebanese that the story was about to break.

What actually happened was an extraordinary sequence of events. Sharon was so triumphant about his diplomatic coup that he had briefed a *Mariv* reporter, giving him the whole story earlier. The Israeli military censor, when he saw the story, immediately understood that it should not be published; however the source was the Minister of Defense, who was the censor's boss. So he didn't feel he could stop the story. Begin, apparently belatedly, realized, when informed of the leak, that something had gone awry. I don't believe that Begin had any idea of the source of the story. He was savvy enough to know that a premature disclosure might abrogate any agreement reached. For reasons that I don't remember now, it was apparently too late for Begin to stop the story.

The story was indeed published. Amin Gemayel, confronted with the story and its subsequent repetition in the Lebanese press, came under enormous political pressure. He had not prepared his Cabinet or any of his entourage; all that had been done had been done in secret and no one else knew, except perhaps one advisor and the intermediary. So no political ground-work had been done at all, but it was in every Lebanese and Israeli newspaper. This uproar forced Sharon to fly to Beirut on Christmas as a last ditch effort to save the agreement. Within a few days, it became eminently clear that Gemayel could not obtain approval of the agreement. The more the agreement was scrutinized, the more vulnerable it seemed. The Syrians weighed in as well in opposition to the agreement. When Sharon returned, he reluctantly admitted that he would have to follow the American track and start the negotiations as we had been urging. These negotiations started at Zachle on December 28. Washington was both astounded and furious at this turn of events because it viewed it as a deliberate insult to Habib and the United States in general. The White House was angry; the State Department was angry. The Sharon ploy became one more element in the rapidly deteriorating relationship between the U.S. and Israel. That relationship had improved a little bit in the Fall when Shamir had gone to Washington and had a good meeting with Shultz. As long as it appeared that both governments were moving in the same direction on the Lebanese negotiations, the U.S. was giving Israel the benefit of the doubt.

This story was one of the most illustrative examples of Sharon's hubris, which led him to "shoot himself in the foot". I doubt that the agreement would ever have been approved publicly. The political pressures would have been too great in any case. But, it is conceivable of course had the major players been more careful and adroit they might have reached a better agreement and an earlier one than the one that was finally reached with the assistance of Secretary Shultz in April.

In any case, with the settlement issue unresolved, Begin's passivity and Sharon's conduct did not help US-Israeli relationships. The Washington attitude was skeptical about Israeli intentions.

I said earlier, that throughout the Fall of 1982, I was working on four major subjects. I have not discussed at any great length the Reagan initiative.

Ever since Begin had angrily and rapidly rejected the Reagan initiative in September, the American administration had doggedly pursued it, trying to have become the center of

negotiations. In retrospect, I realize now that there was never any expectation in Washington that the Israelis would accept it, at least initially. It did reject the idea of a Palestinian state, but it also rejected the annexation of the West Bank territories. There were other elements that were bound to be unacceptable to Begin. But Shultz and his colleagues had convinced themselves that if Hussein were willing to come to the negotiating table under a sort of "Camp David" rubric, as interpreted and expanded by the Reagan initiative -- we had always asserted, correctly so, that the initiative was consistent with "Camp David", although the Israeli disagreed vigorously -- then the Israelis would inevitably be forced to look at the initiative once again. That would provide the needed opportunity to start serious discussion about the Initiative. Hussein was the key. Throughout the Fall, Hussein and Arafat carried on a minuet, trying to find a way in which the Jordanians could represent the PLO's interests in any negotiations. They had to find a way mutually satisfactory, which would also be at least acceptable to Israel and the U.S. The Egyptians were anxious for this to happen. Hussein thought, on at least two occasions that he had Arafat's agreement to a formula. Each time, when Arafat tried to get approval from his Executive Committee or the Palestine Council, he was rebuffed and the formulas were rejected. The Syrians put on a lot of pressure on the PLO, where they had considerable influence, against any efforts to start negotiations. It was only in late December that Arafat and Hussein apparently reached some kind of understanding that if a Palestinian state were to be created on the West Bank, it would be a part of a federated Jordan. That at least was an indication that something was beginning to develop on that side, but nonetheless, Hussein, who visited Washington on December 20, while meeting with Shultz, gave a rather pessimistic view of his hopes. During a meeting with Reagan, on the following day, Hussein said quite clearly that he was not prepared to enter the negotiations as long as Jewish settlements were being established on the West Bank and Gaza.

During this whole period, the settlement issue was very much on the front burners. Sometime around December 1, Sharon reinvigorated the settlement drive; the Cabinet announced that it had authorized an additional 31 settlements on the West Bank. That was an irritant in our relationship with Israel, but it also convinced Hussein not to get involved in the peace negotiations. There was a lot of pernicious stuff going on in Israel during this period, most if not all centered around Sharon and his supporters. The Syrians also strongly opposed Hussein and Arafat getting together on a formula and they managed to torpedo all efforts, although that might have happened under any circumstances. The fact that the two concluded any formula was a small miracle in itself; they distrusted each other enormously. Whenever one of the Hussein-Arafat negotiating sessions was finished, we would immediately receive indications from Hussein that Arafat was one of the most frustrating, difficult, annoying and infuriating men to deal with. We heard a lot about the difficulties the two men had with each other, although we heard more from Hussein because we were of course not in touch with Arafat at the time.

When Hussein came to Washington in December, he suggested to Reagan and Shultz that he was still open to the Reagan initiative; he had not come to any final conclusions. But as long as Israel

was not showing any interest in retreating from Lebanon, it was impossible for the King to deal with the initiative. The settlement process, accelerating as it was, was also a stumbling block. We of course also knew that in addition to the two reasons he gave, he was also having difficulties reaching an acceptable agreement with Arafat. Nevertheless, the King kept the door open; it was not closed until April 1983 when he announced that he could not participate in negotiations based on the Reagan initiative. That almost coincided with the time when George Shultz had achieved success in negotiating an agreement between Lebanon and Israel. The American government's attitude towards Israel shifted rather substantially during the February-April period, particularly once the agreement was signed and when it became clear that Hussein would not enter the negotiations. By this time, Sharon was not Minister of Defense any longer; he had been replaced after the Kahan Commission report, by Moshe Arens. That brought a different tone to the relationship.

From April on, the US-Israel relationship was much calmer. Shultz especially had come to the conclusion that the U.S. had to work closely with Israel, especially if the Syrians were to be blocked who were already showing signs of interfering in the Israel-Lebanon agreement. The US-Israeli relationships grew closer as it became clearer that Hussein would not join the Reagan initiative and that Damascus, contrary to Shultz' expectations, was determined to block the implementation of the Israel-Lebanon agreement.

Now I will return to the Lebanon drama. When President Reagan reintroduced the Marines for a second time after Sabra and Shatila, the Administration had told Congress that it expected the forces to be in Lebanon only briefly. By December, they had been there for four months and nothing seemed to be happening to permit a plausible withdrawal. That situation increased the pressure on the administration to convince Israel to withdraw from Lebanon and to complete the peace negotiations. During December, Sharon returned secretly to Beirut the day before Christmas and Christmas Day, during which he met with Gemayel and other Lebanese leaders in order to push the Israel-Lebanon bilateral negotiations back on track. This effort was way too late and the whole situation collapsed soon thereafter.

After the end of the bilateral debacle, the Israelis realized that they had to find some way to join our negotiating track. We talked to them about procedural matters that had been a stumbling block. We received a number of messages from Washington urging that some movement be evident. When Sharon returned from Lebanon and reported to Begin his failure to make any progress with Gemayel, the Israeli Cabinet decided to accept the terms that essentially Habib had suggested earlier.

On December 26, Israel made a formal statement to the press announcing that negotiations would begin the following day. That was somewhat overly optimistic, but in fact the negotiations did start on December 28 in a suburb of Beirut. The site was a partially shot-up old hotel. David Kimche headed the Israeli delegation with Abrasha Tamir representing the Defense Ministry -- i.e. Sharon. He was essentially the co-chairman. The Lebanese delegation was a very

complicated one filled with representatives of each major ethnic and religious group -- Shia, Sunni, Christians, Druze. The Lebanese were either officials of the Foreign Ministry or the military, but had practically no authority. Morris Draper represented us, supported by a couple of other U.S. officials. He served as an observer and mediator and catalyst to keep the discussions moving. He may have served as chairman of the opening session. That meant that it took from the end of September to the end of December for any formal dialogue to be launched.

In the background stood the Kahan Commission which was investigating the Sabra/Shatila massacres. It was expected that it would report its findings by the end of January. That undoubtedly made Sharon nervous since he was bound to bear the burden of any negative comments.

On December 29, I called Simca Ehrlich who was then the Vice Premier and Minister of Finance. He was the leader of the Liberal Party; he was a moderate and not especially vigorous, but very interested in maintaining a working relationship with the United States. I told him that I would appreciate a few private moments with him. I was greatly concerned at the time by the status of our relationship with Israel, which had been very much attrited by the Fall's events. I was especially concerned by Sharon's nefarious influence on the relationship. I knew that Ehrlich was not a great admirer of Sharon's; he had been unhappy for sometime with Sharon personally and with his influence on Begin and the Cabinet. So I met with Ehrlich. I made it immediately clear to him that I had no instructions from Washington, but that I had taken it upon myself to make this call because of my deep concern about the relationships between our two countries. I told him that I had been in Washington in late November and that my consultations there had indicated that my concerns were shared by many others. But I told him that I found it very difficult to repair the situation because so much of the damage had resulted from the various personalities involved and their interactions. We had a frank and personal exchange about the situation and events and about steps that might be considered to improve the relationship. Ehrlich was the first to raise Sharon's name in the conversation. He of course had gone immediately to the heart of the problem without prompting from me. I told Ehrlich that unless that relationship did improve, I was deeply concerned that we would soon run into some very stormy weather. He concluded our talk by saying that he would try his best to convince Begin to reduce Sharon's influence and actions as one step toward better Israel-US relationships. I mention this meeting here at this point because a year later it figured centrally in my most bitter encounter with Sharon.

I have mentioned earlier that Ambassadors do a lot of unusual things. For example, on December 31 -- New Year's Eve -- soon after my very significant conversation with Ehrlich, I attended a benefit party for the International Variety Club at the Tel Aviv Hilton. American Ambassadors were expected to attend these benefits. This was a particularly interesting one because Variety had managed to obtain the presence of a special guest: Liz Taylor. Sallie and I had the duty to go to the Presidential suite in the hotel to meet the guest of honor and to escort her down to the ball. This one of the periods when she was not married, but she was accompanied by a Mexican

businessman, to whom, I believe, she was engaged although I don't think she ever married him. We had met Liz Taylor once many years before but it was just a brief handshake; we had never really conversed with her. But that New Year's Eve we spent a lot of time with her; she turned out to be very different from what I expected. Actually, she seemed to me to be a very sad lady, although she looked very good -- she was in one of her thin phases. Sallie and I escorted her down, accompanied by several bodyguards, and arrived in the lobby only to face a throng of screaming people, mostly quite mature looking people. Most seemed to be over 40. There must of been several hundreds of fans just waiting there hoping to touch her or at least get near enough for a close look. It was a rare illustration of the old "movie star" syndrome. Sallie was walking a little behind Liz and me. The bodyguards were all around us keeping the crowd away from Taylor and me. But Sallie, who was not inside the "envelope", was almost trampled to death by the throng of fans. It was just fortunate that a friend, who happened to be in the lobby, grabbed her and pulled her up on a sofa; that is the only reason she survived. We of course were ushered into the ballroom and escorted to the table; we sat down -- the ten who were invited to that table. Everyone else in the room just surrounded the table forcing the bodyguards to form a ring around the table to keep two or three feet of distance between the crowd and the seated guests. Sallie was not with us; she had not been able to get through the crowd. In the melee, I didn't realize for a while that she had not made it; when I did, there wasn't much I could do in light of the frenzy surrounding us. Eventually, Sallie worked her way through the crowd, only to be met by the bodyguards who wouldn't let her through. It took her about twenty minutes to finally get a seat. I don't think she really enjoyed herself that evening. It was sheer bedlam.

There was another celebrity at the ball that night and that was Brook Shield, the actress, who was quite young at the time. She was in Israel making a film. She and her mother, who went with her everywhere, were at another table about four or five tables away. She received a certain amount of attention, but nothing of course compared to the fan adulation that Elizabeth Taylor drew even though the latter was much older and the former much prettier at that time. During the course of the evening, Shields and her mother came to our table and sort of paid obeisance to the "Queen". It was quite an evening!

Taylor's Mexican escort was very nice. He was very protective of her and jumped at her every bidding. She was clearly one of those women who from the age of four had never done anything for herself. She always had someone around who waited on her hand and foot; she accepted that as a normal pattern of life. She was really helpless without a coterie to look after her every aspect of daily living.

For the next couple of days, while negotiations were starting in Kiryat Shimona, I was off on other business. Maury Draper was our representative. On the afternoon of January 2, I briefed then senator Paul Tsongas at the residence and a couple of people who were traveling with him. We always had Congressional visitors. In my first year as Ambassador to Israel, two-thirds of the U.S. Congress visited the country, either individually or in groups. In subsequent years, the traffic was not quite as heavy, but I think that practically every Congressman or Senator has been

through Israel at one time or other. I always tried to brief them personally, either in Jerusalem or in Tel Aviv, usually at the residence. I got to know a lot of Members of Congress that way. It was useful for me because I got a good feel for the Middle East political temperature in the Congress.

Solarz must have been in Israel once every six months. He was the most demanding because he was such a fantastic worker. When he would come to Israel, he would want see everybody starting with early breakfast meetings at 7 a.m. and then he would go until midnight every day. He would practically kill his control officer. I would spend a lot of time with him because he was "good value"; I would learn a lot from him during the meetings; he was also very anxious to have our views on current events. So I would spend a lot of time with him. But I can tell you that after a Solarz visit -- two or three days -- everyone was completely exhausted. He has incredible energy.

On Monday, January 3, 1983, Sallie and I left for Washington to accompany President and Mrs. Navon on the first formal visit ever arranged for an Israeli President. They had insisted that we escort them. Navon had been very anxious for such an occasion and had been angling for it ever since he had become President. Until early 1983, Washington had not been impressed that it had been necessary. We always had close contacts with Prime Ministers and other Israeli officials, but the White House had always been reluctant to host a State visit with a personage who was essentially a figure-head. Navon was an influential player within the Labor Party and a very fine person. Mrs. Navon was a former Miss Israel. The Navons put a lot of stock in getting the State visit invitation before the end of his term which was going to take place the next year. I tried to help with the White House to get the invitation. In the final analysis, Navon got an invitation, but it was not full State visit honors. It was, protocol-wise, the next lower set of arrangements, which for example did not require a Blair House stay nor a State dinner.

So we came with the Navons to help with the East Coast portion of their American tour. We flew on an Israeli Air Force plane, which is the transportation used by Israeli VIPs -- not very fancy, to say at least. President Reagan hosted a luncheon for the Navons; there was a big reception, a formal dinner at the Israeli Embassy (hosted by then Ambassador Moshe Arens), not to mention several meetings, some of which I participated in. The fact that he had an official lunch was very important to Navon. It took a lot my persuasion to get the White House to host the lunch; it finally did, but it was a battle all the way. In fact, the visit went very smoothly and Navon was very happy although undoubtedly he would have preferred a full State visit.

I did arrange for John Hopkins University, which I attended as a graduate student, to grant Navon an honorary degree which helped the visit greatly. I did that by conspiring with Steve Muller, the President of the University, who was Jewish himself and also someone very sensitive to international nuances. So John Hopkins hosted a big dinner and a ceremony in Baltimore which was greatly appreciated. The Baltimore ceremonies were huge, but lovely and well done. Navon gave a fine speech, followed by a large kosher dinner for several hundreds of guests.

After that, we went to Boston and stayed with the Navons through that visit. Governor and Mrs. Michael Dukakis hosted a very nice reception for the Navons at the State House. That was my first opportunity to meet Dukakis. He was terrific -- very engaging, politically savvy. The whole reception was a great success. I was surprised that he did not turn out to be a more effective Presidential candidate because on the occasion of the Navon visit, he and Kitty both seemed to be terrific politicians.

In the meantime, back in Israel, the Kahan Commission had finished its report, although their findings remained unknown, even to the well known Israeli informal information system. On January 2, there was a story in the press referring to Steve Solarz, who apparently had been in Baghdad in August shortly after the PLO withdrawal from Beirut. The Iraqis released the transcript of Solarz' meeting with Saddam Hussein. Hussein was quoted as saying that "no Arab official includes in his current policy the so-called destruction of Israel, but there is not one Arab who believes it is possible to co-live with such an aggressive and expansionist state". Those were the words of the man who eight years later would launch an invasion of Kuwait! The Solarz meeting was one of many conducted by American Congressmen to try to wean Hussein away from the camp of Arab leaders who totally rejected Israel.

Habib was back in Washington while I was in New York with Navon. The President met there with American Jewish leaders and intellectuals. We held a session in Elie Weisel's apartment. We were still in a period during which Israel's image in the U.S. in the aftermath of the Lebanon invasion was very badly frayed. Navon's visit was important not only for the contacts he made with American leaders, but also for his portrayal of an Israeli leader so different from Begin and Sharon. He was a left-wing Liberal Party member, known for his strong support of Israel-Arab co-existence. He spoke fluent Arabic -- he taught Arabic at one point in his career. So his meeting with American leadership and the press did have a useful effect in that it brought a different image of Israeli leadership. That was one of the reasons why I was happy to assist in the arrangements for Navon's visit.

In New York, Navon gave a speech to the Council of Foreign Relations. Then he left for a tour of the United States and I returned to Washington. As I said, Habib had been there and had been instructed by Reagan to return to the Middle East in the hopes of accelerating the negotiating process. I met with George Shultz and Cap Weinberger and Fred Iklé and then returned to Tel Aviv on January 11.

Upon my arrival the next day, I went directly to Jerusalem and had a working dinner with Habib that night at the Consulate General. Habib was to see the Israeli leaders the next day. We met with Begin on January 13 at 11 a.m. Habib conveyed Reagan's concerns and delivered a fairly stiff message, although couched in polite terms. We were pushing for an early resolution of the current situation before any further damage might ensue. Begin said all the right things; he also wanted to expedite the negotiations, but he was still withdrawn and depressed and did not engage much in the dialogue.

Habib then went to Beirut. I had dinner that night with Shimon Peres, during which I briefed him on my Washington consultations and Habib's current efforts. I saw that kind of briefing for the major opposition party leader as one of my roles. Although I was assigned to work with the Begin government, it was important that the Labor opposition party be kept current of the negotiations and especially what we were doing and what our views were. Sometimes Habib would also meet with Peres, but more often those briefings were left to me. Begin knew what I was doing, although he was not enthusiastic about the process. As I said, we felt it was important to be even-handed with both major Israeli parties. Labor was much opposed to Begin's Lebanon policy so that our views had a much more sympathetic audience there than with the Likud. But Labor did not have any influence on government policies. So I used to meet with Peres during this long period at least once a week just to keep him apprised.

Moshe Arens was the Israeli Ambassador in Washington. Although he was hard-liner, he was well acquainted with American practices and views and managed to always put the best face on Israeli policies and actions, even though sometimes that was a very tough assignment. He was highly regarded and fully trusted by Begin. He was a very useful communications channel.

The negotiations dragged on through January. Habib shuttled in and out of Beirut, but did not participate directly in the formal negotiations. That was left to Morris Draper. The level of the negotiators was below Habib's, made up essentially of technical people; no Ministers were involved. Habib would coordinate with Draper; he would talk to Amin Gemayel in Beirut and with Begin and Sharon in Jerusalem. He would push both sides to show greater flexibility; he would try to sell them on some compromises. The formal talks took place on a home-to-home basis -- once in Beirut and then in Kiryat Shmona in Israel.

On January 20, the Lebanese rejected a series of Israeli demands for a security sector in south Lebanon and for some early warning stations to be manned by the Israelis even after withdrawal. This negotiation became very complicated; I was not directly involved although I discussed the issues with Habib and Draper in great detail and for many hours before they were discussed again at the conference table. By about January 20, it became apparent that the negotiations were not getting very far. The conference became stuck on many issues. Ultimately, the bottom line was that the Israelis were, in exchange for withdrawal, demanding an adequate presence to provide an early warning of pending attacks and to influence their southern Lebanese allies to provide some defense against cross border attacks. The Lebanese were resisting these demands. The Israelis were also trying to achieve a political arrangement between the two countries which would have been tantamount to a peace accord without that name. All parties understood that a formal peace agreement would have been too provocative to the Syrians.

Gemayel, if left to his own devices, would have been prepared to accede to Israeli demands. But he was under increasing pressure from Syrian allies in Lebanon and from Syria itself. He did keep the Syrians informed about the status of the negotiations, but did not necessarily seek their approval. This set of circumstances became the subject of debate long after the end of the

negotiations which continued for months and months. Eventually, Shultz came to the area at the end of April and took over for Habib. In about ten days, Shultz put a deal together which was called the "May 17" agreement. It included many of the Israeli positions as well as some of Lebanon's. It was actually a pretty good agreement from Lebanon's point of view and certainly a very good agreement for Israel. Unfortunately, it never took effect. Gemayel did sign it, but could not get it ratified by the Lebanese Parliament. Gemayel had been overly confident that Syria would acquiesce and not oppose it. When Assad was briefed on all the details, he made his opposition clear and told Gemayel that he would not permit its approval. He began to apply pressure to his surrogates in Lebanon and intimidated the Lebanese Parliament so that ratification was impossible. The agreement was therefore still-born.

Then came the second guessing. Were we foolish to think that such an accord would be ratified without Syria's prior agreement? When, in the prior Fall, we first began to discuss the problem of achieving an agreement both in Washington and in Israel, Syria was in relatively bad shape having been battered both by the war and their own losses on the battle fields. The Russians had not yet resupplied the Syrian forces; the Syrians felt uncertain and vulnerable. Habib had been told by Syrian officials in Damascus on October 2 that Syria would agree to withdraw its troops from Lebanon if Israeli forces were also withdrawn. Moreover, at some time in the Fall, Shultz had been assured by the Saudis that if an agreement were reached between Lebanon and Israel, Syria would not be a problem. The Saudis assured Shultz that Assad would not interfere. Shultz accepted that assurance at face value and based his approaches on that assumption, even though it was clear that the Syrians might well object to some versions of an agreement. He believed that when it came crunch time, the Syrian would back off and accept whatever arrangements might be concluded. We knew that the Israelis, who were demanding a peace agreement, were taking positions that were probably not acceptable to the Syrians. It was clear that the Israeli were pushing so hard for a full peace accord that if we had tried to bring the Syrians into the process as participants, it would have resulted in a stalemate. On the other hand, we thought that if an agreement could be hammered out quickly while Syria was weak and vulnerable, there was a possibility that the Syrians would reluctantly acquiesce and not try to block the arrangements. That was our calculation and I think, even in retrospect, it was a reasonable gamble. That approach certainly had a better chance of success than trying to get the Syrians to agree explicitly during the negotiations themselves to anything that was acceptable to the Israelis. We had very little effective leverage on the Israelis and therefore a very limited opportunity to reduce Israeli demands.

What was probably wrong was the timing. During the long period of stalemate in the Fall, for which Sharon was responsible, whatever opportunity for success we had was lost. The agreement that was finally reached could have been achieved in the Fall, and would have had a far better chance of approval then because Syria was far weaker and less confident than it was six months later. Assad may have felt that he had no choice except to acquiesce, or at least Syria might have been less able to intimidate the Lebanese and thereby prevent the achievement of an agreement.

By the time we had reached May, Syria had regained its self-confidence; it had been resupplied by the Soviets permitting Assad to flex his muscle again in Lebanon, thereby reestablishing Syria's prestige and influence in Lebanon. By May, the chances of Assad acquiescing in something that he clearly opposed, had become minimal if at all existent. The Saudis again demonstrated their inability or unwillingness to influence Syria. Therefore, although agreement was not reached, I do not believe that it was mistake to try to achieve it. I still believe that if Sharon had not been permitted to play his own game during the Fall and had we moved ahead quickly with our efforts as we had wished, the outcome would have been different. Begin's health failure was a large factor because it enabled Sharon to have greater latitude than might otherwise have been possible.

In addition, there was another series of events which effected the eventual outcome of the Israel-Lebanon negotiations. I refer principally to the Kahan Commission report, which took about five months to complete. On February 2, while Israeli and multi-national forces were in Beirut, three Israeli tanks moved from one sector of the city to another on a road that was patrolled by the multi-national force. An American captain, waiving his pistol, tried to stop the tanks. Someone took a photograph of that moment which appeared in The New York Times and some other papers. That episode was viewed in Israel as ludicrous because the Israelis always liked to believe that our two countries had parallel interests in Lebanon. The possibility that one ally was trying to stop another ally was viewed as ridiculous in Israel. In the U.S., that picture had an entirely different meaning; namely that it was evidence of Israeli lack of consideration for the different roles that the two countries had assumed in Lebanon. Cap Weinberger became very exercised about the picture; it fed his anti-Israeli views which were quite substantial by this time.

The Pentagon, based on this event and other similar ones, put out some very nasty stories about Sharon. They probably were based on some truth. He was accused of discrediting our forces by encouraging these episodes. Sharon had always opposed the idea of the multi-lateral forces because he knew that they would limit Israel's freedom of action. That suggests that the Pentagon's allegation may have had basis in fact.

The Kahan Commission presented its findings on February 7, 1983. It placed indirect responsibility on Sharon for the Sabra and Shatila massacres. It recommended that the Chief of Staff, the Chief of Military Intelligence and another senior general be relieved of their commands. Begin and Shamir were both criticized by the report, but were not held ultimately responsible. On February 10, the Cabinet voted 16-1 to approve the recommendations of the Kahan Commission, including the recommendation that Sharon be removed as defense minister. By this time, Sharon had become completely isolated in the Cabinet. He took all the heat for the Lebanese events, although he tried to wrap himself in a martyr's mantle. He therefore was forced to leave his post, although Begin refused to fire him from the Cabinet and allowed him to stay on as Minister without Portfolio. Nevertheless, Sharon's influence on the negotiations was vastly diminished since he was no longer defense minister. Moshe Arens was brought back from Washington (replaced by Meir Rosenne as Ambassador) and made Defense Minister. That one

single action signaled the revitalization of U.S.-Israel relations although the improvements came slowly. Also Israel's position in the Lebanon negotiations became more flexible. I am convinced that had Sharon remained defense minister, there never would have been a May 17 agreement. He would have tried to extract the last ounce of flesh out of the Lebanese; he was very angry with them for their abandonment of his bilateral deal. Arens was determined to achieve some settlement. He was on good terms with Shultz and worked much more cooperatively with us in trying to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion. The fact that Shultz, Begin and Arens got along quite well and with Sharon no longer a looming figure was the key to bringing Israeli-US relationship on track. I have always thought that one important aspect of the "May 17" agreement was that George Shultz, while achieving an agreement which ultimately did not get ratified and therefore did not solve the Israel-Lebanon tensions, did manage as a by-product of his direct role in the negotiations, start to bring the U.S.-Israel relationship back to its pre-invasion levels. It had been badly ruptured by the invasion; and then had become increasingly difficult through a long series of incidents. Arens return to the Defense Ministry also helped to bring the two governments back together so that they could work on achieving common goals. Israeli approval of the Shultz agreement became the base necessary for the rebuilding of U.S.-Israel governmental ties. This rapprochement accelerated in the latter part of 1983 and in 1984 and 1985.

I was not in Israel on the day the Kahan Commission made its formal submission. I was on one my infrequent, but highly publicized diving expeditions. This time, I had gone to the Sinai on Monday, February 7. I visited our U.S. battalion which was acting as part of the observers' force on the southern part of the Sinai coast. I stayed overnight and then went to Sharm el Sheikh for a dive. I returned the night of February 8. On the ninth, I met with Habib and Kimche on the status of negotiations. Habib and Kimche got along well; as a matter of fact, David Kimche got along well with all of us. He was the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He and his deputy, Habon Bar-on, were two reasonable professional diplomats with whom we dealt with easily and effectively. Kimche was as I mentioned the formal leader of the Israeli delegation to the Lebanese peace talks, but that didn't reduce the influence of the Defense Ministry which was of course very powerful. The Foreign ministry, throughout this period, was a positive influence from our point of view, even though Shamir took a back seat to Sharon. He didn't play much of a role and depended largely on the work of his staff. He was a silent partner throughout this crisis.

We also saw Begin that day and exchanged views on progress. He was still withdrawn and not really engaged.

There were a lot of minor events during the February-April period. I won't recount all of them, but I will mention one that was of particular interest to American diplomats. On April 18, a car bomb blew up our Embassy in Beirut, killing our CIA Station Chief and many others. That was the first clear piece of evidence that our military presence in Lebanon, which was part of a peace-keeping operation, was beginning to be counter-productive. We had become identified as a target for the radical anti-regime forces. That was a major blow to U.S. interests in the region,

particularly the destruction of the CIA complex. It destroyed our intelligence gathering capability on Lebanon, leaving us with too little intelligence for a long time thereafter. It made us very dependent on Israeli intelligence who worked very closely with the Christian Phalangists. Shultz returned to the area shortly thereafter to put the finishing touches on the agreement which was by then close to completion. Habib had by this time lost the confidence of the Israeli government so that he could not bring it to closure. He worked night and day, but he couldn't bring Begin, Arens and Shamir over the last hurdles; they would not trust him sufficiently. That forced Shultz' return; he shuttled for about ten days and brought the negotiations to a successful end. Shultz stopped in Cairo on his way to Beirut and held a conference for those regional Ambassadors who were involved in the process. Among us was Ambassador Paganelli who was assigned to Damascus. He was an outspoken, able and volatile individual, who had been unhappy with our policies toward the area. He believed that we should have been coordinating with Syria all along; he was unhappy that we were talking to Israel and Lebanon but were waiting for Syria until later. He had peppered Washington with his views for some time, but was not getting any positive response. When we met with Shultz, Paganelli, backed up by some other Ambassadors, launched a rather intemperate attack on Shultz' strategy.

He said that even if an agreement were to be reached, it couldn't succeed because the Syrians would block it. He urged that we drop the whole negotiations in part because the chances of success were so small and in part because it was souring U.S.-Syria relations. Paganelli was a serious professional, who talked to the Syrians in tough terms on occasions. He was a diamond in the rough. He had a different perspective because he viewed the situation from Damascus; I don't think he was defending the Syrians just because he was accredited to them. He just the picture from a different angle. Our Ambassadors to other Arab States, like Saudi Arabia, supported Paganelli. Roy Atherton, then our Ambassador in Cairo, and I were the only ones that supported the path that the U.S. had undertaken. Our argument was that we had invested heavily in the negotiation and that we should therefore not now back off and break off the talks, thereby giving Syria and other Arab states a cheap victory, which they would exploit for their own benefit. We further argued that it would be better for the U.S. if an agreement could be concluded, even if Syria then blocked it; the burden would then be on Assad. Shultz was obviously not in a mood to retreat and became very angry with Paganelli. He later told Nick Veliotis, then the Assistant Secretary for the region, that he thought that Paganelli had been in Damascus too long (he had been at post for a little more than a couple of years) and that he wanted a list of potential successors. Shultz was very angry by this ill timed intervention. Nick had a very hard time persuading the Secretary over the period of the next few weeks not to replace Paganelli immediately, although he was transferred in June, 1983. The issue was a perfectly legitimate one, but the presentation was ill advised and too stark, particularly in light of Shultz' personal stake in the outcome of the negotiations. This was Shultz' first trip to the Middle East since taking on the job of Secretary; he had come not only to wrap up the agreement, but with public instructions from Reagan to get the peace process moving once again.

The agreement was signed on May 17. That was not the only issue on our plates. We had arguments about the sale of F-15s to Israel which we had embargoed the previous summer. Shultz promised that once the agreement was signed and approved by the Cabinet, that we would lift the embargo. The Cabinet approved the agreement by 17-2 vote with Sharon and another minister in opposition. Syria, as I have mentioned, immediately raised objections. The Saudis made some noises, but their position was not entirely clear. We kept hoping that the agreement would come into force and were counting on Lebanese reliance on us as well as some hopes that the Soviets would play a positive role with their Middle East allies. We also thought that the Saudis might apply some pressure on Syria, even though the Saudi Defense Minister had publicly said on May 11 that his country would not apply any pressure on Syria -- but what is said publicly in the Middle East does not necessarily reflect what is actually done. On May 13, even before the agreement was signed, Syria formally rejected the accords. But the Lebanese Cabinet proceeded to approve it anyway, after considerable pressure from Gemayel, Habib and Shultz. Arafat returned to Lebanon for the first time since the PLO evacuation.

Gemayel was interested in getting the Syrian forces withdrawn as well as the Israeli troops. It soon became apparent that Syria was not very likely to be very accommodating.

We are now in late May, 1983, following the signing of the May 17 agreement between Lebanon and Israel. As I mentioned earlier, one of the immediate consequences of that signing was the lifting of our embargo on the shipment of F-16, which had been produced, but never delivered. The Congress was also busy at the same time trying to increase the Israel assistance levels, which had been blocked by the Administration since the summer of 1982. After the signing of the agreement, the Administration decided it would go along with any increase as long as that did not result in levels available for other aid recipients. That was symbolic of the fact that with the signing of the agreement, the long slide in U.S.-Israeli relations, which had begun 18 months earlier with the annexation of the Golan Heights, had been halted and was going to be reversed. Over the following 18 months, there was a steady improvement in rapport between the Reagan Administration and Israel.

George Shultz, who had spent a lot of time in Jerusalem on the agreement, had developed good personal relations with key Israeli leaders. That certainly was an asset. The antipathy of some of the Washington bureaucracy, especially in the Pentagon, to Israel was somewhat dissipated by the agreement. On the whole, relationships began their upward trend to the customary level.

DAVID G. NEWTON
Deputy Chief of Mission
Damascus (1978-1981)

Ambassador Newton was raised in Massachusetts and educated at Harvard University and the University of Michigan. An Arabic speaking Middle East Specialist, he served both in Washington and abroad in positions dealing with Middle Eastern matters. His overseas postings include Yemen (three times), Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iraq. From 1984 to 1988 he served as US Ambassador to Iraq and from 1994 to 1997 as US Ambassador to Yemen. A graduate of the National War College, he was also assigned there as Deputy International Affairs Advisor, and in 1997 he was Special Envoy to Iraq. Following retirement, Ambassador Newton joined Radio Free Europe in Prague. Ambassador Newton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Well, what, why did Assad take the attitude of Camp David, which is essentially a settling of the Egyptian-Israeli situation?

NEWTON: Well, except it settled the Egyptian-Israeli situation at the expense of the Syrians and the Palestinians. I mean there was some language in Camp David, but it was just language about Palestinian rights. But basically it took the Egyptian military out of the equation so that war was no longer an issue. It left the Syrians and Palestinians high and dry.

Q: Well, is there any thought that Assad might say okay, I'd better get in on this thing and do something or not?

NEWTON: Well, I don't think there were any active interests on either side at that point. The Syrians obviously felt at that point they'd be in a very weak position. Their fear was they were, they were afraid that the Palestinians would jump, and the Palestinians were afraid the Jordanians would jump and that the Israelis would pick them off one at the time. In fact the Israelis later did pick off the Jordanians. Assad was trying to keep--. He had bad relations with Arafat, and he was supporting other extremist Palestinian organizations. So there really wasn't much scope for U.S. diplomacy.

ROBERT W. DUEMLING

Sinai Field Mission

Sinai (1980-1982)

Ambassador Robert W. Duemling was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1929. He received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Yale University. Prior to becoming a Foreign Service officer, Ambassador Duemling served in U.S. Navy intelligence and was stationed in Japan. His career in the Foreign Service included positions in Rome, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, Ottawa, Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to Suriname. Ambassador Duemling was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: You were assigned to the Sinai which was territory between the Israeli and the Egyptians.

DUEMLING: That is right. After four years as DCM in Ottawa, I rather belatedly went to the Senior Seminar which was a terrific experience that I enjoyed greatly. The year I graduated was a bad time in the Department's history as far as its personnel situation was concerned. Not a single one of my State Department colleagues in the Senior Seminar -- not one -- had an onward assignment when we graduated from the Seminar. We were told that we were on our own and that we could roam the corridors to see whether we could find a job. It was an appalling situation. I went looking around and happened upon the fact that there was a new organization being started called the "Multinational Force and Observers". It was the successor organization to the observer teams we had in the Sinai earlier. But this new organization had to be created to implement the Camp David Accords. There had to be a combination of civilian and military observer force. The State Department took the responsibility for getting in touch with other governments to see whether they would participate in this endeavor. Initially we had hoped for a U.N. peace-keeping force, but the Russians were going to veto that in the Security Council. So the U.S. had to sponsor the effort. This was the first and perhaps the only multinational force organized outside of UN auspices, except Vietnam. The Department went around and signed up about eleven different countries, who agreed in principle. Then the U.S. as the lead country had to design this force -- there was not really any prototype for it. It was decided that what was needed were somewhere between 4,000 and 6,000 troops which included a helicopter component. Under the Camp David accords, the Sinai was divided into three zones. The Israeli were going to withdraw and the Egyptians would move in behind them incrementally, eventually taking over the entire Sinai, which is the situation at the present. There were various levels of armaments permitted and other agreements that required daily verification by both military and civilians to maintain the integrity of the Camp David accords.

We had to set up this observer force. The commitments were made by about eleven countries; then we had to go to these countries and fill in the blanks on the table of organization. At the time, the countries had only committed in principle, not to any specific mode or type of contribution. When I joined this organization, it was still in the process of trying to design itself. It was deciding what the table of organization would be, what units would be involved, the nature and size of these units, and what the civilian role would be. The U.S. was going to provide all the civilians and a full battalion of troops and a lot of logistic support, but we were looking to the other participants for two more battalions, trucks and drivers and mechanics to support the transportation fleet, helicopters and pilots and mechanics, a headquarters company, a signal company, etc. There had been no agreements that anybody would do anything specific. I was assigned to this organization to be a negotiator to go to governments as we determined which we thought could fill the various responsibilities. I would go as part of a team to persuade governments to give us what we needed as opposed to what they might have in surplus and would be willing to give us. In that capacity, I worked initially with Frank Maestrone and a couple of others, but eventually I ended up leading the teams myself. In addition, even if a country had agreed to give us what we needed, we had then to negotiate the terms and conditions and the remuneration, the timing, the logistics, etc. I worked with the Colombians in Bogota to work out their commitments for a battalion of troops. I visited Montevideo to work out the terms and conditions of the trucking unit from the Uruguayans. I visited London and The Hague to discuss with the Dutch the assignment of a signals company and with the British, the headquarters company. That was tricky, because we initially had intended that the signals company be British because that is a hard requirement to fill. This company needed highly skilled radio technicians, who are in short supply in any country's military forces. You need radio technicians who are communicators trained to the NATO standards, using English and the NATO signal-books. That narrows the field. The British refused to provide such a company because they didn't have the man-power. The only country left was Holland.

I was despatched as a "one man Mission Impossible" to go to The Hague to try to persuade the Dutch military that they should provide this company. I met with the commanding general of the Dutch army, who was very nice, very polite. I laid out our problem and the reasons for having the Dutch -- namely, that they were virtually the only force that could do it. He listened to me and then said that I was asking for the impossible. He said that the Dutch had barely enough of those skills in their own army as it was. He pointed out that the Dutch had a draft Army, which had very short periods of service -- only six months. Communicators had to spend another six months or more. By the time the Dutch finished the training, they only had three months left in their service. He pointed out that I had asked for six months assignments. He concluded that the request was just impossible because the soldiers would have to re-enlist for another three months to fulfill my request. He thought that was hopeless and no one would do that. I asked him to do me a favor and to publicize the opportunity to serve in the Sinai. If anybody wanted to volunteer, they would have to re-enlist for another three months to complete a six months' tour in the Sinai. He agreed to that for us, but didn't give it much of a chance. When he did announce the program,

there were 1,000 volunteers. These young people wanted a little adventure. All we needed was sixty, so the Dutch were able to fill our request.

I take my hat off to the negotiators of the Camp David accords. They made that whole thing work. You never hear about peace-keeping problems in the Sinai because that whole operation is in place, very effectively administered and we never had any problems with it. It continues to this day and you never read about it.

As it worked out, the borders between Jordan and Israel would be adjusted by a unique method. Israel would cede certain, disputed areas back to Jordan, but Israel would hold them for a long period under a rental arrangement. There would be the possibility of a joint, Israeli-Jordanian airport near Eilat and Aqaba, at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. Water issues would be dealt with. It was a great breakthrough. There would be a possibility for Israeli investment in Jordan because, of course, Jordan had a very weak economy, which had been further weakened by the embargoes which the Saudis and others had proclaimed against Jordan because of its stance during the Gulf War. There was hope that something could be done in this respect. So that's how that particular breakthrough worked out.

DAVID N. GREENLEE

Political Officer

Tel Aviv (1980-1982)

Ambassador Greenlee was born and raised in New York and educated at Yale University. After service in the Peace Corps in Bolivia and the US Army in Vietnam, he joined the Foreign Service in 1974. In the course of his career the ambassador served in Peru, Bolivia (three tours), Israel, Spain and Chile, as well as in the Department of State, where he was involved in Haitian and Egyptian affairs, and at the Pentagon, where he was Political Advisor. Three of his foreign tours were as Deputy Chief of Mission. He served as United States Ambassador to Paraguay and Bolivia. Ambassador Greenlee was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: How did you see Israel's attitude toward a negotiated peace?

GREENLEE: The problem in the Arab-Israeli negotiations was that they were seen as "zero-sum," and neither side ever wanted to yield. Some thought that if the Israelis gave way on settlements, then you could have a break-through on the other side. So pressure would build on the Israelis. But if anything the Israelis would become less flexible. They don't respond well to pressure. The Israelis, I'm sure, want peace, but they don't want to risk being flexible in ways that they think they won't be able to recover from.

I've had a lot of conversations with Israelis about settlements. The position of the U.S. government was always that settlements were "unhelpful" and obstacles to peace. We would sometimes say to the Israelis, "Just when things look like they could have gotten better, you guys start establishing new settlements." The Israelis would say, "You are wrong to think the settlements are a lynchpin for everything. We could get rid of all the settlements, and would still have the same problem. The settlements aren't the issue."

Q: What was going on with Egypt?

GREENLEE: The great achievement of the Camp David Accords was peace with Egypt. The saying was that the Arabs couldn't make war without Egypt, or peace without Syria. Syria wasn't caught in the net, and there wasn't a broad peace—but at least there was a peace treaty with Egypt. This took Egypt out of the mix of belligerents

I was in Israel during the final phase of the Sinai withdrawal. It was a three- phase thing. Egypt had diplomatic relations with Israel. Some Israelis visited Egypt. You could drive through Gaza and across the Sinai, or you could go through Elat and Sharm el Sheikh and there was also a commercial air link. There was an El Al flight and an Egyptian charter flight. This was consistent with the peace accord.

The Israelis loved to go to Egypt. In the beginning there was a lot of Israeli tourism there, but none the other way. The Egyptians didn't visit Israel. What the Israelis wanted above all was to be accepted in the region, as a country among other countries. They made a step toward that with the peace treaty, but they wanted more. They wanted what they called a warm peace. What they got was a cold peace—and they complained about that a lot. They still have a cold peace with Egypt, but at least it is peace

BRANDON H. GROVE Jr.

Consul General

Jerusalem (1980-1983)

Ambassador Brandon Grove Jr. was born in Chicago in 1929 and lived in Hamburg, Germany at the time of Hitler's rise to power. Before Germany invaded Poland, his father was transferred to Holland and later to Madrid in 1940. He attended Fordham University and later Bard College and Princeton University. His Foreign Service career took him to such places as the Ivory Coast, India, West Berlin, and Jerusalem as well as an ambassadorship to Zaire.

