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Sadat's Negotiations with the United States and Israel: *From Sinai to Camp David*

By ADEL SAFTY*

ABSTRACT. *Anwar Sadat* was generally praised by Western leaders and scholars for his vision, courage, and negotiating skills. A critical examination of the documentary record shows that at least as far as negotiations and decision-making, the dominant Western view is self-serving. The two Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreements of 1974 and 1975 started Sadat on the road to the American-sponsored peace, the price of which Sadat must have known to be the establishment of an Egypto-American-Israeli strategic alliance at the expense of Egypt's traditional role in the *Arab* world. Having accepted this outcome Sadat allowed his alternatives to narrow and *bargaining power* to diminish until they almost exclusively and entirely rested on what the United States and *Israel* were prepared to offer. To the extent that the overall strategic goal of *Henry Kissinger* was to separate *Egypt* from *Arab* and *Palestinian* aspirations, and further isolate the "radical" forces in the region, thus weakening *Soviet influence* and paving the way for a settlement acceptable to Israel, the American negotiator achieved his goal, with hardly any opposition from Sadat. In fact, in his eagerness to accelerate his admission into the American camp, Sadat adopted a negotiating style and made concessions which surprised the Americans themselves.

I

Introduction

THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENT was signed by Egypt, Israel and the United States on September 17, 1978. It consisted of two documents. One established the guiding principles for "a just, comprehensive, and durable settlement of the Middle East conflict," and for the resolution of the Palestinian problem "in all its aspects." The other provided a framework for a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. President Carter described the agreement as "an achievement that reflects the courage and wisdom of these two leaders [Sadat and Menachen Begin]."¹ Sadat rose to international stardom, and Western leaders and many

* [Adel Safty, Ph.D., is assistant professor, Dept. of Language Education, the University of British Columbia, 2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6T 1Z5.] A second article with the same general title will appear in a subsequent issue of this *Journal*. It continues the account, begun in this article, under the sub-title "Camp David and Blair House."

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scholars heaped lavish praise on him for his courage, vision, leadership, and bold negotiation strategies. One scholar described Sadat as “a formidable bargainer.”²

Describing his own decision-making approach, Egyptian President Sadat wrote: “I always know what I am doing and calculate all the possible consequences of every step I take.”³ How did the Camp David decisions reflect Sadat’s perceptions, beliefs, and decision-making approach? How do Egyptian decisions at Camp David reflect Egyptian, or, more accurately, President Sadat’s bargaining strategy in the negotiations between Egypt, the United States and Israel, which started in 1973 and culminated in the Egyptian-Israeli treaty of 1979?

In their exhaustive review of almost a thousand social-psychologist studies, Jeffrey Rubin and Bert Brown reached the following conclusion about negotiations between unequal powers: “Under conditions of unequal relative power among bargainers, the party with high power tends to behave exploitatively, while the less powerful party tends to behave submissively, unless certain special conditions prevail (specifically, coalition formation by the weak).”⁴ Sadat did not want to behave submissively, but, given their powerful positions, the Americans and the Israelis should have been expected to behave exploitatively. Sadat had a penchant for dramatic gestures of largess and grandeur, but in sacrificing the coalition power Egypt derived from its Arab and Soviet alliances, Sadat’s grand gestures became face-saving devices that poorly masked helpless and submissive positions with negotiating partners determined to make the most out of a good opportunity. Accepting the validity of the conclusion reached by Rubin and Brown, the author found the framework provided by Lerch and Abdul Said to be useful, particularly in its emphasis on the importance of a proper assessment of the pattern of forces in a given situation, of the relevant policies of other states active in the situation, and of the capability of the state of carrying out various policies given the situational context.⁵

It may be tautological to say that the outcome of the Egyptian-American-Israeli negotiations reflected the relative balance of power between the three parties. But what is remarkable about Egyptian decisions and negotiating strategies is that they were largely the result of one man’s psycho-political perceptions and beliefs, and did not necessarily reflect a realistic assessment of the operational environment. This tends to confirm the validity of the traditional model of Third-World foreign policy analysis in which foreign policy decisions are largely influenced by the perceptions and beliefs of the leader as a decision-maker. The new operational environment largely created by the decisions which flowed from Sadat’s psycho-political perceptions made it almost unavoidable that the forces at play interact in a manner consistent with the conclusion reached by Rubin and Brown.