I arrived in Jerusalem 18 months after the Camp David Accords, which brought peace between Egypt and Israel, were signed in mid-1978. One of my responsibilities was to elicit support from Palestinians for those agreements and the "autonomy" process for the West Bank and Gaza they envisioned. It did not take me long to recognize we would not succeed. My colleagues at other consulates accurately viewed Camp David as a dead issue. Washington nevertheless remained committed to the Camp David "process." While I had general guidance from Washington, it was up to the consulate to be an advocate, devise a strategy to meet US objectives, and keep Washington informed of the prospects. Rarely, did we get specific instructions from Washington to do anything. In my three years, I was instructed only once to go to the foreign ministry, and that was on a consular matter.

Consulate personnel were closely monitored by the Israeli security apparatus. I was once introduced by Ambassador Lewis to Ariel Sharon, then defense minister, at a social function honoring the arts at Lewis' residence in Tel Aviv. Sam, in a burst of good will, hoped that by meeting me Sharon might become less hostile to the consulate. Instead, Sharon said gruffly that he already knew who I was and what I was doing. He was scathingly critical of me and my staff, whom he accused of coddling the PLO. In some heat, I replied that because Mr. Sharon was well informed he would know that no one at the consulate had any contacts with the PLO. He turned his back to me and we left it at that.

Sharon had difficult relationships with Americans who were not ardent supporters of his views on settlements, Arabs, and the war in Lebanon. I found him an extraordinarily complicated man, an amoral ideologue with a nasty agenda. To him, every Palestinian is a terrorist and something less than fully human. His unrelenting policy of paving the West Bank and Jerusalem's suburbs with settlements is intended to make serious land-for-peace compromises impossible. Over many years Sharon, in my view, has been inflicting great damage on the prospects for peace in the Middle East, and therefore on Israel's, and everyone else's, best interests.

In April 1981 during Secretary of State Al Haig's first visit to the Middle East, I briefed him over breakfast. I told him it was common knowledge among my Israeli friends that Sharon was looking for any excuse to invade Lebanon to settle the Palestinian issue once and for all by force. The invasion occurred on June 6 as "Operation Peace for Galilee," and its stated purpose was to remove PLO forces from a 40-kilometer area north of Israel's border with Lebanon, putting Israel out of range of PLO artillery. In fact, however, Sharon sought to destroy the PLO leadership and remove it from Lebanon entirely, arrange for the election of Bashir Gemayel as president of Lebanon, and then conclude a peace treaty with Lebanon. The goal of expelling the PLO was accomplished; the other objectives were not. Sharon was at this time still playing the dominant Israeli role in the Camp David autonomy talks, thus demonstrating that the Israelis had no intention of engaging in good-faith negotiations with Egypt and the US.

Sam Lewis had long been skeptical about Sharon, and became increasingly distressed as he saw what Sharon was up to in the invasion of Lebanon. I suspect Foreign Minister Shamir and Sharon knew more about plans for an Israeli push all the way to Beirut than Begin. Begin's subsequent depression, his withdrawal and isolation, in part, I believe, reflected his recognition of Israel's self-inflicted wound in Lebanon. He came to understand, as the coffins of young

Israelis kept returning, and after the massacres at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, what his cabinet had wrought and how much blood was on their hands.

Sharon was a problem for everyone: for Sam, for Phil Habib, but especially for peace-minded Israelis. As the Lebanese negotiations unfolded, Sam and Phil would return to the consulate after having met with Sharon, often incredulous at his outrageousness. Habib was always wary of Sharon, who seemed to all of us to have an agenda of his own, no matter what his government's stated policy might be.

Israeli officials resented the consulate's reporting on their rapidly expanding settlements, and on Palestinian views critical of Israeli activities. We disciplined ourselves about what we said and wrote, and separated fact from analysis. We made it clear to Palestinians that the US government had no sympathy for the expansion of settlements, collective punishment of Palestinian families, or acts of brutality by soldiers and settlers occurring with increasing frequency on the West Bank. We also deplored Palestinian terrorism and Arafat's role in it.

Most Palestinians I met were well educated mayors and "notables," university professors, journalists, students, businessmen, lawyers and doctors. Few were professional women. Most spoke English and had family or personal connections to Jordan, where Amman was the source of financial support, passports, and other amenities for the West Bank's Palestinians. The men drank coffee, smoked, and talked politics endlessly, it seemed. A tedious part of my responsibilities was to listen to the litany of complaints from Palestinians about US policy. Most were not interested in hearing our views, and endlessly repeated set speeches accusing us of being responsible for the West Bank's miseries because of our financial and political support of Israel. They held us accountable for the construction of settlements, claiming these were paid for by diversions of US financial aid to Israel and financial support from American Jewish organizations. After a while, these Palestinians would end their monologues and get to more open discussions, although one could usually feel their bitterness toward the US and resentment of the Camp David Accords, which were viewed as legitimizing the Israeli *status quo*.

Arabs of each village and city varied in temperament; at best, one did not sense more than a loose coordination of views among the mayors in the early 1980s. The more radical Palestinians, however, marched in lockstep. Elected officials, like the mayors, talked to us without reservation and in the easy-going manner of people whose lives are in politics. This was not always true for private Palestinians, who tended to be more cautious if their ties to Jordan were strong, or they were concerned about seeming too close to US officials promoting the Camp David Accords. There were only a few occasions when it was not "convenient" for a mayor to see me, and a suggestion was made that we meet the following week. In general, access to Palestinians was not a problem.

Palestinians were also bitter toward Egypt's President Sadat, co-signer of the Accords. I was in Jerusalem when he was assassinated by his military officers, and it wasn't long before Palestinians repeated the PLO line that his fate was deserved because he was a traitor. The moderates who made such comments surprised me. After Israel, Egypt was the strongest military power in the region. The Camp David Accords neutralized that power, which radical Palestinians saw as the only hope of one day regaining their territory and, in the case of the fanatics among

them, pushing Israel into the sea. Palestinians resented President Carter as well, and were pleased when he lost his bid for re-election. They had higher hopes for the Reagan administration, believing it might repudiate Camp David. They particularly hoped the "autonomy" process would be abandoned, and that the US would become less supportive of Israel. Of course, none of this occurred.

This was still a period when Palestinians were unarmed, and violent confrontations with Israelis on the West Bank were not a daily occurrence. Demonstrations did break out in violence, but Palestinians used stones then, not guns. They burned tires, created black smoke, and blocked a few roads; they rioted in refugee camps, but this was pre-*intifada* and weapons were used only by Jewish settlers and military occupation authorities.

Acts of terrorism within Israel, organized abroad by the PLO, Hamas and other groups, were increasing in number and severity. Palestinians in general felt themselves impotent victims of an occupation that became increasingly callous toward their human rights and contemptuous of international standards defined in the Geneva Conventions. Their fellow Arabs in the Gulf States and elsewhere sent money but did not, in the eyes of Palestinians, appear seriously interested in what was happening to them.

A Palestinian I saw often was Mayor Elias Freij, of Bethlehem. He was an orthodox Christian, a moderate, even-tempered, intelligent and moral man, someone who did not whine, and who described the Palestinian dilemma in a larger perspective. As a Christian, he did not have much influence on Muslim Palestinians. I often brought visitors to him because he was eloquent, measured and credible in his soft and patient voice, and because he lived in Bethlehem, which many Americans wanted to visit in any case. Freij was effective in talking calmly and rationally about Palestinian concerns, one of a small number of Arabs who could do so. Yet he, too, strongly criticized the Camp David Accords as a sell-out to Israel. Freij was critical of Arafat in his private conversations with me, but never disavowed him as the legitimate leader of all Palestinians.

Most other Palestinians with whom I spoke would not have dreamed of criticizing Arafat. Freij had deeper insights and recognized that Arafat was not then acceptable to the West because of his endorsement of terrorism and ambition to destroy Israel, and his militant leadership of the PLO. Freij, always a sensitive man of purpose and conviction, read the mood on the West Bank well. He paid for his individuality by being something of a pariah on the Jordanian political scene, and on one occasion having his home occupied by Israeli soldiers for a number of days, for his "protection."

To get a different perspective, I saw, among many others, Karim Khalaf, the former mayor of Ramallah, who was one of two mayors to lose their legs in car bomb attacks perpetrated by a right-wing Israeli underground group. Khalaf lived in Jericho thereafter, but I knew him earlier in Ramallah. Khalaf was a radical, one of the most outspoken mayors on the West Bank, and a vocal critic of Camp David. Even after his amputations, he never lost his fire. When I talked with him in the shade of his garden of orange trees in Jericho, he was full of sparks and anger about the Israelis and ourselves. He, too, was not interested in hearing other views. But he was always,

in the Arab way, a warm and welcoming host, unhappy if you did not share coffee and food, and take some oranges home.

Shortly after my arrival in Jerusalem, Israeli occupation authorities deported two West Bank mayors accused of being PLO-sympathizers across the river to Jordan. They were widely respected leaders among the Palestinians, thoughtful men of principle who were anything but demagogues. The world-wide publicity generated by their deportations was more than the Israelis had bargained for. Deportation left the families, who chose to stay on their land, in dire straits. Western governments, including our own, protested these measures taken at a time when we were clinging to the hope of implementing the Camp David Accords as part of a peace process. To do this, we would need the support of West Bank mayors, particularly those of stature.

I decided to visit the wives and children of these mayors to ask how they were faring, and repeated my calls when I returned to their cities. In Jerusalem, I was pleased when the women stopped by my office. From comments made to me since then, including those of one of the mayors visiting the United States some fifteen years later, I now recognize that this gesture, which became well known, probably was the most effective step I was able to take in three years to reach out to Palestinians as a credible American official.

Israel Invasion of Lebanon

NICHOLAS A. VELIOTES

Deputy Chief of Mission

Tel Aviv (1973-1975)

Bureau of Near East Affairs

Washington, DC (1977-1978)

Ambassador Nicholas A. Veliotis was born in California in 1928. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of California in 1952 and a master's degree in 1954. He joined the State Department in 1955. Ambassador Veliotis' career included positions in Italy, India, Laos, Israel, Washington, DC, and ambassadorships to Jordan, and Egypt. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990.

Q: Haig was still Secretary of State. As I recall it, there was a series of statements from the Israelis like, "We're only going to go so far..." But they kept moving, and it was obvious that the whole idea was to go into Beirut and clean out the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]. Were we aware of what they were doing or were we always a little bit behind the curve?

VELIOTES: Well, there was no secret as to what Arik Sharon [then Israeli Defense Minister] wanted to do. We had had information on that for a long time. However, that isn't what the Israelis said that they were going to do. Sharon planned to create a Southern Lebanon, from Mt. Lebanon to the South. That would be sort of a condominium between the Christians -- that is, the Maronites -- and the Israelis. This was a wildly impractical scheme because between the so-called "Southern Lebanese Army," which was basically Christian, and Mt. Lebanon, which was the home of the Maronite Christians, there were at least one million Muslims, at least half of whom were Shi'a. We knew that Sharon wanted to solve the Palestinian problem in Beirut. But it was a loony idea that you could kill Palestinian nationalism by force of arms in Beirut, with three million other Palestinians living around them in the Middle East. Even if you could eliminate the leadership, that would just have led to temporary openings in the structure, and the leadership would have been reconstituted elsewhere.

Although we may have had suspicions, the Israelis consistently told us that that wasn't what they wanted to do. They said that they were planning to have a security sweep, like the one that they had had in 1978. And, indeed, they did discover a tremendous amount of weapons in the area. It was to be a 40 kilometer sweep into Lebanon. That, I guess, was the range of the PLO weapon with the longest range, the 130 mm, Russian-made artillery. But that turned out to be a pretext. We saw that when Ambassador Phil Habib, on the President's instructions, brokered a cease-fire between the Syrians and the Israelis. As we saw it, this would be a first step toward a broader cease-fire. Then the Israelis claimed that the Syrians had shot at them, and so they then flanked the Syrians and inflicted a very heavy defeat on them. It turned out that it was true that the Syrians shot at them [the Israelis] because the Israelis continued to move. Later, we were told, with a straight face, by the Prime Minister of Israel, "Aha. We said we'd stop shooting but we didn't say that we'd stay in place."

Q: While this was going on, was the Israeli lobby, in any of its manifestations, pressuring us not to do anything, to let them go ahead? Was it orchestrated or not?

VELIOTES: No. Don't forget that there was a shooting war going on, and no one had time, in the early days, really to establish positions for lobbying, apart from just being supportive of Israel. I don't recall that the Israeli lobby did much. When it became clear that the Israelis intended to destroy the PLO in Beirut physically and the television pictures started coming back, with all of their horror, then the Jewish community in this country, by and large, supported the position of President Ronald Reagan -- that that kind of activity must stop. After that, I think that the Jewish community in the U. S. was very supportive of our efforts to negotiate the so-called "May 17 Agreement." Then, in the aftermath of the Sabra and Shatila massacres [Palestinian refugee camps in southern Beirut], the failures in Lebanon, and the great controversy in Israel -- because when I said that the Israeli Government had lied to us, they also had lied to their own people. And there was a great controversy there, indeed. Prime Minister Begin was finished 18 months after the invasion of Lebanon began, both morally, politically, and internally in Israel. So I think that situation was reflected here in the U. S., as well.

But there was strong support for the aid program [for Israel] in Congress and the supplemental aid program of \$500 million in December, 1992, as well. There was great unhappiness in the Jewish community in the United States that we continued to retain certain restrictions on our military supply relationship with the Israelis. For example, the Israeli Defense Forces had been using "cluster bombs" against civilian targets, and things like that.

EDWARD G. ABINGTON

Staff Aide to Assistant Secretary, NEA

Washington, DC (1975-1977)

Mr. Abington was born in Texas into a US military family and was raised in military posts in the US and abroad. An Arabic language officer and specialist in Near East Affairs, he describes his experience dealing with Israel-Arab hostilities and general regional problems while serving as Political Officer at Embassies Tel Aviv and Damascus. In his postings at the State Department in Washington, he also dealt with Near East matters. Mr. Abington was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Were you there when the Israelis invaded Lebanon?

ABINGTON: Yes.

Q: How did that go over?

ABINGTON: We could see the buildup. As we read the reporting from the embassy in Tel Aviv and what was in the Israeli press, particularly people like a very famous Israeli military analyst named Zeb Ship, who's been writing for 25 years, his analyses, obviously based on conversations with Sharon and the IDF, you could see the Israeli invasion coming. You could see that the Israelis were looking for an excuse to invade Lebanon and to take out the PLO. During the fall of '81 through the winter, you could see a steadily mounting pressure with more and more belligerent noises being made by Begin and particularly Sharon. It was very clear that Sharon was pushing the limits of the red lines. These informal understandings that the U.S. had helped negotiate, these understandings of what each side could and could not do. One red line was that the Israelis would not carry out air strikes against Syrian forces. The Israeli air force carried out attacks in late '81/early '82, hit targets in the Bekaa, and killed Syrian troops. This was viewed by the Syrians as the Israelis breaking one of the understandings that the United States had negotiated. I remember the Syrians came to us and said, "What are you going to do about this? You helped broker this. This is what the Israelis have done, violating the understanding." Of course, as usual when something like this happened, we sat on our hands and didn't do anything because the Israelis, particularly with someone like Sharon as defense

minister, basically blew us off. This was a time when there was an increasingly acrimonious relationship between Sam Lewis and Sharon and to a degree Menachem Begin. Whenever he would go in and discuss things particularly on instructions to raise U.S. concerns, he would get reamed out by Begin or Sharon and on occasion they would go out and just publicly berate the United States for questioning Israeli motivation with Sam Lewis standing beside him. But the embassies in Tel Aviv and Damascus frankly got into a very acrimonious relationship in terms of our competing analyses of Israeli intentions. We both became very shrill in what we were saying to Washington, not very professional. We saw the worst in Israeli motives and we basically were right. The embassy in Tel Aviv was trying to defend what the Israelis were doing. We thought in Damascus they were looking the other way and not realizing that the Israelis were setting up a situation so they could invade Lebanon. But when the Israelis violated this understanding, the Syrian reaction, Assad's reaction, was to move SA-3 and SA-6 missiles into the Bekaa Valley in order to defend troops there. His rationale was, "If the Israelis do not abide by the understandings and the Americans don't do anything to reassure us that this won't happen again, we therefore have to take these steps to defend our troops in the Bekaa." That led to a crisis once the Syrians moved those missiles in. That upset the status quo. The Israelis looked upon that as a serious threat to their ability to fly over Lebanon and so forth. Of course, the Syrians said, "The Israelis have no right to fly over Lebanon. They have no right. They have attacked our troops. They are violating Lebanese air space. They violated an understanding against attacking Syrian troops. We have moved these missiles in to defend our troops." The United States embarked on – and I think Phil Habib was the primary negotiator – an effort to persuade the Syrians to withdraw their missiles that was not successful. So, you had this period of mounting tension in late '81 and the first half of '82 caused by these events, by continuing Palestinian PLO attacks against Israel, and it was a crisis that everyone could see coming. I remember sitting on my balcony of my apartment in Damascus, which overlooked Assad's house, early Sunday morning at about 7:00. I had my radio on and was listening to the BBC. The first story was that Palestinians had attempted to assassinate the Israeli ambassador in London, Shlomo Argov, and had shot him, seriously wounding him in the head. He was in a coma and it was not known whether he was going to live or not. I listened to that and said, "The Israelis are going to invade Lebanon today." I called up the ambassador, Paganelli, and told him this. I said, "It's my belief that this is the excuse that Sharon's been looking for and that there will be an invasion." In fact, they did invade that day.

Q: Did the Syrians come to us during this invasion which led to the siege of Beirut? There was fighting with Syria, wasn't there?

ABINGTON: Yes, there was, but the Israelis – and this is where Sharon was roundly condemned by the United States and in fact a commission of inquiry in Israel felt that Sharon had misled Begin and the Israeli cabinet as to what his intentions were. It was initially called the Peace for Galilee Campaign. Initially the stated intentions were to go up to the Litani River and clear out the Palestinian presence in southern Lebanon. People anticipated that there would be an Israeli

occupation of southern Lebanon for some period of time in order to keep the PLO out. But at that point, people really did not know what Sharon's intentions were. Meanwhile, the Mossad and Sharon and Begin had been negotiating secretly with the Maronites in Beirut, with the Gemayels and the Chamouns. The Israelis and the Lebanese Maronites, the Phalangists, had worked out this scheme that the U.S. was really not aware of to drive out the Palestinians from Lebanon - I don't know if the intention was to drive out the Syrians as well - and to install a very strong Phalangist government in Beirut that would enter into an unofficial alliance with Israel. This was all unbeknown to American policymakers. So, this was an unfolding event. Every day that the invasion went on, Israel kept expanding the scope of its military operations. The Syrians from the beginning were very alarmed by this. They saw this as a crisis. They deeply mistrusted Sharon and Begin and they called in Paganelli daily to consult about it. But as the war went on, as the Israelis crossed the Litani, they came into contact with Syrian tank units and they fought pretty fierce battles near Beirut and in the Bekaa and they destroyed a number of Israeli tank units. They attacked the Syrian missile units that had been deployed in the Bekaa and destroyed all of them without losing a single Israeli plane. The Syrian air force, which had carried on periodic clashes with Israel over Lebanese air space, came to the defense of Syrian forces in the Bekaa. In what was a stunning air battle, the Israelis shot down something like 85 Syrian jet fighters without losing a single plane of their own. At that point, the Israelis had uncontested control of Lebanese air space and the siege of Beirut started.

MORRIS DRAPER

NEA, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon

Washington, DC (1976-1978)

Morris Draper was born in California in 1928 and graduated from the University of Southern California in 1952. An Arabic language officer, Mr. Draper served in a number of Middle East posts including Beirut, Baghdad, Jeddah, Ankara, Jerusalem, and Washington, DC. Mr. Draper was interviewed in 1991 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: What role did Brzezinski play?

DRAPER: The rivalry between Brzezinski and Vance existed but it did not interfere with the orderly conduct of our foreign policy. Differences existed about other issues--Africa, Iran--but on the Middle East, Brzezinski cooperated well with Vance. Of course, we had a President who couldn't go to bed at night unless he had read the latest cables. We also knew that "night reading" and other memoranda would eventually get to the President, even if they might have an accompanying note from Brzezinski. So there were many ways of getting our ideas to Carter's attention. That all changed with Reagan; he didn't want to read that much and therefore got in

some cases only papers that the ideologues had approved. If a proposal didn't quite fit a campaign promise, the NSC had no compulsion in just ditching it.

So, as far as the Arab-Israeli issue was concerned, the Vance-Brzezinski rivalry was not a big thing. It did emerge on other issues. Carter himself was closer to Brzezinski than to Vance. Carter felt that Zbigniew was a fascinating personality and that he had a fascinating mind.

During 1978, I became deeply involved in the problems raised by the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. An Israeli bus had been attacked by Palestinian terrorists on a road just north of Tel Aviv. The Israelis, a few days later, moved into southern Lebanon intending to destroy all the Palestinians there. They bombed the hell out of the area. They came up to the Tyre area, close to the Litani River. It was not a very well conducted military exercise. The Israeli tipped their invasion and allowed the Palestinians to retreat to some safety; it was a sloppy exercise in many ways. But it created problems. Previous minor incursions and other incidents had involved Carter personally. In this case, we were afraid that the Israelis would not withdraw and would remain about 20 miles inside Lebanon. That would have raised many difficult questions, including what Syrian reaction might be. One of my major career achievements had been participation in the establishment of UNIFIL (the UN peace keeping force) which had been created primarily at my suggestion, when I was chairing the Task Force on Lebanon. Secretary Vance did not think that the UN would approve it, but after working night and day on it for a few days--on the phone, in New York--putting a couple of UN resolutions together which described the force's mandate, we got them approved. The Soviets might have vetoed them, but they didn't--Vance talked them out of it. Very helpful was the UN Under Secretary for Political Affairs. We were fortunate in getting a Security Council meeting together before the Israeli Foreign Minister was able to reach New York. He was still on route when the Council met; so that the resolutions were all approved before he had an opportunity to interfere--he would probably have objected to them. It was all put together so quickly that there really was no effort by Israel or its supporters to interfere with the process. So we put this UN force together which was designed to take over the territory and stabilize it as the Israelis withdrew from it. We got troops from all sorts of countries--Ireland, Canada, Sweden, Iran, etc--all of which had recognized Israel and Lebanon. The Israelis withdrew very slowly and a lot of pressure had to be applied to them. They would not however move from a very narrow strip north of the Israeli border; they stayed there and build up a local army of Christian Lebanese who became their allies. That strip became almost a permanent irritant in American-Israeli relationships because the Lebanese and Syrians and others were always pressuring us to get these Israeli troops out of the strip, but Israel was not about to do that. To this day, that strip along the border is maintained. UNIFIL was very useful; it was the first time that we were able to put together a peace-keeping force of that nature that quickly. Despite the heavy criticism that has been levied against it, it has become a stabilizing force.

Q: Let me return to the invasion of Lebanon. How did you perceive all those events?

DRAPER: In 1981, we had a crisis when Syrians helicopters attacked Christian position. The Israelis sent some aircraft which shot down a couple of helicopters. That brought on an immediate crisis because the Syrians brought into the Bekaa Valley some anti-aircraft missiles, That was a violation of the so called "Red Line" agreement which was negotiated in 1976 and permitted the Syrians to enter Lebanon, but without their missiles. That in effect allowed Israeli

reconnaissance planes to fly over Lebanon without being threatened. But by bringing their missiles into Lebanon, the Syrians had violated the agreement. The Israelis were ready to attack. One of the problems at the time was that some of the Reagan ideologues, such as the lower level NSC man I mentioned earlier, were trying to get over the Vietnam syndrome and were hoping for a situation which would permit the Israeli to bomb Damascus with our assistance. Or they looked for other pretenses equally idiotic. We tried to get some sanity into the process. I am not saying that any of these actions might have happened nor that Haig would have gone along with some of the wild ideas. But there were people that he occasionally listened to and who had some influence here and there in Washington that were just too wild.

Haig brought Phil Habib out of retirement as a Special Emissary. He and I went to the region to diffuse the crisis by trying to get the Syrians to pull back their anti-aircraft missiles or by developing some other kind of acceptable arrangement. But whatever could be done could only be brokered by the United States since the Israelis and Syrians were not talking to each other. This was in the midst of a heavy electoral campaign in Israel. It was a painful period. Phil and I saw early on that we wouldn't get any movement out of the Syrians; so we gradually made an effort to develop a program which would ease some of Israel's legitimate concerns in a pragmatic way. We came up with the idea of reducing the threat to Israel by the Palestinian forces stationed in Lebanon and with Saudi assistance, brought about a *de facto* cease-fire between the PLO and Israel, starting in July. We were hoping to reinforce this fragile cease-fire with other initiatives later on. We tried that, but were unsuccessful. But that was the first *de facto* agreement between Israel and the PLO; it was the source of great controversy in Israel. Began heard from many critics for seeming to recognize the PLO, but it did buy us about eleven months of relative peace.

Q: These Habib negotiations lasted how long?

DRAPER: From early 1981--about April-- to July when we achieved the cease-fire. The remainder of 1981 was spent traveling back and forth in the region trying to reach a follow-on agreement. We were trying to sell a plan which called for a pull back of forces from the Israel-Lebanon border--that would have pulled the PLO and other Arab groups out of artillery range of Israel. We had other schemes as well. It became clear when Sharon became Israeli Defense Minister that the Israel would move into Lebanon sooner or later to try to destroy the PLO and to set up a regime to their own liking. That was an absolutely stupid idea and in fact turned out to be one of Israel's biggest mistakes. We could see that outcome developing; Sharon practically told Habib and me at one meeting in December, 1981 what he had hoped to do--he did indicate that he did not yet have full Cabinet approval. So some of us spent between December, 1981 and June, 1982--when the Israeli actually invaded--trying to head off what we perceived to be a catastrophe not only for Israel, but also for the West and the United States. I spent a lot of time briefing Haig and Larry Eagleburger, who was then the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Unfortunately, my prognostication were exactly on the mark. The image of American supplied aircraft, munitions, arms crashing down on civilian targets in Lebanon created a horrible uproar in the world and isolated the United States in the Arab world. People like Nick Veliotes, then the

Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs, made similar predictions. Our trouble was, and it was the same trouble that we always had, that the administration could not develop the political will to confront Israel and to tell it that it could not invade Lebanon. Haig wrote in his memoirs that he warned the Israelis that they couldn't take any actions unless it was in response to an internationally recognized provocation; whatever the Israelis did would have to be proportionate to the provocation. That statement didn't mean a thing and no one understood it. The historians will have to decide whether the United States gave in effect a green light to Israel; many Israelis think so. The most common view is that when Sharon told Haig what he was going to do, he got the equivalent of a wink of approval. Haig did not: "You can't invade Lebanon" and he didn't wink; he just didn't comment in some cases. He listened to what the Israelis had to say; once the Israeli Chief of Intelligence told Haig that Israel would have to invade if they couldn't get a better control of the situation. At that stage, we should have said: "No, you can not do that". We might have had to get Reagan to get in touch with Begin or take other measures to impress the Israelis that important US interests were at stake and that they just couldn't proceed. But we didn't. The Israelis wanted not only to knock out the Palestinians, and were trying to provoke a little fight with the Syrians, which they managed to do, but they wanted to install a regime in Beirut amenable to the Israelis. That would have changed the whole complexion of the Middle East and just would not have been acceptable or possible. Lebanon was somewhat of an outsider in the Middle East in any case, but most of the countries of the regime wanted to regard it as an Arab country. Lebanon was a case, like Ireland and Cyprus, where religious strife would intensify political differences. It was a very complicated situation which made outcomes very unpredictable. From a professional point of view, it was very dangerous to have another Arab-Israel confrontation, such as between Syria and Israel, because we had to be concerned with the potential Soviet reaction. In 1967 and 1973, we were very close to an all out confrontation between the US and the USSR over the Middle East, which is what makes the area so dangerous. For all these reasons, we were very leery of any Israeli attack on Lebanon.

Q: How did the Israeli incursion begin?

DRAPER: It was set off by the attempted assassination of their Ambassador in London--Mr. Argov, who incidentally is still alive, but permanently crippled and hospitalized--terrible tragedy. But that was the excuse. Sharon had been secretly planning for this all along was able to sway the Cabinet and the Prime Minister. It started out for the first couple of days with air attacks on the Palestinians and a few other similar actions. Then it escalated until Israelis moved across the border with men and armor. Even then, they described the offensive as having limited objectives; they called it "Peace for Galilee". The announced intention was to drive the Palestinian forces 40 kilometers. When they had reached that line, they went on to Beirut and surrounded the city. There were intermittent cease-fires all along, but none lasted very long. When the Israelis moved on Beirut, the situation changed. The limited objectives had been superseded. The Israelis surrounded Beirut; it was the first time that an Arab capital was in danger of being conquered by the Israelis--that was a major turning point. We desperately tried to diffuse the situation; we helped to bring about the various cease-fires. The Israelis destroyed with virtually no losses the Syrian anti-aircraft missiles systems in Lebanon. The Israelis shot down something like 90 of Syrians first line aircraft. The Syrians were quite bloodied; they dishonored themselves on the ground. From the military point of view, the Israeli operation was not that impressive. With all the resources that they had, they should have been able to move through a small country like

Lebanon much more quickly. The Palestinian forces largely retreated in fair order without too many casualties to Beirut where they could hide in the warrens of the city and where they could defy the Israelis.

Q: As this invasion proceeded, what was the United States doing? What was the Pentagon saying?

DRAPER: The Pentagon was not dispensing any advice; it was basically describing what was going on militarily. The Israelis moved relatively slowly up the coast. What the world did see was vast bombing of essentially civilian areas. It was well covered by the media and TV particularly. The media fanned out over Sidon and Beirut and saw fires from bombs and other destruction; what it saw was a significant military power being applied to a small country that was basically defensive. Women and children were in the camera's eyes to the great embarrassment of Israel. A lot of the destruction was caused by American-made aircraft dropping American-made bombs. Since the US was seen as such a close associate of Israel, we were blamed not only in the Middle East, but throughout the world, for allegedly having given the "green light". That happened even in the United States. In fact, our laws were being violated because the arms and munitions that we sold can not be used except for defensive purposes. They can not be used to subdue other countries. We had all sorts of restrictions on our arms sales and particularly with the Israel. For example, countries that resold any equipment that they had bought from us many years earlier would have been in violation of our laws. In all cases, we had many rules concerning the use of weapons of terror, like cluster bombs, which clearly barred their use unless the purchasing country had been attacked by another power. The Israelis used them in their offensive operations in Lebanon, clearly in violation of United States laws.

Q: Did we believe that the Israelis were implicated in this tragedy?

DRAPER: Of course. One of the items in the subsequent investigation records showed that I personally had been in touch with the Israelis to protest the massacres. When I found out about the events, I dictated a message to Defense Minister Sharon which was given to Israeli intermediaries. I assigned full blame to him for what was happening because he had complete control of the area and could have stopped the massacres if he wished. It was obscene. We did everything we could to stop the Christians; it was a desperate and difficult situation.

We managed to evacuate the Marines and the Italians and the French after seventeen days, which was long enough. We had never contemplated these forces staying more than thirty days. The Palestinian and Syrian fighters had been evacuated and that operation had gone smoothly. The Palestinians and the Lebanese were upset that these troops had left Lebanon, but we had to do it. We certainly didn't want the Marines to stay any longer than was absolutely necessary. At that time, the situation looked pretty good. The Israelis were behaving themselves; the Syrians and Palestinians were quiet; there were very few problems. In fact, the Lebanese army was beginning to take over its own territory. So by the beginning of September, we flew back to Washington to discuss what our next steps might be.

I returned from those Washington consultations and went to Israel first to start a new stage which called for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. I was starting that negotiation between Israel and

Lebanon. We arrived in Israel on September 14, when we got the word that the building in which Gemayel was meeting had been blown up. We didn't know until late that night that Gemayel had been killed in the bomb blast. I was awakened at the hotel around 3 or 4 a.m. by people calling from Washington telling me that the Israelis were moving into Beirut--they had only surrounded before and their move into the city was contrary to all understandings and assurances received. The city was filled with old people, non-fighters, the families of the Palestinians who had been evacuated. So I got in touch with the most senior Israeli I could find--the Deputy Secretary of the Foreign Ministry--and he got in touch with Begin. We had promises that the Israeli troops had not entered the city, but we just occupying the hills surrounding the city. They were occupying checkpoints to keep the various Lebanese factions from fighting each other. I had an appointment to see Begin very early that morning--6:30 or 7 a.m.--; he reiterated some of the same promises that I had gotten a few hours before--that the Israelis were taking only limited steps. In the meantime, Washington had told me that it wanted me to be the official representative at the Gemayel funeral which, according to Lebanese custom, was going to be held that afternoon. I asked the Israelis for a helicopter to get to Lebanon, which they provided. As I stepped off the aircraft at Israeli headquarters in Lebanon, which was in the hills just above Beirut, I saw many signs of fighting--artillery fire, tank fire, small arm fire. I asked the American who had come to meet my helicopter what was going on only to be told that the Israelis had moved into the city despite what had been said to me only three hours earlier.

Q: How did you get the Palestinians to agree to leave Lebanon?

DRAPER: We worked through intermediaries. We communicated in writing. Our notes were very, very carefully drafted. I wrote 99 percent of them. They are all available in the record. The notes were addressed to Arafat, so that technically you might say that we were in communication. We did get approval in principle to have "proximity talks"--one party in one room and the other in another with an intermediary going back and forth--and perhaps even face-to-face talks. As it turned out, we didn't have to. Of course, there are pros and cons to any method of dialogue. We didn't want to have any closer relationships because we knew that the Israelis would go up the wall. It might even have sabotaged the chances for a cease-fire and withdrawal. There was also the question of security; it would have required us to go into parts of Beirut which were being constantly shelled and bombed. Habib and I would have been tracked and who knows who might have wished to blow up the building we might have been in? So it was very difficult to decide how to negotiate with the PLO. We were prepared to have "proximity talks", but didn't have to, as I said. We used to joke about it; when we told the Lebanese Prime Minister that we might do this, he agreed and said: " You Americans can go into the dining room, the Palestinians will go into the living room and we Lebanese will go into the bathroom". Despite all the fighting, we did get messages back and forth. There were delays at times; there were no mechanical methods of communications--telephones, telexes, etc. We had to wait for the emissaries to weave their ways through the fighting. It was all very complicated; we had many deals worked out, including a special checkpoint which allowed the emissaries to travel back and forth without being seen by an Israeli soldier. That was known as "Checkpoint Draper" because I had negotiated it between the Lebanese army and police and the Israeli army and intelligence and other factions. We had all kinds of special ways. Sometime, we might be able to get a telephone call through to some people. We had a very active Lebanese intelligence

service working with us. The Israelis permitted the telephone lines to remain open so that they could tap them.

We finally got an agreement, but it depended on putting a multinational force into Lebanon for a while and an agreement that all the factions in Lebanon would not attack. I got that from himself--he was the leader of the Christians--. We put it all on paper to the PLO. The evacuation was carried out in safety; it was difficult moment, but no one was hurt. By and large, the process worked.

We were very lucky that the Tunisians agreed to take the PLO. That took a great effort, which we did at long distance. Habib was hoping that the bulk of the Palestinians would go to Egypt, but Mubarak would not agree. He did not want the PLO headquarters in his country. We wanted the Palestinian fighters to go some place where strict control could be exercised over them. Egypt was one of the few places we thought would satisfy that objective. It had a strong army and a good intelligence and police force. But Mubarak was completely unwilling, at least as far as the PLO headquarters was concerned. Jordan would accept only limited numbers; Yemen agreed to take some back, but the whole resettlement process was full of complications. The PLO did not want to go to Syria for obvious reasons--Assad was so angry at Arafat. As it turned out, the Syrians were the most accommodating. For a while, we despaired of finding even a temporary home for these people, but the Syrians accepted quite a few and that eased the problem considerably. The Iraqis were willing to take some Palestinians, but there were other problems. We thought if they went there, it would just create other problems; so we were never serious about that possibility. We were trying to evacuate thousands and thousands of men who were leaving wives and children in Lebanon. The Red Cross was very upset with us for a while because they felt that families should not be separated in evacuations of the kind we were fostering. We gave some thought to moving all the Palestinians out of Lebanon, but that would have meant a difference between 12,000 and probably 140,000. The only comparable transfer was between Greece and Turkey after World War II. One of our original ideas was to move the fighters and their families and others to Northern Lebanon in an unpopulated area in sort of an enclave. The Lebanese would not accept that; they hated the Palestinians. There was a lot of sympathy for the Palestinian political cause, but not for their behavior. The Palestinians were very bad. The Shiites in Southern Lebanon had moved the Palestinians out of their area and had welcomed the Israelis to some extent, which the Israelis ruined, of course, later. The Lebanese hostility toward the Palestinians was such that they wouldn't consider leaving the fighters at least in Lebanon. After going through all the options, we reached the conclusion that we just couldn't send all the Palestinians out; we had to settle for just getting the fighters evacuated. We settled on that to save Beirut and American prestige; the situation just had to be diffused so that it would be possible for the Israelis to withdraw in good order with their own "face" saved. That was to be the second stage. There was no other choice to what finally happened; we tried to do the maximum, but had to settle for something less. We did the best we could.

Q: During your "shuttle", did you find any division among the Israelis on the Lebanon invasion?

DRAPER: In the first week, there was completely unity across the board, including the opposition parties. That gradually waned as it became quite clear that the operation might not be as moral as originally sold. Three or four weeks after the invasion, an Israeli Colonel, who had

been a real hero, resigned making it clear that he could no longer kill women and children in the Beirut area. A lot of under-currents of dissatisfaction developed. You could also detect differences when you observed how their various clandestine services were behaving. They obviously all held different views. Military intelligence was very skeptical about the possibility of setting up a friendly Lebanese government; they were very skeptical of the capacity of the Christian militias. Other elements of the Israeli intelligence community felt differently; there was strong support among some of these organizations for Gemayel and his family and for the Falange. There were others who had differing views on how to handle the occupied zone in South Lebanon and the Shiites which were 80 percent of the population in that part of the country. There were other differences over how to handle the Druze; there was ambivalence about what to do with the territory that the Druze occupied. The Israelis initially disarmed the Druze and then resupplied them later. We saw a lot of funny things happening.

As time passed, the Shiite element in South Lebanon, who had initially welcomed the Israelis, turned against them, partially for economic reasons. The Israelis did not let them harvest their orange crop. That was the end of the farming seasons for them. There were other things that the Israelis barred them from doing. It was stupid, but the policy was fostered by a lot of Israeli merchants who were shipping goods to the Shiites from Israel and didn't want competition for their own wares. There were a lot of reasons; I think there were many Israelis who thought that they could treat South Lebanon just as they treated Gaza and the West Bank. That view was not of course held by all Israelis, but there were many who didn't understand how counter-productive their policies were. When you interfere with the livelihood of already poor people, it is pretty traumatic. This policy gave the Shiite fundamentalist and other fanatics an opportunity to regain power and gradually over a period of months they turned the whole population against the Israelis and made the situation more and more difficult.

Q: Tell us a little more if you will about the different kinds of UN or multinational peace-keeping forces that you observed.

DRAPER: I was involved directly or indirectly with forces that were marshaled in the 1970s and 80s. The most prominent of these was the 1978 formation of the UN peace-keeping force in South Lebanon known as UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon). Before that, in 1975 after the second Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreement, I was on a mission that moved into the Sinai to spot sites for our surveillance force and systems that were to be deployed near the key passes--the Mitla Pass and others--in the central Sinai area. Also in 1981-82, I was deeply involved in forming a multinational force for the Sinai to monitor the final Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai. That force had to be formed because we could not put together a UN force as originally anticipated in the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty because of the threat of a veto--by the USSR and others perhaps--in the Security Council. We made a commitment to Israel at the time that in addition to continuing various overhead surveillance of the Sinai--primarily aircraft, but satellites as well--we would also form a ground multinational force. The overhead surveillance required the permission of the Egyptians and Israelis when conducted and the pictures taken were then distributed to both sides so that they could see whether any violations of the truce had taken place. The ground force had to consist of troops whose countries had diplomatic relations with both Egypt and Israel. It was a lot of work putting that together, trying to overcome problems raised by Egypt and primarily Israel. We had to virtually negotiate

everything from tent pegs to the caliber of weapons that we could use, the rules of engagement, etc. We found some superb Scandinavian military officers, but we were restricted to a certain extent by the requirement to find countries that maintained diplomatic relationships with both countries.

One aspect that is true of virtually all peace-keeping forces is that since the end of World War II there has been a tacit agreement that the Great Powers would not use their troops as part of UN peace-keeping forces. Nevertheless, beginning in 1948-49 with a variety of supervisory forces in the Arab-Israeli theater, there were some American and Soviet observers attached to UN forces. There was a tradition that an American officer would be the chief-of-staff of the UN forces headquartered in Jerusalem, but would cover Egypt, Syrian and Lebanon. We had other observers--few in numbers--from time to time. The Egyptians were confined primarily to Egypt and Syria and had to be restrained periodically when they tried to extend their areas of operations. But putting together a peace-keeping force as we did in 1978 was very difficult because a lot of potentially eligible countries did not have diplomatic relations with Israel or were considered hostile by Israel. That group included Greece, for example. The caliber of the forces was often a problem, but some did surprisingly well. The Fiji forces for example contributed outstanding troops to UNIFIL which are still there. The Israeli and the Lebanese factions operating in South Lebanon are very respectful of the Fijians who are excellent soldiers who go by the book. The French contributed crack troops which at the beginning improved measurably the caliber of the over-all force. But there were also weaknesses; the Israelis found, for example, that the Irish troops were not always of good caliber. The Israelis, I think, resented the Irish for seeming to enjoy themselves and often challenged them rather than others. We had Iranian troops in 1978, but they had to be withdrawn in 1979 when the Shah's regime began to collapse. But we had considerable success and some tribute has to be paid to countries such as Italy, which had never contributed forces to a UN operation, but which did participate first in the Sinai by sending naval vessels which closed a big gap. You could always depend on some country to help out. The Canadians have always contributed troops, but it is such a small population that it has to rotate its troops through "hot" spots like Cyprus, Africa or the Middle East and that over and over. The Canadians are very useful because often we needed bilingual communications; these are always in English, but if you can have English and French that makes the tactical communications so much better because more people can receive them.

SAMUEL W. LEWIS

Ambassador

Israel (1977-1984)

Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis was born in Texas on October 1, 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree in international relations from the Johns Hopkins University. His career included positions in Naples, Florence, Rio de Janeiro, Kabul, and an ambassadorship to Israel. Ambassador Lewis was interviewed by Peter Jessup on August 9, 1988.

Q: How did Shultz become secretary of State?

LEWIS: At the time of Haig's resignation, Shultz was teaching at the University of Chicago. He had been a member of Nixon's Cabinet -- Secretary of Labor, Secretary of Treasury and Director of OMB. He had been considered for Secretary of State at the beginning of the Reagan administration. There was a story, which I consider fairly credible, that Shultz had been selected to be Secretary upon the recommendations of Reagan's "kitchen cabinet". Reagan had called Shultz and offered him a Cabinet position, but apparently was quite vague about which job it was. Shultz, based on press leaks and other rumors, assumed that Reagan was referring to Secretary of Treasury or some other position in the economic sphere. That didn't interest him, so he turned down the offer politely without being aware that it was the Secretary of State position that he was refusing. That is how Haig became Secretary of State. There are several people who give credence to this story although I don't have any first hand knowledge about it. In any case, Shultz was well known commodity in Washington. He was an excellent choice. He was one that I eventually became to regard very highly and to work with easily. I also had a good working relationship with Al Haig; in fact, I think that he was a better Secretary of State than history has credited him so far. His personal style just didn't fit in with the Reagan team; Haig was his own worst enemy in the way he tried to exert his own leadership. That did not fit with a management style which was not very clear about responsibilities; the White House staff could not accept some one who tried to assert his primacy over an area of responsibility as Haig was accustomed to doing.