II

Sadat's Negotiations with the United States

KISSINGER came to Cairo on November 7, 1973 to discuss with Sadat how to bring the Israelis to withdraw from the new positions they had occupied in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 383 which ordered a cease-fire on the lines of 22 October. Sadat rejected the advice of an Egyptian negotiating team meeting with the American team and preferred to have tête-à-tête meetings with Kissinger. Sadat told Kissinger: "Do you think I am going to argue about the cease-fire lines of 22 October or about disengagement? No, Dr. Kissinger. You are a man of strategy, I am a man of strategy. I want to talk to you at the strategic level."⁶ Sadat said that he got along very well with Kissinger: "For the first time I felt as if I was looking at the real face of the United States . . . Anyone seeing us after that first hour in al-Tahriah Palace would have thought we had been friends for years."⁷ Kissinger presented to Sadat Israeli demands with regard to exchange of prisoners and the ending of the Egyptian naval blockade of Bab El-Mandeb in return for agreeing to return to the October 22 line "within the context of an agreement on the disengagement of forces." In effect, Kissinger was asking Sadat to pay a price to get the Israelis to abide by the cease-fire they had accepted on October 22. Kissinger apparently had no difficulty getting Sadat to agree to Israeli demands without asking anything in return. To help Sadat accept the concessions he was being asked to make, Kissinger resorted to his favorite approach: secrecy. He suggested that limitations on Egyptian forces in the Sinai and Sadat's private assurances on Israeli cargoes transiting the Canal could be handled in secret memos of understanding.⁸ Kissinger took out from his briefcase the paper on which Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's six points were written, points which Kissinger had told her when she was in Washington he was sure Sadat would reject. Sadat glanced at the paper and said, "All right; I accept." Sadat's negotiating approach taxed Kissinger's credulity. Kissinger wrote that he could not understand why Sadat "did not haggle or argue. He did not dispute my analysis, he did not offer an alternative, violating the normal method of diplomacy—which is to see what one can extract in return for concessions."⁹ Sadat made the concessions demanded by the Israelis and later that day he was to tell the waiting journalists that he and Kissinger had agreed "on my six points," and without batting an eyelid handed out copies of Golda Meir's proposals as his own.¹⁰

At another tête-à-tête meeting, on December 11, in Aswan, Upper Egypt, Sadat astonished and delighted Kissinger by agreeing to much lower levels of Egyptian military presence in the Sinai than Kissinger had thought would be acceptable to Egypt. Kissinger had argued with the Israelis that Egypt could not accept

anything less than 250 tanks.¹¹ At the Aswan meeting Sadat told Kissinger that he was prepared to maintain only 30 tanks. When the full Egyptian and American delegations met, Kissinger announced the agreement he had reached with Sadat. General Gamasy, the Egyptian Chief of Staff who had not been consulted, felt that he and the Egyptian army had been betrayed. Sadat decided to go even further, and, as "a goodwill gesture," he offered to withdraw the token Egyptian force. An Israeli observer wrote that Sadat "must have felt that it would be more degrading for him to fight for the positioning, with Israeli consent, of a mere 30 tanks in Sinai than to put on a show of largess by offering to put no tanks there at all. That was Sadat."¹² A participant at these talks reported that General Gamsy could not believe his ears. "What a heavy price we paid to get our tanks into Sinai," he said. "Thirty tanks was a ridiculously low figure, but to reduce that to none . . . ! He went over to the window, and I saw that he was in tears."¹³ Another Egyptian participant at the talks observed: "Sadat had singlehandedly given away all that the Egyptian army had won with great sacrifice. Without consulting anybody, he had caved in to the Israeli request that the Egyptian military presence east of the Canal be reduced to nothing."¹⁴

Sadat tended to reach a general decision and cared little for details, some of which had significant implications. Thus, at the September 4, 1975 meeting in Cairo between the American and Egyptian delegations, Kissinger requested that Sadat sign the documents of the second disengagement agreement. A member of the Egyptian delegation reported that "Sadat as usual welcomed the idea and gave his approval immediately. The Egyptian Foreign Minister intervened and said: 'No, President Sadat will not sign the agreement.' Sadat was astonished, 'Why, Ismail, I have already signed the first disengagement.' Fahmy told Sadat that he had not signed an agreement with Israel, but American proposals. Sadat then changed his mind: 'Yes, Henry, Fahmy is correct. I did not sign any papers with Israel, only American papers.'"¹⁵ Kissinger asked Fahmy to sign but the Egyptian Foreign Minister refused and urged Sadat to postpone the conclusion of the accord until Egypt reconsidered its options. Sadat rejected the suggestion, and seeing that his Foreign Minister was refusing to sign, he called Mahmoud Salem, the Egyptian Prime Minister, and ordered him to sign. Salem readily complied and signed the disengagement documents.