In any case, by early July, 1982 I was back in Israel after two trips to Washington in June, one with Begin. Haig was trying to run Middle East policy from his house as Shultz hadn't yet been sworn in and Haig was still technically in the job. Shultz was finally appointed in mid July. We had problems in New York in the U.N. Security Council which was considering resolutions calling for PLO limited withdrawal from Beirut and for Israeli forces from Lebanon. The U.S.

vetoed such resolutions because we were, at that stage, still supporting the Israeli contention that the PLO had to leave Lebanon before a modicum of order could be restored to the area. The news out of Beirut suggested a very nasty situation. The press was hammering the U.S. administration, accusing it of having approved the Israeli invasion. On June 30, at a press conference, Reagan denied that rumor, even while the Israelis launched an attack on West Beirut from a distance with artillery shells. The President added however that we agreed with the Israeli position that all PLO forces had to withdraw from Lebanon. The Israelis had told us repeatedly that they did not wish to enter West Beirut and wished that we would find some way to force the PLO to withdraw. There was an increasing level of discussion about the desirability of an international peace-keeping force to enforce the cease fire.

Q: Wouldn't that not have required a larger force than is usually despatched?

LEWIS: Of course. There wasn't much enthusiasm for the idea anywhere. There was already a U.N. force in south Lebanon -- UNIFIL. Some suggested re-deploying UNIFIL to the Beirut area to separate the combatants. The U.N. certainly didn't leap at that suggestion because it didn't feel it would get sufficient cooperation from either side. In Beirut, the fighting had come to a stalemate because the Israeli shelling was not achieving the objective of forcing the PLO out. The PLO was well dug in and it was increasingly apparent that something more had to be done to root the PLO out. The Israeli Army always had some reservations about entering West Beirut, as I noted earlier. It did not cherish the prospect of urban warfare even though it had handily defeated the PLO in the previous few weeks even though the PLO forces fought more tenaciously than expected.

Morris Draper, then the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau for Near East Affairs responsible for Israel-Lebanon-Syria geographic area, had been working for the past year as Phil Habib's alter ego. Draper was in Beirut in July trying to work with the Lebanese government to persuade the PLO to evacuate. Habib may have been there as well; the two worked together at times and separately at others. I believe that Habib may have been in Beirut and had asked Draper to go to Jerusalem to try to convince the Israelis to stop their shelling of the city. That sort of shuttle diplomacy set a pattern for activities which took place over much of the summer, 1982. Habib was trying to work out an arrangement which would have the PLO evacuate Beirut and would have brought the conflict to an end. Phil worked out of our Embassy in Beirut. As time wore on, he became less and less even-handed; he became increasingly an Israeli critic, influenced no doubt by the continual Israeli shelling of Beirut. Although the attacks were to be targeted on the PLO, undoubtedly the whole population suffered, including Habib. He must have been shaken at the continuing sight of smoke plumes from artillery shells and bombs from planes; his vantage point inside the American Embassy in Beirut gave him an entirely different perspective from ours; he could see the war through Lebanese and PLO perspective. Because of our diplomatic niceties, no U.S. official was permitted to enter Lebanon to observe the war from the Israeli side. We watched the war through newspapers and television; that was entirely different than seeing it as Habib did from our Embassy in Beirut.

Habib saw the continual break-downs of the cease fires; he noticed the creeping forward progress of the Israeli forces; he saw the effects of the bombings and the artillery fire on innocent civilians. The cumulative effect of these observations increased Habib's anguish about Israeli policy. Periodically, he or Draper would visit Jerusalem following a very dangerous escape route from Beirut. They usually took a helicopter to an American carrier which was just off the Lebanese coast; then they would fly to Cyprus to connect with a flight to Jerusalem. Either Habib or Draper would meet with Begin or Shamir or Sharon in an effort to convince them as tactfully as possible to cease their military activities so that diplomacy might be given a chance. Habib and Draper felt that if the Israelis would stop their incessant bombardments, then they could get in touch with the Palestinian leadership. They thought that if given a breathing moment and an opportunity for a dialogue with the PLO, they could convince the PLO to evacuate. But as long as military pressure was being applied, there was no way for the Americans to meet with the Palestinians -- it was just too dangerous to be on the streets. Furthermore, the Israeli shelling was causing so much agony that no diplomatic discussions could possibly be contemplated. In effect, Habib and Draper were saying that the current Israeli policy was counter-productive. It was usually Draper who carried the message; if he didn't, then there would be indirect messages relayed through telephone conversations over secure lines that lasted for an hour or two at a stretch between Habib or Draper and the Operations Center in the Department of State. Usually, Habib would talk to Charlie Hill, then the acting Deputy Assistant Secretary and the designated liaison between Habib and the Secretary's Office. Hill would listen to Habib, both the factual reports and the anguish about Israeli actions; in general, Habib's message was that some one had to get the Israelis to stop their military activities. These phone calls would result in periodic instructions to me to call on Israeli officials and try to get them to cease and desist. Sometimes Washington would call Ambassador Arens in and give him the same strong message that we wanted a halt in the shelling of Beirut. The pattern of an anguished Habib reporting at great length to Washington followed by some kind of demarche delivered either in Washington or in Jerusalem began at the end of June and continued through the summer until the PLO finally withdrew.

There were several times during July when it appeared as if the PLO was prepared to withdraw. They were asking for all sorts of guarantees and assurances, primarily from us; they wanted to leave some forces to protect the refugee camps. One of the problems was that there were no countries that were particularly interested in becoming PLO hosts, especially the military forces. That brought the U.S. into the unusual role, stemming from Habib's mediation efforts, of trying to find a haven for the PLO. American embassies in the region were making discreet inquiries of their host government whether they would be willing to accept these PLO fighters. There were no takers because these "immigrants" would prove to be nothing but trouble either domestically or internationally. Egypt, for example, whom we considered to be a logical safe-haven, didn't want any part of the PLO. Mubarak was crystal clear that although he had great sympathy for Arafat and the PLO, he was not about to get the PLO out of the mess they had made and was not about to jeopardize his peace treaty with Israel. I think we were talking about 4-5,000 men; it

was not a gigantic number, but it was substantial. Ultimately, the U.S. was instrumental in finding other homes for these troops -- they were actually dispersed throughout the region, some to South Yemen, some to Tunisia, some to Syria on the Beirut-Damascus highway in convoys. We were instrumental in assuring safe passage and preventing the Israelis from firing on the trucks which they watched drive by. Much later, Arafat himself with his senior staff ended up in Tunis. Some moved north in Lebanon to Tripoli so that not all PLO forces evacuated Lebanon. That is what triggered later fighting between the Syrians and their surrogates and the PLO which eventually resulted in the PLO being completely ejected from Lebanon. We in fact arranged for Arafat's safe conduct out of Tripoli and he probably owes his life to the U.S. diplomats who were responsible. I presume he has remembered that fact although gratitude is not always a common virtue in the Middle East.

I have described in general a lot of the daily activities during this period of the Summer of 1982. I was very busy, trying to stay synchronized with policy developments in Washington. After Shultz took office, the atmospherics changed substantially. Many people in Washington were getting fed up with the Israeli maneuvering and continuing Beirut bombardments; increasingly Washington was doubting Israeli good faith and the bonds of trust between the two countries was weakening. I shuttled frequently back and forth between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem; when I didn't call on the Israeli leadership in person, I was on the phone to it.

Q: What was Arens doing in Washington during this period?

LEWIS: He was being fairly starchy, but handled himself well in a rather difficult situation. One of the sad aspects of this period was the tensions that mounted because of the issue of a peace-keeping force. When it became clear that there was insufficient support for the idea of moving UNIFIL north, we finally agreed to join with the French, the Italians and the British in sending forces to the area, which would act in a coordinated fashion although each under its own flag. These troops were to serve as a temporary shield for Beirut, screening it off from the Israeli forces. These forces were to establish a free zone which could eventually be used as a withdrawal route for the PLO. We and the Israelis were during this time at considerable odds about the facts. What we were told about the situation around Beirut was seldom in agreement with our own observations were as reported by our Embassy in Beirut and the Habib group. Of course, they were being provided information by the Lebanese and by the Palestinians neither of whom were neutral observers of the fighting. To this day, I do not know how much deliberate misinformation we were fed, how much was correct and how much was just information which had been filtered through the fog of war. I do know that there was a lot of factual disagreement between the combatants about what was actually happening on the ground. There was also a lot of finger pointing.

The sympathy of the administration, which up to early July, had been strongly pro-Israel, increasingly shifted towards the Palestinians. That was not a formal policy shift, but the tenor of the instructions emanating from Washington changed as did the Washington reaction to events in

Lebanon. There was a growing sympathy for the Lebanese and the PLO, who turned out to be considerably more tenacious than any one anticipated. We reacted as we normally do when there is an under-dog; we sympathize with it. That was true even among those who were well disposed towards Israel. My own reactions changed as well; you could not be involved in those very trying days without feeling frustration and anger. The Israeli mood was also changing; they were showing frustration with the United States particularly once the multi-national peace-keeping forces were deployed. They gagged at the sight of an American force, an alleged close friend and ally, stationed in Lebanon for purposes which were somewhat inimicable to their own perceived interests, although some Israelis saw our intervention of potential benefit. It did not help that our military refused to have any contact of any kind with the Israeli Defense Force even though they were in close proximity. There was considerable discussion of the danger of uncoordinated overflights as well as potential for other accidents. So there was a lot of tension on the military side in light of this close proximity of forces especially since we for policy reasons refused to have any contacts with the Israeli military.

Habib during this period traveled around the area to Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel trying to develop a coordinated plan to convince the PLO to leave Beirut and to get the Israelis to join a real cease fire during which the PLO might depart. He would come to Jerusalem with all sorts of proposals and formulas. In the meantime, Arafat was meeting with the press in Beirut putting on a very defiant air; he seemed to believe that he would not have to evacuate Beirut and that his position was salvageable. There has been a lot of discussion about how he developed this perception. There are some credible reports that at the beginning of his troops' retreat from south Lebanon, the PLO had become completely disorganized under the Israeli pummeling. There are some indications that by late June the PLO was ready to leave Lebanon through Beirut port. But at a critical moment while this issue was being debated, Arafat received a message from Saudi Arabia which reassured him and led him to believe that the U.S. would intervene and prevent Israel from over-running the PLO in Beirut. This message was received while the first cease fires were being declared. The Israelis have often alleged -- and there is some evidence to support their contention -- that Cap Weinberger, who was never sympathetic in the slightest with the Israeli invasion and therefore at odds with Haig and later with Shultz about our Israeli relations, while paying a visit to Saudi Arabia at about this time, had said to the Saudis that President Reagan would never permit Israel to enter and occupy West Beirut. This may have been transmitted to the PLO giving them the sense that it could count on the United States to stop the Israelis at the last second. It is clear that from the panic stage that followed in the immediate aftermath of the Israeli invasion in late June, the PLO recovered and in fact took a very pugnacious and unrelenting stance. It took six-eight weeks of fighting before they eventually left Beirut. During this period, the Israelis slowly applied increasing military pressure and eventually damaged much of West Beirut in the effort to root the PLO out. In retrospect, if we in fact conveyed the wrong signal, either intentionally or inadvertently, that may have been one of the major causes for Beirut's great damage and suffering. Had the PLO not thought that

we would come to their rescue at the last second, they might well have fled Beirut shortly after the Israeli invasion, thereby sparing Beirut and its inhabitants from a few weeks of hell.

As I said, during June and into July, Habib was pleading with the Israelis to cease their bombardments so that the PLO might withdraw. Sharon became the focus of our frustration and anger because we held him accountable for all the cease fire break-downs, for the shelling of Beirut, the misinformation, the alleged double-dealings, etc. As I mentioned, Habib's argument was always that if the Israelis would only cease and desist for a few days, he could put a deal together which would end up with a PLO withdrawal from Beirut. Israeli intelligence, which was quite extensive and which was based to a considerable extent on Phalangist sources as well as its own, was portraying an entirely different mood in the PLO leadership. It described that group as defiant and almost euphoric because it was attracting so much world-wide attention. Furthermore, Israeli intelligence described the PLO as convinced that it could outlast the Israelis or that in the final analysis, the world would save them. This perspective led the Israeli army to disagree with Habib's assessment; it was convinced that the PLO would retreat only if Israel would maintain and indeed even increase its military pressure so that the PLO would understand that it had no option except evacuation. This disagreement about PLO intentions and perspectives gave rise to U.S.-Israel tensions about the validity of Israeli military policy in Lebanon during July and August. Our dialogue with Israel became very bitter and spoiled American-Israeli relationships at senior levels.

Q: Do you have any hypothesis about whether the Weinberger's comments in Saudi were made on purpose? Or were they the expressions of an unsophisticated, inexperienced man?

LEWIS: My guess is that the remarks were not made intentionally, but rather a reflection of the policy disputes that were then raging in Washington. Furthermore, this was a period when the foreign policy tiller was not in very firm hands. Haig was on his way out, Shultz was not yet in the job, Reagan was a laissez faire President and every Cabinet member was marching to his or her own drum beat. The NSC was weak, failing to coordinate foreign policy effectively. I suppose that if Weinberger had actually expressed the thoughts that are now being impugned to him, may well have believed that Ronald Reagan would not have permitted in the final analysis that the PLO to be expelled. But the Weinberger comments, if indeed they were made, were mischievous in their effect; there is no doubt about that.

Habib was in Jerusalem once again towards the end of July. In the days preceding his arrival, there had been considerable dialogue about the Syrians. Israeli jets had attacked and destroyed three Syrian SAM sites in the Bekaa Valley as well as Palestinian targets in and around Beirut. While that bombardment was going on, Arafat was meeting that same day with a group of U.S. congresspersons: Mary Louise Oaker (D-Ohio), Peter McCloskey (D-CA) -- he left Congress soon after that. After the meeting with Arafat, the American delegation came out and proudly waved a statement which they had gotten Arafat to agree to withdraw if Israel accepted certain U.N. resolutions about Palestine. McCloskey insisted that this agreement signified PLO

recognition of Israel which the Americans considered a great triumph. McCloskey came to Israel after his meeting with Arafat and tried to sell this interpretation to Begin and the Israelis, but he was not very successful. In the first place, they didn't agree with McCloskey and secondly, the Congressman was not very popular in Israel to start with. The Israelis felt that the American delegation had been duped by the PLO.

We looked at the statement that Arafat had agreed to and we agreed with the Israelis that it did not represent any change in PLO position. But McCloskey and his colleagues were, or wished to be, convinced that their meeting with Arafat was a significant progress towards peace.

On July 27, while Habib was meeting with the Israeli leadership, Senator Paul Tsongas was in Tel Aviv. I was moving from one set of meetings to another. That day was also notable because the Israeli jets bombed a residential area in Beirut. The Lebanese authorities declared that 120 people were killed and 100 more wounded in the raid, most of them being civilians. The U.S. responded to this raid by suspending indefinitely shipments of cluster bombs to Israel; there had been considerable pressure to take this step for some time and that particular bombing finally forced Reagan to take the step. We said that we had done so on policy grounds and not as a matter of law, i.e. a finding of violation of the military assistance laws.

As July passed, Habib was trying to get PLO agreement to withdraw. Another cease fire had been declared. On July 29, the U.N. Security Council voted 14-0 on a resolution demanding that Israel cease its blockade of West Beirut, which had been in effect for several weeks. This was the Israeli way of avoiding entering West Beirut; they had hoped that a cut off of supplies might force the Lebanese to insist that the PLO leave. That was viewed as a very callous policy by much of the world, including many Americans. So when the resolution came up in the Security Council, we abstained, thereby permitting the resolution to be passed. That U.S. action came as a blow to the Israelis. By this time, Reagan's comments about the Lebanese situation took on a much harder edge. He decried the bloodshed in Lebanon and called for an end to it. He was particularly critical after an August 1 Israeli raid that was particularly destructive.

At about this time, a suitcase filled with explosives went off in the Munich airport injuring seven innocent bystanders. So the tensions were rising on all sides.

At the beginning of August, I returned to Washington to participate in meetings that Foreign Minister Shamir was holding there. He had been despatched to Washington to try to improve the coordination and understanding that had seriously deteriorated during July. I had meetings with Shultz and Eagleburger; I attended a meeting that Arens had with Eagleburger. I had a session with Judge Clark, the NSC advisor. It was not a pleasant consultation because by this time, the Washington mood was generally very anti-Israeli. I met Shamir at the airport on August 1. The next morning, I had an early session with Shultz prior to his meeting with Shamir.

After the Shultz briefing ended, Nick Veliotis and I shared a car to the White House where we took part in a 15 minute "pre-brief" for the President, then sat in on the 1 ½ hour Reagan-Shamir

meeting. It also included numerous other White House aides, Shultz, Weinberger, etc. Though polite, the meeting was pretty tense - and essentially a stand-off. Reagan's skepticism about Israeli intentions was clearly growing apace.

We then returned to the State Department for another hour-long Shultz-Shamir session, followed by a working lunch on the Eighth Floor. Shultz was for the first time getting to understand how immovable Shamir (and the Israelis) could be. Both men were on their diplomatic best behavior, but neither was at all persuaded by the other's arguments - which centered on how best to get the PLO to evacuate Beirut - by constant military pressure, or by Phil Habib's negotiating tactics.

I then accompanied Shamir to the Pentagon where Cap Weinberger worked him over much more combatively - with little effect. Shamir parried Weinberger's bitter complaints about Sharon's military moves with his own counter criticism of the "insulting" way the U.S. forces in the MFO were behaving toward the IDF - as if the U.S. and Israel were enemies!

Returning to State, I met with Shultz to fill him in on the Pentagon meeting and to share impressions of the day's sessions. Neither of us were at all encouraged. Fred Iklé then picked me up to give me a lift to Ambassador Moshe Arens' residence for the dinner Arens was hosting in Shamir's honor. The usual cast of political supporters of Israel and some friendly journalists; the usual rather forced toasts to eternal U.S.-Israeli amity. A rather subdued mood.

Tuesday, August 3 and Wednesday, August 4 were eventful indeed. By the time I caught the plane for Tel Aviv at 7:40 p.m. Wednesday evening I was running on empty!

Accompanied Shamir to meetings on the Hill with Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday morning; then I left Shamir to his customary round of private meetings with Jewish supporters from the Congress and various Jewish organizations, his press briefings for the Israeli and American press corps (separately, of course), etc. (All these events being absolutely SOP for high-level Israeli visits.) I went by to see Bud McFarlane at the NSC, then talked with Jeane Kirkpatrick and subsequently joined her for her meeting with Shamir. Finally returned to State for other meetings and what turned out to be an all night vigil in the Operations Center!

The news from Beirut was getting increasingly ominous. Israeli air strikes and artillery fire seemed to be growing in scope and intensity. Phil Habib weighed in by phone with increasingly angry demands that we contact Begin. George Shultz had joined Velioles and me in the Op Center at a console to speak directly with Phil. At his direction I tried to reach Begin, to no avail. Shultz then had me rouse Shamir from bed at his hotel (by phone) and he laid it on the line sternly to Shamir - making clear that these Israeli actions were completely contrary to the soothing reassurances which Shamir had given the President and Shultz earlier in the day. He demanded an immediate explanation from Begin. Shamir protested that he had no information about any new military assaults - but promised to get ahold of Begin immediately. (It was by then after midnight in Washington but early morning in Israel and Lebanon.) We sat impatiently

in the OP CENTER waiting for him to call back. When he finally did so around 1:30 or 2:00 a.m., he told Shultz (with me on the line) that he had reached Begin, who had immediately consulted Sharon, and that Begin insisted that our information must be incorrect since Sharon had checked and found “nothing unusual” going on in Beirut! At almost that moment, Phil Habib called in an angry eye witness account of seeing the Israeli planes bombing West Beirut targets at that very moment! Shultz’s U.S. Marine Corps background kicked in at that point; his face turned almost purple as he told Shamir just what Habib was personally watching; he also told him to set the Prime Minister straight and see to it that the bombardment ceased forthwith... We stayed in the Op Center the rest of the night and eventually the reports from Beirut began to show some positive effect of these three way exchanges. Shultz’s personal initiation into the frustrations of dealing with Begin/Shamir/Sharon in the heat of crises (long-since all too familiar to me) was a very unhappy one. His view of Begin’s credibility was strained to the limit, only slightly attenuated by my urging him to recognize that Sharon’s propensity to mislead Begin should not be underestimated.

Veliotis and I had a skull session with Shultz at 5:00 a.m. - then at 7:15 a.m. we all assembled in the White House basement in the Situation Room with Reagan, Bush, Weinberger, Clark, McFarlane, Kirkpatrick, assorted Generals, and numerous other White House and Pentagon representatives for an impromptu NSC meeting on the Beirut Crisis. It lasted until 11:40 a.m., intermittently (though most of that time without Reagan); I met privately with Bill Casey during one of the breaks to discuss some planned CIA activity in Israel. The mood was pretty grim all around. Bush and Weinberger led the charge in favor of cracking down hard on the Israelis; Jeane Kirkpatrick made an eloquent defense of the Israeli rationale for keeping up military pressure to persuade Arafat that he had no option but to abandon Beirut - the objective we all were seeking. Reagan seemed prone to accept Jeane’s arguments; she obviously was a favorite of his. McFarlane made delphic, somewhat ambiguous interventions. Shultz said relatively little in the large meetings, though I gathered that he had expressed his views separately to the President and I doubt they were very complimentary to Israel.

After a few more meetings at State, I headed for the airport. It was abundantly clear that the Begin government’s standing with the Reagan Administration had taken some heavy hits. There were more to come.

I got home Thursday afternoon and the next few days were more or less normal - i.e. late nights on the secure phone to Washington, back and forth to Jerusalem, press backgrounders to try to checkmate tendentious leaks from the GOI about alleged mistakes and miscalculations by Habib in his indirect mediation between the PLO and the Israeli Government (carried on via intermediaries in the Lebanese Government), briefings for a visiting group of retired U.S. generals, meetings with other Ambassadors, attending the Alvin Ailey Dance Company’s performance at Caesarea’s ancient Roman theater, etc, etc, etc. The usual merry-go-round.

On August 10 I had a private meeting with Begin at his residence in Jerusalem. It was testy. The PLO still hadn't agreed to depart and Sharon was pressing for more IDF action. Phil Habib flew in from Beirut that evening and we stayed up much of the night thrashing out how he should approach Begin to try to get across just how damaging to Phil's efforts were Sharon's military moves. We spent 2 ½ wearying hours with Begin the next morning (Wednesday). Phil then returned to Beirut and I to Tel Aviv/Herzliyya, believing that the Israelis would now keep things relatively quiet while Phil finished negotiating with Arafat.

A massive air attack on Beirut on August 11(?) resulted in an angry telephone call from President Reagan to Prime Minister Begin. It followed a call that I made to Begin earlier during which I had read him the riot act without waiting for any instructions. My call had angered Begin, but had already triggered a command to the Israeli Air Force to cease the bombardment, well before Reagan's call with his "ultimatum" to stop the bombing, or else! (Since I had already reported by secure phone the results of my early call to Begin, I've always been suspicious that Reagan's subsequent call and the publicity given to its tough tone by the White House was all something of a piece of theater!) In a cabinet meeting that morning, an angry Begin had taken away Sharon's unilateral authority to order any major military operations; thereafter they required the Prime Minister's approval. That would suggest that Begin did not know of the Beirut air strike until after the fact.

Habib was reporting from Beirut in very angry tones that he was just about to complete the negotiations for the PLO withdrawal when the air attack came; it had completely disrupted the delicate status of the negotiations. On August 13, the PLO finally provided Habib a list of 7100 troops who would be withdrawn from Lebanon; it also proposed a time table for the withdrawal. On August 14, Habib flew to Tel Aviv, where I met him and drove to Jerusalem with him. The following day, early in the morning, before the regular Israeli Cabinet meeting, Habib and I met with Begin, Sharon and others. Habib presented the withdrawal plan, which drew a lot of carping reservations from Sharon. Begin agreed to submit it to the Cabinet; it was discussed there later in the morning. With Begin's blessings, the Cabinet accepted the plan in principal, subject to some further refinements in the details. At the same time, the Cabinet withdrew Sharon's demand that Israel had to have a name-by-name list of every member of the PLO to be evacuated from Lebanon. Habib had also relayed a proposal that a multi-national force be deployed into Lebanon to supervise the evacuation. That generated a lot of discussion, but was finally accepted by the Israel government. A couple of days later, the PLO and the Lebanon government approved the same evacuation plan; the Israeli Cabinet met again on August 19 and gave its final approval.

Interestingly enough, during this period of high tensions and drama culminating in the withdrawal agreement, our Embassy was going through the periodic change in key personnel. As is often the case, there is no relationship between the personnel assignment process and the political situation on the ground. Bill Brown, my outstanding deputy for three years, was transferred back to Washington and was being replaced by Bob Flaten. So during this very tense weekend, we were giving a farewell dinner for the Browns and a welcome dinner for the Flatens

and going through the usual change of personnel ceremonies as if nothing else were happening. In reality, I was shuttling back and forth to Jerusalem with Habib trying to wrap up the PLO withdrawal negotiations. I hated to give Bill up at that stage because there was still a lot of work to be done before the PLO would finally evacuate. He had been an extraordinarily reliable and strong right hand. I had known Bob Flaten for a long time and had a lot of confidence in him, but he was not thoroughly knowledgeable on current Israeli affairs, having just completed a tour as coordinator of Afghan programs. He was a real expert in Afghan affairs; we had first met when I was DCM in Kabul in 1971 and he was the Afghan desk officer in Washington. I worked with him then very closely and had a very high regard for him, but the timing of the change in DCMs in Tel Aviv could not have been much worse. Bob had served in Tel Aviv a few years earlier and therefore knew something about Israel-Palestinian affairs, but it was not current knowledge. Nevertheless, we managed to survive the change in the middle of all of the excitement. I even managed to play some tennis that weekend and had lunch with the President Navon at Caesarea, where he was vacationing. He was quite disturbed by the manner in which Begin was handling the PLO issue; he talked very frankly to me about Begin's stubbornness, Sharon's disruptive tactics and other concerns that he had.

To add to all the turmoil, this was the weekend before our son was leaving to go off to college. He had just had spent four years at and just graduated from the American International School and was departing for James Madison University in Virginia. This was just another example of the continuing juggling act that a Foreign Service officer has to perform to be faithful to his or her public duties and private responsibilities.

The deployment of the first contingent of the multi-national (French, Italian and American) peace-keeping force that had been established took place during this week. The cease fire, although tenuous, was holding and the last details of the evacuation were being settled. On August 20, 800 Marines were ordered to land in Lebanon from their off-shore carriers. On the 21st, the PLO began its evacuation; 400 of its troops boarded a ship for Cyprus. The French forces landed at about the same time. The process moved forward relatively smoothly, except for a couple of near catastrophes. None were reported by the media, but they did give rise to considerable anxiety for us in the area.

One of the crises occurred on Sunday evening, August 22. Contrary to the arrangements negotiated, the PLO had decided to take some heavy weapons and vehicles with them. Side arms were all that were supposed to be taken by the PLO. In any case, the first PLO contingent showed up, flags flying, at the Beirut harbor under the watchful eyes of the multi-national forces and further away, of the Israeli army. This PLO group had thirteen jeeps, armed with mounted machine guns, with it which it wished to take to Cyprus. Sharon and the Israeli army objected strenuously. We thought that the whole arrangement might come apart over these jeeps. There was a lot of telephoning between Beirut (Habib), Jerusalem (the Defense Ministry), Tel Aviv (me) and eventually the PLO agreed not to ship them out. We undertook to take custody of the jeeps and agreed to ship them to another country where they would eventually be returned to the

PLO. As I recall, those jeeps wandered around the Mediterranean on an American war-ship for weeks thereafter before we finally managed to dispose of them. This was just an illustration of the lack of statesmanship on both sides which caused us as intermediaries to burn a lot of midnight oil unnecessarily.

But there was a much larger crisis on the 22nd which almost caused an exchange of fire between the Israeli Navy and the American Navy. That was an occasion which is usually seen by history in a footnote as it should be, but it could have been taken up several pages if events had proceeded differently. The Israeli Navy, which was hovering just off the Lebanese shore observing the PLO withdrawal, seemed to be menacing the evacuation although it had not taken any offensive action. The American Naval Force which was navigating in the same seas found the Israeli presence unacceptable and a potential barrier to the smooth implementation of the evacuation agreement. There was concern that the Israelis might sink some of the transport vessels once the PLO troops were on board and the ships were on their way to Cyprus. I received word that I was to request that the Israeli withdraw their Navy. I called the Prime Minister; he was outraged by my request. He insisted that it was essential that the Israeli forces be permitted to observe the process so that they could assured that it met all the conditions of the agreement. Our Navy then threatened to sink the Israeli ships; I was entrusted to relay that policy to the Israelis. You can well imagine the ensuing flurry of phone calls that this statement of intent generated. Begin, Washington and I were on the phone almost continuously. I could not be in direct contact with the American fleet commander; I had to communicate with the Navy through Washington. A stalemate developed; Begin was furious and offended and not about to order his Naval units to withdraw. Our Navy appeared almost anxious to demonstrate its fighting capabilities. The tensions between our respective armed forces were already high; this demand by our Navy did nothing to lower them. Eventually, I constructed some language which was to serve as an understanding between Israel and the U.S. and submitted it to Begin for his approval. The language was artfully drafted to save his face and that of our Navy. Begin finally agreed to it and issued a brief statement of confidence in the multi-national force. Soon thereafter, the Israeli ships moved slightly and our Navy withdrew its threats. So by Sunday night, the crisis had passed, but it had been a very tense afternoon during which some outbreak of fire might well have taken place. Everybody took a very macho position which made the outcome unpredictable. I have often reflected what history might have said had the American and the Israeli navies exchanged fire particularly since both were present in the area to observe the evacuation of the PLO forces and to insure compliance with an agreement. Because most of the negotiations on this event was done telephonically -- much over the secure phone to Washington -- the written record is very small; my instructions were provided by Washington over the phone. The whole episode is also another illustration of the fact that despite all the modern communications available to diplomats, that despite the ability of a Secretary of State to be in another country in hours, that despite the predilection of heads of state to communicate directly with each other, there are still times when an Ambassador is needed and needed urgently.

Q: Did it turn out that there had been some independent action by the U.S. Fleet commander?

LEWIS: I think there was probably a little muscle flexing going on, but I am not sure to this day how many of the commander's demands were determined on the spot and how many were authorized by the Pentagon. The whole episode received little notice, mostly in the Israeli press. Everyone played it down; it served no one's interest to highlight it.

The evacuation was completed on August 22. The ships used were Greek chartered ships, hired by the PLO and escorted by the navies of the three multi-national forces. The ships had to navigate through the Israeli screen which had been set up just outside the harbor. The PLO was certain that the Israelis would try to sink the ships and therefore were pressuring the Americans and the French to provide close protection. I don't believe that the Israelis ever intended to harm the PLO ships, but I can certainly understand the PLO's concern. The PLO left with heads high, flags flying while marching down to the harbor, trying to make the evacuation look like a great victory. The Israelis were very busy taking pictures from the hillsides with telescopic lenses trying to capture the image of each PLO fighter for future intelligence purposes.

On Monday, the 23rd, the Lebanese Parliament elected Bashir Gemayel as President of the country. The vote was 57-5 which was clear evidence that Gemayel's allies, the Israelis, had made it very difficult for the Muslim delegates to reach the Parliament building where the vote was taken. That vote was also an indication that the joint Israeli-Phalangist strategy had succeeded. The PLO had been expelled and Gemayel was now President. Both Sharon and Begin were counting on the new President to bring Lebanon into some sort of alliance relationship with Israel while at the same time cleaning up the remnants of PLO presence which might still have been left behind.

The U.S. Marines took up their positions in the port area on August 25. The French and the Italians had been the main multi-national forces during the evacuation. The total multi-national force was about three-four thousand strong, scattered throughout Beirut in strategic areas. They were there essentially to protect the PLO who had insisted on such a force to ward off any Israeli attack. It was part of the agreement that Habib had worked out with the PLO and the involved governments. Throughout the summer, the Israel were insisting that Egypt should rejoin the autonomy negotiations which had been essentially suspended when Israel invaded Lebanon. Mubarak had said on several occasions that he could not resume those negotiations as long as Israeli forces continue to be deployed in Lebanon. He had even raised the stakes by suggesting that autonomy negotiations could not really resume until the United States itself accepted the principal of self-determination for the Palestinians. Israel was determined, as soon as the PLO had been expelled from Lebanon, to put pressure on us to pressure the Egyptians to resume negotiations. Begin made his positions clear to a Congressional delegation that was visiting Jerusalem during this week.

Habib visited Israel on a couple of occasions during this period. This coincided with the 66th annual convention of Hadassah which met in Jerusalem. That brought thousands of American women and I was asked to address them one evening. On the 26th, Sharon left for New York, with the political situation in the area presumably on track. His main purpose was to put his political relationships with the American Jewish community back on track in the United States. That community had become alienated from Israel in light of the invasion; they were not happy with the pictures of the Beirut shelling which were widely seen in the U.S. The number of casualties that the media reported had been caused by Israeli actions did not sit well at all. Sharon also went to Washington and met with Weinberger and Shultz. Those meetings were followed by a White House announcement that Weinberger would visit the region: Lebanon, Egypt and Israel. Sharon, in his American TV interviews, was saying that since the PLO had been expelled from Lebanon, it was now possible to bring some stability to the area with the cooperation of the moderate Palestinians on the West Bank, who would no longer be burdened by the heavy hand of the PLO. That had always been one of Sharon's strategic goals. Egypt continued to refuse resumption of negotiations as long as Israeli troops were in Lebanon.

In the meantime, during the whole month of August, Washington was undertaking highly secret planning for a major peace initiative. Right after Shultz had become Secretary in mid-July, he and the President had concluded that once the PLO had been evacuated from Lebanon, it would be important to refocus everyone's attention on the peace process by restarting negotiations which had been suspended. Shultz instructed some of his staff to quietly and secretly develop an American initiative. I knew that this process was going on because while in Washington In July, I had the opportunity to discuss it briefly at least; I was given the chance to review and comment on some early drafts, but the whole exercise was on a very close hold. There was no time table for the beginning of the initiative, but plans were being drawn up. I was relatively comfortable with what I had seen and heard. As I said, the initiative was being worked on secretly during August while the struggles continued in Lebanon. I was receiving some very cryptic briefings over the secure phone from Charlie Hill, but the conversations were not comprehensive enough for me to have a clear picture of the staff's proposals nor did I have any sense of the timing. I was unaware and not informed that Nick Veliotis, who, as Assistant Secretary, was in charge of developing the initiative proposal, had consulted King Hussein of Jordan. In fact, I believe that Veliotis secretly visited Amman unbeknownst to me. Veliotis had been our Ambassador to Jordan and therefore knew the King quite well. He apparently got the King's agreement to enter the peace negotiations based on the draft initiative that Nick discussed with him. But nothing was said to the Israelis, contrary to long standing written commitments that we would not undertake any major initiatives on the peace process without consulting Israel. Washington was greatly concerned that if the Israelis had known about the initiative, they would leak it prematurely and would thereby sabotage the whole effort. Furthermore, it was Washington's view that unless King Hussein became seriously interested it would not have been worth launching the initiative; he was viewed at that time as the key.

So while the Israelis were focusing on the restart of the autonomy negotiations, even though the Egyptians were not a willing player, we were concentrating secretly on a new peace initiative. I was almost totally in the dark about that effort as were the Israelis. When I later found out about what was going on, I was very upset. I discussed my unhappiness with Shultz and Velioles. I understood their concern about the possibility of leaks and the possibility of an preemptive sabotage effort by the Israelis. Nevertheless, the Washington tactics left me out of the loop and deprived it of some advice that I could have provided about how to handle the initiative in Israel when they wanted to launch it. I was not convinced that the idea of an initiative was a good one at that time, but I am convinced that after it was launched, it had been presented in the worst light and at the worst possible moment. I think had I been consulted earlier, we might have avoided some of detrimental consequences that the initiative produced.

In the meantime, in Israel, Begin was delighted with the PLO troops' expulsion. He decided that after a very stressful summer, he could take a short vacation. He had never taken a vacation since becoming Prime Minister four years earlier. That he was ready for a vacation then was a clear indication of how worn out he was by the end of the summer. So he and Mrs. Begin went to Nahariyya on the coast south of the Lebanon border. They rested in a small house. They had intended to spend about a week there during the last part of August. That seemed to be a propitious time for vacation especially since Bashir Gemayel had been installed as President of Lebanon, the fighting had ceased and the PLO had been expelled.

On August 31, a Tuesday, I received an "Eyes Only, Top Secret" message from President Reagan which I was to deliver to Begin. The message contained what became known as the "Reagan initiative", which was the product of the six weeks of planning I described earlier. I was instructed to deliver the letter immediately to Begin. I was also given some talking points which I was to deliver orally. I was told that the initiative would be unveiled to the public in the near future and that therefore it was extremely important that I see Begin immediately and get his reaction and hopefully his acquiescence. What the U.S. government was obviously doing was going through the motions of consulting with Israel. I later learned that similar messages had been sent to our Embassies in Cairo, Amman and Riyadh. All the Ambassadors were requested to deliver the letters and the comments immediately and to report reactions immediately. We were told that the President intended to make his new plan public in a speech to be delivered within 72 hours. We were not to give any impression that the plan could be modified, although of course we would listen and report reactions. I called Begin and apologized for interrupting his vacation, but that I had to see him about a most urgent matter. He said that he was very tired and wondered whether the matter could not wait for two or three days. I told him that I had personal instructions from the President to see him immediately and he finally agreed to see me. So I got in a car and drove to Nahariyya which was about two hours north of Tel Aviv. I left about 3:15 in the afternoon and got to Nahariyya at about 5 p.m. Begin ushered me into his sitting room, very politely. He wore a sport shirt, which for Begin was extraordinary since he almost always wore coat and tie. Alisa brought us a cup of tea and we talked a little about the success of the

Lebanon operation. Begin was in a good, relaxed although tired mood; he was obviously very satisfied with recent events. Then I gave him the President's letter which he read. I then mentioned that I had some oral points which I was supposed to deliver. He asked me to proceed which I did. While I was talking, he kept looking at me, with an expression that was getting sadder by the moment. When I finished, he just looked at me for a couple of minutes and then said: "Sam (sigh), could you not have let us enjoy our victory just for a day or two?". Then he pulled himself together and more formally said: "Mr. Ambassador, I have listened carefully and I am extremely upset by your message. It is entirely contrary to all of our understandings with your country. This initiative is not in accordance with the Camp David agreements; in fact, it is a violation of those agreements. Of course, I will consult with my Cabinet and then I will give you a response. I do need a little time for that process". He went on for several minutes in this vein and became increasingly angry as he talked. He was not happy with the content and the implications of the President's letter. He was obviously upset by the lack of any indication that the initiative was being developed and by the absence of any prior consultations. In my talking points, Washington had included the point that we were consulting simultaneously with Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The mention of this last country really set Begin off. He was especially furious that on an issue that involved first and foremost Israel and perhaps also Jordan, that Saudi Arabia, which was not a central player, was being treated in the same manner as Israel. He was also upset that we had apparently already consulted the Jordanians -- my talking points included something along the lines that "we have reason to believe from our contacts that the King of Jordan will be favorably disposed" to this initiative. That certainly tipped what we had done and Begin did not take it very well at all. But the part of the process that really set him off was our approach to the Saudis simultaneously to my conversations with him. He took that as a diminution of Israel's role. He then recounted many of the summer's events; it was a long and very unpleasant conversation. Begin vacillated between anger and weary resignation about American policy. He took on an aggrieved mood of bitterness and of being treated unfairly. The timing of my visit could not of course have been worse; I interrupted his first vacation in four years. So the Begin's response was negative both for official and personal reasons. By the time I left him, it was quite clear that Begin would recommend to the Cabinet that the American initiative be rejected forcefully, but he said that he would take the matter up with the Cabinet. He did request, as I mentioned, that the President give him enough time to convene the Cabinet. That would be time consuming since he would have to return to Jerusalem and convene the Cabinet and have a thorough response. Begin asked me to pass to the President his plea that the speech be deferred at least until the beginning of the following week or five or six days hence. I told Begin that I would report his request, but that I had no way of knowing whether the President could wait that long. I was aware of the Washington concerns about premature leaks. He pointed out that he thought that we owed him at least that much time to consider Israel's response. So I dashed back to Tel Aviv and spent the evening writing my report. I strongly urged that the speech be delayed long enough to allow Begin to consult with the Cabinet. I also called Washington on the secure phone and elaborated on my written message.

The initiative was handled in a manner which was bound to produce a disaster. It was almost so ordained. Israel may well have rejected the substance of the initiative in any case, but a more sensitive process of consultation may have avoided the vituperation and bad feeling that in fact occurred. Those side effects could have been avoided. The basic problem was that the Israelis had been concentrating on Lebanon all summer; that issue had not been yet finally resolved. There were still Israeli troops in Lebanon and there were some messy residual problems yet to be resolved with the new Lebanese government. It was not very likely that the Israeli government, psychologically, would be prepared at that stage to deal with a major American peace initiative which concerned the West Bank and Gaza. There were of course central and difficult problems in those areas, but the time was certainly not propitious to raise them since the focus of the government was still on Lebanon. So the rejection of the initiative was most likely, but it didn't have to happen with such rancor.

The first person in the NSC who read the cable was probably Geoffrey Kemp, the Middle East expert who worked for Judge Clark, the NSC advisor at the time. I am not clear that Reagan ever saw my cable or anyone else's for that matter. I assume that the President was briefed. But as far as I could tell the tactics for the initiative were being orchestrated by Shultz and Velioles in the State Department.

The next day, Wednesday, Begin called a meeting of the Cabinet to be held the next day in Jerusalem. In the meantime, Weinberger had landed in Beirut the previous day and was to travel to Israel as his next stop. On Wednesday afternoon, I met with Shimon Peres in Tel Aviv at the Dan Hotel; it was the day before the Cabinet was considering the President's proposal. I briefed Peres privately on the initiative which was based on the Camp David agreements and included important policy objectives that we continue to espouse to this day. For example, we said that we did not support an independent Palestinian state, but we would also not support the annexation by Israel of the West Bank and Gaza. The proposal used phraseology drawn from the Camp David accords, but in certain areas, went beyond those understandings; those were the statements to which the Israelis took great exceptions. There is no question that the initiative was a genuine effort to jump start the negotiations and it obviously had been drafted with a lot of care. The details of the plan were less an issue than the matter, the timing of its presentation and the diplomatic activity that surrounded it. Although a well crafted statement of U.S. policy and a good vehicle for restarting negotiations, it was tactically ill-conceived; it might have had the intended effect had it been floated at the right moment and with better preparation.

On the other hand, the talking points were not well thought out. They became a major part of the tactical problem, at least in Israel. The talking points were basically drafted to convince the Jordanians to enter the negotiations. They were couched in language intended to appeal to King Hussein. Shultz, a careful man of great integrity, did not wish to employ a very normal diplomatic practice; that is when talking to different governments on the same subject, a government will argue for the same substance, but the language to be used is different depending on in which capital the discussions are taking place, in order to tailor the approach to maximize

the appeal to each interlocutor. In the case of the Reagan initiative, however, Shultz insisted that same identical talking points be used by all American Ambassadors when presenting the proposal to all Middle East governments. He obviously wanted to avoid being accused of double-dealing. But some of the phrasing of these talking points set Begin on edge. That was another reason that our presentation was tactically deficient and stirred a negative reaction far greater than the substance should have.

The next evening (Wednesday), while I was awaiting the Israeli response, Weinberger arrived at about 5 p.m. Sharon, as Weinberger's counterpart as Defense Minister, was to host a large reception, as was normal, at the Tel Aviv Hilton. I took Weinberger there. We were sitting down having some food and drinks -- this was about an hour after our arrival -- when one of my staff members brought me cable that he had just picked up at the embassy. It was a message that I was to deliver immediately to Begin, before the Israelis could formulate their formal response. Washington, in this message, was telling Begin that not only could it not delay its unveiling of the initiative, but that the President would make his speech that evening in Washington (the evening of September 1, which would have been early Thursday a.m. in Israel). So the message that I was to deliver was about six hours away from the moment the President would unveil his initiative. I was told that I should tell Begin that the speech could not be postponed because some of its substance had already leaked out and therefore the President would have to speak at the planned time.

At that moment, I decided that I would not drive to Nahariyya, which would have taken two hours, to deliver the message. Instead, I called Begin and gave him the essence of the message and had the full text delivered by messenger. Of course, Begin was outraged. His Cabinet was not to meet until the next day in Jerusalem, so that he was still on vacation in Nahariyya. When I described Washington's message he became very angry, bitter and cold. He made the point that this was no way for friends to treat each other; he did not feel the Israelis did not deserve this kind of treatment. Begin asked me to report to the President that he was very upset, but that nevertheless, he intended to convene the Cabinet the next day and provide an official Israeli response. Of course, I think the die had been cast by that time and I had no doubts about what the response would be.

Soon after my call to Begin, the Israeli information system went to work. There had been some small leaks in the press about the initiative, but no major effort and some of those leaks may well have originated outside of Israel. But the next morning, the press was filled with extensive and tendentious coverage of the initiative. These were obviously authorized and stimulated by the government. By this time, the Embassy had received the full text of the President's speech as delivered in the early hours -- Tel Aviv time. The speech was essentially an elaboration of the letter; there was no reference to the talking points. But the press stories covered the talking points extensively; it had obviously been fully briefed. The tendentious nature of the process -- i.e. that Jordan had been consulted earlier than Israel and that Saudi Arabia had been consulted simultaneously (all of the aspects that galled the Israelis) -- were made public and were available

to the Cabinet while it was considering the initiative. The Cabinet was meeting in Jerusalem; I was with Weinberger meeting with Sharon before the Cabinet meeting; then I attended Nahun Goldmann's funeral on Mt. Herzog in Jerusalem. Then I accompanied Weinberger on a number of visits to such facilities as tank factories and then on a helicopter trip to the west Bank and the Golan Heights. Weinberger and I ended up in Nahariyya late that afternoon after the completion of the Cabinet deliberations, a Begin press statement and the preparation of an angry rebuttal to Reagan. After he did all that, Begin had returned to Nahariyya to finish his vacation. So late on that Thursday, September 2, Weinberger and I spent a couple of hours until 7 p.m. with Begin. Weinberger caught the full brunt of Begin's displeasure; he got it in spades and I was delighted to be essentially a bystander. Begin listed at great lengths all of his aggravations with the United States and how it had behaved. The list included American treatment of the IDF in Lebanon which would have been characteristic of enemies rather than allies, how we had colluded with the PLO, how we had been plotting a betrayal of Camp David behind Israel's back, how we had consulted with Jordan first and then with Saudi Arabia. It was a great two hours!

Then Weinberger and I flew back to my house by helicopter where I was to host a stag dinner for the Secretary of Defense. I had invited many of the leading Israeli military and politico-military personalities, including Sharon. It was quite an evening; not very pleasant. There was another aspect of this series of events that must be recorded. Unbeknownst to me at the time and only learned later, Begin had, after my first meeting with him Tuesday night, when I gave him Reagan letter and briefed him, met in Nahariyya with Bashir Gemayel, the Lebanese President. Gemayel was one of Begin's protégés and an ally; a relationship that had developed secretly over the previous few years. Gemayel had brought a few close advisors and Begin had invited some Israelis including Sharon. The meeting was secret and attended by very few on both sides. Begin reportedly greeted Gemayel quite brusquely which was very uncharacteristic. He essentially told Gemayel that Israel had now won him the Presidency and had ridden his country of the PLO fighters; it was therefore time to sign a peace treaty. Begin had every reason to believe, based on the years of relationships with Gemayel and the Phalangists, that the Lebanese would now be prepared to sign a peace treaty once Gemayel had taken office. But by now the restrictions of being President had become clearer to Gemayel. He had to find ways to reconcile the Muslims who had assisted him in the expulsion of the PLO. So Gemayel, although quite polite, tried to tell Begin in unmistakable terms that such a treaty would need time. His message became quite clear soon to his Israeli audience. He gave all the reasons why he had to proceed cautiously, he told them he was not in a position to set a date, he mentioned all the political fence-mending that he had to undertake first. This Lebanese position soon got under Begin's skin; he became furious. He then addressed Gemayel in very demeaning and authoritarian terms; he was obviously very upset that his Lebanese allies were not being compliant. He obviously felt betrayed because the Israelis had done so much for the Phalangists and the Christians. That session in Nahariyya changed Gemayel's views of the Israelis; he viewed them as much more sinister than he had before. All the Lebanese were shocked by Begin's behavior to their new President. In fact, I understand that even the Israeli delegation was quite shocked. Dave Kimche was one of the

Israelis present at this meeting and he told me sometime later that he was really embarrassed as were others by Begin's tone and demeanor towards Gemayel. Those who participated in the meeting and who later learned of my meeting with Begin just beforehand are convinced that Begin's mishandling of his meeting with the Lebanese -- particularly his nasty attitude towards Gemayel -- may have been in large part been caused by his anger at Reagan in reaction to my presentation a few hours earlier. The interaction between these two events is an interesting historical sidelight. I think that even if Bashir Gemayel had not been assassinated soon thereafter by a bomb at his headquarters, those who know the Phalangists well are convinced that the Begin-Gemayel relationships would never have been smooth after their meeting in Nahariyya that night. A lot of bad feelings were developed that night by the Phalangists which would be shown later.

On Friday, September 3, I accompanied Weinberger to a meeting with Foreign Minister Shamir. Afterwards, Weinberger made the obligatory stop at Yad Vashem and then toured Jerusalem with our Consul General. I went back to my office at the Embassy to catch up on the work that had piled up during that harried week. Weinberger then held a conference with editorial writers at the Cultural Center. We then flew down to Sharon's farm south of Ashdod for lunch. Sharon was very proud of his farm and often tried to get dignitaries to visit it so that he could be seen in his country squire mode; he used to butter people up that way and exercise his quite formidable wiles which he could do well when he chose to be ingratiating and attractive. He could be very engaging and that is the persona he displayed to Weinberger that day. He hoped to convince our SecDef that Israel was now in control of the situation and that together with the United States it was now possible to push the Syrians out of Lebanon and to bring the West Bank and Gaza inhabitants to negotiate on an autonomy regime because the PLO was not in the neighborhood any longer. The lunch went on for a long time -- all afternoon as a matter of fact. There were a lot of war stories with Sharon relating all his military exploits. Weinberger handled himself with great style; he was extremely well controlled even during Begin's outburst and the meetings with Sharon, though I am sure, from my knowledge of the man's views, he was hardly taken in by the Israelis; he was not, I am sure, very sympathetic towards either leader.

We returned by helicopter early that evening at about 7 p.m. I went to the office to draft my reporting cables and got home about 10 p.m. that night for a very late dinner. As I mentioned earlier, the Israeli Cabinet had rejected the Reagan plan as a deviation of the Camp David accords. Begin had insisted on drafting the Cabinet statement himself to make sure that it was sufficiently nasty and tough. He made sure that the words would be offensive to us and he succeeded. The cabinet went out of its way to highlight its determination to continue settlement activities on the West Bank; the Reagan plan had called for some kind of cessation. It was the same argument then as it has been up to today. Since 1977, whenever the Israelis get mad at the United States, they proceed with the establishment of a few more settlements just to make the point that they can not be commanded -- they are the masters of their own ship and not a U.S. vassal. While the Cabinet was taking its hard-line stance, Peres issued a statement saying that the

Reagan plan could be the basis for a dialogue; Arafat, from Tunis, said that the PLO had neither accepted or rejected the plan. Both statements made Begin even angrier. The State Department issued its own press release rejecting Begin's allegation that the U.S. had violated any commitments about consultations. The press in general and the leadership in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Europe reacted relatively positively to the proposal.

But the pivotal event was about to take place in Fez, Morocco. I learned later that the main stimulus for the timing of the release of the plan by Washington was an Arab League summit meeting that was about to convene in Fez. In the wake of the PLO expulsion from Lebanon, State Department was convinced that the U.S. had to take an important initiative which would show some sensitivity of the Arab point of view. The Department was concerned that unless some preemptive action was taken, the Arab League meeting would reject any further cooperation with the U.S. in seeking a Middle East settlement, as it had done in Khartoum in 1967. That was the main reason for the urgency to reveal the plan publicly. It had the hoped for effect. There was a lot of discussion and criticism of the U.S. at Fez for its alleged bias and perhaps even collusion towards Israel and its Lebanese invasion. Nevertheless, the Reagan plan was sufficiently intriguing to enough members of the League, including Jordan and the PLO, that we, after some vigorous lobbying, were able to head off any formal rejection by the League. Instead the League approved its own eight point peace plan that had been proposed by the Saudis -- the so-called Fahd plan. We found some solace in that plan since it included some features that were close to our position; indeed, even some Israelis saw some merits in the Fahd plan. Unfortunately, the Saudi plan was modified by the League; although the Fez declaration was silent about the Reagan plan, it did not reject it; it merely supported its own approach which was totally unacceptable to Israel. But we achieved our objective by forestalling any Arab League rejection of the U.S. as a peace maker.

Maury Draper, who had been with Habib during the negotiations with the PLO, now became in effect the main negotiator. Habib had worn himself to a frazzle and had returned to Washington. There Reagan received him with the honors he so well deserved, for it was indeed Phil who was the key player in the PLO's departure from Lebanon. Phil was not only tired, but also ill. He left the area shortly after the PLO's withdrawal and then stayed in the U.S. for the next couple of months. Draper carried on the work of the American delegation and he and I met Shamir on September 5, a Sunday. We also met with Sharon. We discussed what had to be done to begin the Israeli withdrawal; Sharon reviewed his game plan with us. Shamir told us as well as the press, that there would be no more autonomy talks until the Lebanese situation had been settled to Israel's satisfaction. Both Shamir and Sharon were very tough in the aftermath of the Reagan plan process, although at least Shamir, as always, was polite.

Congressman Steve Solarz was also a visitor over the Labor Day weekend. We hosted him for dinner and Bob Flaten, Paul Hare and perhaps a couple of other staff members and I talked with him until about 1 a.m. briefing him on the recent events and discussing his program. Whenever Steve visited Israel, which was frequent, he worked an 18 hour day and his control officer always

needed some leave after Steve's departure to recuperate from the visit. That was also true of some of the rest of us because Solarz insisted on having 18-20 appointments per day; he was always fully up to date, interesting and useful, but he obviously had an extra set of glands that would leave us worn out by the end of his stays. On this particular Labor Day, we had enough work already; we didn't need Steve, but there he was.

On the same day that we were meeting with Solarz, September 6, Washington issued a statement under Shultz' name which was an effort to try to pacify the Israelis. The statement included a provision that any Israeli-Arab agreement would have to include a totally demilitarized West Bank; that was intended to reassure the Israelis that when they withdrew from the West Bank, the vacuum would not be filled by foreign forces. But in the atmosphere then existing, this U.S. position did not win many friends in Israel.

On September 7, the Israelis issued their own public statement calling for Lebanon to sign a peace treaty in order to guarantee the security of its borders; Israel would not fully withdraw until such treaty was signed. Lebanon's rejection of such treaty would force Israel to institute a special security zone in Southern Lebanon; that is of course what happened and that situation still holds today.

On September 8, while conditions in Beirut remained very unsettled, Reagan announced that the American contingent which was part of the multi-lateral force would be withdrawn beginning in two days' time. On the same day, the Arab League announced its peace plan in Fez, which required Israel to withdraw from all of the territories, including Jerusalem; all the settlements were to be dismantled; and there were a number of other provisions all unacceptable to Israel. The Fez declaration also acknowledged the PLO's absolute right to represent the Palestinians and to govern the West Bank once a Palestinian state had been established on the West Bank with Jerusalem as its capital. It is obvious that the Fez plan was not well received by Begin and his Cabinet. The next day, in response to Sharon's ultimatum to Lebanon about the peace treaty, Shultz said in Washington that the U.S. would support an Israel-Lebanon peace treaty only if Lebanon accepted it voluntarily and not under Israeli pressure. That was just another volley fired in the public arena between the US and Israel; it was just one more indicator of the deteriorating relationship between the two countries. Begin, in the meantime, was accusing American officials and journalists of interfering with Israel's internal affairs by writing articles critical of him and his policies.

At the same time, Israel destroyed some SAM missiles sites in Lebanon which just heated up the atmosphere some more. The U.S.-Israel relationships were just getting tenser. On September 10, the U.S. Marines began their withdrawal. Begin again accused us publicly of interfering with Lebanese-Israel relations. Characteristically, he gratuitously added that we should remember that Israel was not Chile and that he was not Allende. During this period, Mubarak announced, and this was an interesting comment, that he preferred the Reagan plan to the Fez plan; that was well received in Washington. So for a couple of days, public statements were volleyed back and forth,

none of them intended to dampen ardors on any side. The Jordanian reaction to the Reagan plan had been guarded; it was not as positive as I am sure Washington had hoped, but at least the King didn't close the door. We kept urging the Jordanians to support our plan by pointing out the advantages of our approach.

This period was filled for me by a lot of activities related to visitors, including a couple of Congressional delegations, and diplomatic requirements. I saw many Israelis and talked to them about the state of affairs. I was on my last legs; I had not a moment of respite during the whole summer, which had been more hectic than usual. I was worn out; so I decided to take a few days off as soon as I could. I wanted to take off Thursday afternoon, September 16, and take a long weekend in Crete with my wife. I was just going to forget about Israel and concentrate on something else. By his time, Bob Flaten had been in Israel long enough to be handle day-to-day activities of the Embassy.

On Tuesday, September 14, Jordan issued a very encouraging statement in which King Hussein praised the Reagan plan as positive and constructive. The King did say that he couldn't negotiate with Israel unless he had the approval of the other Arab states, which gave the statement an equivocal tone. In the evening of the same day, a bomb exploded in the Phalangist headquarters in East Beirut; I learned about that the following day, early in the morning at around 5 a.m. from a phone call. I was told that Bashir Gemayel and six others had been assassinated by the bombing. Immediately thereafter, as I learned somewhat later, Sharon, upon hearing of the event, ordered his forces stationed outside of Beirut to move into West Beirut to try to maintain order. The troops were also to complete the rooting out of any PLO fighting remnants which Israeli intelligence had reported had been left behind after withdrawal. This was a clean up operation that Gemayel had promised the Israelis that his Phalangists would undertake on their own. But after Gemayel's assassination, Sharon assumed that the Phalangist would not follow through and therefore ordered his own forces into Beirut to prevent the 2,000 PLO fighters he insisted were still remaining and hiding in civilian clothes from exploiting the assassination and from further destabilizing the political situation. It has never been fully proved, but the Lebanese investigations pointed clearly to the Syrians as the perpetrators of the bombing. That seems a logical conclusion since Gemayel was clearly anti-Syrian and was determined to cooperate with Israel in pushing Syria out of Lebanon. So it was in Syria's interests to eliminate Gemayel. The actual planting of the bomb was done by a Lebanese adherent of the Syrian Socialist movement - a left-wing, pro-Syrian political party. He had been working with Syrian agents for a long time. The Lebanese were never able to put together all the evidence necessary to make the Syrian connection crystal clear, but all the indications certainly tended to confirm Syrian complicity.

We were very concerned with the Israeli forward movement into the city, in part because our rationale for withdrawing the multi-lateral forces only a week earlier had been the assumption that Israel was going to withdraw from Lebanon in the near future; we certainly did not anticipate a further occupation of Beirut. Moreover, Habib had made some commitments to Arafat and the Syrians during his negotiations for the PLO withdrawal that if the PLO fighters

were withdrawn, no harm would be done to the PLO civilians who remained in Lebanon. Habib insisted to the end he had acted on the basis of Begin's statements to him about Israel's intentions, and that these commitments had been exaggerated by the PLO. I am sure that was the case. There was probably some implied U.S. commitment, however, which probably led to President Reagan's and Shultz' feelings of guilt after the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

Draper, who had arrived in Jerusalem on the afternoon of September 14, received notification of the bombing soon after I did. He and I met with Shamir and later with Begin to discuss what might happen next in Beirut in light of the devastating blow to Israel's expectations, not to mention those of the Lebanese. The latter had put great faith in Gemayel because he had begun a healing process to bring all the various factions together and had by this time managed to gather considerable popular support from both the Muslims and the Christians.

Draper and I were not told by Shamir or Begin or Sharon that the Israeli forces were moving into West Beirut, although during the day, our intelligence began to pick up the tell-tale signs. Draper helicoptered back to Beirut that afternoon; he returned to Jerusalem unexpectedly the following afternoon - Thursday -- the day when I was packing to go off on vacation. For a period after the Israeli forward movement we were receiving angry messages from the White House to be relayed to the Israelis demanding explanations for their military actions which we felt were a violation of prior commitments. The Israeli Cabinet issued a statement Thursday afternoon saying that their troops would be withdrawn from Beirut only when the Lebanese army was in a position to guarantee the security of the city. Arafat, who was in Rome at the time, demanded that the multi-lateral force be immediately returned to Lebanon to protect the Palestinians who had been left behind. Begin claimed that the IDF had moved into Beirut only after it had been fired upon by Muslim militia, I don't believe that there was sufficient evidence to warrant that excuse.

At 5 p.m. Thursday afternoon, September 16, I joined Maury Draper in a very tough meeting with Sharon; we were trying to persuade him -- always a rather feckless proposition -- to withdraw the IDF troops then in West Beirut. We argued that the Lebanese army was perfectly competent to maintain order and that the Phalangists certainly also had some muscle still. It was a very nasty meeting; Sharon was disdainful. He was bitter and furious about Gemayel's assassination since with that event his hopes of a having an ally in Beirut had died. He treated Draper in a very condescending fashion. There were some very mean exchanges; it was a most unsatisfactory meeting from our point of view. We did agree that Draper would meet the next day with Shamir and Sharon and if necessary also with Begin. I talked to Begin by phone a couple of times after the Sharon meeting, making the same points. I didn't get much of a response.

I went home to pack for my vacation. The next morning, Sallie and I flew to Athens and then on to Crete. I was absolutely worn out. We had no idea of what would happen next. But I must say that in retrospect, I should have stayed in Israel. As it was, I was gone during the climactic

events of the Sabra and Shatila massacres. We were in Crete driving around in a rented car, out of communication.

Word of events trickled back to Tel Aviv on Friday, September 17. The rumor was that Phalangist troops had entered the PLO camps the previous evening, about 5 p.m. or exactly when our meeting with Sharon began. He must have known at the time that the Phalangists were about to enter the camps; he didn't say a word about it. The Americans did not learn about it until mid-day the next day by which time I had already landed in Crete. Draper was seeing Shamir in Jerusalem when the word filtered back. When the first reports reached Shamir, he apparently called Sharon on the phone; Draper was with Shamir at the time. Sharon apparently gave Shamir some double-talk. Shamir's report had come from an Israeli journalist; he had been told that something dreadful was occurring in the camps. The journalist had called Shamir for further information; Sharon denied to Shamir any knowledge, or at least put him off with a misleading comment. Shamir never followed up after his conversation with Sharon. We knew about these events when the Kahan Commission later investigated the massacres. Shamir did not look very good in that report because he had not pressed for further information although he had received additional reports later in the day. Sharon knew well what was going on. What Begin knew and when he knew it is still subject to some debate; his awareness of events was never fully resolved by the Commission.

Sabra and Shatila were populated mostly by the families of the PLO fighters that had been evacuated. There may well have also been some PLO fighters who had stayed behind; there certainly were some who had burrowed themselves into the city. Sabra and Shatila were the two large refugee camps on the outskirts of Beirut and the centers of the Palestinian population of long standing.

Our Embassy tried to get a hold of me in Crete through the Greek police, using our Embassy in Athens. The staff started its efforts the minute the first rumors of the massacre reached them. It took the Greek police two days to find us on Crete, which says something about the Greek police. Frankly, I was not too unhappy because I did get two days' vacation that way. When we were finally found, we took the first plane out to Athens and back to Tel Aviv. I got back to Israel the following Thursday night, so that I actually had seven days' respite. That week was consumed for others by the Sabra/Shatila massacre and the beginning of the ensuing complications in relations with Israel, Lebanon and the PLO. In fact, the massacres started an incredible chain of events that would last for weeks and weeks.

I don't want to recall the Sabra/Shatila events in any details because history has well covered what transpired. The Phalangists just decided to "clean up the PLO problem" as agreed upon with Sharon. Allegations have been made that they were encouraged by Sharon, although he has steadfastly denied them, particularly during his libel law suit against TIME Magazine. The Phalangists moved into the camps Thursday evening and essentially went through them mowing Palestinian people down, including women and children. There never had been much love

between the Phalangists, who were Christians, and the Palestinians, most of whom were Muslim, of whom several hundreds were killed. It was a horrible sequence of events.

The IDF were not in the camps; they were near by in positions which over-looked the camps. It is still not clear how much the IDF troops knew or understood what was going on until the next morning; the evidence is contradictory. It is clear that Sharon was well aware of the Phalangist plans; his troops outside the camps could possibly have been unaware. The IDF was certainly not doing the shooting, but were close enough to stop the slaughter if ordered to do so. In fact, the IDF did not interfere until the following afternoon, after we found out about and brought great pressure on the Israelis to stop the massacres. This issue was the key to subsequent arguments about Israel culpability and Sharon's personal responsibility.

The end result of the refugee camps' events was that the Reagan White House was horrified once informed. The staff began to make it clear that it felt that Israel had at least indirect responsibility for the massacres by in the first place permitting the Phalangists to enter the camps and then not taking any action for at least a day. On September 20, Begin's office acknowledged publicly that the Cabinet had approved the Phalangist invasion of the refugee camps. I am not clear when that approval was actually given. President Navon, horrified by the events, called for an independent inquiry, which was an unusual action of a President who was supposed to be non-political. Begin seemed to be a state of shock; he denied any prior knowledge and said that he had only learned about the massacres on Saturday, which seemed to be somewhat less than credible to many people.

In Washington, the massacre led to a decision to return the peace-keepers. The White House felt very guilty about the withdrawal of the multi-lateral force; it appeared that that had been very premature. The absence of these troops had barred the U.S. or any other outside force from taking any preventive actions. We told the Israelis that we would return the troops, which they accepted, after some discussion, but did not set any time table for the withdrawal of the IDF. The Lebanese had in the meantime elected Amin Gemayel, Bashir's brother, as President of Lebanon. The vote had been 77-3.

Begin resisted the idea of an independent investigation, although he agreed to an internal investigation. But there was a huge public outcry. Hundred of thousands Israelis demonstrated in the streets against the government, against the massacres. The Israeli public demanded the investigation. The Knesset defeated the proposal for an independent commission at Begin's insistence even though Sharon admitted during the debate that the IDF had permitted the Phalangist invasion of the camps. He also admitted that the Israelis had supplied flares which lit up the camps so that the Phalangists could do their work during the night. But Sharon insisted that his understanding had been the Phalangists were only searching for PLO fighters who had been left behind in contravention to all agreements reached. He insisted that the Israelis never

dreamed that the Phalangists would kill women and children. In light of the revulsion about Sharon's actions, there were some resignations by senior officials.

The French were the first to return to Lebanon on September 24, which was the same day that I returned to Israel. On the 25th, approximately 350,000 Israelis demonstrated in a Tel Aviv square, in an anti-government display both for the massacre and for its refusal to have an independent inquiry.

Habib returned to the area, reluctantly, at the President's orders. So when I returned to Tel Aviv, both Habib and Draper were there and we met with Begin and Shamir on the 24th. Our troops did not land back in Lebanon for another few days, but we kept pressuring the Israelis to withdraw their troops from the airport so that our Marines could land there. The Israelis insisted that they had to remain there, but we refused to let our soldiers to intermingle with the IDF which in itself increased tensions. Eventually, in light of the domestic pressure as well as the international ones, the Israelis accepted our ultimatums to withdraw from the airport area. The public pressure also forced Begin to permit the establishment of an independent commission, which was headed by Mr. Kahan, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

I was concerned that our relationship with Israel was going into a final nose-dive. Our meetings with the Israelis were interesting in a way; they were not particularly confrontational. Begin, Shamir and Sharon were so much on the defensive in the public opinion arena that they were trying to be a little more conciliatory towards U.S., which was an unusual reaction. On Saturday, September 25, Habib, Draper, Flaten and our military attaché, Colonel Raines, and I went to Sharon's ranch where we spent the day. We ate lunch and talked about getting the IDF out of Beirut. Sharon went out of his way to try to smooth things over with Habib; they had had a very difficult and nasty relationship over the summer, but by the end of September, Sharon was trying to make amends in an effort to dampen down some of the anger and bitterness. The meetings were somewhat stiff, but they were useful. Yom Kippur was on the 27th which seemed an appropriate time for a day of atonement. Begin started a personal slide down at about this time; he went into a deep depression.

Q: Did the antipathy in the Pentagon stem from the Services or from the Office of the Secretary?

In Lebanon, events were not favorable for a resolution of the conflict. There were an increasing number of military incidents. There was some heavy shelling on August 29. The Syrian manipulations were becoming increasingly obvious. Opposition to the agreement was being stirred up. Our Marines, who were in Lebanon as peace-keepers, were supplemented by additional forces in September. Two Marines were killed and fourteen were wounded. There were almost daily clashes which our Marines found difficult to manage. Washington was becoming increasingly skeptical about the deployment of the Marines, but the U.S. was committed to supporting the Lebanese government. On September 23, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives voted to authorize the Marine presence for another

eighteen months. That resolution was ultimately passed by the whole Congress, after long negotiations on how the Marine presence might conform with the War Powers Resolution.

The whole period between July and September, 1983 was filled with concerns in Lebanon. The Israelis were ambivalent; they wanted to withdraw from Beirut and its immediate surroundings, back to the Awwali River line. That had been the line that the Israelis had promised not to cross when the invasion was launched. That was about 45 kilometers north of the border. During this period, a quixotic difference now arose between us and the Israelis. We had been calling for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon almost from the day the invasion began. We had pressed hard for an agreement because that would permit Israel to withdraw in an orderly fashion. But by Summer, 1983 it appeared that the agreement would be sabotaged by the Syrians. We had begun to recognize the Syrians as the trouble makers in Lebanon; they were clearly checkmating all of our initiatives. There were now many in Washington who viewed the Israeli interest in a quick withdrawal -- even before the agreement had been formally ratified -- as undermining U.S. leverage on the Syrians! These differing objectives generated a strange dialogue between the two governments. McFarlane was involved; I was involved. We found ourselves in the Summer of 1983 in the position of asking the Israelis to move slowly on withdrawal in order to assure that the Lebanese government was fully coordinated so that its troops could follow closely right behind the withdrawing Israeli forces. We were urging the Israelis not to be in such great hurry to pull out, in order to forestall what would be perceived as a great Syrian victory. It was not an easy sales pitch to make after having urged the Israelis for so long to withdraw as rapidly as possible! The Israelis press ran many stories about our efforts to slow down troop withdrawal from the Lebanon morass.

During this period, I was receiving frequent reports over secure telephone about discussions in the White House and in State Department. Charlie Hill, who was Shultz' executive assistant after having been the Embassy Political Counselor, then Israel Office Director and later a deputy assistant secretary, had been authorized by the Secretary to keep me fully informed by telephone about what was happening in Washington on Middle East policy issues.

One of the continuing problems in the Department of State has always been the transmission of information to ambassadors. No one wants to send sensitive accounts, particularly about internecine bureaucratic warfare, by telegram which will undoubtedly be distributed to more people in Washington than it should be and will be seen by friends and foes alike. So, an ambassador who wants to keep up to date on Washington doings has to be on the telephone with someone in the Department who is knowledgeable. The advent of secure telephones assisted enormously. I used it continually for the eight years I was in Israel. It was particularly valuable at times such as occurred in 1983 when a huge policy chasm opened up in Washington. That chasm went on throughout the Fall and Winter. The disagreement was essentially over the question of how tough the U.S. should be towards Syria. As part of that debate was the question of the amount of military resources that we should devote to the propping up of the weak Lebanese government. Furthermore, there were sharp differences of opinion on the question of the extent

of U.S. cooperation with Israel to neutralize Syria. There were many NSC meetings on these subjects along with Congressional consultations. The debate raged for weeks and months. Shultz, McFarlane and often Reagan were the proponents of the "be tough on Syria" school of thought. Weinberger was always on the side of a more cautious approach, he was often supported by Vice President George Bush. They were very reluctant to coordinate any policies with Israel and certainly were very wary of involving any U.S. armed forces in the area. There were many others who also took strong positions on one side or another, but the ones I mentioned were the key players.

This Washington debate would generate long phone calls. I was briefed on the debates taking place. The end of every conversation was always the same; no decision. Increasingly, I felt that Washington was coming to the conclusion that Syria was in the driver's seat, that the Lebanese government was growing weaker and that its armed forces would not withstand the shelling from the Shia militia. To redress this changing balance would have meant a commitment of U.S. armed resources; that choice made decisions very difficult. I was supposed to brief the Israelis on the Washington debates in an effort to coordinate their activities with ours. I was put in a position of essentially depicting a U.S. policy which gradually would lead Arens and Shamir to conclude that Israel would have to reach its own conclusions and take whatever actions it thought appropriate to extract itself from Beirut, to provide some security on the border by building up its surrogate force in southern Lebanon, and to try to convince the U.S. to coordinate its actions with Israeli ones. But I am sure that it became increasingly clear to Arens and Shamir that the U.S. could not be counted on for much action. McFarlane and Shultz both tried very hard in the Fall of 1983 to bolster the coordination between the two countries. Their views were often well received by the Israelis, but neither in the final analysis represented the U.S. government. Furthermore, the Congress was very lukewarm on supporting any further commitment of U.S. forces in Lebanon.

The continuing U.S. indecision really came to a head on October 23, when the Marine headquarters at the Beirut airport was blown up by a truck bomb filled with explosives, killing 256 Marines. On the same day, another truck loaded with explosives hit the French headquarters, destroying an eight story building and killing 56 French soldiers. On November 4, the headquarters of the Israeli Shin Beth and Army was also car-bombed near Tyre; 39 were killed in that action and 32 wounded. These attacks on the French, the U.S. Marines and the Israelis were conducted by Shiite terrorists under direction and with the support of the Syrians. In retrospect, that day was the end of any possibility of further U.S. military involvement in Lebanon to shore up the Lebanese government. We did stay until the end of February, 1984. We did, between October and February, become involved in the Lebanese war; we took sides; we were no longer just peace-keepers, but viewed our presence as a bulwark against Syrian aggression. The battleship *New Jersey* was shelling military positions in the country; bombing missions were authorized; we lost two airplanes; two pilots were downed and taken hostage. Unfortunately, the Lebanese army was not strong enough to assist. The Syrians were not sufficiently impressed by a

limited U.S. show of power. We took just enough action to demonstrate a sort of incompetence. Our military actions fell far short of intimidating the Syrians. They just waited us out; by mid-February, after Reagan had just declared that Lebanon was a "vital U.S. interest", the administration caved in to Congressional pressure. The President one day just blithely announced that we were moving our Marines off-shore onto ships, but that we would continue to be very aggressive and active from the ships! Two or three weeks later, we withdrew entirely. We promised a sort of phased withdrawal plan, allegedly calibrated with more active diplomacy and additional military assistance to the Lebanese government, but in fact, little was done. We essentially left the battle field. Reagan cut his political losses in preparation for the election to take place in November, 1984. There just wasn't much political support for our involvement in Lebanon, particularly since our policy was failing which, in my mind, was due to the inability of Washington to reach firm, concise and clear decisions. I have never seen a time in American diplomacy when such bitter arguments raged within the government, incapacitating the U.S. government and barring any decisions.

During this period, I talked over the telephone often to Larry Eagleburger, then the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. He was also a supporter of the "tough on Syria" policy; he wanted to use U.S. military force effectively in the area. By mid-August, McFarlane had moved to become National Security Advisor; by this time, he agreed with the necessity of coordinating closely with Israel. In November, Donald Rumsfeld was named special emissary for the Middle East. He toured the region. He also was for being tough and by and large agreed that we had to be much more consistent and coherent in our politico-military actions and policies to support the Lebanese government. But Weinberger was set on getting the Marines out of the area as quickly as possible and he had full Congressional support for that policy. Larry told me on February 11 that "in the last seventy-two hours, we have lost our Congressional base. We made some rather unwise decisions and we couldn't even stand with those." Even at that late date, he was arguing that some U.S. advantage might be rescued through the off-shore presence, although no one else I think shared that view. The military situation in Lebanon was going from bad to worse for the Lebanese government.

There was a key White House meeting with the President on February 15, 1984. The intelligence estimate was that President Amin Gemayel might last only another two or three days. A series of options were laid out for the President, ranging from major commitment of U.S. forces to Option 3a, which was essentially to let Gemayel do the best he could with the Syrians while we stood by as observers. That option was based on the conclusion that our original goals in Lebanon were no longer achievable. Charlie Hill told me that the meeting produced a decision, more or less, to approve Option 3a. I noted that day that "the Lebanon game is over". That very day, Raymond Hunt, a distinguished retired Foreign Service Officer, who was the Director General of the multinational observer force in the Sinai, was assassinated in Rome, where he was headquartered. He was killed by three gunmen in a drive-by assassination. He was a good friend; he was, I think, the sixth ambassador or equivalent -- all friends -- who were assassinated in the

Middle East or because of the Middle East during the 1970s and 1980s. We lost too many lives in or for that region.

Gemayel went ahead to annul the agreement with Israel and made the best deal that he could with the Syrians. At that stage, that was probably the most sensible outcome. We tried to sugarcoat the failed policy by saying that we would withdraw in a gradual fashion, etc, but in fact, after February 15, we were no longer active in Lebanon. We abandoned any efforts to force the Syrians to accept the Lebanese-Israeli agreement, which had been negotiated under our auspi

The whole September-February period -- the end of U.S. involvement in Lebanon -- is one of the sorriest records of U.S. foreign involvement. First we did not have a coherent policy; second we had too many different judgements of what might be effective and what might not work; third, we were so spooked by the Lebanon war that we did not work smoothly with the Israelis to maximize the assets that we did have in place -- which were primarily Israeli assets; and fourth, because Assad is a very tough man, who saw that his stakes in the game were higher than ours and therefore was able to ultimately force us out. It was a sorry period in American foreign policy. I think we all have understood for a long time how tough Assad can be; we may have misjudged our ability to persuade him. We have often vastly exaggerated the influence that the Saudis had on him, despite the fact that they were some of his principal financial supporters. Time and time again, we have tried to get the Saudis to push Assad in the direction we deemed correct, but I am not sure that they really have tried; furthermore I think Assad is much better at intimidating the Saudis than the reverse. He is very nice to deal with personally, but he is tough and ruthless and nasty.

The peace process had been stalled for a long time, although we were by now trying to rejuvenate it. The Reagan Initiative was tabled in 1982. We were then focusing on involving Jordan in the negotiations. We did differ with the Israelis on a number of key issues; e.g. further settlements on the West Bank. But late 1983 saw a real change in the relations. In the final wrap-up sessions of the Arens-Shamir meetings, first with Reagan and then with Shultz, the two governments came to substantial meeting of the minds on some of the key questions and how to address our differences. Rumsfeld was also very much involved in these meetings. On the first day of the visit, a working group on Lebanon was established. That was the first time in the tortuous history of the "Lebanon affair" that American and Israeli officials, representing both defense and foreign affairs agencies, sat down together in a working group trying to address, as professionals, the dilemmas that each country faced. Unfortunately, by the end of November 1983, it was far too late for such a dialogue; most of the damage had already been done and there was little to be salvaged. But at least the interaction between the two governments were greatly smoothed.

Q: In an earlier part of this series of interviews, you referred to Shultz' unhappiness with our Ambassador to Syria, Bob Paganelli. When did that happen?

LEWIS:

I would like to continue our discussion of the end of 1984. I have described how the Lebanese affair came to a close. The rest of 1984 was devoted to a variety of issues. One of the key threads in that period was political. The Lebanese affair had turned out very badly, with Israel slowly but surely withdrawing its troops without having achieved any of its objectives. On the contrary, the Shiites in Lebanon were becoming increasingly antagonistic to the Israelis. They had been friendly towards Israel when the invasion began; thirty months later the Shiites that had taken over the PLO role of resistance. The problem of terrorism in southern Lebanon had not improved; in fact, it may have deteriorated. Israeli casualties were rising, day after day. If I remember correctly, by the time the war formally ended in August, 1982, there had been roughly two hundred Israeli soldiers killed. In the following 2 ½ years, several hundreds more were killed, so the total casualties exceeded the war losses by a good deal. All these human losses, when added to the rapidly deteriorating economic conditions in Israel -- inflation accompanied by stagnation -- and to the fact that Shamir had failed to establish himself as a strong Prime Minister -- paling in comparison with Begin and being undermined by Sharon -- made it clear that a national election would have to be held, which was finally scheduled for June 23, 1984.

Yitzhak Rabin, as Defense Minister, was essentially in charge of Lebanon policy. I remember vividly my first meeting with him after becoming Minister. I had known him quite well since I used to play tennis with him every Saturday. I met him in his office in September privately just after the Cabinet was sworn in -- and he came as usual right to the point. He asked me to arrange for a secret and serious probe in Damascus with Assad. He wanted to test whether Assad was at all ready to start peace negotiations. Rabin had always viewed Syria as the strategic key to achieving a broad peace agreement. Syria was also key to the solution of the Lebanon problem. I reported immediately to Shultz and we did in fact carry out some delicate probes, but I had to soon report to Rabin that we had not found any room for optimism. Assad was not interested in any negotiations -- direct or indirect -- with Israel at that time. Then Rabin began to examine his options for how to withdraw at minimal costs, without any deals with the Syrians. Laying his political and diplomatic groundwork took him about four months before he could demonstrate to the Likud Cabinet members, or at least a majority of them, there were no good alternatives to partial unilateral withdrawal. There was no possibility of negotiating with the Lebanese, based on the by-now moribund agreement. He also had to show that the cost to Israel of maintaining a forward political position in Lebanon was far too great. He had to win over enough Likud Cabinet colleagues because the character of the Cabinet of national unity required some bipartisan support of any initiative. Sharon, who was a member of the 10 member Inner Cabinet, was certain to be opposed to any sign of withdrawal. That meant that Rabin had to convince at

least two of the other four Likud members to support him. He did that very skillfully by going through all the diplomatic motions of first trying to negotiate some agreement with the Lebanese government, while having us conduct the probe of Syrian intentions. He also tried to work out something with the Druze sect in Lebanon. He tried a variety of approaches, all unsuccessfully. In the meantime, Israeli casualties continued to mount as well as the domestic political pressures for some kind of resolution. By January, 1985, Rabin was able to report to the Cabinet he had always thought that would have to be the outcome: a withdrawal to the border area sparing Israel any further losses. His presentation convinced a couple of the Likud members -- David Levy and perhaps Moshe Arens -- to support his plan. Shamir may also have supported Rabin, ultimately.

The withdrawal was begun on January 14, 1985. Rabin presented a three stage plan for unilateral withdrawal. By the Spring of that year, the withdrawals were well along; it took about five months for the process to be completed with several thousand Israeli forces leap-frogging over each other while the Shiites sniped away at them. Of course, the broader Lebanon problem was still unresolved. The Israelis had succeeded in putting the issue aside as a domestic political matter because both parties, or at least majorities thereof, were in support of withdrawal. That took the issue out of the domestic political arena and helped keep it under control as a divisive factor in Israeli politics. The withdrawal was completed by early June just as my term in Israel came finally to an end, with only minor military units remaining in the area just north of the Lebanon-Israel border with General Lahad militia. The last Israeli troops came home three years after the start of the invasion in 1982. At the beginning, Begin and Sharon had promised a campaign of a week's duration with minimal casualties. In fact, during the three years, 650 Israeli soldiers died and over three thousand were wounded. It was a war with some of the highest Israeli casualty counts ever encountered. More than half of the deaths occurred after the war was over in the summer; they were victims of sniper fire, primarily from the Shiites and other Syrian surrogates. in synchronization with Peres' plans. Unfortunately, it took Peres too long to improve relations with Egypt.

The resistance of Amin Gemayel's government to Syrian efforts to extend its role in Lebanon was also collapsing. Furthermore, during the first week in March, the Lebanese government cancelled its ratification of the Lebanese-Israeli agreements reached in the preceding May. So both Israeli and American policies on Lebanon were turning out to be abject failures. That gave Sharon the opportunity not only to attack these policies, but to use their failures as a vindication of his actions. He attributed the failure of these policies to the fact that his path had not been followed; the Americans had forced Begin to "waffle" instead of giving him full support for strong actions in Lebanon. As I said, these Sharon diatribes were political ploys in his game to replace Shamir as party leader. It was clear in early 1984 that the Shamir government, which he had inherited from Begin during the preceding September, would have to face the electorate

sometime during that year. Shamir's majority was too frail to last any length of time. In fact, on March 28, the Knesset set the date for elections. On April 13, the Likud Party held a meeting of its Central Committee to select its leader. Shamir had been viewed as an interim leader when Begin stepped down. Sharon launched his campaign for the leadership and pressed it vigorously in the weeks prior to the Committee meeting.

WILLIAM JEFFRAS DIETRICH

Press Attaché, USIS

Tel Aviv (1979-1982)

William Jeffras Dietrich was born in Boston in 1936. He received his bachelor's degree from Connecticut Wesleyan University in 1958 and then served in the US Navy. His career included positions in Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Italy, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Mexico. Mr. Dieterich was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: This is the 6th of January 2000. Jeff - Lebanon.

DIETERICH: Right. The roots of the Lebanon issue go back well into '81, when the Israelis did some strikes beyond what was known at that time as the "red line", which was the line that defined the zone that Israel was controlling through Major Haddad and his Christian militia. Then that led to the Syrians putting in some antiaircraft missiles in the same area. In the meantime, the PLO saw its chance to get both sides to escalate. The United States began to see a great danger in this and brought Philip Habib in on a series of missions to deal with that particular issue. His technique was to shuttle back and forth, in sort of on a tripod type shuttle - Jerusalem, Beirut, and Damascus.

Q: Did you have a feeling that Sharon and company were cocking the rifle, ready to do something?

DIETERICH: Eventually, yes. But we are not quite there yet. As I remember, it was in the fall of '82 that Habib finally achieved a minor miracle diplomatically, in that he got a *de facto* cease-fire between the Israelis and the PLO, as far as southern Lebanon was concerned. This was done by Habib making a statement which neither side denied, which is the way you dealt with the fact there wasn't going to be any kind of a joint document between the PLO and the Israelis, nor any kind of joint statement. When that was finally achieved, Charley Hill and I were hanging around the consulate, and Habib was off some place, but I don't remember where. Not with the prime minister, probably at the foreign ministry, and for some reason I hadn't gone along. I got a

call from Habib's party saying he wanted to talk to the press right away. I'm sitting there at the consulate thinking, "How in the hell am I going to get in touch with the press and put them with Habib?" Charley and I talked for about 15 seconds, and it finally occurred to us that we had to figure out a way to get to the prime minister's office because that is where the press was. We decided to call up Begin and say Phil Habib wants to come by and say good-bye to him, because he was leaving. That is exactly what happened. Otherwise, I think I would have been screwed. So we all went to the prime minister's office. I'm proud of the fact that I was standing there with Phil Habib as he announced the cease-fire and took some questions.