Sinai II was more than a military agreement. It had political implications, notwithstanding Egypt's Foreign Minister's assertions to the contrary. Egypt pledged itself to abstain from the use of military force to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, and this essentially meant the end of belligerency, which Israel had demanded. It marked Egypt's military abandonment of the commitment to the right to liberate occupied Arab territories. Sadat also agreed to honor the pledge he had made to President Ford in Salzburg to allow the United States to establish

and operate an early warning system in the strategic Milta and Gaddi passes as demanded by the Israelis. In addition, Israel had extracted meaningful “compensations” from the U.S. for agreeing to disengagement agreements which were largely favorable for it. Washington pledged “an uninterrupted flow of modern weapons systems to Israel,” and undertook to refrain from pressuring Israel for “withdrawals from the Golan or from the West Bank,” and to “withhold recognition of the PLO” until it accepted Resolution 242. Kissinger also committed the United States government to “consult closely” with Israel in the event of a threat to the stability of the region either by Egypt or “an outside power.”¹⁶ The American economic, political and military commitments to Israel took the form of an “executive agreement” that escaped Congressional scrutiny and committed the United States government to unprecedented involvement on the side of Israel.

Deprived of the use and the threat to use the military option, increasingly bereft of Arab political support, contemptuous of the Soviet Union and unwilling to mend fences with Moscow, Sadat decided to keep faith in Washington. But a more realistic assessment of the nature of the American/Israeli relations, and of the respective positions and relative power of Israel and the United States, should have tempered Sadat’s overly optimistic assessment.

III

The Relevant Positions and the Relative Forces of the American/Israeli Parties

PRESIDENT CARTER, in his first meeting with then Israeli Prime Minister Itzhac Rabin in Washington, stated an American position that was based on the need for a comprehensive settlement negotiated among the parties, including the PLO. “We see a possibility,” he told Rabin, “that Palestinian leaders can be absorbed in an Arab delegation. And we don’t know any Palestinian leaders other than the PLO.”¹⁷ Washington was interested in implementing Resolution 242 and, shortly before newly elected Israeli Prime Minister Begin was to arrive in Washington, the State Department issued a statement affirming that Resolution 242 “means withdrawal from all three fronts in the Middle East dispute—that is Sinai, Golan, West Bank and Gaza.”¹⁸ When Begin met Carter in Washington, July 19, the Israeli leader forcefully presented his position: “he would accept no “foreign sovereignty” over Judea and Samaria”¹⁹ and was not interested in putting a halt to Israeli settlement activities. Shortly after, the PLO informed the White House that it was prepared to live in peace with Israel and was willing to make a public statement and give a private commitment to that effect to Carter if he were prepared to support an independent Palestinian “state entity” link to Jordan.²⁰ In a memo to Secretary of State Vance prior to the latter’s departure

for the Middle East, Carter had written that if the parties did not accept American proposals “we need enough public support so that, with the U.S.S.R., we can marshal world opinions against recalcitrant nations” and informed Vance about the “need to make arrangements for Geneva” and “arrange for the PLO to attend together with Arab nations on the basis of U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338.”²¹

IV

Sadat's Separate Strategy

CARTER, unable to pressure Israel himself, preferred to rely on a strategy whereby the combined pressure of Arab, Soviet and American positions at the international conference would expose the recalcitrance of the Israelis. But Sadat undermined the plan by adopting a strategy more in line with Israeli thinking. Thus, while the Americans pushed for a single Arab delegation at Geneva, Sadat agreed with the Israeli position of “adamantly” opposing it. Whereas Carter and Vance seemed prepared for some PLO representation at Geneva, Sadat again agreed with the Israeli position of rejecting PLO representation. While Vance and his party were under instruction from Carter to push for the reconvening of a Geneva Conference, Sadat surprised Vance by telling him that there was no rush with respect to Geneva.²² When Vance returned to Egypt after visiting Israel and other Arab countries, he was received by Sadat in Alexandria. It was a memorable meeting in which Sadat presented the American delegation with an Egyptian position that astonished and dismayed Ismail Fahmy, the Egyptian Foreign Minister who attended the meeting. He gave the following account: “Discussing the outcome of his tour, Vance informed us in particular of the Israelis’ interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242. In their view, Vance explained, the resolution did not require total Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in the 1967 War; it does require, on the other hand, not only the end of belligerency between Israel and the Arab states, but also full normalization of relations. It was a very biased interpretation, diametrically opposite to the Egyptian one. To my complete surprise, when Vance finished, President Sadat said in no uncertain terms that *he was in full agreement with that interpretation*. I had no option but to intervene and disagree most firmly. I sensed immediately Sadat was going to insist on his position and in fact he did so.” (my italics)²³ An American official who attended the meeting noted that “Sadat was putting his cards almost face up,” and seemed more interested in “ingratiating himself with the American side.”²⁴

Suddenly, and without the knowledge of his Foreign Minister, Sadat entered into secret talks with the Israelis aimed at undercutting the American preparations

for Geneva. Begin sent Dayan to Rabat, Morocco, to pursue the idea of a meeting between Sadat and Begin. The Egyptian President sent his Deputy Prime Minister Hassan al-Tuhamy. Dayan's account of the meeting shows that the Egyptian negotiator was interested in a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli agreement and some sort of Palestinian arrangement linking the West Bank and Gaza with Jordan. There was no Egyptian demand for the recognition of Palestinians' right to self-determination, nor did Dayan leave any doubt about Israel's determination to continue to occupy Arab Jerusalem and the West Bank.²⁵ Al-Tuhamy's own account of the meeting was significant in that, while it differed in important respects from Dayan's, it still confirmed Dayan's claim about Egypt's opening position regarding Palestinian rights. Sadat's special envoy reported that he repeated to Dayan that Egypt demanded the return of "every inch your forces occupied in the 1967 aggression starting with Arab Jerusalem and the Golan Heights before the Sinai. The West Bank and Gaza to be returned to King Hussein as it was [sic] before the aggression."²⁶ Thus Egypt's opening negotiating position did not include a demand for the recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination, nor did it press for the inclusion of the PLO in the future negotiations as agreed upon by the Arab states at the Rabat Summit of 1974. And that despite the fact that Dayan has reportedly hinted that "Israel would be prepared to include the PLO in the peace process."²⁷

At the same time the new American President was admitting his impotence in the face of Israeli intransigence. On September 21, 1977, he told the visiting Egyptian Foreign Minister: "President Sadat repeatedly asks me to exercise major pressure on Israel, but I want you to know that I simply cannot do it because it would be a personal political suicide for me." The Egyptian Foreign Minister urged Sadat to reevaluate his total reliance on Washington but "Sadat was unresponsive."²⁸

V

Sadat's Decision to go to Israel

SADAT told his Foreign Minister, Ismail Fahmy, during their visit to Romania on October 28, 1977, that he was thinking about going to Jerusalem to speak before the Knesset. Fahmy opposed the idea on the ground that it would deprive Egypt of whatever negotiating leverage it still had. Back in Cairo, Sadat instructed Fahmy, who was preparing to go to Tunis for an Arab Foreign Ministers Conference scheduled for November 12, to insist on the importance of a unified Arab position before Geneva and to confirm that Egypt was fully committed to the PLO. He also told Fahmy to tell the Arab Foreign Ministers that the settlement of the Palestinian problem was the core of a just and comprehensive peace and

said that he wanted the Tunis meeting to be “a historic one under Egypt’s leadership.”²⁹ Meanwhile, Sadat was engaged in secret talks with Israel in preparations for his trip to Jerusalem.

On November 9, Sadat delivered a major speech to the People’s Assembly. Suddenly he departed from his text and emotionally declared that “he was ready to go anywhere in the world, even to Jerusalem, to deliver a speech and address the Knesset if this would help save the blood of his sons.”³⁰ Egypt’s Foreign Minister was dismayed. He later wrote: “Sadat never explained the reasons behind his initiative. The National Security Council did not debate the initiative and did not approve it.”³¹ After the speech, Sadat told Fahmy that his phrase about going to Jerusalem was “a slip of the tongue,” and added, “Please Ismail, censor it completely.”³² Fahmy gave instructions to delete from President Sadat’s speech the phrase dealing with the trip to Jerusalem. But when Sadat saw the first edition of the Cairo papers “he was extremely angry, and gave orders that the front pages should be remade, giving the ‘end of the earth’s offer fullest prominence.”³³ On November 17, Egypt’s Foreign Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister resigned in protest against Sadat’s planned visit to Israel.