Q: How was the Israeli press coming around? Were most of them hoping for a peaceful solution or was the press so politicized that you could almost write the news or editorials of each paper?

DIETERICH: Your question sort of contains the answer. It is a pretty politicized press. I don't mean it is a dumb politicized press. It is a smart politicized press. Most journalists are probably more inclined towards the peace side than the war side in Israeli politics. We often misunderstand the Israeli attitude toward war. Let me explain that. I remember once I talked about going on that trip where I almost met Major Haddad. One of the standard stops on that tour was to go up to the Golan Heights. We were among a huge number of tourist groups and others who had been taken to the Golan Heights to look down on Tiberias and see how vulnerable Israel is, and how narrow Israel is, at that point. While I was up there one of the Americans said to me, "But why are the Israelis so worried all the time? They always win." The more I thought about that question, the dumber I realized it really is. After all, at the end of a war when you win, the people that died aren't resurrected. Besides, it was a pretty near thing in '73. Israel could have lost that one, had it not been for massive shipments of arms from the United States.

Going back to your question, Israeli journalists are pretty professional. They don't wear their ideology on their sleeve. You have to worm it out of a lot of them. That is especially true of those journalists that were covering the American Embassy, covering foreign affairs. They were sophisticated types who spoke English well, were educated, and really understood both the questions and the answers. I found them a pleasure to deal with, and equally the U.S. and European press. They were all pretty good. It's kind of like what Sam Lewis said to me about being press attach_ in Israel, "It's center court Wimbledon." Israel is a hell of a good assignment for an American journalist who wants to make his career as a foreign correspondent. Israel has been a surefire front-page story for the last half-century.

Q: During this time when rockets would land in Israel, then there would be air strikes, was anybody toting up how many Israeli civilians were killed as opposed to how many Palestinian civilians were killed?

DIETERICH: Very few Israelis were killed in those raids. Anybody in a war is pretty much trying to make sure that he doesn't take many casualties. The Israelis got very good at building shelters, the Katusha rocket was just a piece of artillery. It had no real guidance system. They

could figure it might hit a particular town, but that was the best they could do. The Israelis got used to spending nights in shelters. I'm sure Israeli retaliation took many more lives than they lost, but I can't imagine anybody's national policy being based on "as long as they don't kill more of our people than we kill of theirs, that will be okay."

Q: No, no, but I was wondering if this was of concern.

DIETERICH: It was a concern, but the Israeli answer was always, "Look, we are trying to limit civilian casualties. We are doing the best we can" I don't think the Israelis ever deliberately targeted some civilian area that didn't have some sort of strategic interest. The Israelis were, after all, interested in killing PLO, not in killing Lebanese.

Q: It seemed like the event that precipitated this whole thing was the sad attack on the Israeli ambassador in London.

DIETERICH: There was the attack on the Israeli ambassador in London, followed by an Israeli air strike on the PLO headquarters in Lebanon, followed immediately by a major barrage of artillery of Katushas from PLO sites into northern Israel. That is what did it. There really was an outbreak of real shooting going on. It was funny how I found out about the actual move into Lebanon. At the end of May, our daughter had a date with an Israeli student at her school to go to her senior prom. On the day of the prom, late in the afternoon, she got a call from the kid saying, "I'm calling from Lebanon and I'm sorry I can't make it back for the prom." I got on the phone right away. It was one of the first confirmations we had that they were really that far up into Lebanon. I think young man was calling from Tyre or Sidon. Mari, now a foreign service officer herself, has been lunching on that senior prom story ever since. It's the kind of foreign service childhood story that makes it all worthwhile.

WILLIAM ANDREAS BROWN

Deputy Chief of Mission

Tel Aviv, Israel (1979-1982)

Ambassador William Andreas Brown was born in Winchester, Massachusetts in 1930. He joined the "Holloway Program" which was part of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Program and went to Harvard University, graduating with a Magna cum Laude degree. In 1950 he went to Marine Corps basic training in Virginia and later served in Korea. His Foreign Service career took him to a multitude of places including Honk Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, USSR, India, the UK, and Israel. His career includes an ambassadorship to Israel as

well as several positions in the State Department, Environmental Protection Agency. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November of 1998.

Q: Today is May 6, 1999. Bill, let's pick up the story in May, 1982.

BROWN: Things were really heating up. Let me take you through the buildup to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and its immediate aftermath. This was in 1982.

Just a bit of background here. The PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] had unsuccessfully tried to overthrow King Hussein of Jordan in September, 1970. This effort failed, and the PLO was then driven out of Jordan and escaped into southern Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese internal situation had deteriorated to the point that the Christian Phalangists invited President Assad of Syria into Lebanon to cope with their problem with the Palestinians. So, in effect, Assad was the man who came to dinner but never left. His forces are still there in Lebanon. Assad moved his forces into Lebanon with an invitation from the Christian Phalangists. I don't claim to be either a Syrian or a Lebanese expert. However, my impression is that this was the fulfillment of a widely-held Syrian ambition. That is, whatever the Sykes-Picot arrangement reached during World War I between the British and the French regarding the establishment of a Lebanese Republic under French tutelage, from a Syrian viewpoint, this was all one piece of a larger Syrian entity.

It was the case then and, I believe, it is still the case that there was and is no Lebanese embassy in Damascus, [Syria]. Lebanese political figures either asked to go to Damascus to see President Assad or were summoned there to see him. With the introduction of the Syrian Army into Lebanon, Assad so strengthened his hold on Lebanon that, at the risk of only slight simplification one could say that it became virtually a Syrian protectorate or appendage. That is, rivalries continued, but thousands of Syrian troops were the power on the scene, and Assad could and did play one faction against the other. In a larger sense Assad could play on the Lebanese scene, vis-a-vis the Israelis as he sought to recover the Golan Heights lost to Israel in 1967. That was and remains the situation.

In this connection, the instrumentalities Assad used changed from time to time. During my time in Israel the instrumentality Assad used was the PLO. I would say that the PLO presence in southern Lebanon was approved of by Assad to a degree. Not only countenanced but encouraged as well, within certain limits. The PLO had to understand that the Syrians called the shots. Within those limits the PLO could build up their paramilitary organizations. They could, and did, attempt provocations against Israel, using mortars, rockets, demonstrations, infiltrators, hang gliders, and so forth. The Israelis responded to these cycles of provocations by the PLO with increasing vehemence.

Q: While we're at it and while this was going on, what reading were you getting, both within the embassy in Tel Aviv and from our embassy in Cairo, about why the Egyptians were not fulfilling all of their obligations?

BROWN: Stuart, this is the Middle East. Pardon my cynical comment, but you really have to keep your eye on everything. Egypt has its own internal problems and its own bureaucracies. Some of those bureaucracies are military bureaucracies. Sometimes they are at odds with each other. Words, interpretations, and instructions get mixed up, and so forth. We checked the situation regularly but were not in a position to deny what the Israelis were telling us, if I may put it that way. However, at the eleventh hour, the situation was cleaned up.

At the same time Begin's, and particularly Sharon's remarks, were laced with such observations as Sharon put it: "I've told them, and you can tell them that I told you that I've told them. If they violate their commitments again, we'll be back in there in 24 hours." There was no ambiguity about that. This was the situation after the nice play on words. Ezer Weizman was long gone as Defense Minister. He had had a very good relationship with Anwar Sadat, but Sharon was the tough guy. After all, Sharon had emerged as a great hero in the breakthrough at Suez and the encirclement and defeat of the Egyptian Army during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. The Egyptians knew that they were dealing with a tough individual in the person of Ariel Sharon. So, as I said, the Israelis were extracting every particle of advantage that they could, while they could do so.

Now, let's go back to the Lebanese front which, as I've said, was heating up. Following Sharon's accession to power as Minister of Defense and his revealing his plans for the invasion of Lebanon to Habib and myself in December, 1981, there were further intimations of Israeli preparations to do this, if necessary. The same point came up during Sharon's visits to Washington. In his meetings there, Sharon tended to be melodramatic, depending on his interlocutor, his mood, and so forth. Of course, we were in the position of trying to dampen down all of this. So the services of Phil Habib were again in dire need. Nevertheless, the situation continued to spin out of control. In negotiating the cease-fire agreement Habib could not be in direct touch with the PLO, for that was verboten for American diplomats. We found out later, and you'll see this in George Shultz's book, that without Shultz's knowledge, William Casey, Director of Central Intelligence, had authorized Bob Ames and others to open their own channels with the PLO, unbeknownst to the State Department. However, the policy was that Phil Habib could not negotiate directly with the PLO. They were cheek by jowl, and there were Lebanese, French, and other interlocutors used to contact them. The cease-fire agreement included a prohibition on PLO attacks on Israel. The Israelis interpreted that to mean across the board. The Arafat interpretation of the agreement was that this commitment referred only to the Lebanese border. The PLO, in this view, was free to engage in the struggle against Zionist imperialism around the world. The PLO considered that, as long as the Israelis didn't attack them, they would not attack the Israelis on this particular Lebanese front.

This was a particular bone of contention between the two parties. This situation came to a real crunch and was used, either as a pretext or the reason, however you want to characterize it, for the invasion of Lebanon itself. On June 3, 1982, I believe, the Israeli Ambassador in London, Shlomo Argon, was shot and seriously wounded by a Palestinian terrorist while coming out of a function at a hotel. He was not killed, but he became virtually a vegetable. This was an unfortunate, tragic case. That was, if you will, the proximate provocation which led to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Prior to this, as I said, apart from Sharon's remarks to us in December, 1981, numerous Israeli reservists were mobilized and deployed toward the North.

Israeli reservists would be mobilized at a moment's notice, and the Israeli military and reserves would come out, crank up, and head toward the North. They were perceived as leaning forward in their foxholes and were just ready to go across the border. We would go to the Israelis and say, "What are you doing?" They would say, "It's just an exercise," and there would be a pullback. However, there was no surprise, as far as Israeli preparations for an attack on Lebanon were concerned.

So the Israelis went into Lebanon. Remember that in the discussions of this action the initial description of the campaign was most frequently portrayed as limited out of consideration of the concerns expressed by the more nervous Nellies in the Israeli cabinet. The invasion was portrayed as a cleanup of the Palestinian Katusha rocket capability in Lebanon. A Katusha rocket in those days could go about 40 or 45 kilometers and was frankly a terror weapon. The Palestinians were not aiming them at military targets.

Q: This situation raises the whole issue of reporting. First, you obviously could report to the Department what the Israelis were telling Embassy Tel Aviv. However, did you attach qualifiers to these reports and say, for example: "These guys are lying like hell a lot of the time?" Or did you just say, "This is what we have been told." In the normal course of events in Washington, if an Arab source says that the front is here, and the Israelis say that it is there, the tendency will always be to say that the Israelis are much more truthful than the Arabs.

BROWN: Yes, but remember that there are different channels of reporting. First of all, as the Israeli Army crashed across the Lebanese border, Minister of Defense Sharon was totally unavailable to us. He was up at the front, so we didn't see him for days. In that kind of situation, shall we say, he was one of the most active Israeli Defense Ministers that you could imagine. Even though he was no longer a general on active duty, he was right up there with the troops. Clearly, Sharon was trying to maximize whatever he could do.

Professionally speaking, our military attachés were getting their military read-outs from the Israeli military. The same thing applied to what our intelligence people were getting. We were left to deal with the Foreign Ministry under with Shamir, who was now the Foreign Minister, and with the Prime Minister's office.

Remember also that in the very early days of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon there was almost a sense of euphoria in Israel. Now I'll have to be careful how I describe this. Israelis were saying: "At last, we're going to clean up this mess, these constant provocations against Israeli border settlements by the PLO." So there was an initial cheerful period. The invasion of Lebanon was not regarded as a lark, but, let's face it, the PLO didn't have a regular army, whereas the Israelis had armored forces and knew what they were about. The Israelis had their plans and they implemented them. Here and there the Israelis bumped against this or that Syrian Army outfit which didn't quite withdraw as quickly as they should have. This developed into an escalating series of problems. We're talking about conventional, Israeli armor striking North in a characteristic, heavy push, leaving pockets of resistance in certain areas of encircled or bypassed Syrian Army units.

The Israelis were initially telling the world that they weren't attacking the Syrians but were just trying to clean up a PLO, terrorist phenomenon. Well, one thing led to another, and the fighting got worse and worse. A situation emerged where, as it developed, the Israeli Army surrounded Beirut and ringed it with tanks and artillery. Beirut, of course, was divided into Christian and Muslim sectors. The Israelis took the Christian sector and were now right on the edge of the Muslim sector, in which the PLO and a large, swollen Muslim population were located. The Israelis began hitting this area with air attacks, tanks, and direct artillery fire.

A day or two before the Israeli invasion of Lebanon began, which was on June 6, 1982, I believe, Phil Habib was in Europe. He was immediately rushed to Jerusalem. We took him up to see Prime Minister Begin, who solemnly assured him of the limited objectives of the Israeli attack. When Habib told Begin that he'd be going on to see President Assad of Syria, Begin said, "You can tell Assad that we're not attacking Syria. We're trying to clean this situation up. See what you can do."

During that very early period of the Israeli attack on Lebanon, remember that the Syrians had moved many anti-aircraft missile batteries into Lebanon, and the Zakleh area of Lebanon immediately leaps to mind. As the war broke out, up went the Israeli Air Force, the Syrian Air Force went up to meet it, and was immediately shot down. There was an enormous disparity between the two air forces. The Israelis lost nothing and shot down, I forget, something like 50 or more Syrian aircraft in major air battles.

The Israeli Air Force virtually wiped out the Soviet-supplied, Syrian Air Force. In the process, the Israelis used their latest techniques in which our Air Force people were very interested. At the risk of dramatizing the situation, you had a kind of prototype of Desert Storm, the war against Iraq in 1990-91. That is, the Israelis carried on a really integrated, air-ground struggle. The Israelis knocked out the Syrian Air Force and knocked out the Syrian radar and missiles, all at the same time. They also knocked out something like 225 Syrian tanks including the vaunted Soviet made T-72 tanks, and anything else that got in their way. This was all done in the name of "cleaning up the Palestinian mess."

Habib flew to Syria, met President Assad, and at 3:00 AM sent us a FLASH cable to report his meeting with Assad. Ambassador Sam Lewis and I had moved during the night up to Jerusalem to get a readout of the situation from Phil Habib. We wanted to be able to contact Prime Minister Begin, which we did at about 4:00 AM. Habib reported that President Assad sat there, absolutely calm, as if he hadn't lost his tanks, his air force, and his missiles. Assad put on a great act. Prime Minister Begin subsequently reported this to the Israeli cabinet. The net effect of it was that Assad was not about to come to Begin's terms or do anything to help Menachem Begin in this mess." From Begin's viewpoint, that reaction by Assad freed his hands to continue with the invasion of Lebanon, and continue they did. Habib...

Q: Did you feel that the Israeli Foreign Ministry at that time was really one of the "players?"

BROWN: No. Or, perhaps, only in the sense of giving their judgments to Prime Minister Begin. David Kimche, who had been a top Mossad [Israeli intelligence organization] man and who had been installed in the Foreign Ministry as the new Director General, had good access to the Prime Minister. Someone had once used the expression that Kimche was the "Prince of Lebanon." He had been a case officer for the top Christian families of Lebanon, the Gemayels, the Chamouns, and so forth. He was considered "Mr. Lebanon" in the Israeli Government, so he had that extra cachet and aura about him.

In any case the Lebanese situation worsened. The Israelis had surrounded Beirut and were bombarding it with artillery, tank fire, and air strikes. They had cut off the water and the food supply to the civilian population. Washington was just going up the wall at this situation.

The second thing, in communications terms, that I would mention to you is that this was a TV War. TV, including Israeli TV, showed the world, including Israeli audiences, pictures of Arab women coming out with dead babies and children with their limbs blown off as a result of Israeli attacks. They were coming into the streets, wailing and so forth. From a humanitarian point of view, it was just dreadful. It was terrifically poignant. This impacted directly on Israel's image, ruining it around the world. These TV images stirred up various Arab populations, including the people in our Consul General's consular district on the West Bank of the Jordan, as well as ours in the Gaza Strip, as well as the Arabs in all of the neighboring countries. All of the Arabs and Muslims were just frantic over these scenes on TV. These images were now beginning to have an impact on Israeli public opinion, the more so as the bodies of Israeli soldiers started coming home for burial. The Israelis rolled over their Opposition, but snipers, mines, explosive charges and so forth began to take their toll.

The Israeli people began to realize that they received not only fresh fruit and vegetables from Lebanon, but body bags as well were starting to come back to Israel. This really began to have an impact on them.

I'll read you a short passage from George Shultz's book, Turmoil and Triumph, covering one of the peaks of this situation in Lebanon. This is taken from pages 58 and 59 of the book. Shultz

writes that one day: "I came into the Department at 5:00 AM. Habib was screaming in rage on the TACSAT. He said that the Israeli shelling of Beirut was the worst that he had seen in eight weeks of war. We had to get the Israelis to stop. Charley Hill was talking to Habib in Beirut on a telephone, on the one hand, and Deputy Chief of Mission Bill Brown, in Jerusalem, was talking on a telephone in his other hand. Brown was also holding two receivers, talking to Hill, on one hand, and Prime Minister Begin on the other. Begin was calmly denying that any shelling was taking place. This had just been confirmed by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

[Begin...] "said, 'There is no intent to occupy West Beirut. If there had been such an intent, I would write to Ronald Reagan,' Begin said. [He added]: 'The United States was being fed hysterical, inflated reporting,' Begin said. Hill relayed this to Habib. 'Oh, yeah,' Habib said, and he held his TACSAT earpiece out the window so that we could hear the Israeli artillery firing. Hill counted eight shells within 30 seconds from IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] artillery batteries located just below Habib's position. When Bill Brown reported Begin's assurances, we told him to tell Begin that at that very moment he was reassuring us, we could hear the noise of Israeli guns. Begin telephoned Bill Brown again. It was now 5:10 AM in Washington. The Israeli Chief of Staff reported that the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] had been using a great variety of weapons. The IDF had fired back, but only at the [point of] origin of the firing against them. The Israelis were not advancing at all. Begin said, 'Do you think that the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces is misleading me?'"

Well, I'll stop right there, just to highlight the kind of situation that we were dealing with. This is not in Shultz's book, but I'll just continue with it. Here I was, as the Chargé d'Affaires, talking to the Prime Minister of Israel, under tremendous pressure himself. He was getting all of this on various channels from Washington, and not just from me. Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir was in Washington, and all kinds of people were reporting in on the Israeli side. Begin said, "Do you suggest that my Chief of Staff and my Defense Minister are misleading me?" I said, "I suggest that Phil Habib is reporting this enormous barrage which is going on." I said, "Perhaps it would be useful, Mr. Prime Minister, if I met with your Defense Minister." Begin said, "It shall be done." Shortly thereafter I got a phone call from Defense Minister Sharon. He asked me to come over to his office, and indeed I did, later that morning.

I took with me Paul Hare, our Political Counselor; and our Military Attaché, Pete Hoag. When I arrived at Sharon's office, his ministerial office in Tel Aviv was really filled. In fact, there was standing room only. He had generals, colonels, note-takers, maps, and so forth. He proceeded in a very sarcastic, cynical manner to attack our reporting. He said, "If you had a qualified Defense Attaché there [in Beirut]," which was a dig at us, "or if you let your Defense Attachés go up [to Beirut] with us, you would see that a lot of this reporting is exaggerated. Not even on D-Day [June 6, 1944 in Normandy] was there such a barrage as Mr. Habib reports, sticking his telephone out the window."

I said, "Mr. Minister," and there was no more 'Ariel' and 'Bill' as this point, "I want to stress at the beginning that I intend to report this conversation in its entirety and in as much detail as I can, accurately and objectively. I just want to go through this with you, step by step. The Prime Minister has told me that nothing happened [in Beirut] last night. He said that you had told him that nothing happened last night, that there was no bombardment of West Beirut. Is that true?" Sharon answered: "Well, in response to 'provocations' and so forth, we had to respond." I said, "Are you claiming that no Israeli tanks moved forward?" He said, "Well, there may have been a little movement on the fringes, here and there, repositioning themselves and so on. But we are not invading West Beirut," and so forth, giving his usual spiel. I asked my note-taker to take it all down and closed by saying to Sharon: "Rest assured that I will report every word of yours that I can remember, as accurately and faithfully as I can, as you've given it to me." Then I left Sharon's office.

I got back to my office at the embassy. As we were sending out the reporting cable on this conversation with Sharon, the phone rang again. It was David Kimche, the Director General of the Foreign Ministry. He said, "Bill, I understand that you had a conversation with the Prime Minister early this morning." I said to myself: "Aha, and I'll bet you were listening in on an extension." I said, "Yes, I did, David." He said, "You reported that the Prime Minister said that nothing happened during last night." I said, "Yes, that's what he told me he had heard from his Defense Minister and his Chief of Staff." David Kimche said, "What he meant was that at the time you were talking, at 7:00 or 8:00 AM today, Bill, there was nothing going on." I said, "Thank you very much, David. I'll report that as well." In other words, the Israelis saw themselves now in a real "fix," and so they were.

Of course, that conversation, which is in Shultz's book and which I've just skimmed over, was preceded by another. I'd called David Kimche at 4:00 AM to tell him what Charley Hill was telling me. In other words, I called Kimche to get him to wake up Prime Minister Begin. Well, the situation worsened. There were assurances and very temporary lulls, but the Israelis kept the water cut off. Food shipments into West Beirut were kept to an absolute minimum. This was extremely upsetting. I would pause here and say that, looking back on it, what we were dealing with was not just Begin or Sharon. We were dealing with an Israeli approach to crisis management of a conflict with Arabs. That is, if it comes to a showdown, you go for the jugular vein, you get your hand on the Arab's throat, whether it's surrounding his army on the other side of the Suez Canal or taking the Golan Heights, or whatever it is, you keep your hand on your opponent's throat until you get what you want. This is in contrast with their perception of an American approach, which is more humane. You go in and do what's necessary and then you negotiate. For the Israelis, allowing a paramilitary structure led by Arafat, whom they hated, to remain able to oppose them in any way was anathema. The Israelis were out to destroy this Arab paramilitary structure and, if necessary, to destroy Arafat. Indeed, we were concerned at the time that the Israelis were out to assassinate him if they could get to him.

Now, in all of this, as the situation worsened dramatically from Arafat's viewpoint, he began, through interlocutors, to approach Phil Habib with something that would allow the final resolution of this situation. That is, a cease-fire and a pullout of Arafat and his forces. This happened in August, 1982. There were all kinds of dramatic breakdowns and so forth, in which I was involved. However, I think that, rather than go on in great detail, I'll pause there. Ambassador Sam Lewis returned from home leave and engaged directly with the Prime Minister. I assisted in all of this. It went on, day and night. It was agonizing and it was horrible. Among other things, we were dealing with a very emotional Phil Habib. I think that I left Tel Aviv when the basic deal had been negotiated. That is, Arafat would be allowed to leave Lebanon, with his PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] troops. The Israelis gave us assurances that nothing would happen to the Palestinians in the refugee camps.

The Syrian forces were called the Arab Deterrent Force, or the ADF. They were allowed to get out via the route from Beirut, leading to Damascus, which had been cut by the Israelis. Under this arrangement, the Israelis would avert their gazes so as to lessen the humiliation of the departing Syrians and some of their Palestinian adherents. Some Palestinians went with the Syrians to Damascus. This is all described eloquently in Shultz's book.

I left an exhausted American Ambassador. I turned over my office to Bob Flatten, who was my successor as DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]. I said, "Go to it, friend." Reflecting back on that, I have to say that I was an exhausted DCM after three years of this. I was in good shape, physically, but I was exhausted. I said to myself: "How much the more so Ambassador Sam Lewis must be." His fun was only just beginning, because, shortly thereafter, there came such things as the massacres at the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila and the surprise Reagan peace plan announced, I think, on September 1, [1982], without prior consultation with the Israelis. Ambassador Sam Lewis had to go up there and deliver this proposal to Prime Minister Menachem Begin at his residence in Nahariya, as it was released worldwide. Begin reacted very, very strongly, saying that Israel would not be treated as a banana republic.

After a fantastic tour in Tel Aviv, my wife Helen and I left Israel and went on to the University of New Hampshire. However, before leaving the subject of Israel, there are a couple of other things that I'd like to cover.

Q: Bill, I have a number of questions that I would like to ask before we leave this subject. First, what was the feeling, at the time, of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon? Much has been made of the fact that Secretary of State Haig basically winked when Ariel Sharon talked about invading Lebanon. What were you getting at that time, about this particular matter?

BROWN: I was getting an earful. You have accounts, including Haig's own book, Caveat, in which he defends what he said and did. He denies having given Sharon the green light or permissive wink, or whatever you want to call it, for Israel to invade Lebanon. There are other accounts available in published form to which I would call your attention, including the book,

Israel's Lebanon War, by Ze'ev Shiff and Ehud Ya'ari. The same subject has been treated elsewhere.

At this particular time and on this particular issue I had a very good contact in none other than Mordecai Zippori, a hard line Israeli a member of Likud and a member of the Herut before that. He was a former career military officer who had risen within the Likud Party and the political structure to become deputy defense minister when Weizman quit, and Prime Minister Begin took over the portfolio himself. Begin made Zippori his deputy defense minister. Zippori ran the day to day affairs of the Ministry of Defense. He was the gentleman with whom I dealt on Lebanon and other, military matters as well. Subsequently, in the new cabinet, when Ariel Sharon came in as Minister of Defense, Zippori and Sharon were at odds, so Zippori was moved out of that job. They made him Minister of Communications.

Now, there was no love lost between Sharon and many other ex-military types, including Zippori. For his part Zippori said to me: "What is the real message on Lebanon?" I gave him chapter and verse on U.S. policy on Lebanon. Zippori would shake his head and say, "Bill, that's not what I'm hearing." It got to the point, during the preparations for the Sharon visit to the United States in May, 1982, and other matters where we were delivering the line as set forth in State Department cables of instruction to us, only to find that the Israelis were getting other versions of U.S. policy. As instructed, we faithfully presented the official line to the Israeli Government, chapter and verse. So the official message was being delivered, but Zippori was not alone in questioning what the U.S. message really was regarding Lebanon. For purposes of this discussion I have chosen to highlight what Zippori said.

We finally got to the point where in the absence of Sam Lewis I invited Zippori to my residence and showed him the green copy of an action cable from Washington. I said, "Here it is, chapter and verse. You'll notice that the name on the bottom of this cable is the name of the Secretary of State, Al Haig. Here it is!" He read the cable, digested it, and said, "Thank you very much, Bill, but I have to tell you that that's not what's being reported in the Israeli cabinet meetings. I sit there and listen to another view of the matter."

What he meant was that Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon was conveying, by his own means and in his own way, his version of what he thought was American policy. He had visited Washington and talked with Secretary Haig and others. Don't forget that the Israeli ambassador to the United States at this time was Moshe Arens who, for all of his American accent and American upbringing, was a hawkish, Likud representative. I consider him to this day to be a good friend, but he was then as always a Likud member. If you look at the memoirs of former Secretary of State George Shultz and others, you'll see that Ambassador Arens was delivering the "Begin line." He saw Secretary of State Haig, when he had access to him.

In this particular case, I called someone in Washington on a secure phone. I said, "You have given me an appreciation of what Al Haig said, in a meeting with Israeli Defense Minister

Sharon, or with Ambassador Arens. There were note-takers, both Israeli and U.S. present. I'm not disputing that report of what was said. However, was there a subsequent meeting?" My interlocutor said, "Well, after that meeting there was a private meeting with Secretary." I said, "Well, can you tell me what happened at that meeting?" My interlocutor said, "No, that was an 'Eyes Only' conversation."

I was left with this lingering concern that something may have been said at the subsequent meeting which was then elaborated, distorted, or spun by an Israeli, unbeknownst to me. Those things happen. And they happen, not only in U.S.-Israeli relations but they happen in many other cases.

RICHARD E. UNDELAND
Public Affairs Officer
Damascus (1979-1983)

Richard E. Undeland was born in 1930 in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from Harvard University in 1952 with a degree in English literature, received an M.B.A. from Stanford University, and studied in Egypt from 1955-1956. In addition to Syria, Mr. Undeland served in Vietnam, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Jordan, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in July of 1994.

Q: Why don't we talk about Lebanon. Israel went into Lebanon when, in 1981?

UNDELAND: At the time, this dominated Syrian thinking and media coverage, and for once the two were nearly as one, convinced the United States had at least supported, and probably promoted, the Israeli attack. Our arguments to the contrary fell on deaf ears. A point used time and time again to make this case was that the U.S. had stood behind the attack by providing the arms the Israelis were using. Reports from American and other western correspondents coming out of Beirut tended to confirm such views. During the main attack on Beirut, every night, all night long, you'd hear the wailing of the ambulances, bringing over the wounded to the Palestinian Hospital in Damascus, with the overload going to other Damascus hospitals.

Syrians found our statements of trying to get the Israelis to stop the attack as unconvincing, if not downright mendacious, and certainly ineffectual. Nonetheless, our relations with individual Syrians remained as warm and cordial as ever, and they continued to speak openly to us, so long as the venue was not public, that is, so long as our interlocutors didn't have to look over their shoulders to see who might be overhearing them. The attack on Beirut was taken as crowning proof, not that they felt they really needed it, of Israel's fundamentally evil nature. Private criticism of the U.S. was somewhat more muted, often running along the line of "can't you finally see how bad the Israelis really are? How can the American government really support them so blindly?" I was struck at how often such sentiments came forth more in sorrow than anger. We were not nearly as much under the gun as you might have expected. If I remember correctly, the center remained open and in business throughout, with activities going on pretty

much as usual. I made my rounds, including visits to the *souks* and found people, as always, their amicable selves. This again did not mean that Syrians did not feel strongly about what was happening, for they did, but they tended to put that issue in its own compartment and not have it get in the way, while they dealt with others things.

Not a Syrian story, but nonetheless illuminating, is that of the USIS driver, the son of a prominent Jerusalem family, who refused to go to school, and while his brothers were prominent doctors and lawyers, he was but a USIS chauffeur. One day his driving was inexplicably not just silly but downright dangerous. I asked if he was sick, and he said no. After a near collision, I took over the wheel and once back at the office, he came to my office tearfully apologizing. And it all came out. He had two sons among the PLO fighters in Beirut and was so terrified they would be killed he could think of nothing else. Then he blurted out, "we Palestinians should hate the United States for all you've done, for your bombs and your shells that are killing us. But we can't, because of all the Palestinians, the only lucky ones, the only ones that are really doing well, are the 100,000 you took into the United States. These are the only happy Palestinians anywhere." At least a year later, a Syrian told me nothing had impressed him more about the Americans than our keeping on a Palestinian with sons in the PLO. I told him the above story, which he punctuated with "yes, yes" comments. By the way, I wondered if Embassy security knew this, but they must have, for my driver's oldest son was in charge of maintenance for the GSO shop.

Going back to Lebanon, the Syrians let us and everybody else know they were going to continue giving their support to the cause of Palestinian liberation and to groups they dominated or heavily influenced. They had always had problems with Yasser Arafat, but got along well with the Hawatmeh, Jabril, Habash and other leaders, who shared the characteristic of being more extreme and of accepting, or at least going along with, Syrian dictates. They had offices, some their headquarters, in Damascus. Syrian security services watched the Palestinians' every step carefully, which the Palestinians resented but could do nothing about.

Amusingly, I was thought to be in contact with at least one of these organizations. Quite regularly I visited the Syrian Writers Union offices, which was located in the same building as the PFLP or DPFLP, I forget which, and my visiting that place did not pass unnoticed. Several Syrians rather slyly asked me about these contacts, not believing for a minute I was only concerned with the Writers' Union.

Syrian attitudes, and here I'm not talking about official ones, recognized and supported the Palestinian cause, how often I heard that phrase used, as a given. They saw it very largely in moral terms, and their support was an article of faith. I heard much criticism of the Assad regime, its repressiveness, its inefficiency, its harmful policies, but I cannot think of one time I heard it criticized for its stand on Palestine and the Palestinians.

BRANDON H. GROVE Jr.

Consul General

Jerusalem (1980-1983)

Ambassador Brandon Grove Jr. was born in Chicago in 1929 and lived in Hamburg, Germany at the time of Hitler's rise to power. Before Germany invaded Poland, his father was transferred to Holland and later to Madrid in 1940. He attended Fordham University and later Bard College and Princeton University. His Foreign Service career took him to such places as the Ivory Coast, India, West Berlin, and Jerusalem as well as an ambassadorship to Zaire.

The Habib Negotiations

Israel's invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982 was the dominating event of my tour. As we watched the crisis mount, Israeli forces moved into Lebanon in an operation cynically called "Peace for Galilee." We thought, initially, that their forces would stop forty kilometers north of the border. But they kept moving, and it slowly became clear that Defense Minister Sharon intended to go all the way to Beirut to expel the PLO and arrange for the election of Bashir Gemayel as president of Lebanon. The Israelis suffered heavy casualties. As these mounted, and the purposes of the invasion became clear, the mood in Jerusalem changed.

The incursion polarized Israeli society as never before. Many Israeli friends asked: "What have we come to? What is this country about in Lebanon and on the West Bank?" Peace Now adherents were the most vocal in their opposition, followed by the Labor Party. A whole country was having an identity crisis. Many Israelis were morally outraged at Begin's government and its purported rationale for the invasion. There were demonstrations and vigils in front of the prime minister's residence, a few blocks from the consulate. When the Sabra and Shatila massacres occurred at Palestinian refugee camps in September, 1982 people viewed Sharon as responsible. Israelis and Palestinians alike were horrified.

Israeli anxiety was reinforced by the flow of soldiers returning from the front in coffins. Jerusalem's atmosphere is often tense and somber, but during the Lebanon crisis it was funereal. National schizophrenia took hold. As bad news from Lebanon flowed in day after day, the depression deepened. Jerusalem's universities, its scholars and religious leaders, provide the city moral authority and make it a repository for national values. Jerusalem cherishes its memories of the founding of the State of Israel and the collective conscience of its founders, and now the very meaning of Zionism was challenged.

Into this atmosphere came Philip C. Habib, assisted by Morris Draper, as leader of a US negotiating team seeking to dislodge Arafat and his fighters from Lebanon. Subsequently, Habib would broker a peace among Lebanese factions and attempt to end the war itself. I had no idea, nor did Phil at the outset, of what was in store for all of us.

I encountered Phil at my first post, Abidjan, in 1960, when he came through the region gathering material for his National War College paper on Africa. Ever buoyant, he and the consulate's American secretary, Marion Markle, had a memorable picnic trip by Volkswagen Beetle into the rain forest, where in village after village Phil sought out Lebanese shopkeepers to practice his Arabic. Marion reported that he received a hero's welcome. Phil had visited me in Jerusalem earlier, when he was trying to rekindle negotiations between Jordan and Israel on riparian issues involving the Jordan River. He had barely begun this work when President Reagan named him as his personal envoy for the larger issues of Lebanon.

Phil became a frequent guest at the residence. I insisted he stay with us rather than at a nearby hotel, because we had more comfortable quarters and he was better protected there. He could hold meetings at any time under secure conditions. Our offices and communications facilities were a floor above the living quarters and provided immediate support.

Phil loved staying at the residence for its spacious and cool comfort and the quality of the household staff, particularly the talents of Atta, our Arab cook. In typical Habib fashion, he complained that his shirts were ironed better at the ambassador's residence in Beirut. He gorged on the Lebanese pistachio nuts we put before him. He loved the rose garden. At my urging, after his death, a plaque was placed in the garden honoring him and his love of roses. Phil spent time with me, just musing and chatting. He found the residence a calming shelter from the world beyond its walls. There were days when he arrived worn out. Phil, at 63, had experienced two heart attacks, and the negotiating process was grueling. From time to time, I arranged for an Israeli cardiologist to show up at the residence. Phil grumbled a bit, but was pleased to have a check-up. His concern was that these calls would leak to the press, but they never did.

When his motorcade arrived, I met Phil at the front door and took him to the guest room, where he unpacked his bag and hung up his suits, which were always in plastic dry cleaning wrappers. An excellent way to keep the wrinkles out, he reminded me. He stripped to his boxer shorts and tee-shirt, stretched out on the bed, and started talking. Phil invariably asked about my children, and how the household staff was faring. We discussed the garden and agreed it needed his scrutiny, an issue of priority on his personal agenda. He shared his concerns about the work at hand. Then he dozed off.

For Phil, the negotiations were arduous, frustrating, and often disappointing. Phil instinctively understood the Lebanese and their Syrian masters lurking in the background. Washington had given him a near *carte blanche* to resolve the issues in PLO withdrawal and the larger peace effort. On the phone, he dealt with Near East assistant secretary Veliotes on day to day matters, and occasionally with Secretary Shultz, an old California friend. He also spoke frequently with NSC adviser Bud McFarlane. There were occasional bursts of shouting from Phil, but he generally found the Washington bureaucracy supportive. Ambassador Lewis shared fully in these matters. He and his committed staff, including Charlie Hill, Bill Brown, and Paul Hare, became nearly as worn down as Phil as they produced reams of reporting cables.

It was the Israeli government that troubled Phil most. He had direct access anytime to Prime Minister Begin, but sometimes found him removed from Phil's immediate concerns. While Phil

encountered warmth and support in many government quarters, particularly the foreign ministry, he found these qualities lacking in Defense Minister Sharon, whom he distrusted and disliked. The massacres at the refugee camps in Lebanon upset Phil greatly. He was frustrated by infighting in Lebanon among the various factions and their inability to act together. His Lebanese origins seemed to have no influence on his views or emotions, but helped him understand the mindset and negotiating styles of his counterparts in Beirut. During each visit Phil asked me to brief him about the situation on the West Bank, which was always grim. He was careful to keep these matters separate from the concerns of his negotiations, but on a couple of occasions agreed to pass along comments and advice about the West Bank where it was most likely to do some good in Begin's government.

One afternoon, Phil was in a good mood and looking for something to do. I suggested we visit the collection of Roman glass at the Israel Museum, one of the best collections, if not the foremost, in the world. The museum was close and he agreed to go. When we entered the rooms where the glass is exhibited, Phil lost himself. He became engrossed in shapes and colors, and for a long time walked from one beautifully lit display case to another, totally absorbed. It was one of the few times I lured him out of the residence. Arab feasts with family and staff at Walid's Philadelphia Restaurant constituted the others. Phil cherished the quiet solitude provided by the residence and its garden.

Phil was fond of my children, two of whom lived with me, and two others, Cathy and Jack, who visited from college in the summer. He would greet my youngest son Mark at the breakfast table with a hearty, "Good morning, smartass!" He was a warm and funny person, despite his often stern demeanor. Phil's daughter Phyllis spent some time with us, and we tried to make her feel part of the family. Occasionally, I would host small dinners for him to which I invited UNIFIL officers, journalists, and other interesting people in Jerusalem. Phil was a great dinner companion and raconteur. He liked good wine. "Dining is the soul of diplomacy," Lord Palmerston observed. Whenever Brian Urquhart of the UN was in Jerusalem, I asked him to dinner with Phil. It was fascinating to hear their assessments and reminiscences. Brian, as well, had a deep and intuitive understanding of Lebanon and the Middle East.

We were stretched thin in the consulate when Phil was in town. Martha Hayward, ever a tireless secretary, saved us time and again. These visits were a workload for which we were not prepared. My undaunted deputy, Jock Covey, took on this chore, having had invaluable staffing experience in the State Department's executive secretariat. We trained our junior officers to put together briefing books, sort cables, and staff the needs of a busy negotiator. They took to this work like bees to honey, and enjoyed their easy access to Phil. Phil in turn, took an interest in them. He asked about their careers, past and prospective, and why they had joined the Foreign Service, amplifying everything with his usual wisecracks. The junior officers loved it, and vied for the demanding responsibility of taking care of him. Many of them received quick promotions and were recognized by the State Department for their outstanding work in Jerusalem. The lesson in this is that foreign service professionals like to work with strong leaders engaged in important issues. They will give their all in response to wise leadership from someone whose understanding and management of matters at hand commands respect.

On one of his visits to Jerusalem, Phil was unhappy about his support from our embassy in Lebanon. He was about to return to Washington for a meeting with the president, and told me he intended to ask Reagan to appoint me ambassador to Lebanon forthwith. I thanked him for his confidence and said I needed to sleep on it, although I knew what my answer would have to be. At breakfast the next morning, I told Phil it would not be possible for me to go. I had a commitment to my sons living with me that I could not abandon when they were at an age at which a father's guidance is badly needed. The divorce had been hard on them. Phil made his disappointment clear--he was a great believer in "the Foreign Service first"--but accepted my decision, frowning at me from time to time later on, grumbling that I should have gone to Beirut. Had I done as he wished, I would have been at our embassy when it was blown up in a terrorist attack.

Habib's temper was legendary, and his blow-ups were memorable though brief. Nick Veliotis, then assistant secretary for the Middle East, tells the story of one of Phil's quick visits to Washington during the Lebanese crisis. Phil asked Nick to draft a telegram on some complicated matter, which Veliotis and his associates promptly did. The draft was handed to Phil, who retreated into Nick's office and closed the door, while the others waited outside in trepidation. Sure enough, the outburst came: "GOD DAMN IT!" Phil yelled to their dismay. "Why can't the rest of the Department do work like this!"

Habib had a wise press policy. When he went to the foreign ministry at the outset of his negotiations, he was confronted after the initial discussions by a huge jumble of TV cameras and journalists. Phil, undaunted, went to the microphones, looked straight into the cameras and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is going to be a silent movie!" He surveyed the startled faces for a few seconds, and left. He would not speak to the press during the negotiations, except for an occasional formal statement. He believed that one cannot negotiate in public. The Israeli press, moreover, was notorious for its flights of fancy and tenacity.

In the early days of his negotiations, Phil received kudos by the gross. One week, he was on the covers of *Newsweek* and *Time*. After Arafat's exit from Beirut, he was increasingly mentioned as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. When Phil returned to Washington for consultation, President Reagan usually invited him to lunch. Habib was the star of US foreign policy. That reputation changed after a suicide truck bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut killed 241 Americans in October of 1983, the worst of times for Americans committed to peace in the Middle East by their presence, actions and cautious hopes.

ROBERT S. DILLON

Ambassador

Lebanon (1981-1983)

Ambassador Robert S. Dillon was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1929. He received a bachelor's degree from Duke University in 1951 and joined the State Department in 1956. In addition to serving as ambassador to Lebanon, his career included positions in Venezuela, Turkey, Malaysia, and Egypt. Ambassador Dillon was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1990

Q: How did Israel fit into these conversations? How did you and your staff view Israel in the pre-June 1982 invasion period?

DILLON: The attitude towards Israel was cynical. Israel and its American supporters who accused us of that were half right. We were cynical because of the pressure that we felt from Washington to somehow square a circle that couldn't be squared. I never met anybody in Lebanon who was a particular admirer of Israel. The Israelis were seen as tough, brutal, *real-politik* people. The Lebanese were very scornful of Israeli pretensions to be humanitarians. There is an idealistic side to Israel, but when you were in Lebanon it was very difficult to remember it. The Israelis were tough and arrogant. The Lebanese that were recruited by Israel were also tough and brutal. The idealistic side of Zionism or Jewish life was not on display in Lebanon. Even the Maronites, who became deeply involved with the Israelis, basically disliked and distrusted them very much. If there was anything idealistic about Israel, it would not have occurred to Bashir Gemayel, who was an ally. He did not see them in that light, although he did admire their toughness. He thought that the Israelis were right in thinking that the only good Arabs were dead ones. He came to think differently later, but when I first met him, that was very much his point of view.