Fahmy wrote that he was unable to explain the reasons which motivated Sadat to undertake the Jerusalem trip. In particular, he dismisses the economic explanation: “The Suez Canal and oil revenues were increasing fast. The remittances of Egyptians working abroad, particularly in the Arab world, were flowing back in unprecedented amounts. . . . American economic aid to Egypt had already reached high levels before the trip. The major increase had taken place in fiscal 1976, when American economic assistance jumped to US\$986.6 million from \$371.9 million the previous year.”³⁴

VI

Egyptian/Israeli Negotiations

FROM THE OUTSET, it was the Israelis who established the context for negotiations between Egypt and Israel, the general principles of which were contained in an Israeli plan presented by Begin to Carter in Washington on December 16. Begin told Carter that Israel would withdraw to the 1967 international borders between Egypt and Israel in return for a peace treaty and normalization of relations with Egypt. He cleverly stipulated that Israel intended to leave its settlers in the Sinai, thus presenting a negotiating position that he knew could not be accepted by Egypt. He would thus exact a price from Egypt by appearing to make the significant “concession” of removing the Israeli settlers from the Egyptian Sinai. With regard to the other fronts, Begin presented to Carter a plan which he called “Home Rule, for Palestinian Arabs, Residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District.” It mentioned no Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, recognized no political rights to the Palestinians, made no ref-

erence to the Palestinian refugees, and left with Israel the ultimate military control of the territories. Brzezinski compared the plan to the South-African controlled black enclaves, the Bantustans. Yet, President Carter told Begin that his proposals were “constructive,” represented “a fair basis for negotiations”³⁵ and marked “a long step forward.”³⁶

Begin and his party went to Ismailia, Egypt, on December 25, to present the Israeli plan to Sadat. At a joint meeting of the two delegations, Begin read his lengthy proposals, often to the visible boredom and restlessness of the Egyptian delegation. On the Sinai front, he made proposals that would impose severe military and political limitations on Egyptian sovereignty. “When the peace agreement is signed,” he said, “the Egyptian army may be established on a line which will not reach beyond the Milta and Giddi passes”³⁷ and the remaining three quarters of the Sinai to be demilitarized with Israel keeping its military airports and early warning stations in the Sinai. In addition, Begin said that the Israeli settlements between Rafah and El-Arish and those between Eilat and Sharm el-Sheik would remain in place. Undisturbed by the impact of his proposals on his audience and to the incredulity of his hosts, Begin made a remarkable claim: “Mr. President,” he said (ignoring the rising tension), “the settlements will not infringe upon Egyptian sovereignty,” and added “I should point out that we cannot leave our settlements and our citizens without a means of self-defence.”³⁸ By proposing that Israel keep its settlers and military posts in an Egyptian Sinai, three quarters of which would be demilitarized, Begin effectively denied Egypt’s sovereignty over its own territories. In so doing, he gave the Egyptians fundamental values to negotiate for: the recovery of their sovereignty over the Sinai. At the same time this strategy placed hierarchical values on the conflict in which the recovery of Egyptian territory became more important and more urgent than the question of a comprehensive settlement. Arab demands were to be divided and Egypt would have to worry about its own territories. One Israeli account of the meeting did not fail to notice that the Begin strategy implied that Sadat would have no option but to negotiate a separate peace.³⁹

Begin then proceeded to read his autonomy plan article by article, pausing after each paragraph “to praise its virtues, and pay tribute to his own great generosity and his excessive humanity.”⁴⁰ The plan was, according to Carter’s memoirs, “substantially” different from the one Begin had presented to him in Washington.⁴¹ Still, Begin concluded his lengthy presentation by claiming that his plan had been supported and praised by the U.S. President as well as by the British Prime Minister and “by everyone who saw it.”⁴² The meeting was a “great fiasco,”⁴³ but more so for Sadat than for Begin. The Ismailia meeting gave the Israelis some significant advantages. First, they staked a negotiating position that required Egypt to concentrate on the recovery of its own territory and the

reestablishment of its sovereignty over that territory. This would remain the Israeli strategy throughout the negotiations with Egypt until its final triumph at Camp David. Second, they were reinforced in their knowledge that Sadat was interested in a separate agreement and cared little for Arab or Palestinian demands. Sadat reportedly told the Israelis that it was his advisors who were insisting on a comprehensive approach. According to an Israeli account, Sadat met with Begin privately and told him “half apologetically . . . that it was his advisors from the Foreign Ministry who had insisted that he not yield an inch on the matter of self-determination for the Palestinian people.”⁴⁴ This naturally played into the hands of the Israelis who proceeded to exploit the confessed vulnerabilities of the Egyptian President by isolating him from his advisors to better extract commitments and concessions. “From Ismailiya [sic] on,” observed one American official, “the Israelis repeatedly sought to deal with Sadat without the presence of his advisors . . . Ismailiya convinced Begin that progress could be made by isolating Sadat from the influences that surrounded him.”⁴⁵