The Israelis enjoyed exercising hegemony in southern Lebanon. After the invasion, when I went into that area, one would meet the Israeli version of Lawrence of Arabia; that is their Arab specialists. These were not all Mossad (Israeli intelligence) people; Mossad people were involved with the Maronites in the north. After the invasion, the Israeli officials who organized that region and the now-called South Lebanese Army and got themselves involved with the Druze, recruited a lot of Shiite thugs. The Israeli belonged primarily to Shin Bet (the internal security forces). A lot of them spoke Arabic very well. They were arrogant, as I said. They enjoyed being westerners among the "barbarians". I would occasionally see them; indeed sometimes they would seek me out and talk to me. They loved the idea of lecturing an American Ambassador, even though they hated us. They loved to have the American Ambassador

subjected to lectures about the sins of our society and the stupidity of our policies. The Shin Bet guys enjoyed doing that.

The PLO in Lebanon did not depend entirely on Palestinians. They recruited others. They recruited poor Shiites as did a lot of Lebanese factions. Poor Shiite gun-slingers were available; they or their counterparts are available in any society, Many of these same people later were recruited by the Israelis to become members of the South Lebanese Army, although the media always referred to that Army as Christian. But in fact, that Army and the PLO and others all had these poor Shiite gun-slingers working for them. The exasperating thing about being in Lebanon and dealing with these situations was that Washington viewed any reports from Lebanon with suspicion and cynicism, whereas anything reported from Tel Aviv was taken seriously. I have seen some awful garbage from Tel Aviv. That Embassy was not bad; Sam Lewis was a good Ambassador. But they did send some awful garbage which was taken seriously in Washington. Lebanon was viewed as a wild, savage place; the reporting from there was viewed with skepticism and taken with a grain of salt.

A good example of this syndrome is in the events leading up to the invasion. From Lebanon, there were a constant stream of reports from many sources that the Israeli preparations had been made and that they were going to invade. I had become very friendly with Bashir Gemayel, who was the leader of the Lebanese forces. Bashir, who was later murdered, started to feel guilty, I believe, that he was misleading me. He came to me one day, which was not unusual because he used to stop at the Residence frequently. It was usually about ten p.m.; we would sit in the Library and chat and then he would go home. He was afraid that I didn't know that the Israelis would actually mount an invasion. He felt guilty about it. So he "spilled the beans". It must have been sometime in the Spring of 1982. It was clear from the conversation that he wanted me to know.

I called Nick Veliotis, the Assistant Secretary for NEA, on the secure phone. I assume I also sent a message. But I wanted to be sure that Washington understood the context. A report, even from the American Ambassador, would not be as meaningful to Nick unless he understood the circumstances under which the information was received. Bashir did not want the invasion to occur without having told me about it.

(NEXT FEW SENTENCES OBLITERATED BY STATIC ON TAPE)

The invasion preparations in Israel were sufficiently overt so that I could not see how an American official in Israel could have missed them. They could not have minded the extent of them. Sharon did not make that big a secret out of it, but I didn't see any reporting about it until after the invasion had begun. Our staffs in Israel were reporting that the invasion, if it took place at all, would be a limited one, focusing only on the southern part of Lebanon.

Q: Before we get to the actual invasion, were there any major political events from June 1981, when you arrived in Lebanon, to the invasion date?

DILLON:

(SENTENCES INAUDIBLE BECAUSE OF TAPE STATIC)

Following that, there was a PLO response with missiles. Phil Habib negotiated a cease fire. The Palestinians were vulnerable and knew it. They wanted the world to see that they had not provoked the invasion. So it was relatively quiet in southern Lebanon in the weeks just prior to the invasion. There was an alleged arms build up by the Palestinians. We saw these reports. We were told that the Palestinians were obtaining long range artillery, smuggled into Lebanon probably from Libyan sources. Your first reaction, of course, is immediately to try to find out more about it, which we were not able to do. But the reports continued. After a while, it occurs to one, that these reports may have been generated by the Israelis. You just can't be sufficiently sure enough to tell Washington with any certainty that it is receiving false reports. All you can do is report suspicions. You can talk to people in Washington, as we used to do all the time, and say that we couldn't confirm that there was long range artillery in southern Lebanon. We could say that it was very difficult to keep a secret in southern Lebanon and despite that we couldn't find any evidence to confirm the reports. There could have been a few howitzers, a few a hand held rockets, but we couldn't find any long range artillery or rockets. We would have to admit that it was certainly possible that Libyans may have been buying this equipment and shipping to Lebanon, but we couldn't find it anywhere. People in the Bureau and CIA understood the nature of our dilemma. But we were certainly never in a position where I as the American Ambassador in Lebanon could send a cable to the President of the United States to tell him that he was being subjected by a disinformation campaign by our allies, the Israelis. I could not say with any evidence that in fact the Israelis were gearing up to an invasion. I could discuss the possibility with my Foreign Service colleagues, but the evidence was not sufficient to carry the warning very far up the decision-making ladder.

Q: Had you seen any escalation of tensions in the Spring of 1982?

DILLON: The Palestinians in southern Lebanon were in a very defensive mode. They were making defensive preparations. There were no offensive preparations that I could see. I believe that their political leadership did believe that an invasion was coming, but that there wasn't anything they could do to stop it. They wanted to be very clear that they didn't provoke it. This was a period during which the PLO was trying to play an increasingly political hand with the Americans. Once they had made the agreement with Phil Habib on the cease fire, they adhered to it. Phil has testified to that fact many times. The Palestinians stuck to the letter of the agreement. The Israelis tried to expand the scope of the agreement, which dealt with southern Lebanon. They interpret it to cover anything in the world despite our continued injunction to them that their view was not realistic and that the agreement did not cover any act of Palestinian violence outside southern Lebanon.

The incident that they used as an excuse for the invasion was an Abu Nidal attempted assassination of their Ambassador in London. It had nothing to do with the PLO or Lebanon.

Q: Let me move to the Fall of 1981. Beirut was being subjected to a series of Israeli bombings interspersed with firing from Israeli gun boats. Did the Lebanese government, to the extent that there was one, complain to you or did it use different channels?

DILLON: The Lebanese government had mixed feelings. It was simultaneously anti-Israel, anti-Syria and anti-Palestinian. I am referring to the Sarkis government. It was in a very weak position. Lebanon was surrounded by these forces. That government played its cards with some skills, even though, as I said, it held a very weak hand. The Foreign Minister, Fouad Boutros, was a brilliant man. The other powerful member of the team was Johnny Abdu.

Those three men were together constantly. I met with them many, many times. We became friends, which always happens, of course. I saw a lot of them and came to respect all three. Sarkis was viewed, particularly by the militant Christian right, as "weak". There were always complaints that he was "weak". That was not realistic. Sarkis wasn't "weak"; Lebanon was immensely "weak". Sarkis had very few options. He had an Army that he was trying to keep together, which he did with some success. The Army was the only institution in which Muslims and Christians cooperated. I thought he dealt skillfully with the Syrians. The idea that he was "pro-Syrian", as some of the right wing Maronites proclaimed, was nonsense. Sarkis was a Maronite himself. He was a smart, realistic man trying to deal with the consequences of the Syrian presence. He was concerned about the involvement of right wing Maronite groups with the Israelis. One has to be careful how one describes that. From Sarkis' point of view, there were times when that relationship was useful to him; it helped him to balance other forces. On the other hand, he also saw it as very dangerous. He maneuvered back and forth between the Syrians on one side and the Israelis on the other. Then there was the PLO, particularly in Beirut and in the northern part of southern Lebanon, which was very strong. So he had to contend with a lot of groups. It was important to achieve a certain balance. Fouad Boutros, who was perhaps his chief advisor in the maneuvering, was a thoroughly decent man, whom I liked very much, and a brilliant one. He was a classic diplomatic chess player; very good at leaning one way or the other.

Johnny Abdu was the action man. He did a lot of things, some perhaps not very nice. He collected information. He had a massive telephone tapping operation and constantly fed information to Sarkis. Johnny had his detractors. I must say that I enjoyed my dealings with him very much. He was smart, witty, an absolutely dedicated Lebanese -- that is important. Most Lebanese have very little loyalty to the concept of a united country. But a few people had the vision of whole Lebanon. They did see that Lebanon had to build on Christian-Muslim cooperation, not domination by one side or the other. So we had the interesting picture of Johnny Abdu, a tough little character who is running the Duxieme Bureau, who had a vision of Muslim-Christian cooperation and did understand that, although himself a Maronite, a totally Maronite

dominated state could not survive. He probably thought that if the Maronites were clever and smart enough, they would not have to surrender much power, but it was impossible that they, as a minority, could continue to dominate the country completely. Interestingly, Sarkis used Johnny for many of his clandestine contacts with the Muslims. Johnny was trusted because they knew that he played it straight. If he came to them and said that the President has said so and so, that was truth. Johnny would not play games. They also knew that he could be trusted to report faithfully to Sarkis. Despite the fact that at one level, Johnny was a PLO foe -- he was responsible for keeping them in check -- Sarkis used him as the contact man and that was successful.

I am trying to paint a picture of a very weak Lebanese government, whose writ did not run far in any direction outside of Baabda, which was the capital. Sarkis maneuvered with a great deal of skill among all the various factions. He and Abdu, both Maronites, understood well the unrealism displayed by their friends and in some cases, their relatives who believed strongly that Lebanon had to be ruled by Maronites. Boutros was a Greek Orthodox. I mention the religion of the various leaders because it is very important in the Lebanese context. The Orthodox always felt far more Arab than the Maronites, even though they were Christians with all that implies in the Middle East including some feeling of superiority over other people. As a group, the Orthodox tended to be far more realistic in their dealings with the other Arabs, and they tended not to be Francophiles as the Maronites were.

So the three leaders maneuvered back and forth. The usual concept of someone being pro or anti-Israel, pro or anti-Syrian, pro or anti-American didn't make any sense in that context. What we had was smart people who were trying to balance a variety of forces as best they could. Did they like Israel? No, they didn't. Did they think that our Israeli policy made any sense? No, they didn't think it made any sense. They thought we had gotten ourselves very foolishly in a situation which was not likely to give the U.S. any benefits and indeed they felt that the underlying problem in the area was the presence of Israel and its expansionist policy. They were quite frank about that view, but were quite prepared when the opportunity arose to use Israel as a foil to PLO or the Syrians or other forces.

None of these three Lebanese leaders was pro-Syrian. They were "anti-Syrian"; they mistrusted Syria. Historically, there had been some enthusiasm in Lebanon for the concept of a "greater Syria". There was a political party, the PPS, which was Greek Orthodox dominated, which was devoted to the idea of a "greater Syria". I honestly think that by the time I got to Lebanon that probably the sentiment within Lebanon for a "greater Syria" was minuscule. There may have been a handful of individuals who still believed in it, but I never met a Muslim Lebanese whom I would have described as pro-Syrian. The Maronites of course were very anti-Syrian, with the exception of the Franjeh group. Among the Sunni establishment -- the wealthy Sunnis who lived principally in Tripoli, Beirut and Saida -- I never detected any pro-Syrian sentiment. I did meet Sunnis who had a feeling for a greater Sunni Arab world of which they would have been a part, but at the same time, they distrusted Assad whose government was Alawites, which was a

religious off-shoot of the Shiites. They lived mainly in northern Syria on the Turkish border. Many of the Arabs in southern Turkey are also Alawites. I have been told that Assad has relatives in Turkey.

The Alawites were about 10% of the Syrian population; yet they dominated Syria. Syria is 70% Sunni; the other 30% is divided, including a fair number of Christians. Generally, the Assad government had the support of the non-Sunni groups because they feared Sunni-domination. That is a great over-simplification of a complicated situation, but it is worth noting because you shouldn't be surprised when I refer to Muslims in Lebanon, I refer primarily to the Sunni establishment, which was not pro-Syrian. The Syrians were important to them only as a counter-weight to the Maronites or the Israelis. They did take their ties to Syria very seriously, but were not pro-Syrian.

The Shiites were the down-trodden. They were the largest single group; certainly a plurality at the time I was there and probably in the majority by now. They were not pro-Syrian, even though you may hear some Shiite leaders described occasionally as pro-Syrian which simply meant that they had some connections with Damascus and may have had some support from there. But the Shiites were not interested in being part of a "greater Syria" dominated by Alawites. The important thing is for Americans to understand that in Washington, partly because of the desperate need to rationalize the policy built on an alliance with Israel, vast oversimplification and misunderstandings of these relationships were very common. Some officials sitting in Washington liked to hear that in Lebanon many Christians were "pro-Israel" or that some of the terrible Muslims were "pro-Syria" and therefore untrustworthy. This fitted their preconceptions. None of that made any sense in the Lebanon context. The people there related to each other in many different ways. I would also argue that the general view was that the Israelis were the outsiders who had no business being there, even though any one Lebanese faction was readily prepared to use the Israelis against other factions they considered as enemies. American officials were dealing with Lebanese who on occasion gave the impression of being "pro-Israel"; they were not, and the Americans should not have interpreted the situation in that way. These were essentially tactical ploys by Lebanese to get on the "right side" of the Americans. They understood our hang-ups.

Q: Can we move on from the end of 1981 to the time the invasion took place in June, 1982. What was the situation like in that period?

DILLON: In the Fall of 1981, there were armed clashes which I think I have already mentioned. Phil Habib's mission was, at least initially, to get Syrian agreement to withdraw their SAMs out of the Bekaa Valley. His headquarters were in my residence. He shuttled back and forth between Lebanon, Israel and Syria. There comes, of course, the time when one can no longer determine who is retaliating against whom. The cycle of violence becomes so ingrained that everyone is retaliating for something someone else has done. The question is how it is done. The Palestinian retaliation was pretty weak stuff because they were feeble. The Israeli retaliations were through

shelling from the gunboats off the coast and air strikes which are far more destructive on the ground in terms of human costs than what the Palestinians were doing. Both sides had an awful righteousness about what they were doing. That was one of the reasons that they were all exasperating to deal with. The idea that all Arabs and Israelis were cynical was easy to believe, but in fact, most are just damned self-righteous. They each believe that their case is so self-evidently correct that if one does not accept it, there is something wrong with you, not them. So when you get caught in between as an American, you find you are surprised that both Arabs and Israelis are intensely hostile to you because each side believes that it is so self-evident that it is right; each sees itself as the victim and the aggrieved. The idea that an American can have a "balanced" view is almost immoral in their eyes. You do get that feeling in dealing with Palestinians and certainly with Israelis.

That was the attitude that Habib was dealing with. He finally worked out a cease-fire sometime in the fall, 1981. From then on, the cease-fire held partly because the Palestinians were in a weak position and with the exception of few extremist groups, it was very much in their interest to stick to the cease-fire. The Israelis were, I think it is fair to say, always tempted to break it because if you are in a strong position you are less interested in a cease-fire. When people write revisionist history, it is worth examining when they say that the "stronger" of the two parties was forced to violate a cease-fire because of the actions of the "weaker" party. It usually doesn't happen that way. It is usually the "weaker" party that wants to maintain a cease-fire. In fact the PLO wanted the cease-fire and it stuck with it to the maximum degree possible. They enforced discipline on their people.

Eleven months of essentially unbroken cease-fire went by. Then the Israelis unilaterally announced that the cease-fire applied not only for southern Lebanon, but it applied world-wide. That was not true. What broke the cease-fire in Israeli eyes was the assassination attempt on the Israeli Ambassador in London in June, 1982. He lived, but I think was crippled for life. The fact that the Ambassador didn't die was only a miracle; the bullets lodged in the spine and he never walked again. The attempt was the work of the Abu Nidal group, which was an independent terrorist group and very anti-PLO. Abu Nidal, as a matter of fact, was under death sentence by the PLO for assassinations of moderate Palestinians.

The Israelis retaliated by bombing in Lebanon. The Palestinians retaliated by firing some rockets into northern Israel. The Israelis bombed again and then invaded Lebanon in massive strength. I did not realize fully at the time how public the preparations for the invasion had been in Israel. I have to say that I don't understand why the Americans in Israel did not report more on those preparations. Inside Lebanon, we had many, many reports that the invasion was coming. There was constant apprehension on part of Lebanese and Palestinians. They would talk to us and we would duly report these conversations. From Washington's point of view, clearly Palestinian or Shiite warnings about an imminent Israeli invasion was seen as self-serving. So I didn't expect a report from Lebanon that "they are coming" to be accepted as fact, but I do not understand why there wasn't better reporting on the preparations out of Israel.

There were constant reports from Israel of Palestinian build-up. It is very hard to prove the negative. If there are reports of Libyan-supplied heavy artillery in southern Lebanon, you can be sure that the source was Israel. And we "looked into" those reports. It was very difficult to prove that the artillery was not there. One can't really be sure. We, CIA and the military attachés, could only say that we couldn't prove that the pieces were there or not, only that we saw no evidence of their presence. You can see how weak an analysis that was compared to an Israeli military intelligence briefer saying with certainty that pieces were located here and there. Then there were we Americans in Lebanon, who were suspect anyhow because some felt that we had probably sold out to the Arabs, saying that we couldn't say definitely whether the artillery was there or not; we just had no evidence of its presence. We did know that there were rockets.

In retrospect, I can say that there were no secrets in Lebanon. It was almost impossible to hide anything. I wish we had been more forceful than we were. In truth, if there had been artillery in southern Lebanon, we would have known it. It wasn't there. In retrospect, the "presence" of the artillery was clearly a propaganda build-up to justify an invasion which had been decided for domestic political purposes in Israel.

There were people in Israel who saw an opportunity to remake the political map of the Middle East. They saw a chance to convert weak Lebanon on their northern border into a Christian led client state, dependent on them. They were conspiring with the Lebanese Forces, led by my friend Bashir Gemayel. There was a propaganda build up leading up to the invasion. As I mentioned earlier, Bashir Gemayel and I had become quite friendly. He was the youngest son of Pierre Gemayel who was the head of the Phalange party. His elder brother was Amin Gemayel who later became President of Lebanon. Bashir was a man who had been a guerrilla fighter since he was 14 years old; he had been a successful fighter. He then headed the strongest Maronite militia, which wiped out the other Maronite militias. He had treated the other Maronite militias as brutally as he treated Palestinians or any other group that got in his way. Bashir was in his early 30s when I first came to know him. He was just beginning to transit from a guerrilla leader to a politician, which was an old metamorphosis in many countries, including Israel. When he came to see me, we enjoyed bantering, but I also gave him serious advice. I was concerned about his relationship with Israel because I saw in Bashir a potential leader for all of Lebanon. It would have been impossible to be the leader of all of Lebanon and an Israeli agent at the same time and I suspected he was the latter. It turned out later that I was right.

Bashir became fond of me. We became friends. I think he knew I was honest with him. He was curious about the United States; he was curious about American intentions; he was curious about American policy. He understood how painful it was for me to be completely honest and realistic with him, particularly about what he might or what he might not expect from the United States on certain issues.

One evening, in the late Spring, he came to me at a time when there were many, many stories about the coming Israeli invasion. There were just the two of us. We sat down and he looked at

me and said, rather formally: " Ambassador, you know they are really coming". I asked him what he meant. "Look, the Israelis are really coming", he replied. What I realized at that moment was that he was in on it. He felt a compulsion to be in a position of not having lied to me. I am sure that is what happened. We had had an open and frank relationship which he had come to appreciate. He did not want to be in a position of having lied to me. I reported our conversation to Washington. I even talked to Nick Veliotis, the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, on the secure phone. I told him what had happened. I knew that Nick would understand the circumstances and the reasons for Bashir's comments. You would have to ask Nick what was going on in Washington at the time, but I don't think that the leadership thought the invasion would take place. The reporting out of Lebanon was viewed as Palestinians just "crying wolf", even though Bashir was certainly not a Palestinian.

This is all part of the question whether General Sharon was given a "green" light by Al Haig. I don't believe he was. I believe Haig when he denies it, even though in Israel everybody believes that Sharon was given the "OK" signal. Sharon came to Washington in May, 1982 and in effect described an invasion plan. According to the public record, Haig very carefully told him that Israel couldn't do anything like that on a flimsy pretext. He wanted to make it clear that if they just drummed up a pretext for an invasion, the United States would be opposed. I have talked to a person who was sitting at Haig's right hand during the talks with Sharon. So I have a pretty good idea of what went on. There was some more back and forth between Haig and Sharon. Then Sharon left and Haig's staff said to him that he had in effect given Sharon a "green" light. Haig denied it. I am told that Haig was then told: " Secretary, Sharon just left here believing that if he invades Lebanon, the United States will not oppose him". Haig said that had not been his purpose. A letter was then drafted from Haig to Sharon presumably to clarify our position and to make it clear that in fact the United States was opposed to an invasion of Lebanon. But Sharon already had his answer. Americans sometimes don't understand this. Sharon didn't care whether Americans approved or disapproved of whatever he wanted to do. He just wanted to know whether the U.S. would take any punitive action. He had sat and looked at the Secretary, who was a distinguished military officer himself, and immediately understood that the Americans were not going to take any action if Israel were to invade Lebanon. He saw that there would be no political costs to Israel. And that is the message that Sharon got during his meeting with Haig. The question was not whether the United States would approve of the invasion -- Sharon knew that couldn't be the case. But he wanted to know whether we would either try to stop it or take punitive action afterwards. He concluded that there would be none. If the United States wants to do anything about prevention, whether it be with the Greeks or the Israelis or the Palestinians or anyone else, you have to grab the other guy by the collar and shake him and say: "God damn it, we are opposed! You must understand that there will be consequences. You can not do what you have in mind with impunity; there will be some cost to you!". That would have been the only way to deal with the Israelis; we didn't do it and that makes me very angry.

Afterwards, of course, we were all sitting around wondering how it all happened. We all agreed that the invasion was not in U.S. interests; it harmed those interests. The President of the U.S. came to that conclusion. In fact, by now, even the majority of the Israelis have come to the conclusion that invasion was not in their interest. And that goes beyond the 650 or so Israelis that were killed in the venture. There are times when you must be very, very direct in dealing with people and we are not. We are therefore constantly being surprised when others do outrageous things -- as recently illustrated by the 1991 Iraq invasion of Kuwait.

Q: The invasion occurred on June 6, 1982. Were you just waiting for the "shoe to drop" at this point?

DILLON: Yes. The Israelis invaded and immediately announced that they would "drive the Palestinian artillery back from the border" where it was a threat to Israel. This rang false with us because we didn't really believe that there was artillery in southern Lebanon although we couldn't be certain. There may have been a gun someplace. Our military attaché, who couldn't get anybody to really pay any attention to him -- he would submit lots of reports, but nobody in Washington really cared about them -- immediately noticed that the Israelis were using too much strength for the limited purposes they had announced. The attaché said that it was not a border foray; he predicted that there was something more than just moving a few artillery pieces back 25 miles. The Israelis kept coming. The Syrian air force rose to meet them and was destroyed in two days -- they lost something like 85 airplanes. The Israelis lost one plane. Some people were of course delighted by the evidence that American weapons were so far better than the third rate stuff that Syrians had gotten from the Soviets.

The Israelis kept coming. The Palestinians chose to fight at Saida at a place called Ain El Hilweh, which was the largest refugee camp. They fought and held up the Israelis for several days. Eventually, the Israelis leveled Ain El Hilweh; then moved north and killed a lot of civilians in their advance. They used tanks and heavy weapons. My recollection is that they divided into two or three columns, one of which smashed up the coast through Ain El Hilweh and Damour. The column moved to Beirut. One other column was in the Bekaa Valley going through the mountain passes. The Syrians fought surprisingly well, but were eventually overwhelmed by superior numbers and equipment and indeed by better tactical leadership. On the tactical level, the Israelis were very good. It is at other levels that one can fault them.

In the midst of this, we were sitting in Beirut and reporting what we could see. It became clear to us that a full scale invasion was taking place. I thought that Beirut was the objective, even though the Israelis were still claiming that they were interested only in the 40 kilometers north of their borders. But they were already well beyond that line and not with just a few patrols. They were into mid-Lebanon in strength. It was at this time that Begin sent a reassuring message to Reagan asserting that the Israeli action was intended solely to move the artillery back. That was clearly a lie. We in Lebanon called it a lie in polite language. It was clearly not what was happening.

Q: What were the Israelis bombing and strafing?

DILLON: That is a good question. The Israelis were always obsessed with Beirut airport. It was such a symbol of Lebanese independence. They had raided that field with helicopters and commandoes in the past. At the end of the runway, there were Shiite and PLO positions which had light aircraft guns in them. They were totally ineffective. I suppose that was their target. But it was undoubtedly partly intimidation to assert to Lebanon that it was trapped because the large international airport was no longer useable. So it was a psychological as well as a military operati

So the dependents left. As the Ambassador, I didn't do a lot of traveling around. My staff did most of that; I tried to be the quarterback sitting in the center of the situation. The Israelis continued their march northward; they had entered the southern part of Beirut still maintaining that their action was still only an "incursion" and that they would withdraw to Israel in the near future. We didn't believe them. The PLO was withdrawing into the city, setting up defenses there.

I stayed in my house, as I mentioned, which was in the hills, not far from Babda where the Presidential Palace was. There is a road which passed my house. One day, on that road, about 1/2 mile from my house, we could see an Israeli tank column advancing. We immediately reported that to the Operations Center of the Department. The answer was: "Well, we have assurances from Tel Aviv that the Israelis are still well south of Beirut". So I repeated again that I could see the tanks from my house -- north-east of Beirut -- and they were moving towards the city. The Operations Center just wouldn't believe me. Finally I said: "God damn it, this is the American Ambassador. Tel Aviv is lying to you. Doesn't anybody care back there?". There was a moment of silence and then a plaintive woman's voice said: "I care, Ambassador". I was touched and gratified. There was at least one person who cared. The Israelis were lying. But when you reported from Lebanon about Israeli actions, Washington called Tel Aviv to check our observations. The Israelis denied and Washington believed them, even though the American Ambassador was reporting that he was seeing the tanks and the self-propelled artillery.

The Israelis had a great sense of humor. They stuck the tanks and the artillery all around my house and then proceeded to shell Beirut from there. That had two effects: one, it annoyed the American Ambassador, whom they disliked in any case and second, when the Palestinians retaliated, they had to fire in the direction of the American Ambassador's house. Some Israeli officers showed up to pay a call on me; I refused to receive them. I was later told that that was very impolite of me. It wasn't; I was accredited to Lebanon and I didn't have any business receiving the officers of an invading army. What they clearly expected to do was to use my house as sort of a headquarters, which I of course refused.

The siege of Beirut lasted something like 50 days -- it seemed forever. We were holed up in the house surrounded by Israelis. The siege was savage. Our military observers counted on some

days that 8,000 rounds of artillery were fired by the Israelis on a limited area of Beirut. Occasionally, the newspapers reported rocket and artillery "duels". Rocket and artillery "duels" consisted of Israeli rounds -- a lot of 155 millimeters which are large shells -- going into the city and every once in a while some Palestinian popping out of a hole with a hand launcher, firing a rocket. The only thing that the Palestinians ever hit was the air conditioner of my house. That was not funny; there were about thirty people living in the house by that time. That was the "duel". I should also note that what thirty people do to plumbing is no joke, particularly in the middle of a hot, hot Mediterranean summer. We were living cheek by jowl without air conditioning. It was no lark.

Phil Habib was also living in the house. So he and we were reporting at the same time. His mission got more attention than we did. There was a famous incident I should mention. A cease-fire had been declared and Habib was on the phone back to Washington reporting that the Israelis had broken it and were firing into Beirut. He got the same answer that I got. Washington said: "Ambassador Habib, we have been in touch with Tel Aviv and are assured that the cease-fire is holding. The Israelis are denying that there is any firing". Habib then stuck the phone out of the window just as two tanks fired, with a huge amount of noise. That was a famous story, which was reported in Israel, although there, I was mentioned as the person on the phone. Sharon then made a statement to the press, outraged at me, attacking me for my non-professionalism as someone who stuck a telephone out of a window believing that anyone could tell one explosion from another. He then said that if I had been one of his junior officers, he would have fired me.

There were numerous cease-fires. They were all violated -- all by the Israelis. The Palestinians were in such a weak position that they desperately wanted the cease-fires so that they could pump water up to their shelters, carry the wounded out, etc. They wanted some respite. The Israelis didn't want cease-fires because they wanted to keep the pressure on.

Q: What did you think the Israelis were trying to accomplish?

DILLON: They were trying to kill as many PLO as possible. They spent a lot of time trying to kill Arafat, the head of the PLO. They had agents in the city and whenever they had Arafat spotted, whether there was a cease-fire or not, they would zero in on him. Several times, they would initiate air-strikes on apartment buildings that he just left. Arafat moved from place to place throughout this time. In the meantime, we, the Americans, were the go-between trying to negotiate a cease-fire and an evacuation. Habib handled most of that. The interlocutor with the Palestinians, in most cases, was Wazan, who was the Prime Minister and a Sunni. Habib, assisted by Morris Draper, went back and forth to arrange the cease-fire and the evacuation. He did a magnificent job; he was good. He got fairly good agreement, but there were problems left. Where would the PLO go, which was a perfect illustration of the Palestinian problem because they have no place to go. The PLO agreed to evacuate if we could find some place for them to go. Of course, every Arab government said "No, we won't take them". There were 13-17,000 PLO fighters. The U.S. put massive pressure on the Tunisians, who finally agreed to take the

bulk of the fighters. Then others agreed to take a few. Syria took some; Jordan took some; Sudan took some. So a cease-fire was arranged.

Just before the end, I was in the library in my house, which had become one of two command centers -- the other was upstairs where we had all of our communications. I was there with Habib and Bashir Gemayel and Wazan, the Prime Minister. Bashir had just given his personal guarantee to Habib that if the Palestinians fighters left, no action would be taken against the remaining Palestinians. Phil, in turn, had gotten assurances from the Israelis that they would not enter Beirut, once the fighters had evacuated and that they would not take any reprisals against the remaining Palestinians. Wazan was the interlocutor with the PLO; we were still maintaining the fiction, except for my "security" contact, that we didn't deal directly with the PLO. So we were all listening in as Wazan on a speaker phone was trying to convince a frantic Arafat, who was really concerned, that the remaining civilians would not be harmed. Arafat finally agreed to evacuate.

Immediately thereafter, the Marines landed along with the other multi-national forces. The evacuation proceeded. There were dramatic scenes at the dock as the Palestinian men left their wives and children behind. People were crying; there was great sorrow. Guns were being shot in the air. In typical Arab fashion, the PLO declared victory because they all lived to fight another day. A fine job was done by all and the multi-national force withdrew.

One reason I and my staff were so bothered by the Sabra-Shatila massacre is because we were present when Arafat, clearly very concerned about the fate of the Palestinians who were going to be left behind, was being given assurances that the women, children and old people would not be harmed. And they were butchered.

Q: What were you doing as the PLO fighters pulled out?

DILLON: The Israelis were all around Beirut and had been creeping into the city. There was no American Embassy at the time in the city. The Embassy in effect was in my house. By this time, the house was behind Israeli lines. There were Israeli artillery positions almost besides the house as I mentioned earlier. The Lebanese forces -- the Maronite militia -- was in the area but had declined to join in the fighting. The Israelis were very disappointed by this policy because they thought they had a commitment from the Lebanese Forces. They apparently had some covert cooperation, but no overt action. Bashir Gemayel had just been elected President. The population of Beirut had been reduced to about 1/2 million, most of them Lebanese, but including a fairly good number of Palestinians.

Once the PLO fighters had been evacuated, the Israelis were to be in static positions, but there was no opposition to them except the multi-national forces which were thinly spread around Beirut in defensive positions. When Bashir Gemayel was elected President, even though some people considered him a "thug" and a fighter, many of us thought he was a good choice. He was 34 years old. He had certainly developed a great deal of sophistication over the previous year or

so. He had progressed from being a fighter to a fairly astute politician. As I have mentioned, he had covert relations with the Israelis, which was an anathema to other Lebanese. On the other hand, he had a vision of Lebanon which included Muslims, unlike many Maronites who did not see such a multi-religious community. He recognized the necessity of dealing with the Shiites and was elected with a good deal of support from that community. He didn't get any support, nor did he seek it, from the old line Sunni Muslim leadership which was the traditional leadership that the Maronites and American administrations had always dealt with. In Beirut, there was a vacuum; only local police were patrolling the streets. No armies or militias were in the city. A very few days after the evacuation of PLO forces, Bashir went to a Phalange Party meeting in Ashrafiyah, which was its stronghold. The Phalange was the right-wing party led by Bashir's father. In effect, what Bashir was doing was having a series of victory celebrations and was using them with some skill, not simply to gloat on the victory, but to prepare for what had to be done after the victory -- repair ties, reassure people who might not have been enthusiastic that he would be cooperative and so on. The Phalange by this time had come to understand that their name was an unfortunate one stemming from Franco's fascist regime in Spain. It understood that to Western reporters the word "Phalange" had a bad connotation. So they simply called themselves Kataeb, which simply meant "The organization" and that is how we in the Embassy referred to them. A Kataeb headquarters was in an apartment in Ashrafiyah which was in East Beirut. Since all the Muslims had been expelled from that area, there were only Christians in that neighborhood, mostly Maronites. The apartment house in addition to holding offices had also people living in it. One of the families that lived there was the Shartouni family who were Greek-Orthodox. As we later found out, some members of that family had been involved with groups that favored the union of Lebanon and Syria. As I mentioned before, people who subscribed to this policy were mainly Greek-Orthodox, although undoubtedly there were members of other faiths who believed in a "greater" Syria. Bashir's murder was caused by a large bomb being placed in the apartment above the Phalange headquarters which was occupied by the Shartouni family. When the bomb went off, a number of people were killed. A number of hours passed before it was established that Bashir had been among the dead. In the meantime, there were many rumors that he was still alive, although within a couple of hours we were certain that he had been assassinated.

The way we found out what happened was that Lebanese intelligence, particularly the Deuxieme Bureau, although ineffective in many ways, had a massive telephone monitoring operation. They literally taped everything; they had heaps and heaps of tapes. As far as I could tell, their analysis was very ineffective. They had lots and lots of raw information, but rarely did they syphon out intelligence which they could act upon in a timely fashion. But after the explosion, they went through their tapes and found a phone call from Shartouni to his sister. She lived in the apartment above the headquarters and was told to get her parents out of that apartment. Shartouni was subsequently arrested. He had planned the bombing on the supposition that his family would be gone and then discovered that they would be there. He panicked and was overheard. Shartouni was arrested; I don't know what happened to him, but I am sure he lived a short and unhappy life.

We did hear about his confession during which he never admitted that he had worked for anybody. There is no particular reason to think that the political party to which he belonged was behind his actions. He had been recruited by somebody, but it was not at all clear who that was. The assumption was that it was Syrian sponsored, but unless more information has been developed with which I am not acquainted, there seemed no clear indication who had backed Shartouni.

So now Bashir is dead. Some hours later, the Israelis announced that they were moving into Beirut to "restore order". There was no disorder. People were stunned; the Muslims were extremely apprehensive because they were afraid that the assassination would open them to massacres. The Israelis moved in, over our objections, and took over the entire city. Subsequently some Muslims professed to believe that Bashir had been killed by the Israelis because he had made it clear that he would not front for them. He had had a stormy meeting with Begin during which he had made it clear that he intended to be the President of all of Lebanon. As far as we know, the Israelis did not kill Bashir, but I would guess that they were looking for a pretext to occupy Beirut because they believed that "enemies" lived there and they wanted to get them. The Israelis are big on "enemies". They did over-run Beirut and killed some people in the process. I don't know who those people were or why they were killed.

On the edge of the city was a neighborhood called Sabra; in its center was a refugee camp called Shatila. The Israelis surrounded Sabra; cut it off completely. They mounted searchlights from buildings nearby to illuminate Sabra and Shatila. They allowed a group of Maronite fighters, all part of the militia, under the command of Eli Hobeika, who had been Bashir's personal bodyguard, and whom I had known well. He was a pathological killer. The group was fairly large. They entered Sabra and Shatila and began to kill people systematically. All the Palestinian fighters had been evacuated; there were almost no adult males. There were elderly men, women and children. By this time, I was in Washington. I was actually at the White House when the report of Bashir's assassination came in. I remember someone asking me who the next President would be; I immediately said it would be his older brother, Amin, which turned out to be correct. We all became very apprehensive about the Israeli entrance into the city.

Then word came that "something was going on in the camps. As soon as I heard that, I felt sick because I guessed what would be going on. Our political officer, Ryan Crocker, and a couple of newspaper men got into Sabra and Shatila, about 48 hours after the beginning of the massacre. They were absolutely sickened by the mounds of bodies they saw. At a minimum, there were several hundreds of people killed, but the murders were still going on. Then there was an international outcry and the Maronite operation came to a halt. The Maronites withdrew. The Palestinians estimated that 2,000 people were killed; later an Israeli inquiry established the number at 850, which I think was a whitewash. The area stunk with the smell of bodies.

The White House (Bill Clark, the NSC Advisor) was concerned how to handle this massacre with the Israelis without offending the Israelis. There was no way to do it, but that was Clark's

tone. He was a nice man who knew nothing about foreign affairs. He had come from California. Clark's skills were primarily those of a domestic political operator, particularly in respect to California. Shultz had just become Secretary replacing Haig. Shultz was very, very cautious about the Middle East. He had been stung at his confirmation hearings for having been perceived as pro-Arab, which was certainly not true. He had been connected with Bechtel, a large construction firm which did some work in the Middle East, but that certainly didn't make him pro-Arab. To say that George Shultz was intimidated is probably inaccurate and inconsistent with his general personality. On the other hand, he went to great, great pains to show that he was not pro-Arab because of these accusations. So he was just feeling his way into the Middle East. The White House wished that Lebanon had never happened because any actions the U.S. might take would have brought it into conflict with Israel.

The President of the United States was strongly pro-Israel. He had an emotional a pro-Israeli bias. He had a romanticized Hollywood view of brave, little Israel. On the other hand, he was a decent person and was clearly shocked by what was going on. I think he had also been shocked by the savagery of the Israeli attack on Beirut in which some thousands of people were killed by artillery fire and air strikes. Reagan was a nice man, but totally ignorant of foreign affairs.

So at the White House -- that means Clark and probably the President, they were very embarrassed by the Israeli entrance into Beirut and then even more embarrassed and shocked by the Sabra and Shatila events. They knew that the United States had given assurances that this would not happen when the PLO fighters were moved out.

I jumped on an airplane and returned to Beirut. Upon arrival I was briefed by my DCM (Bob Pugh) and the Political Officer (Ryan Crocker) about what had happened and was told that the Marines were returning. I was surprised. I won't say shocked because it had occurred to me that that was one of the things that Washington might do. It would also be misleading for me to say that I was adamantly opposed. I was very apprehensive about it. I didn't like the idea that there had been no discussion of this possibility with me while I was in Washington. I remember asking what the Marines' mission would be; I was told by my staff that they didn't know, but only that the Marines were returning.

From then on, we tried to make the best of it. We were always inventing missions, not very successfully, for the Marines. But the Marines landed again; other multi-national forces returned. It was announced that they were "restoring order". The Israelis reluctantly withdrew from the central part of the city. There were long, long negotiations to get the Israelis away from the airport. We had very much in mind that we wanted the Marines to guard the airport; we wanted to control it. I do not remember how long it took. We are talking about days and even weeks. The Israelis finally gave up the airport. The Marines took over and the airport became the center of American military activity. The French and Italians were down in the city; the Americans were kept out of the city even though they made an occasional patrol. A small British cavalry squadron from Cyprus eventually joined the forces.

Initially, the attitude of most Lebanese of all descriptions was that they were delighted to have these forces, particularly the Americans. They were delighted because it meant Israeli withdrawal. It also in a sense restored confidence. To say that there was euphoria overstates it, but there was definitely a feeling of optimism as the forces arrived. All of the troops, with the exception of the Legionnaires, behaved well. The Americans particularly were very well behaved. So were the Brits and the Italians. The Legionnaires, who were not really French except for their officers, tended to be tough, slightly older Europeans -- mostly Eastern Europe probably from the Balkans, some Germans. As we have noted in recent years, people from the Balkans tend not to be terribly friendly to the Muslim populations in general.

The Israelis left the airport. They stayed around the city. There were Israeli troops in the Druze areas. They immediately started to arm both the Druze and the Maronites despite the fact that these were traditional enemies. Why did they do that? Many people were very cynical about that policy and said that the Israelis were arming both sides because they knew that this would destabilize Lebanon. It was more complicated than that. I think there were factions within the Israeli government which traditionally dealt with one group or the other. Certainly within the Israeli Army and indeed in the Mossad as well there were a lot of Maronite connections. Shin Bet (the security forces) had Druze connections. There were also some Druze officers recruited into the Israeli Army. They had not recruited any other Arabs. The Israelis encouraged an assault by the Lebanese Forces -- the Maronite militia -- on the Shuf. They sent a column, with Israeli encouragement and supplies, deep into the Shuf to a place called Aley. The Druze militia, headed by Walid Jumblatt, had been quiescent all this time and had withdrawn during the Israeli invasion and not opposed. They had withdrawn into their mountain strongholds and had not fought the Israelis. The Israelis, in turn had stayed out of most of the Druze areas and for the most part had left them alone. But then the Lebanese forces invaded the Shuf with the objective of recovering what they considered traditional Maronite areas. Indeed they were partly right; for years there had been Maronite villages, but then they had been expelled. Maronite-Druze antagonism went back to at least the massacres of 1860. The Maronite forces went up to Aley and got their tails whipped. They were overextended. The Israelis helped and encouraged them, but didn't directly support them. They were deep in Druze territory and the Druze administered a sound beating to the Lebanese Forces who finally withdrew in disorder. The remaining Maronites in villages in the Shuf were expelled and some atrocities were inflicted by the Druze on the Maronites. So it was a very emotional period. I don't know how many Maronites had been left in Druze territory, but it must have been a few thousands. They fled, creating a new flood of refugees into Maronite areas with all attending stories of atrocities. Tensions between Maronites and Druze became very high. Americans, being Americans, were very bothered by all of this. We tend not to like it when people are butchering each other, when populations are being chopped up. There wasn't much we could do about it.

Our general plan, which was not really a bad one, was to try to strengthen the Lebanese Army. That Army was the only institution in Lebanon in which Druze, Shiites, Christians, etc.

cooperated. It was the only national institution surviving. It was in perilous condition, but it seemed to hold some hope. I talked to Washington about strengthening the Army. I strongly advocated that policy which many of us saw as making sense. We were eager to try it. We saw the possibility of using the Army as a unifying force. It was one of the places where all factions met and indeed in many cases worked together. The best brigades were essentially Maronite and Shiite. The Druze, even though good fighters, were never effective soldiers because of disaffection. The Sunni traditionally had not been fighters; you didn't find many of them in the military. The traditional soldiers were the Maronites and the Shiites.

So we began to assist the Army. It is sometimes misreported that the Marines were training the Lebanese Army, even though, as a public relations gesture, they did have a few joint activities. In fact, the Marines were not there to train the Army. There was an American group, headed by a Colonel Fintel, which came in. They were excellent. Many of them belonged to the Special Forces. Fintel was an outstanding soldier himself. These guys were bright enough and sophisticated enough to comprehend some of the complex political situation. The Marines were very good, but were essentially teenagers and did not grasp the difficult political situation. Their officers were excellent and the total group was very disciplined, which was absolutely essential. They were not well prepared to deal with the complexity of the Lebanese scene, while some of the Special Forces guys were pretty good at it. They had had some previous experience and therefore had a little better feel for the situation. It made sense to try to strengthen the Lebanese government in general and the Army in particular.

In the meantime, Amin Gemayel was elected President, succeeding his assassinated younger brother. I knew Amin fairly well. He had been the "politician" among the brothers. Pierre was the patriarch of the family. Amin was the older son and he was a politician-business man. Bashir was the younger son and was the guerrilla fighter and the conspirator. Superficially, it would have appeared that Amin would be better suited for Presidency. I don't think that was so, and my judgement was borne out later. Furthermore, there had been terrible jealousies between the brothers. Particularly, Amin was jealous because his younger brother had eclipsed him. I didn't realize at the time how serious that friction was. It was some months before I really understood that because of my personal relationship with Bashir I was viewed with suspicion by Amin. Amin did not trust people who had been close to his brother. That was just one of a thousand complications one had to deal with.

In the meantime, Phil Habib shuttled in and out, but his health was deteriorating. The U.S. started a negotiating process in order to effect an Israeli withdrawal from all of Lebanon. The negotiators were Israeli and Lebanese; the Americans were observers. The Syrians were on the sideline, but Habib made several trips to Damascus to keep Assad informed. At one point, Phil had secured a qualified Syrian promise to withdraw if the Israelis withdrew. This is an important point. I remember Phil coming back from Damascus and telling me about his meeting with Assad, who did say that the Syrians would withdraw from the Bekaa Valley. They had been driven out of southern Lebanon and had their air force knocked out of the skies by the Israelis.

Phil said that Assad had said that he would withdraw, but that he would not permit the Israelis to gain any political advantage from their Lebanese invasion. Both Phil and I understood that to mean that the Syrians would withdraw only if the Israelis left Lebanon entirely. The Israelis had no intention of making a clean withdrawal.

The negotiations went on for months. The Israelis dragged them out and dragged them out. Every time, if close to an agreement, the Israelis would find something to object to. The Lebanese did not try to drag them out. It became clearer and clearer that not only were the Israelis going to keep their "security belt" just inside Lebanon, but they wanted an agreement that would permit them to maintain an office in Junieh -- the equivalent of an Embassy in the Maronite area. They also wanted to retain certain positions outside their security zone. They wanted explicit agreement that they had a right to intervene in Lebanon in the event of any threat to their interests. Their demands went on and on. The negotiations started in October, 1982. In the Fall of that year, a quick, clean agreement could have gotten both Israeli and Syrian troops out of Lebanon, which was very much what we wanted. By early 1983, that window of opportunity was closed. The Syrians had been rearmed by the Soviets. It was abundantly clear that the Israelis had no intention of a clean withdrawal. The situation was deteriorating in many ways. Phil Habib and then Morris Draper, after Phil just became too ill, tried to encourage the negotiations.

My job was to try to assist the Lebanese in rebuilding a government and an Army. We did have a modest aid program with which we tried to strengthen the central government. Initially, my relationship with President Amin Gemayel seemed quite friendly, but I soon realized that he didn't trust me because I had been close to his brother. I also came to understand that he was himself a very weak person. He was corrupt -- not that that was particularly important. He was also a notorious womanizer; so he had a lot of distractions in his life. Yet to be fair to him, I think he sincerely wanted most of the time to be a good President but didn't know how to do it. It was a job that would have defeated a much stronger man than he was.

The Israelis, particularly in the south, came under increasing pressure. The Palestinians had left the south. The population there was mainly Shiites, although there were Maronite and Greek Orthodox villages. The town of Saida was a Sunni city and Tyre (called Sur by the Arabs) was primarily Shiite. At first, the Israelis were not under any particular pressure from the local population, but that ended fairly quickly. The Israelis behaved foolishly of course. They were poorly disciplined. The locals became disgusted with them. Shiite resistance started, giving rise to a general local demand for an Israeli withdrawal. I was in the south a couple of times when the road was closed because Israeli trucks had been ambushed. There were a lot of banana plantations down there which made excellent cover for guerrilla activities. The roads were narrow and wound through thickly covered territory. The Israelis would come under fire; the Israelis adopted a policy of "reconnaissance by fire". That meant that they would travel these roads with heavy 50-caliber machine guns mounted on vehicles spraying the road sides. That was supposed to prevent ambushes. Naturally that killed civilians.

I have already mentioned the Israeli encouragement of the Lebanese Forces into the Shuf, which failed miserably. By this time, there were new groups of Maronite refugees. Lebanese groups in the United States mounted a campaign to do something for these refugees. That was just one more complication of being in Lebanon. Stories circulated in the United States which greatly exaggerated the atrocities. There had been some and the refugees had not been treated well. There were also refugees in Damur who were surrounded and cut off. Bad situations were portrayed in the U.S. as truly horrible -- something like we are getting today out of Bosnia in regard to the Muslims. These are terrible issues to deal with publicly because it is dangerous and indeed defeating to a policy-maker to get trapped in the position of being an apologist for atrocities or for bad things that are going on. And yet you know that they are exaggerated. So you are constantly in the position of agreeing that people are being murdered, but "there are not as many as is believed." That is an untenable position and no politician can be in that position. On the other hand, it was clear that the people who kept insisting on the misleading and exaggerated stories concerning the conditions of the refugees, the murders and the atrocities wanted American intervention. It was never practical to think of an American intervention.

Amin Gemayel one day wanted American intervention, the next day he wanted something else, but he persisted in playing his cards as if an American intervention in Lebanon was practical. He later confided to friends, as I found out, that the "American Ambassador had opposed the idea". He came to believe that somehow I was anti- Lebanese and was opposed to those "good" Americans who wanted to intervene in Lebanon, presumably to restore a Maronite supremacy. That became a bone of contention between us. My instructions from Washington were so nebulous that in some sense I could have done anything I wanted. I rarely got any instructions, although I reported and reported. Never any response! I would periodically call Veliotos on the secure phone to find out what was going on, but it was impossible to get any instructions out of the Washington bureaucracy because no one can do anything in Washington; the "checks and balances" really work. A cleared message containing clear instruction to an Ambassador on a difficult, complicated subject is difficult to achieve.

There were individuals who came to Beirut, including senior CIA people. We also had some self-appointed right wing Maronite American-Lebanese, who encouraged Amin Gemayel and the people around him to believe that they had American support and that if they played their cards right, the U.S. would restore Maronite supremacy in Lebanon. This was very mischievous because there was no realistic possibility of anything like that happening. All it did was discourage Amin from making the accommodations that he had to make.

He also had made a cardinal mistake in dealing with the Muslims. I mentioned earlier that Bashir understood that the Shiites had to be dealt with. They were the largest group and although they had traditionally been at the bottom of society, a new Lebanon meant that they had to be taken seriously. Bashir was prepared to deal with them. He had not, when elected, given anything to the traditional Sunni leadership. Amin reversed that. He chose to ignore the Shiites; he set up relations with the Sunni leadership. They are nice people, the kind that we Americans prefer to

deal with. They were well educated, a lot went to A.U.B. They were easy to deal with, so that your tendency was to have relations with these people from these big, very nice Sunni families. The only problem was that the Sunnis had cut themselves off from other Muslims; they had not developed their own militia and had in fact relied on the Palestinians. That had been very convenient since they didn't want their own boys to do any fighting -- there may have been a few fighters among them, but basically they had been protected by the PLO. The Shiites, on the other hand had developed their own militia; the Maronites had a strong tradition of fighters and armed forces going way back. The Druze were traditional mountain fighters.

So Amin became chummy with the Sunnis, who couldn't bring much to the table. He ignored the Shiites -- not just the Hezbollah, even though this was the era of the rise of that group -- extremist, fanatic religious, fundamentalist, with ties to Iran (there were a few Iranian fighters in the Bekaa Valley training Hezbollah). There was a rival group called Amal headed by Nabih Berri, a man I used to see all the time. They were much less extreme than Hezbollah -- basically secular and indeed reasonable. Amin didn't want to deal with Nabih or any of the people around him. He didn't like them. He hated the Druze; hated Walid Jumblatt and didn't want to deal with him. So he dealt with Saab Salam, who had been in Lebanese politics forever, and his son, who was not a bad guy. But they couldn't deliver anything. So Hezbollah was getting more and more active, both in the Bekaa and in the south, putting more pressure on the Israelis. In Israel, the public view began to develop that the government had blundered. The invasion of Lebanon, which initially had been popular, was being increasingly criticized as Israeli casualties mounted. There was a lot of criticism of Sharon whose reputation was further tarnished by his obvious complicity of the massacres in Sabra and Shatila. That brought the Israelis to make some motions toward withdrawal.

That is the way foreign affairs goes. There are the Americans having for a year argued against the Israeli invasion and then for Israeli withdrawal. Then all of a sudden as the situation deteriorated we are trying desperately to negotiate not simply an agreement between the Israelis and the Lebanese, but also between the Maronites and the Druze, while at the same time rearming the Lebanese army. The Israelis then announced their intention to withdraw forcing us to ask them not to. We needed some time. That made the Israelis happy because it permitted them to say that they were ready to withdraw, but the Americans had requested them not to. In the meantime, relations on the ground between Americans and Israelis was going right down the tubes. There were some nasty incidents, almost resulting in fire fights between our Marines and Israeli forces.

Q: That used to be the standard response. We hope that will change.

DILLON: The negotiations, in my view, were going badly. I need to say a word about my friend Morris Draper at this stage. Morris Draper was a very good American diplomat and old friend of mine. He had a very inventive mind. Morris is one of these diplomats who, when two sides have absolute impasse, can always rig something up to get around it. It was the Israelis that were

throwing up the road-blocks, not the Lebanese. Every time the Israelis would throw up a road block, Morris would devise one more ingenious way around it. In fact, that was wrong. In fact, he should not have done it. All we did was play the Israeli game because every time Morris would get them out of an impasse, the Israelis would create another one. My own personal relationship with Morris became strained during this period, although I think it was restored later. I was fed up with the process. I honestly think I was right, even eleven years later, as I look back on that period. It was a mistake to have played the Israeli game.

Then one of those damn personal things happened that can effect the course of history. George Shultz had kept out of all of this, but he was flying to Southeast Asia. He had been stung by an article written by Karen House in the *Wall Street Journal* which in effect questioned his manhood because he was studiously avoiding the Middle East. So he suddenly decided to stop in the Middle East. Just before his arrival, the American Embassy was destroyed on April 18, 1983. A few days later, all American Ambassadors in the area, including me, were invited to Cairo to meet with the Secretary. Habib was there although not in very good health. I was treated very nicely as the survivor of the bombing of the Embassy. I was given a gift by the Secretary. People were very nice to me. I naturally appreciated that kind of treatment. I would have been happier if they had been willing to listen to me, but that was too much to hope for. The subject for discussion was the negotiations between the Israelis and the Lebanese and whether the Secretary should get involved. He felt under political pressure. He also felt that his honor had been challenged by the article. He was therefore strongly tempted to become involved. The advice he got from all his Ambassadors, except Sam Lewis, was negative. Sam Lewis, on the other hand, explained why from the Israeli point of view it was important that he become involved. He spoke of the realities of Israeli politics. Phil Habib did not say anything. The rest of us were forced to expose ourselves in front of all the others. We did not get much response from the Secretary. Phil was able to speak to the Secretary in private. I have never known for sure what Phil told him, but he later told me that he had advised the Secretary not to get involved in the negotiations. As much as I loved Phil and trusted him, I am not sure that was really the advice he gave. I wish I could be sure.

The Secretary chose to get involved in the negotiations. He spent some days in Lebanon. While he was there, the rockets and shells fell all over the place; a lot fell around my house. It was not possible to know who was firing. Some was Druze artillery; there may have been some Syrian artillery although I don't think so. Clearly, there was a lot of Maronite artillery; some of the rockets came from Shiite launchers. The Israelis continued to be under pressure from Hezbollah. Shultz negotiated under these circumstances. He was a good negotiator; he had made his reputation as a labor negotiator; so he knew something about the negotiating process. The Israelis immediately understood that they had an opportunity to coopt the American Secretary of State. They made some minor concessions. The Lebanese gave in and an agreement, which immediately became a dead letter, was signed in May 1983. The Syrians of course announced that they would not cooperate since they had not been part of the negotiations. George Shultz for

the rest of his time as Secretary of State, chose to believe that he had been betrayed by the Syrians. The Syrian government was a lousy government in a lot of ways, but as I mentioned earlier, Habib told me that he had conversations with Assad precisely on this point. I don't think there were any reasons to believe that the Syrians had pledged to withdraw from the Bekaa Valley if an Israeli-Lebanon agreement was reached unless it meant a clean Israeli withdrawal, which was not what the agreement called for. Indeed, it was not even a full withdrawal. But Shultz chose to believe that he had been betrayed. I don't think that Habib felt that the Secretary had been betrayed.

The Syrians then stupidly announced that they would no longer deal with Phil Habib because "he had lied to them." By this time, it was May 1983. The Israelis were talking about withdrawal. They clearly had developed massive "stay behind" operations, but they were not happy about staying in Lebanon. They were under severe pressure at home where the invasion had become very unpopular. The Americans were desperately trying to piece together not only a Lebanese coalition to govern, but also a Maronite-Druze agreement that was essential to end the fighting between them before the Israeli withdrawal. There were moments of optimism which would come usually when the Lebanese Army looked a little better. The old Lebanese commander, General Khoury had left; he was replaced by General Tannous, a Maronite, whom many of us thought was a better soldier than his predecessor.

By June, 1983, everything was beginning to come apart. The Lebanese Army, particularly those parts that were Maronite, were going to enter the Shuf, which struck me as a dangerous enterprise. The Maronite militia, the Lebanese Forces, had already taken a beating up there. They were going to take over certain positions which they believed would protect Beirut. But just before taking that action, they made a foray into West Beirut from East Beirut where they had been stationed. They took over parts of West Beirut, cleaning out some of the Shiite fighters that had infiltrated into West Beirut. Initially, this action seemed successful, even though the American military advisors who were closely cooperating with the Lebanese Army were apprehensive about this incursion. People were commenting how well the Lebanese Army had done and speculating that their fears may have been misplaced. The incursion did delay the operation into the Shuf by about ten days.

Q: And after that?

Dillon: The daily shelling and rocketing had again become a serious problem. I am surprised that no Americans were killed. We were holed up in the basement of the British Embassy. Sometimes the British Embassy was bracketed by artillery fire, although it never took any direct hits. My house was never hit directly either, but I was concerned. My wife had returned to Beirut and was living in the house which had shells land very near it. We had a fire in the back yard, a piece of the roof was taken off by a rocket. We didn't have any shelter in the house, so Sue and I slept frequently in the pantry so that we would have greater protection. We slept in flak jackets. It was very noisy all night with the all the hardware falling around us. Phil was replaced by Bud

McFarlane, the Deputy NSC Advisor who later became well known because of his part in the Iran-Contra scandal. Bud's presence made it quite clear that everything had changed. He and his people were not about to cooperate with people in the Embassy. Indeed, they went to some pains to conceal what they were doing from us. That situation became quite difficult for me. I had of course invited McFarlane and his people to stay at the residence; I later came to regret that. They moved in and I was stuck with them for several months. That became increasingly difficult. In the meantime, I had told the Secretary that I wanted to leave. I had been reluctant to take that step because I did not want to seem cowardly in leaving my staff, but I realized that I would not be able to make any constructive difference. I felt sure that I would be replaced by someone who would take care of my staff. I didn't think that my relationship with Amin Gemayel would improve. I had been in Lebanon a little over two years and so I asked to be relieved. That offer was accepted immediately, but it took several months before a replacement was named. So I stayed on until October, 1983.

Q: Who was McFarlane negotiating with and against whom did he intend to intervene?

DILLON: He had decided that his mission was to support Amin Gemayel. The remaining opponents of Gemayel, with the PLO gone, were the Druze. The first big clash between McFarlane and me came when he went to see Amin and didn't take me along. Amin told him that the Americans had made the "colossal political mistake" of taking Walid Jumblatt -- the hereditary chief of the Druze -- seriously and that had build up Jumblatt artificially. He said that if the Americans broke relations with Jumblatt, then he, Amin, would be successful in establishing himself and his government in Druze areas. It was a wildly unrealistic scenario. It was nonsense. To Amin's delight, McFarlane accepted this theory and came back and announced to the White House, where Bill Clark was still the NSC Advisor, that he had promised the President of Lebanon that the American Ambassador's contacts with the Druze would be cut off. I immediately protested. There was a series of telegrams back and forth. Washington did what Washington always does: nothing! It argued and sat there. Lines were drawn. The State Department and the NSC went at each other hammer and tongs; the CIA stood by and watched the proceedings. McFarlane was clearly so wrong that eventually about six weeks later, without a decision ever being made, McFarlane, without admitting that he had been wrong, withdrew his objections and in fact, personally started dealing with the Druze. He met with Jumblatt in Geneva. So the whole program collapsed, but it illustrated the problems of dealing with people who don't understand the situation on the ground.

I don't want to cover the day-to-day sequence of events. It would just take too long. Eventually, the Israelis did withdraw, at the worst time, of course. Immediately, fighting broke out on a large scale between the Druze and the Maronite parts of the Lebanese Army. The rest of the Lebanese Army at this point completely disintegrated. The Druze deserted as did most of the Muslims. There were a few Shiites still fighting, but the main remaining Lebanese Army troops were Maronite. They were placed in the hills above my house -- about five miles in the Shuf -- at a place called Souk el Garb, which was a very important cross-road.

In September, the real crunch came. The Israelis had withdrawn. Fighting broke out at Souk el Garb. The Lebanese Army brigade up there commanded by Brigadier General Michel Aoun -- a good, tough little son of a bitch. He was under heavy pressure from the Druze. There was a question of whether there would be a break-out at Souk el Garb. There was a considerable amount of disagreement among the Americans about what would happen. It is very difficult to prove the negative. The people at the Embassy were not convinced that a break-out was imminent; they were also not convinced that any Americans would be in danger even if the break-out occurred. Bud McFarlane was convinced that the Lebanese government would be over-thrown and that the Americans were in danger if there were a break-out. At that point he got into a spat -- about which I didn't find out until later -- with Colonel Tim Geraghty who commanded the Marines at the airfield. McFarlane wanted naval gun-fire to support the Lebanese Army. Geraghty felt very exposed and thought that his Marines would pay the price of retribution for such naval shelling. It was not until several months later that I learned of this dispute. One day, I returned to my house; McFarlane was in the radio shack that we had erected in the back yard. He had a message in his hand which he showed me. It was a message requesting that gun fire from the ships off shore be authorized because of the imminent danger of a break-out at Souk el Garb. The justification was that the break out would endanger the Americans in Lebanon, because if the Druze broke out, they would over-run my house and we would all be butchered. I didn't think that would happen because we had good relations with the Druze and that therefore we would not be direct targets, although there is always the possibility of some stray ammunition. So I was surprised and very concerned. I doubted that in fact the situation was as dangerous as McFarlane described, but I also considered the consequences if my assumptions were wrong. I didn't know everything. I wanted some time to consult my staff, but McFarlane said there was no time for that. In later years, I wished of course that I had stopped the message, but I didn't. I thought that Bud was probably wrong, but I could not be certain. So the message was sent. It was not immediately acted upon in Washington. I wished I had known at that point that Colonel Geraghty was protesting. The fact was that there was no single American leader in Lebanon. What we had in Lebanon was a bunch of disparate American elements, with no one designated to be in charge. The American Ambassador should have been in charge of both civilian and military components. But McFarlane was a Presidential Envoy not under me, and deployed troops, e.g. the Marines. So we had a lot of bickering and in my view, a shameful situation. I was very bothered by it all. I had great difficulty in finding out what McFarlane and his team were doing. I suddenly became aware that they were lying to me. I remember one of the guys, after talking to me, walking away and saying: "I hate to lie to an American Ambassador" and everybody laughed. They didn't realize that I could overhear the conversation.

Then two things happened. The Lebanese brigade held its ground even though under very vicious assaults. Bud's message said that the Maronites were being attacked by Syrians and PLO, none of which was true. There were some Druze officers from the Syrian Army that had been seconded to the Druze forces. There were no PLO forces involved. But the naval gun fire did

start , first from destroyers and later from the battleship *New Jersey*. It fired its 16 inch guns, which was the first time in a long time that the Navy had found a role for these huge ships and guns. Sixteen inch shells are huge and very indiscriminate. We ended up killing Druze villagers; it didn't effect the outcome of the fighting in any way. We also ran some air strikes which were similarly ineffective. One American plane was shot down and its pilot was captured.

JOHN M. REID

Public Affairs Officer, USIS

Beirut (1981-1983)

Mr. Reid, a Virginian, was educated at Virginia Tech, Columbia and Harvard Universities. A specialist in East Asian and Pacific Affairs, he served in Saigon, Vientiane, Bangkok and Seoul, primarily as Public Affairs Officer. In his Washington assignments, Mr. Reid also dealt with affairs of that region. He was also assigned as Public Affairs Officer at Beirut during the Lebanon Civil War, and was a casualty in the bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut. Mr. Reid was interviewed by Charles R. Beecham in 2002.

Q: It is my impression that your tour as PAO Beirut could hardly have been more eventful. It was hazardous in the extreme, certainly, and challenging in other ways, I am sure. This seems a good time and place to put on the record a more or less detailed account of your experiences there.

REID: I think I had just about convinced myself I had established a pattern for my two years in Lebanon, when the Israelis invaded in June, 1982, eventually coming as far north as West Beirut, where the embassy was. As soon as the invasion began, however, before the Israelis reached West Beirut, the embassy evacuated dependents and so-called non-essential staff. Dillon asked that I stay, but Beth and her husband left. At that point, I think both Bob Dillon and I believed I would be needed to help deal with foreign journalists, but there were surprises ahead.

Within a few days after the invasion began, Ambassador Dillon called me in and told me there were reports that Americans—a lot of them—were in Jounieh, in the Christian area north of Beirut, trying to get out of Lebanon. With the Israeli blockade of the Lebanese coast, they were trapped. He asked me to go to East Beirut, find out what I could about the situation and report back. At this point there was much less international media focus on the embassy than we had expected, and neither of us thought I would be dealing with the problem of stranded Americans for more than a few days. I remember a hair-raising ride across town, with RSO (Regional Security Officer) armored vehicles in front and behind, me driving the PAO car at breakneck

speed along the Corniche Mazraa, while Palestinian anti-aircraft guns blazed away from traffic islands in the middle of the road.

I think I should say something about the Israelis. I was not impressed, and I think most of us weren't. To my eye, and I think to the Lebanese, they appeared unkempt and undisciplined, particularly alongside people like the U.S. Marines. Also, they appeared arrogant in dealing with the Lebanese—and they were deliberately provocative, as when they erected Israeli flags at intervals along the road leading to the Lebanese presidential palace. Once our Marines were on the ground, I know of one serious confrontation which attracted media attention and which, I was told, almost led to some shooting. Under cover of darkness, Israeli troops moved some markers which were supposed to distinguish an area they controlled from one controlled by the Marines. The situation was only resolved the next day when the markers were repositioned by a group comprising the Marine commander, the Israeli commander and the American DCM. I haven't mentioned the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, when the Israeli troops surrounding the camps allowed Phalangist militia troops in to do the killing. The commander of the Israeli troops was Ariel Sharon, now the Israeli prime minister.

Shortly after the embassy moved back to West Beirut, the Palestinians left, and our Marines, having completed their mission, returned to their ships. Media activity appeared to subside a bit, but, if I thought things might now be normal, I was mistaken. With the assassination of President-elect Bashir Gemayel, we moved back to East Beirut again for a few days. Shortly after that and the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, our Marines returned. It is interesting; I don't know why, but I was part of the embassy group that met the military advance party and surveyed the building and area that the Lebanese offered for the Marine base. It was an unused civil aviation building near the airport—the building that was bombed in October, 1983, when 241 Marines died.

Habib left, and, although the Israelis had withdrawn from Beirut, they still occupied Lebanese territory south of Beirut. Morris Draper, who had been Habib's deputy, assumed responsibility for dealing with this problem, and, for a time, he negotiated with the Israelis and the Lebanese at a hotel right on the edge of Israeli-occupied territory, south of Beirut. Morris Draper asked that I accompany the U.S. delegation to act as spokesman.

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RICHARD N. VIETS

Ambassador

Jordan (1981-1984)

Ambassador Richard N. Viets was born in 1930 in Vermont. He served in the U.S. Army and attended Georgetown University and Harvard University. He joined USIA in 1955 and served in Afghanistan, Tunisia and after a break reentered the Foreign Service in 1962 serving in Japan, India, Romania, Israel and was ambassador to Tanzania and Jordan. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy 1990-1992.

Q: Had our Embassy in Tel Aviv, in your analyses and everybody else's who were looking at this thing, felt, "Oh my God, here is a gun that is loaded and cocked and is going to go off?"

VIETS: I think there was no great secret that Sharon had been promoting the idea, the concept, for quite some time. That sooner or later, preferably sooner from his point of view, the Israelis had to go into Lebanon and once and for all take care of the problem of the PLO operating inside Lebanon. And along the way to remind the Syrians that the Israelis remained the boss of that part of the world. I don't recall that there were any major intelligence indicators that the invasion was going to take place up until immediately after the assassination attempt, and then you began to see reports. The Israel military is as good or better than anybody else at having contingency plans filed away in the safes of their headquarters, and I am sure the Sharon plan in various incarnations had been developed over the years and was ready and waiting. Sharon decided and persuaded the Prime Minister and the cabinet that this was the excuse (the abortive assassination) they needed.

In fact, you may recall the principal argument for launching it was that Israel had to neutralize the border; that the PLO would continue to threaten Israeli border settlements with rocket attacks and the odd infiltration effort by guerrillas. Over the years this had resulted in the deaths of innocent people and children.

In fact, Phil Habib had negotiated a year earlier, in Lebanon, a cease-fire along that border and my recollection is that it had held to the letter. So Sharon's "excuse" for launching the invasion because it was necessary to purge that border of all these dangerous people who were throwing bombs over the wire fences is pure baloney. The record simply doesn't sustain it.

And secondly, as we now know, Sharon sold the Prime Minister and the cabinet on the fact that this would be a very limited operation. He insisted he had no intention of coming in contact with the Syrians and certainly had no intention of going all the way to Beirut. In fact, he did. They did precisely that.

I think for those of us who were out there it was a very, very bad moment of our lives. God knows it was much worse for the people in Lebanon who were the victims.

Q: Could you talk about how you felt when you got this news?

VIETS: The first recollection that I have is a midnight phone call from the Queen of Jordan, daughter of Najeeb Halaby, a distinguished American citizen. She just stripped my skin off..."How can I serve a government which is doing anything to stop this carnage and this terrible war?" I remember giving it right back to her. Firstly, I thought she had no right personally to castigate me in this form. And secondly, she was speaking from total ignorance about what I was doing in trying to stop it.

The King called me the next morning and asked that I come up to see him. He closed the door and started laughing. He said he had been listening in on an extension phone and had heard the whole conversation. I guess I should not go into what he said about it. But it was not an easy time. There were demonstrations against our Embassy and threats against our people.

Q: It was sort of salami tactics in that...I have just finished a long series of interviews with Bob Dillon where he notes that Sharon and the Israelis were saying they were going up to such and such a line and stop and actually we saw them 20 miles beyond that line. This went on and on. Did this unfold gradually or did you immediately realize they were going the whole way?

VIETS: My recollection is that it was happening so fast that one was stunned by the blatancy of the whole thing. It was as if there were no constraints, no restrictions whatsoever, placed on that army. I can still recall those terrible moments when the Israeli artillery units sat up on the hills overlooking Beirut and 24 hours a day just lobbed shells and rockets into that city of totally unprotected people.

I think from a personal perspective it was even worse for me because I realized what we were seeing at that point was in fact the first time that the most modern technology of war, those horrible weapons of war that were not available to the third world, were being used against defenseless populations. I was just horrified by what I saw on television. It seemed to me that as these terrible weapons became available to more and more armies and irresponsible governments the world would be witness to carnage and devastation of heretofore unknown dimension.

This is a slight aside, but at this time I got into terrible difficulties on Capitol Hill. I came home shortly after the end of the war. I was going back and forth between Amman and Washington with considerable frequency in those days, and whenever I did I always made a point, as many ambassadors do, of spending a certain amount of time on Capitol Hill going around seeing key senators and representatives and staffers, to brief them on what was going on, offer my own views, etc.

One of the people who I often went to see was Senator Rudy Boschwitz, now defeated Senator from Minnesota, a Jewish member of the Senate who had a very strong interest in the Middle East. While he was very pro-Israeli, he also understood there certain aspects of our interests in the Middle East that even transcended our/his affections of the state of Israel. I remember sitting

in his office, this was right at the end of the war, and saying to him that I thought it was going to be a long, long time before those of us who had been witness to all of this could forget the inhumanity of the Israeli army's attack on the city of Beirut itself, which had absolutely no military significance whatsoever. I remember Rudy Boschwitz rising out of his seat and putting his finger under my nose saying, "You get out of this office. And you never cross the threshold of this office again. I will never tolerate hearing any American Ambassador or any representative of the United States government ever using the word "inhumane" in connection with the state of Israel. Get out of here."

Well, I sat there and gave him back exactly what he had given me with a little chapter and verse on the number of innocent casualties, men, women, children, grandparents, etc., who had been killed and maimed, and then got up and left. I have not seen him again to this day, but I know from others on the Hill that he went around really doing a job on me concerning my perceived lack of loyalty to Israel.

Q: During this time was there any thought of the Jordanians jumping in or anything like that?

VIETS: No. The last time the Jordanians jumped in (1967) was also the final time. This war was an insane military operation and thank God everybody saw it for what it was and did what they could to contain it.

Q: How about the Syrians?

VIETS: There was always the potential of this exploding into a regional war and the potential had various scenarios inherent to it. You could have had an uprising in Israel in the occupied territories in which large numbers of settlers, for example, might have been killed and maimed. You could have had the loss of American life and damage to American interests and installations in countries on the periphery. We certainly were concerned about such an event in Jordan, and so was the Jordanian government. I remember we had very heavy security around our Embassy and staff housing units, provided by the Jordanian government. That was true throughout the area.

Q: The two camps of Palestinians, Shatila and Sabra, men and women were left and with the collusion of the Israelis, Christian militia were allowed to go in there and it turned into a massacre. How did that play in Jordan and what was our Embassy's reaction in Israel to this?

VIETS: The press reports led to a feeling of abhorrence that this could happen and led to all kinds of contrasts with Nazi atrocities during World War II, etc. I'm being a little hesitant as I am responding to your question because my recollection is that all we really had in the first days after this were press reports. We really didn't have any inside information on exactly what had happened. We knew something terrible had happened and while there might not have been any doubt in the minds of people "in the streets" in the Arab world that this was a direct result of Israeli collusion with Christian elements in Beirut, I think most of us were a little reluctant to jump to that conclusion without further evidence to support the fact. We simply didn't have it at that point.

My own view is that the total story of what went wrong has not yet been made public to this day. I was told shortly thereafter that we had intercepted some communications between Israeli units and the Phalange, which we deep-sixed because we felt it would make the Israelis even more culpable than the Israelis' own investigation suggested. But I have never heard the tapes and have never seen them.

Q: Back to the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. When would this be?

VIETS: The date would be summer of 1983.

Q: And it was essentially over in the fall of 1983?

VIETS: Yes, I think so. I should have brushed up on the chronology of this.

Q: Well, the exact chronology is not all that important. It had happened, the Israelis were withdrawing, the Palestinians were getting out...

VIETS: Well, you remember they didn't get out for a long time and this was part of the problem. As time went on the Israelis began to suffer increasing casualties from truck bombs, car bombs, assassinations, etc. and life became intolerable for the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) in Lebanon. They finally decided they had had enough and got out. Of course it was about that time George Shultz got on his horse and decided that he would negotiate the famous Israeli-Lebanese peace treaty.

I have one major recollection of that period. The Secretary flew out to Cairo immediately prior to launching his shuttle diplomacy between Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Beirut to negotiate the treaty. Immediately prior to that he went to Cairo where he summoned seven or eight of his ambassadors in the region, and I was one of them. The reason for summons was he wanted our collective judgment on what was needed in the treaty--and what was possible to attain. With the exception of Sam Lewis, who was still our ambassador in Israel, the rest of us to a greater or lesser extent told the Secretary--either very bluntly or very diplomatically--that he was embarking on a useless and dangerous venture. We all already knew essentially the dimensions of what he wanted in the treaty. His primary goal was to normalize relationships between Lebanon and Israel. Most of us believed it would be a big, big mistake to abandon what had been US policy for many, many years, of seeking a comprehensive agreement. To negotiate treaties piecemeal with Israel would surely guarantee an imbalance in the final result--or so we thought. As we went around the table with these warnings, as I say, one ambassador in particular, our ambassador to Syria, spoke to the Secretary about as bluntly as anyone I have ever heard.

ARTHUR S. BERGER

Embassy Spokesman

Tel Aviv (1982-1986)

Mr. Berger was born and raised in Rhode Island and educated at Yeshiva and Howard Universities. He joined the Foreign Service (USIA) in 1970. Serving primarily in Cultural and Public Affairs, Mr. Berger served abroad in Kampala, Addis Ababa, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Tel Aviv and the Hague, where he was Public Affairs Officer. In his Washington assignments Mr. Berger served at USIA Headquarters as Director of Publications and at the Department of State as Spokesman for the Near East South Asia Bureau. Following retirement Mr. Berger worked with the American Jewish Committee before becoming Director of Communications of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Mr. Berger was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2003.

Q: You must have been hit square in the face by that 2x4, Shatila and Sabra and the questionable Israeli questionable collusion in the massacre of Palestinians?

BERGER: Oh yeah. That was an awful night. I can remember exactly where I was, in fact. I was at the DCM's house for a dinner. This was in September of 1982. I had arrived in mid-June. In the middle of this dinner the DCM - who was charge' because Sam Lewis was out of the country on vacation - took this phone call and I could see right away on his face that there was some crisis. And then he took several of us from the embassy staff - a political officer, myself and a few others - and we sat down in a private room and he briefed us what had happened. And from then it was almost non-stop.

There was some misinformation at first as to what was happening. And once we found out - which was within a couple of hours - they immediately demarched the Israeli government. I think he went to Begin, the foreign minister, and said: "You've got a responsibility. You've got to stop what is going on there." I will give the Israelis credit for one thing. Surely, they should not have allowed the Lebanese Christian militia to go into Sabra and Shatila because they could know what was going to happen. The hatreds were so awful. This was right after Amin Gamal was killed in the bombing. There was no question that the tempers, the seeking of revenge, were going to be.

The Israelis, who were working with the Christian militia, had to know that any Christian militia men who were going into Sabra and Shatila were going to go after them and would kill as many people as possible. They should have stopped them. And the Israeli commission of inquiry that took place was very clear about that. They said: "The Israelis certainly didn't take the guns to these people, but Sharon, as minister of defense, had this personal responsibility of not stopping

something like this from happening.” And they forced him to resign. And he was out of government for a long time because of that. I thought the commission of inquire one of the high points of Israeli democracy.

[Editor’s Note: A book on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon which was researched in part from ADST interviews is Cursed in the Peacemaker: The American Diplomat versus the Israeli General, Beirut 1982 by John Boykin, Applegate Press 2002.]

Q: Israel was sort of the third hanger-on.

BERGER: It was. I still haven’t read enough about some of the discussions between the British and the French in ‘56. I know they wanted to get to Suez Canal back. They wanted to denationalize. But I think the Israelis saw this as an opportunity to get back at Egypt. Because in the period ‘53 to ‘56 there were a lot of cross-border incursions from Gaza and from Sinai into Israeli settlements nearby.

But Lebanon was different. Lebanon changed the perception, as I said, for a lot of Israelis, but especially I think in the West, the United States and Europe. Here was a country that really did not have to go to war. That took upon itself to be the shaper of the future of the Middle East. Or at least they thought they were going to be the re-shaper of the Middle East. Start a new relationship, a peace treaty, with a new government in Lebanon. And I think that Sharon and a few others in the Israeli government thought that they were really going to change the Arab perception of Israel. That they were really going to have from that a series of peace treaties with all of the Arab countries.

Well, of course, we know that didn’t happen and the whole thing backfired badly on the Israelis. And part of it was that the United States got so ticked off at the Israelis not only being in Lebanon up to Beirut, but also bombing the city. I remember some of the messages that went from the United States, from the president and the secretary of state to the prime minister and foreign minister of Israel, they were some tough messages. Let me tell you, the language in there was extraordinarily severe. There was that special bilateral relationship and sure there was a lot of tension over there, but once the bombing of Beirut started, and then Sabra and Shatila, the language got harsh. And in fact U.S.-Israeli relations went to a low point that really caused an incredible strain. I think that it was probably – except for the ‘56 war when Eisenhower forced the Israelis and the British and the French to back out of Egypt – I don’t think there was any time in the history of U.S.-Israeli relations where the language was so tough and the pressure was so severe. Extraordinary pressure and threat.

I remember reading this year the diary of James Grover McDonald, who was the first U.S. ambassador to Israel [Editor’s Note: McDonald served from March 1949 to December 1950]. His family presented them to the museum. His twelve-thousand pages of his typed personal diaries of his years in service to the United States. And there were some things in there, some of the language in some of the demarches that he had during the Israeli war of independence, where

the language was just like that. But from that time until '56 and then to the bombing of Beirut, I don't think I've ever seen anything like that.

First Intifada

MORRIS DRAPER

Consul General

Jerusalem (1986-1988)

Morris Draper was born in California in 1928 and graduated from the University of Southern California in 1952. An Arabic language officer, Mr. Draper served in a number of Middle East posts including Beirut, Baghdad, Jeddah, Ankara, Jerusalem, and Washington, DC. Mr. Draper was interviewed in 1991 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: While you were Consul General between 1986 and 1988, the Intifada began. How did it look to you at the time?

DRAPER: I recently have reviewed an interview I had given at the time. I pointed out at the time that we had been tracing a rise in tensions, measured statistically by number of incidents, violence, etc that had taken place in the previous two years. There was unquestionably a steady increase. We had been predicting for some time in our reporting that there would be an explosion. I also said in that interview that after the predicted explosion, the situation would stabilize but at a higher level of tensions than before. Frankly, we were a little surprised at the endurance of the Intifada. It was beginning to resemble what had happened between 1936 and 1939 when the Arabs rose *en masse* against the British and the Jews.

The uprising was well covered by the media. It took the form of demonstrations and rock throwing, fires, etc. by kids in grammar school and junior high school equivalent and high school. We watched fires and the closing of streets in part of Arab Jerusalem by young people 15, 16 and 17 years old. They got into big trucks and walked up alleys, etc. It was the young people who were taking charge at the beginning. Part of what was done at the beginning was the closing of shops by the merchants. There was a total boycott of business activity for certain hours, weeks and days which was only relaxed for the purchase of food stuffs and other necessities. There were boycotts against Israeli manufactured goods. Some of this was happening spontaneously in school yards where things like this always happen. The middle aged traditional leaders were dying to get a grip on the uprising. They didn't know what to do. The PLO was very slow to react; it didn't know what was going on. In fact, it is always slow; when something did happen in the occupied territories, it took it a week to make up its mind what to do. If a

university were closed, there be no reaction from the PLO for four or five days; then it would come down on it. The PLO surrogates in the territories didn't have anything to say initially about the Intifada; I know because I was talking to them. Finally the PLO sort of embraced it and then the main stream PLO leadership in the territories also came along, after a week or two. The young people were quite clever; they were natural leaders--some better than their elders. These young people came from everywhere--private schools, camps, etc. the camps were more obvious because the troops would enter the camps more often for confrontations. The troops were told to tear down Palestinian flags; they would look at a refugee camp which was mostly a slum and they would see these flags and go after them. That is what created the major part of the confrontations. But there were just as many in private schools, religious schools--many were run by Christian organizations--and there was just as much uproar there as in the camps. The camps were simply more conspicuous because the troops were there and some are on main roads and intersections and the demonstrations could cause real problems for entryway. In Nablus, there are two main refugee camps which straddle the two main highways leading into the city from the East and North-South. The troops had to something just to keep the traffic flowing. Our mission cars were stoned regularly going through the gauntlet. These areas were point of confrontation, but the Intifada was very wide spread. It could be found in all sorts of places. The press told all kinds of great stories of what was going on because at times they would go into dead ends or little villages and find people who were shouting for the Intifada, particularly when they found out that the stranger was a newspaper man. There were a lot of narrow escapes. The resentment was very wide spread.

One very clever man that I knew--rich middle class who owned a business--, who might be called a PLO moderate said that he got very excited about what was going on. He thought the real stimulus came a few weeks before the Intifada broke out when a Palestinian guerrilla team from Southern Lebanon had entered Israel and had attacked an Israeli army camp with only indifferent success--they killed a few Israelis, but the guerrillas were also killed. This man said that as a Palestinian, he felt proud of these people because they were young, had never lived in Palestine and they had risked their lives and most importantly had attacked Israeli military targets instead of schools or other civilian targets. He always felt embarrassed when the Palestinians only seemed interested in terrorism--bombs in city markets, killing school children, etc. For the first time, they had attacked Israeli soldiers. This was a team that was airborne--kites or balloons or whatever. He was very proud of that incident and felt that had helped to spark the Intifada because it showed that Palestinians were willing to die fighting Israeli soldiers.

Anybody who was familiar with the territories knew that something would blow. We didn't know how high it would blow. We in the Consulate General in Jerusalem were far more concerned about some nuts who might set fires or try to destroy some of the Islamic monuments, like the Mosque on the Temple Mount. We knew what had happened in 1968-69 when riots broke out all over the Islamic world if they thought Americans had anything to do with what had happened. We were always concerned with that kind of reaction. The real Jewish "crazies" tend to be from the United States. There is still a group, mainly of American born Jews, who do not recognize Israel as a secular state who have a Yeshiva--a religious school--yards away from the Temple Mount, Sherif, what the Arabs call the "noble enclosure". We were more worried about that possibility than a massive Palestinian uprising.

I think the Israelis were taken by surprise; their standard techniques of intimidation and control did not work, so they resorted to actions which drew vast criticism and justly so. They ordered the troops to break arms and legs and to beat up people. The Israelis have found it very difficult to get a handle on the Intifada; it is very difficult to know what to do when 8 year olds throw stones at you; it is very difficult for anyone to make war on children. One Israeli police officer described to me once a situation in which the police had to control a riot by the super-ultra-conservative groups in Israel, which came mainly from Brooklyn. The policeman told me about coming up against one of these bearded men of 60--very venerable, scholarly--and a person with very little physical strength because he spent most of his life behind a desk, studying. The policeman had quashed the riot, but found it personally difficult to move against this gentleman, because he looked so much like his own grandfather. So it was very difficult for young Israeli soldiers, even if they despises Arabs, to make war on children. They didn't know what to do and they still don't.

Q: Was your staff covering these uprisings and were they effected by what they saw?

DRAPER: In the two years I was in Jerusalem, there were quite few riots and disturbances of various kinds and killings. Our officers would cover these events to try to see if they could get in contact with various leaders to get a feel for what was happening. We had some success with that. We always got copies of the handbills; we monitored the media to see what the two populations were being told and what effect that might have on their attitudes. We knew the major trends and could describe those. But we did not go to see a riot for a riot's sake. Some visitors were interested in seeing some of the action. We had one Congressman who wanted to see some stone throwing. That somewhat upset me. One of our officers took him to the outskirts of a refugee camp in the company of the UNRA officials. Sure enough, some of the school children started throwing stones at an Israeli patrol that went by. One thing led to another and the Israelis threw back tear gas. The Congressman got a good look at what was going on, but that I had to tell him later that we were not in the tourist business for this sort of thing; it wasn't worth it and took too many of our resources and that I didn't want our junior officers out looking for trouble. I am familiar with the process in the United States. If you want to get attention, you can manipulate a press attendance at an event; we did in Jerusalem get wind of a lot of upcoming incidents because the media was being notified by the perpetrators.

The Israelis, particularly Teddy Kollek, the Mayor of Jerusalem, did a lot of things to head off problems and to forestall events that might have gotten out of hand. He was trying to keep peace in Jerusalem; he instructed his municipal police on what they could and could not do and they were much better than the Israeli army at controlling disturbances. For a long time, Jerusalem was fairly quiet, besides the occasional stabbing. Many of the problems could be forestalled by not allowing or keeping control of religious demonstrations. For example, once a year, there were groups of Israelis who thought they had a right to visit Temple Mount; that can be done if you are very careful and you warn the Arabs that it would happen. Teddy would often let me know what was going on to see whether we could help in various ways. There are always people who want to exploit tense situations. Riots can easily get out of control, especially in the Temple Mount-Harash el Sherif area because there are loud speakers all over the area. It is has been a custom for the Mufti and others to shout over the speaker if there is any perceived danger. Before you know it, there are tens of thousands of people running to defended the Holy places as the

Mufti has encouraged them to do; they drop whatever they are doing and are all running for one spot. It could have been a very innocent situation or a modest problem; when the police force armed with only a few shotguns watch thousands of people carrying knives rushing into their vicinity, it gets kind of nervous.

WILLIAM A. PIERCE

Deputy Public Affairs Officer, NEA Bureau

Washington, DC (1987-1989)

Mr. Pierce was born and raised in Georgia and educated at Davidson College and the University of Georgia Law School. Entering the Foreign Service in 1973, he was first posted to Surabaya, Indonesia, followed by a tour at Damascus, Syria. After completing Arabic language studies in Washington and Tunis, Mr. Pierce was assigned as Political Officer to a number of Arabic speaking posts, including Khartoum, Jeddah and Riyadh. In Washington, Mr. Pierce dealt primarily with Middle East Affairs. His final post was Surabaya, where he was Consul General. Mr. Pierce was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: This was the first stone throwing, particularly of young people, against Israeli troops within the Palestinian area.

PIERCE: That's correct. The problem with the Intifada was stones being thrown and the response by Israeli troops first with live ammunition, then with rubber ammunition. Frequently we would try not to become involved in condemning one side or the other, or in a human rights situation or in response to specific situations. In other words, we didn't want to condemn Israel for excesses, but at the same time, as the Palestinian side became more and more amenable to peace and was more interested in taking constructive approaches, we did not want to condemn that side on its own. It's a complicated issue. Generally there was the perception that we were reluctant to push Israel in a public way.

With the Intifada we would try, when it became obvious that hard ammunition was being used against what, in essence, amounted to teenagers throwing rocks, we started pushing for guidances indicating that there was something wrong with using live ammunition in these instances. Our language would get neutralized but we kept pushing and ultimately I think it was obvious that we became far stronger in our public affairs pronouncements on the use of live fire, and also of time to time arbitrary use of rubber bullets, which also can kill.

One of the things that we had to do was to look at the media all of the time. We had CNN (Cable News Network) in our offices. One day at about four-thirty in the afternoon CNN broadcast the

story of Iraqi gas attacks against the Kurds in Irbid and there were bodies in the middle of town. After we looked at that it took us a while to get across to a very preoccupied level above us in the hierarchy that this was important. Ultimately – it took some time – by seven o'clock that night we had begun to fashion our guidance basically expressing our extremely strong reaction against the use of gas on the Kurds. When something like that happens you're responsible to make sure it gets to the front office; you're responsible to make sure they, who are normally preoccupied with a host of other issues, know that this is a cutting issue and that we need to respond quickly and decisively in reacting to it. You'd get to the front office and you'd get the statement cleared there. Then you'd get that up to the press spokesman, even at seven o'clock at night. You'd do that.

ROSCOE S. SUDDARTH

Ambassador

Jordan (1987-1990)

Ambassador Suddarth was born in Kentucky and raised primarily in Tennessee. He was educated at Yale and Oxford Universities and Massachusetts Institute of Technology and served in the US Air Force before joining the Foreign Service in 1961. Primarily a Middle East specialist the Ambassador served as Political Officer and Counselor in Yemen, Libya, Jordan and in Saudi Arabia, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. He also served with the Department of State in Washington in senior level positions concerning primarily Middle East and Political Military matters. In 1987 he was appointed Ambassador to Jordan, where he served until 1990. Ambassador Suddarth was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: Could you explain what the Intifada was?

SUDDARTH: The Intifada was the uprising of indigenous Palestinians – not led by the PLO, a kind of spontaneous combustion of the frustration accumulated after 20 years of occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the fact that the Palestinians there were willing to take matters into their own hands, I think, frightened the PLO that the leadership was moving inland, inside. So, the PLO became more willing to get involved in the peace process. One of the major galvanizers of this was, the King, having concluded after what they called the “Shultz mission,” which was pretty non-substantive just trying to talk the Jordanians into getting involved in talking with the Israelis, the King then decided (and they alerted us to it several times in advance, although not in any detail) that they were going to disengage – not from the peace process but from the West

Bank. So, sure enough, while we had the Foreign Service inspectors, the Jordanians made this dramatic announcement. They had demarches to the British, the French, the Russians, the Japanese, and the Americans. I was meant to wait last to get news of this. I knew about it all before that. My British colleague had gotten first notice of it, although we had been told quite formally by the prime minister several weeks in advance that they were moving in that direction. So, I immediately tried to see the King and he wouldn't see me. The prime minister held me off. The point was, "Don't do anything. We want Dick Murphy, the assistant secretary, to come out before you make the announcement." They said, "No way. We're going to do this." And they did it. In effect, I think it had a generally beneficial effect in the long-run.

There was an interesting little sidelight. The King was holding me off, but Arthur Herzberg came to town. He was our houseguest. The Crown Prince, who had been involved with him in religious things (the Judeo-Islamic-Christian stuff) and knew him a bit... So, I went up with Arthur to talk to the Crown Prince. Arthur had some kind of message from Peres. So, I managed to sneak my way in with Arthur with the King. So, before they made their formal announcement, I was able to get a pretty full readout on it. It illustrates for those at FSI that the practice of diplomacy is sometimes an exercise in luck, sometimes in resourcefulness... You really have to keep your wits about you. If you only follow the formal dictates of diplomacy, you never get anywhere. So, I got a little bit more insight into it, particularly his very strong reassertion of the fact that he was not abandoning the peace process, only his claim to the West Bank so that the Palestinians would be able to take full responsibility of it.

PHILLIP C. WILCOX, JR.

Consul General

Jerusalem (1988-1991)

Phillip C. Wilcox, Jr. was born in Colorado in 1937. He received his bachelor's degree from Williams College in 1958 and then immediately after received his law degree from Stanford University in 1961. After graduation he went and taught in Sierra Leone from 1961-1963. During his Foreign Service career he had positions in Laos, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Washington D.C., and Jerusalem. Mr. Wilcox was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 1998.

Q: Can you comment on any of the recommendations that you made positive and negative back in Washington?

WILCOX: During the Intifada, a young Israeli reservist at a bus stop near Tel Aviv killed a group of Palestinians and serious rioting broke out in Gaza. Israeli forces responded in an

excessive and heavy handed way, killing seventeen Palestinians. Palestinian emotions, already running high in the midst of the Intifada, grew even more intense. The local leadership was already involved in a hunger strike against Israeli policies. The PLO introduced a resolution in the UN Security Council condemning the use of excessive force by the Israeli forces. I recommended that we engage in negotiations on this resolution rather than veto it as we were increasingly doing. If we were unable to achieve balanced language, we should abstain from the resolution. Our policy was to oppose the use of excessive force against the Intifada in violation of recognized human rights standards. We were also working to defuse the conflict and to encourage the Palestinians to consider a political solution. I reasoned that a veto would further reduce U.S. influence among the Palestinians and undermine our efforts to get the Israelis to pursue a more sensible response to the Intifada. My recommendation for an abstention was not welcomed in Washington and the U.S. cast a veto in New York. The upshot was that the local Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and Gaza decided to boycott further official contacts with the U.S. officials, including the consulate. This was a foolish, counterproductive move on their part, but it demonstrated their sense of anger, despair and powerlessness.

Q: What was the state, I am a little bit foggy on the chronology, one the Intifada, the uprising. When did or was this to take place? The other one was the beginning of talks with the Arab, the PLO in Tunisia and all of this.

WILCOX: The Intifada began in November, 1987, with riots in Gaza and in the West Bank city of Nablus sparked by the deaths of Palestinian youths in confrontations with the IDF. It spread spontaneously, with strikes, marches, barricades, and stonings of Israeli forces.

In a matter of months a full scale mass protest movement emerged, led by a clandestine Intifada leadership dominated by the PLO Fatah faction. Protesters had no firearms, but used stones against the IDF. The leadership also issued regular leaflets which contained propaganda and calls for strikes, boycotts against Israeli products, and the withholding of Palestinian day laborers from work in Israeli factories and homes and fields. The leaflets contained a lot of rhetoric, as well as the core of the Intifada's ideology and tactical advice to the Palestinians. We read these documents with great care and reported them.

The Israelis were caught by surprise, since the Palestinians had been relatively passive since 1967, and had never before mounted a sustained protest movement. The IDF was forced to deploy many more Israeli troops in the West Bank and Gaza than they ever had in the past. Its strategy was to respond with major force, for fear of being seen as weak, instead of ignoring the riots and letting them play out, which would have been a sounder strategy. So thousands of young Israeli conscripts and older reservists found themselves involved in street battles with stone-throwing Palestinian kids. The IDF saw themselves as a fighting army and they were cast in this new role as policemen to put down street riots. They were unprepared. Although the

policy was to use live fire only in self defense, the death toll from live fire grew. Many Palestinians were also killed or wounded by rubber, steel-cored, bullets that were widely used. The IDF also used beatings, curfews, massive arrests, and the confinement of people in whole villages or areas, a form of collective punishment.

Rather than subduing the Intifada, these Israeli practices intensified it, and the IDF was put, increasingly, on the defensive. The uprising had a profound effect on Israeli public opinion which in the past has assumed that the occupation could be maintained without much effort and that the Palestinians had been subdued. Now they were sending their sons and husbands to subdue Palestinian teenagers and they found this troubling. The troops themselves disliked the new role they had been cast in, and a process of soul searching about the occupation began.

At the same time, the Palestinians began to sharpen their propaganda and to articulate more carefully their cause to sympathetic Israeli journalists and to the western media. The western press reported on the Intifada intensively and the specter of heavily armed Israeli armed forces beating up unarmed Palestinian youths created a lot of sympathy in the United States and Western Europe for the Palestinians. [As a result of] this renewed interest and attention to the Palestinian cause, many for the first time saw the human dimension of the occupation and all its anomalies. In Israel, people began to ask how the occupation could be sustained - and the peace movement and political ferment grew.

Some Israelis advocated harsher crackdowns on the Palestinians, but many others said this [was] an untenable [price] for a liberal democracy to pay in terms of repression and violation of human rights and began to advocate a political solution. The Palestinians, themselves gained a new sense of pride. [They] gained new respect and increased understanding in the world, where they had often projected a negative image. This external recognition, plus the fact that the Palestinians had for the first time stood up to the Israelis, gave the Palestinians a new sense of confidence and, in return, realism and honesty about their situation with the Israelis. The fact that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza took the initiative in the Intifada themselves, without prompting or direction from the external PLO, added to their sense of confidence. As a result, Palestinians began to talk among themselves and to us about recognizing Israel and a negotiated peace which would result in the creation of a Palestinian state which would live peacefully with Israel. Such talk was almost never heard in the '70s or the '80s when I had first met Palestinians. We engaged with Palestinians and encouraged them.

There had been signs over the years of pragmatism and moderation within the PLO, but the mold of rejectionism had not been broken, in part, I think, because the U.S. did not engage with the PLO. A major change in Palestinian doctrine came at the Algiers meeting of the Palestinian National Congress in 1988 when an aide of Arafat's, Bassam Abu Sharif, published a paper, with official blessing, that called for the creation of two states, the recognition of Israel, and peace between them. At first, Washington was skeptical and paid little attention, but this was a seminal document that reflected an important shift in Palestinian thinking.

The Intifada was the impetus for this change. The Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza, for the first time, began to assert themselves with the external PLO. They were in constant touch with Arafat and the PLO leadership and were urging them to be more creative and to seek a political solution with the Israelis. Arafat and his leadership reacted positively, recognizing that they had to be responsive to their constituents in the occupied territories who had initiated and were bearing the brunt of the Intifada. A new synthesis emerged in the PLO that led to its commitment to forswear terrorism and recognize resolution 242 and to the beginnings of a U.S.-PLO dialogue in Tunis. That dialogue was suspended when the gang of Abu Abas, a radical member of the PLO executive committee, staged an abortive attack against Israel on the beach at Herzliyya, near Tel Aviv.

To summarize, the Intifada created real political movement on both the Israeli and Palestinian side in the direction of accommodation. It was an important event in the history of the conflict and the peace process.

Q: What did you and your staff do during this time to sort of get out the word. You know, this is an opportunity. Whom were you talking to about this?

WILCOX: There wasn't an elected or formally recognized leadership structure in the West Bank. The old municipal leadership had been undermined by Israeli deportation, and the Israelis discouraged the emergence of other leaders by arrests and deportations. This lack of a coherent recognized political structure on the inside made it difficult to find the points of authority and key interlocutors.

The Intifada leadership were young people who were unidentified and carefully concealed. There was an overt tier of respected pro-PLO Palestinians, however, including journalists, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, notables, and political figures like Faisal Husseini who were influential and served as a kind of local leadership. We saw these people regularly. They and the younger clandestine Intifada leadership were all trying to persuade the PLO to move further toward compromise.

There was chronic rivalry among Palestinians, as there had been historically, that threatened their unity and sense of purpose. This rivalry, based on regional and clan ties, weakened the cohesiveness of the community and its ability to deal with their situation. Arafat and the external PLO encouraged this rivalry, since they did not want strong political leaders to emerge in the occupied territories. Disunity was a constant problem when we had American visitors either from the Congress or the executive branch who wanted to talk to Palestinians. Our job was to invite Palestinians who have some stature and who might in some way be representative to meet with Americans. But because of rivalries, it was not always easy to get a group of Palestinians who would come to meet with senior Americans. Often they were interested in who else was coming. That was part of our burden in the consulate general, but we generally succeeded. We had to

work very hard with the Palestinians to identify a team of Palestinians to meet with Secretary Baker when he began his round of diplomacy.

Most Palestinians viewed the U.S. as partisan and pro-Israel, and this complicated our relations with them, but most realized the value of contacts with the consulate, and during my first year in Jerusalem we had superb access. However, after the U.S. veto of the Security Council resolution following the killing of the Palestinians at Rishon Lezion and in Gaza in the midst of the Intifada, the most prominent Palestinians decided to boycott all further contacts with Americans. This interrupted some of our contacts, but we stayed in touch with many others and with intermediaries of the boycott group.

WILLIAM ANDREAS BROWN

Ambassador

Israel (1988-1992)

Ambassador William Andreas Brown was born in Winchester, Massachusetts in 1930. He joined the "Holloway Program" which was part of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Program and went to Harvard University, graduating with a Magna cum Laude degree. In 1950 he went to Marine Corps basic training in Virginia and later served in Korea. His Foreign Service career took him to a multitude of places including Honk Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, USSR, India, the UK, and Israel. His career includes an ambassadorship to Israel as well as several positions in the State Department, Environmental Protection Agency. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November of 1998.

Q: You might explain what that was.

BROWN: The Intifada was an uprising in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank areas, by Palestinian youths, natives of Palestine, the local crowd. They insisted on their own uprising and for their own purposes. In retrospect, it appears to have been very largely domestic and local, to the point where it became embarrassing for Arafat. I would say that, from my vantage point, he appeared to relish the thought of the Israelis being embarrassed and the spectacle of an outbreak against Israel. However, he did not relish the thought or image that this series of incidents was domestic in origin and that he was just an outside player.

The Intifada was a very delicate problem for Arafat, and, as with many other, historic examples, it was fraught with danger for him. Look at the uprisings in Eastern Europe and what happened to those who rose against the communist governments after World War II. Then the Soviet Army moved in and crushed these uprisings, and many native communists who had started them went

to the wall. It's a very delicate matter to see domestic liberation or freedom fighters rise up, when you're sitting 1,000 miles away, breathing fire and brimstone.

Anyway, the Intifada began. As I said, it was conducted essentially by Palestinian youth, it was domestic in character, blessed, of course, from Arafat in Tunis, but not really run by him. The Israeli response was conducted by a coalition government which rotated between Shimon Peres [Labour Party] and Shamir [Likud Party]. Under that peculiar arrangement, as of 1988 Shamir was the Prime Minister of Israel. The Defense Minister was none other than Yitzhak Rabin. Rabin's response to the Intifada, as the minister responsible for the occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, was reportedly: "Break their bones!" The Israeli military, employed a variety of its riot control techniques, including rubber bullets, and resorted to demolition of terrorists houses by tanks and explosives. Hundreds of these Palestinians were interrogated and given quick, administrative trials. They were then incarcerated in security centers. Some were released after a relatively short time and then ran through the same operation again as the Intifada continued.

So the Intifada was proclaimed as a great success for Arafat, but it was an embarrassment, both domestically and internationally for him.

Q: It was played on TV on a daily basis and made the Israelis look like big bullies.

BROWN: Yes. The Israelis, who had played on the Holocaust theme and acted as the misunderstood of the world, found themselves now under the international spotlight. The publication of our own, annual Human Rights Reports, under successive administrations, made Israel increasingly vulnerable to U.S. criticism. So that was the scene in Israel as I took over my duties as Ambassador.

Now, just before I left for Israel, I had held a whole series of meetings with American Jewish leaders, including AIPAC, B'nai B'rith, the Zionist Organizations of America, the Anti-Defamation League under Abe Foxman, and some other groups which were quieter but still very important, including representatives of the ultra-orthodox Jews.

I met with a significant, ultra-orthodox Jewish leader in his investment office in New York. I had a very interesting conversation with him, which covered not only the views of the ultra-orthodox Jews on Israel but on his group's operations in the Soviet Union as well. For years they had been running ultra-orthodox networks in the Soviet Union, in their determination to keep that aspect of the Jewish faith alive there. It was a sophisticated operation. It involved the distribution of their literature, their own agents, and their own channels. Altogether, it was fascinating.

Of course, we also watched the development of the Sharansky case. You may recall that I had been involved in the Sharansky case years previously in Moscow. In Moscow we dealt with the Sharansky case, the "dissentniks," and the "refuseniks." These people met with Secretary Shultz in April, 1987, in Moscow. I was with Shultz when he met with them in Spasso House, the

American Ambassador's residence in Moscow, for a Passover or Seder meal. Shultz put on a yarmulke, but had to excuse himself later on, because Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze called him by phone. I stayed with the others. We had a kosher Passover meal in the American Ambassador's residence, with all of these refuseniks and dissentniks, who were later given permission to leave the Soviet Union and go to Israel. A new process was under way. The mood was changing under Soviet President Gorbachev. We didn't yet have the huge influx of these people in Israel, but the way was being prepared for what developed into a massive exodus as the Soviet Union fell apart. A very fascinating period opened there. So that was the background as I went to Israel as American Ambassador.

I arrived in Israel, having been appointed by a lame duck President Reagan. (End of tape)

I went to Israel just as George Bush had been elected President of the United States and was waiting to be sworn into office. Present at my swearing in at the Department of State was James Baker, the prospective Secretary of State. In a surprise move, Secretary Shultz brought Baker into his office, as I was preparing to go out and be sworn in. Baker, wearing his Marine Corps tie, looked at my Marine Corps tie and said, "I don't like the school you went to [Harvard University], but I sure like your tie."

I had met extensively with Dennis Ross, who was to become a key negotiator on Middle Eastern questions. I met President-Elect Bush in the Vice Presidential office through Dennis Ross. I remember that President-Elect Bush asked Dennis Ross: "Dennis, are you going to stay with us here?" Dennis said, "Well, sir, I think that the better course would be to move over to the Department of State and work from there." Bush said, "All right, good luck to you." Bush also wished me well. I'd also met with Larry Eagleburger, who was then President of Kissinger Associates up in New York and was being tapped to be Deputy Secretary of State. When we met, one on one, in Larry's office, it hadn't been officially confirmed, but it was known that this was a done deal. Larry said, "Bill, it's going to be a different ball game. I know these guys, and you're going to see changes made."

I met with retired General Scowcroft, who was an associate of Eagleburger in Kissinger Associates, down here in the Washington office. I met with him one evening, and it certainly reinforced Eagleburger's comments about prospective changes. Scowcroft was still in the private sector at the time. However, having met and heard what Larry Eagleburger said and then hearing what Scowcroft said, I came to realize that we were in for a distinctly, shall I say, "firmer" attitude toward the Israel in general and the Shamir Government in particular.

Knowing all of this, I realized that I was in for quite a challenge as Ambassador to Israel. All of these cross currents were going to develop and sharpen, if you will, in the new administration.

Q: Also, the Israelis have been dealing with this problem for a long time. For us, when you can't kill too often, and you're dealing with something like the Intifada, or...

BROWN: The Palestinians were throwing heavy bricks or stones and using slingshots and various things which put out people's eyes and sometimes cause death. God help the Israeli soldier who make the wrong move and blunders alone into a Palestinian mob. If a buddy of yours gets brutally killed by a mob, you are likely to react harshly, whether you are an Israeli or anyone else. This kind of experience tends to harden you. They may well have reacted overly harshly, but the Israelis were trying, in their own way, to cope professionally with a very difficult situation. While we felt that our criticism was warranted, the Israelis believed that their response was also warranted.

DAVID WINN

Deputy Consul General

Jerusalem (1989-1992)

David M. Winn was born in Texas in 1942. He graduated from Swarthmore College in 1964, received an MA from the University of Texas in 1966 and an MPA from Syracuse University in 1969. He served in the Peace Corps and then joined the Foreign Service in 1969. He has served overseas in Vietnam, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, France and Senegal. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: How was the Intifada?

WINN: Well, the Intifada had geared up pretty heavily by the time I got to Jerusalem. As I say, that was the only post in the Foreign Service I bitterly regret, for internal professional reasons. The situation on the ground had become bad of Deputy Principal Officer in Jerusalem - much too bad to take a sick spouse to (her MS had gotten much worse). I was long since used to bombs and rocks and whatever, but it developed so quickly, that from being the most heavily bid post in the Foreign Service - 82 souls bid for the job when I got it, "more than for the Court of St. James," as one diplomat put it Now you cant force people to go to Jerusalem. Virtually no one bid on my job when I left. So, it had become quite a source of concern although nothing like it is now. There were not any suicide bombers then. It was the risk of being brained by rocks every time you got on the road in Arab East Jerusalem, not in West Jerusalem. There were no problems in Israeli Jewish West Jerusalem, by the way where half of our staff lived, but my wife and I lived far out in East Jerusalem, where young Palestinians would throw rocks at my wife.

Q: Well, what had caused this?

WINN: The Intifada, the stonings. At that time, just stonings would occasionally kill people. I mean our cars, the minute I got there, you know, we had to have Mylar tape reinforcement put in the windows because if you were hit in the head by a big rock it would kill you. The Israelis went around with pistols. For all I know they do to this day. Its so startling to see grown men walking around wearing holsters, I mean it was all so primitive, particularly when they would make the occasional foray for business reasons over into East Jerusalem. I would sit on my porch and look at the main road from Jericho to Jerusalem and watch these kids. In those days we didn't have video cameras and I wish we did. I could see the kids down below the road, get their rocks, I would see them spot a car and I would see them stone it and I would see the drive get out with a pistol and start shooting at them. I wish to heck I had video cameras, they hadn't been invented when I was there. Then I of course, we ourselves were incessantly stoned. They would just see a foreigner and just throw rocks at them. My car was burned up. It was burned in front of the house. So, it was such a strain, given my wife's inability to walk by them

Q: How were we viewing Intifada? Did we see this as a futile effort?

WINN: Well, toward the end of my stay by the way we had the Madrid Peace Conference, but we saw it as, certainly an irritant. Another irritant and a major element of our reporting were the Israeli settlements. Steve Kashkett, whom had been the terrorism guy in Paris, whom I was instrumental in bringing to Jerusalem, was our settlements guy. They of course have expanded exponentially since then. To his credit, Phil Wilcox, we didn't have a very close relationship, but I've got to give him credit, was constantly on top of the settlement and human rights issues. Phil should have been a lawyer. I've got to hand it to him. He wrote detailed and damning cables pointing out human rights and legal abuses of the Israelis' expansion into East Jerusalem. There was a constant keeping an eye on Israeli encroachments on the West Bank. Now, that didn't answer your question. Weekly we would get the latest Palestinian communique of the Intifada resistance, which eventually I think numbered into the hundreds. We had a wonderful political officer there, Marc Foulon, who has since left the Foreign Service in frustration, actually writing speeches for Richard Haas now and he would translate these things every week. I gather to some extent we succeeded in focusing Washington's attention. George Bush finally tied down some of the financial aid, on condition that it could not be used in the settlements. As the months wore on, I found it increasingly irritating to drive to work; I risked my wife and I getting killed by these stupid kids with rocks. I often would pull over to lecture them in Arabic. I would say, "Listen you miserable little sons of bitches, don't you realize who I am? I'm half on your side!" It's so funny, that you could sit there and have a cup of coffee with them. In other words it wasn't personal with the guys who burned my car up. You know, I never feared them for my, never one for my bodily danger as an individual in Jerusalem. One could be a random target, but assassination was not a factor. Although we had no guards, I lived openly. It was always a political thing, these kids throwing rocks at the car because they saw a foreigner and thought it was great fun.

Madrid Conference

BRANDON H. GROVE Jr.

Consul General

Jerusalem (1980-1983)

Ambassador Brandon Grove Jr. was born in Chicago in 1929 and lived in Hamburg, Germany at the time of Hitler's rise to power. Before Germany invaded Poland, his father was transferred to Holland and later to Madrid in 1940. He attended Fordham University and later Bard College and Princeton University. His Foreign Service career took him to such places as the Ivory Coast, India, West Berlin, and Jerusalem as well as an ambassadorship to Zaire.

Middle East Peace

I left Jerusalem in early summer 1983, thoroughly discouraged about the future of the West Bank and Gaza. The Camp David process had run its brief course. I saw no prospect any time soon for the creation of a respectable entity Palestinians could call their own. They were at their most despairing, a mood that erupted four years later in the *intifada* uprising which introduced armed clashes, for the first time, into the occupied territories themselves. Moderates in Israel and among Palestinians hunkered down to wait for change.

And, finally, change did come at the Madrid Conference of October 30, 1991, an event that could not have happened during the Cold War. Presidents Bush and Gorbachev, the latter with only two months left in office, together brought to the table in Madrid representatives of Israel, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. Nothing comparable had occurred since the creation of Israel in 1948 at the Cold War's onset. Much of the credit belongs to Secretary of State James Baker.

The fact that the Soviet Union no longer existed, and Syria and the PLO had therefore lost its support, made the decisive difference. With Cold War competition over, Russia and the United States saw their interests beginning to converge and joined forces in the Middle East. The Madrid Conference broke the downward spiral in Arab-Israeli relations, although beyond its symbolism in post-Cold War realignments, it amounted to little more than a new format for old problems. In the Middle East, however, formats matter. The struggles between Israelis and Palestinians are not in the main religious, but secular. They are about land, water, security, dignity, and freedom in its many forms. Whose land, today, is the West Bank and Gaza, and whose city is Jerusalem? By what rights--biblical, historical, conquest, deed, use or occupation--do these lands belong to Arabs or Jews?

Progress toward peace was made under the 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles, signed on the White House lawn one hot September day by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, soon to be assassinated as Sadat had been, and PLO President Yasser Arafat. The accords had been reached without US participation or knowledge. At the White House ceremony on the lawn, I watched these former adversaries hesitate--and then shake hands, and I joined in the emotional ovation. With President Clinton standing in the middle, as Carter had stood with Begin and Sadat, the scene rekindled a fragile flame of hope.

Nevertheless, in a dangerous and inexplicable strategy, Prime Minister Netanyahu, abetted by Sharon as Minister of National Infrastructures, is creating new settlements in Jerusalem and on the West Bank, more facts on the ground, as his critics say. He adheres minimally, if at all, to the spirit of the Oslo Declaration. Arafat, on his part, is showing himself, so far, to be the weak leader and poor administrator of a corrupt Palestinian Authority, failing to control terrorism and rioters, or discipline Palestinian police in cities such as Gaza and Hebron.

Regarding Jerusalem, I suspect that a generous formula for religious sovereignty and Palestinian rights will eventually prove acceptable, one that guarantees access and control of holy places to the concerned parties in an open city that serves, by common consent, as Israel's capital, and perhaps even Palestine's. When that happens, the United States will move its embassy. The US role as peace broker in the Middle East remains indispensable and, like Phil Habib, we must not give up. The Cold War's outcome augments the diplomatic options. The lesson of Oslo is that Americans, Israelis, and Palestinians are not alone in these efforts.

My years in Jerusalem were difficult and painful for everyone. And yet, Val Vester, still at the American Colony Hotel, wrote to me fifteen years afterwards: "I think you would hate Jerusalem if you saw how it is now, so built up and surrounded by high-rise fortresses...I look back on the period that you were here as a very happy one."

WILLIAM ANDREAS BROWN

Ambassador

Israel (1988-1992)

Ambassador William Andreas Brown was born in Winchester, Massachusetts in 1930. He joined the "Holloway Program" which was part of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Program and went to Harvard University, graduating with a Magna cum Laude degree. In 1950 he went to Marine Corps basic training in Virginia and later served in Korea. His Foreign Service career took him to a multitude of places including Honk Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, USSR, India, the UK, and Israel. His career includes an ambassadorship to Israel as

well as several positions in the State Department, Environmental Protection Agency. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in November of 1998.

Q: Alright. After we finish that, I would like you to return to African and South American policy while you were in Israel. We haven't touched on that. I would like your comments on these matters. Maybe there are other policy matters, elsewhere in the world during this time, which you would like to discuss.

BROWN: All right. Before going farther down the road, I would like to pause a little bit and discuss Prime Minister Shamir and the peace process. I've covered Secretary of State Baker's eight trips to Israel for a series of grinding negotiations between March, 1991, and concluding with the Madrid Peace Conference in October, 1991.

Later on, perhaps after he had left office as Prime Minister of Israel, Shamir is reported to have said that he never intended to yield an inch of Israeli territory at the Madrid Conference. He said that he went to Madrid holding the position of a piece of territory for peace. He said that he would never have gone much further than that, nor would he have had to, since he had the ideological support of Likud and so forth. Later on, he was particularly critical of Yitzhak Rabin, when he took over the reins of Prime Minister of Israel and entered into negotiations with Yasser Arafat, the leader of the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization].

Shamir may have been correctly quoted along the lines that I have just cited. However, the fact is that Prime Minister Shamir had accepted an invitation to this conference, which was tendered to him specifically on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which amount to an exchange of territory for peace. Shamir was sophisticated. He knew by various means, through intelligence and political reporting channels and so forth, what we were saying to others, including the Palestinians, the Syrians, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, and the Lebanese. Shamir not only agreed to Israel's participation in the Madrid Conference but decided to attend it as the chief of the Israeli Delegation.

The Madrid Peace Conference was the center of world attention at the time and represented a momentous decision on the part of Shamir. I think that any reasonable observer of Israeli political life would realize that the Israelis were now on the path of land for peace. In other words, Shamir had accepted an invitation to attend the Madrid Peace Conference and all that went with it. He pocketed the tremendous gains of the Madrid Conference in terms of breaking the long standing taboo on official contact between Arabs and Israelis. However, the Madrid Conference was permeated with a land for peace atmosphere.

The Madrid Peace Conference was followed by the difficulties involved in the establishment of bilateral relations which went on, first in Madrid and then were shifted to Washington. There were multilateral negotiations, with the U.S. further putting its shoulder to the wheel and overcoming the long standing UN resolution that "Zionism equals racism." The Arab League boycott against Israel was broken. All of these achievements represented wonderful

breakthroughs for Israel, but there was a price tag that went with this. The remarks attributed to Shamir and the tough language that many of his associates in the Likud notwithstanding, the fact is that Shamir put his country and his government on a path which would inevitably lead to just about where we are today. I think that that should be mentioned.

Q: Was that implicit, was that something which all of you understood at the time?

BROWN: I can't say that it was something that was understood by all Israelis, but it certainly was understood on the U.S. side. Among the more sophisticated Israelis, it didn't take much to put two and two together. The liberal side of the Israeli political scene was elated that we had maneuvered Shamir to this point. Since some of them are still active now, I won't go into any names. They included professional Israeli diplomats, who were tough, political liberals by background. They confided to me, after the Madrid conference was over, that only the U.S. could have done this. They had tremendous admiration and regard for Secretary of State James Baker.

Q: When you say "negotiator," what do you mean by that? Who was negotiating with whom? Who were the parties involved?

BROWN: Israel, Syria, Jordan, the Palestinians, and Lebanon.

Q: They were all talking to each other?

BROWN: They were talking with each other. Remember, this was the follow up to the Madrid Conference on the Middle East. By this time you had what I called "general stasis." That is, there were acrimonious negotiations, and they were not really leading anywhere in dealing with the problem. The new administration was already getting restive, and the Secretary of State decided to appoint a new negotiator, Dennis Ross. When Ed Djerejian, as I understand it, was informed of this change, he extracted his price. That is, he would become the next American Ambassador to Israel. Having been Ambassador to Syria and having had a distinguished career, he would now become Ambassador to Israel.

All of this was in somewhat characteristic style. None of it was recorded in the cable traffic. It was all handled over the secure phone. Some crockery was broken in the process. Eventually, the announcements were made, and there we were. I think that we might break off here.

Q: How about Jordan?

BROWN: Regarding Jordan, the same thing. The new government was quite willing to do a deal with them. They made pronouncements that went along these lines. However, ongoing negotiations in Washington bogged down. Notwithstanding what I would call a very forward leaning position of the Israelis, Assad's negotiators remained obdurate. In short, they didn't reach a final agreement.

As far as the Palestinians were concerned, these were nominally local people. There was nobody from East Jerusalem, nobody who was a deportee, and nobody who was openly a supporter of the PLO, even though they were reporting, in one way or another, to Yasser Arafat. These Palestinians wanted to get rid of the Jordanians. They wanted to be treated as an independent group, the arrangement reached at the Madrid Conference notwithstanding.

So this negotiating process dragged on and on. There was growing frustration in Washington on this, as the new Clinton administration took hold. That is the background to this situation.

Now, in the meantime the Lebanese situation was constantly heating up. I described before what became of Operation Accountability. That situation was aggravated by Katusha rocket attacks on northern Israel, conducted by the Hezbollah, as well as attacks not only by the pro-Israeli South Lebanese Army, but also by the Israeli Army itself, in the "Security Zone" in Lebanon as it is called. The Israelis finally countered with a massive bombardment which forced some 250,000 Lebanese from South Lebanon to take to the roads and clog up the transportation system. In all of this we were involved in an intense form of negotiations, much of which was being handled on the telephone. At the same time I've mentioned that Ed Djerejian...

Q: These negotiations involved whom?

BROWN: This was Dennis Ross, with Secretary of State Christopher participating, but it was very largely Dennis Ross. Ed Djerejian had been bumped away from the negotiations, and Ross was appointed as Special Negotiator, while Djerejian remained Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs.

Meanwhile, I was in an even more delicate position because, if you will, on paper my reporting channel was to Ed Djerejian as Assistant Secretary, while the real action had shifted to Dennis Ross. In that capacity Ross was phoning Rabin and company, he was phoning Shara [Syrian Foreign Minister], he was phoning the Lebanese, and also getting Secretary Christopher on the line. These were open line and fast breaking conversations, conducted at all hours of the day and night.

I found myself in a position which became apparent to me as a trend. That is, Dennis Ross had a distinct tendency to jump over the heads of the local American ambassadors, deal directly with some of the other participants, and conclude things as he saw fit. In my position I really had to be on my toes to play catch up ball with him. I was in direct contact with Prime Minister Rabin, of course, and his military secretary who, in effect, was the chief of staff of his personal cabinet for everything, Major General Danny Yaton. Gen Yaton is a very unique personality and a can do man.[He later became head of Mossad.]

At the same time, I had to keep Ed Djerejian in the picture. There were times when I was frantically phoning Djerejian at, say, 3:00 AM, Washington time. When I couldn't get in touch with him, I called Dennis Ross. Then I filled in Djerejian later on. That was a delicate situation

because, obviously, Djerejian had been bruised somewhat by this reshifting of responsibilities regarding the peace process. He was still Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, and a very good Assistant Secretary. As I reported to him, there were times when I had the impression that he was very sensitive to the fact that Dennis Ross was really going off on his own, without directly informing Ed and taking more and more control of the process. Djerejian naturally wanted me to continue reporting to him, which is only human.

It was a delicate business. It was to continue this way and to grow as a trend. That is, for whatever reason or combination of reasons, I found increasingly that Dennis Ross moved to jump over the head of his ambassadors and negotiate, or try to negotiate directly with some of the principal parties concerned. I'm sure that for Secretary of State Christopher this was okay. He had to cover the world, and the Middle East was a very important part of it. Dennis Ross might get results, and so forth. Secretary Christopher himself was persuaded by Dennis Ross to engage in a form of shuttle diplomacy to get the negotiating process going again.

And now we come back to the old rivalry between Rabin and Peres, in Israel. Rabin remained a very tough guy, vis-a-vis the Palestinians. Now he was both Prime Minister and Defense Minister. He had a new program, and that program contained a distinct outreach element of approaching the Palestinians, resembling what had happened at the Madrid Conference. In effect, Rabin was saying to the Palestinians: "We're willing to deal with you if you get off your duff. However, Rabin felt a growing frustration that nothing was really coming out of this process.

Peres, in his new-old capacity as Foreign Minister, was wheeling and dealing with me, with Dennis Ross, and with Secretary Christopher when the Secretary came out to the Middle East. It was quite clear to us that Peres was always out pushing the envelope, as it were, trying to accelerate the process and to take new initiatives. In all of these meetings we never, ever met with Rabin and Peres at the same time. Never. That old rivalry and bitterness between the two of them was still too strong. When we reported an apparent willingness of the Government of Israel, as articulated by Foreign Minister Peres, to go far out, what you'd get from Rabin was a dismissive wave of the hand, a grunt, and negative facial and body language, as well as the necessary words to go with it, amounting to: "Oh, that's a lot of bunk." Well, Rabin didn't use the word bunk, but that is the impression he was conveying.

This contrast was fascinating. We knew, on a very private basis, that a couple of Israeli academics were meeting in Oslo, Norway, with some Palestinians, courtesy of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. I think that Stoltenberg was the Norwegian Foreign Minister at the time. Larson, and Larson's wife, were the key operators for the Norwegians in these talks. Knowledge of these contacts was closely restricted and representative of the new era. There was an open track in Washington with a Palestinian Delegation, but it didn't seem to be going anywhere and we were content to see academicians pursue a parallel track on the side to see what the possibilities were. However, we did not have much regard for these discussions. We concluded

that these were talks between a bunch of academic types, but they weren't going to lead anywhere. We felt that the main action was going on in Washington.

Well, I won't go into this very fascinating and complicated bit of history at Oslo. It's in David Mayakovsky's book, Making Peace with the PLO. You'll also find it in the memoirs of Uri Savir, who was the new Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. You'll also find it in the memoirs of Singer, who was an Israeli defense lawyer and a long-time lawyer with a Washington law firm. He also worked with the Israeli Ministry of Defense. He had dealt with sensitive matters, including matters related to West Bank problems.

At the time this was not known to us, but the Palestinian representatives in Oslo said that they were speaking for Yasser Arafat. They stated that they had a mandate from Arafat and that they represented him. These were PLO people who represented the Tunis crowd. They demanded that the Israelis upgrade the talks in Oslo, Norway, from an informal to an official level. As I say, we didn't know this at the time.

Peres finally persuaded Rabin to allow these Oslo talks to be upgraded. As a result, Uri Savir went to Oslo, and Singer, the lawyer, also went to Oslo. As I say, we didn't know this. We tended, therefore, to write off these in Oslo. However, when I met with Peres, he was going farther and farther out in his statements to me about a deal involving an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and a portion of the West Bank. He also said that the U.S. Government ought to get with it and join in pressing for this line of action. He felt that we ought to push Prime Minister Rabin. Things got to the point where, at a meeting in the VIP [Very Important Person] Room at Ben Gurion International Airport, Peres went so far with me that I finally said, "Well, Shimon, this is fascinating to hear, but are you representing Prime Minister Rabin in this respect?" He said, "Yes!" I said to myself: "Wow!"

I think that this conversation occurred just as a delegation headed by Secretary Christopher was arriving in Israel. I was sitting down next to Dennis Ross. I told him: "I've got to tell you that something is happening here." Indeed, I went back to the Embassy in Tel Aviv and shocked my Political Section by gathering a couple of my officers together and saying: "I have the impression that something is about to happen. Even though Prime Minister Rabin is dismissive in his remarks about these Oslo talks, give me a draft of a very brief formula for an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and 'X', meaning some portion of the West Bank" My officers said, "What?" I said, "I want something succinct on which we and the U.S. leadership can focus." I had that drafted and gave it to Dennis Ross. My own thinking had gone that far.

Now, bear in mind that I had reported that Prime Minister Rabin had been dismissive of such ideas, and particularly with reference to the role of Shimon Peres. There continued to be a stalemate in the Washington talks. This was summertime in 1993.

DOUGLAS R. KEENE

Deputy Chief of Mission

Amman (1991-1994)

Mr. Keene was born and raised in Massachusetts and graduated from Colby College. He joined the Foreign Service in 1967, serving first in Viet Nam and subsequently at Middle East posts including Jerusalem, Karachi, Cairo, as well as Amman and Muscat, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. His Washington assignments also concerned primarily Middle Eastern matters, including the Arab-Israel problem. Mr. Keene was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: Well then, you left there in 1994? Where did you go?

KEENE: Back to Washington. No, actually, no. Before we leave Jordan, I guess I should mention that I did go to Madrid for the peace conference.

Q: What were you doing there?

KEENE: They brought all the DCMs (deputy chiefs of mission). And then Roger got in a traffic accident on his way to Madrid and never made it. And because of the fact that nobody recognized the PLO at the time, we had to set up the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in Madrid, which was a very useful diplomatic device, but it meant responsibility for two delegations instead of one. So that was interesting, too.

Q: So what were you doing?

KEENE: We were assigned to the delegation as their liaison with the conference and with the secretary's party.

Q: You were sort of carrying messages back and forth?

KEENE: Yes...and actually negotiating arrangements. You know, "If he gets an armored car, I want an armored car. If they get an office with three rooms, we want an office with three rooms." And the politics of it—"Please don't say this in your speech. We want everybody to get along at least well enough to get through this so we can get the process going." And advising the Jordanian prime minister to shake hands with him--the Israeli—he didn't want to. This was not going to make a very good photo op. In the end, they did shake hands for the camera. It was very intense; it was about ten days, I think. There was a lot of back and forth. The delegations were in hotels, and we were in another hotel, and shuttling back and forth; and then setting up the venues, which were in a palace—a Spanish palace. Getting the delegations settled in, getting the

Palestinians to talk to the Jordanians. I had, I think, a real advantage there in that I had known, in my previous incarnation, about three quarters of the Palestinian delegation personally, so that helped a great deal. That all worked out, and in fact you can see in retrospect that we didn't get the deal we wanted, but it actually did lead to the Israeli-Jordanian agreement. And then the work afterwards on setting up all those interlocking committees that we had....you've probably had somebody describe all of this before, so I don't need to go over that ground. We had the joint committees for water and natural resources and refugees and economic development, and, I don't know—there were a lot of them. And the idea there was just to keep everybody talking to each other constantly—at various levels, technical levels, official levels.

Q: Well, did you find both sides—Israeli and Jordanian sides—wanting to get into, I mean, were they on board with the idea, you know, that the more we get together, the better, the easier things will work out, or not?

KEENE: Yes. It was important to them to reach an agreement on things like water and right of return and trade and all the modalities of what peace would really look like. So that really also was a major undertaking and took a lot of time.