Shortly after the Ismailia meeting the Israelis decided to move to the second phase of their game plan which consisted in increasing Sadat’s worries about the Sinai. The Israeli cabinet authorized four more settlements in the Sinai. Ezer Weizman, Israel’s Defense Minister, explained that the decision was based on the calculation that “if the Egyptians acquiesced to our ‘colonization’ we would have pulled it off; if they refused to countenance the new ‘settlements,’ Israel could make a gesture and give them up in return for the right to retain the existing settlements.”⁴⁶ The Israeli decision made sense in the Israeli game plan of trade off: trading the Sinai for the West Bank. By building more settlements in Egyptian territory, Israel would be raising the stake for the Sinai and putting pressure on Egypt to worry about its own territory. And when Israel eventually agreed to dismantle the settlements, as surely it knew it would have to as a price for isolating Egypt, the action could be presented as a major “concession.” The *quid pro quo* expected of Egypt would have to be on the Arab and Palestinian front. Weizman recognized that such was the basis of the Begin strategy: “He (Begin) must have decided to reach a compromise with the Egyptians in the South as a way of perpetuating some form of Israeli rule over Judea and Samaria. Whereas the Egyptians saw the Sinai agreement as a model for similar understandings with Jordan and Syria over the West Bank and the Golan Heights, Begin saw it as the precise opposite. As far as he was concerned, the withdrawal from the Sinai would be the end of story.”⁴⁷

VII

US Moves to Publicly Support Israeli Position

AFTER THE FAILURE of the Political Committee meeting in Jerusalem on January 16, 1978, Sadat was reluctantly realizing that his “sacred mission” had not pro-

duced the miracles he expected and that the Israeli position had undergone no substantive modifications as a result of his breaking "the psychological barrier." He had decided to negotiate directly with the Israelis in the belief that this would produce faster results than the multilateral negotiations of Geneva favored by the Soviet-American initiative. Three months after his visit to Israel, Sadat was unable even to get a declaration of principles from the Israelis. Admitting the precariousness of his position in the direct confrontation with Israel, he turned to the United States to plead for help to rescue his faltering initiative. Herman Eilts, the American ambassador to Egypt, conveyed Sadat's growing doubts and frustrations to Carter in an important cable titled "Sadat and the USG: An Incipient Crisis of Confidence."⁴⁸ Eilts explained that Sadat was disappointed for not receiving enough support from the U.S. on the question of settlements in the Sinai, and was increasingly doubtful about the seriousness of American commitment to the Sadat initiative. Carter and his advisors decided to invite Sadat to come to Washington.

Carter met with Sadat alone on February 4, at Camp David. When the two delegations met, the Americans urged the Egyptians to submit a proposal for the West Bank and Gaza, but Sadat was by now anxious that he might not even be able to reestablish Egyptian sovereignty over the Sinai. He was, therefore, more interested in the possibility of an Egyptian-Israeli agreement, and he and Carter may have agreed at their first private meeting on "the importance of moving quickly toward a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli agreement."⁴⁹ Moreover, Sadat seemed uninterested in the American strategy of attempting to put combined pressure on Begin on the question of Resolution 242 and the issue of the settlements. "Carter was therefore," wrote an American official, "left in the awkward position of appearing to be more pro-Arab than Sadat."⁵⁰

After the Carter-Sadat meeting and the probable agreement of the two Presidents to move toward a separate agreement, and with Carter unable to exert pressure on Israel for withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, Washington moved to support Israel's demand for an agreement that separated Egypt from Arab and Palestinian interests. In background briefing, American Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs, Harold Saunders, told reporters that Washington did not intend to pressure Israel, and said that Vance would not be "playing into anybody's hands, particularly Sadat's hands."⁵¹ Saunders also recognized that Israel was not prepared to modify its position and "insisted that the issue regarding the sovereignty of the West Bank should be shelved. . . . The United States government, for its part, considered the Israeli attitude . . . more in line with the American way of handling things." Saunders also stated: "It is common knowledge that the Israelis are looking for a separate settlement, and we have not sought to impose our views in this matter."

When asked whether Sadat was ready to go back to the Arab fold, Saunders

replied: "Just technically, the point at which that happens is when they arrange and agree on an Arab summit. And I am hopeful the Secretary can give him enough to work with, to suggest enough that we might work with together, so that that decision won't be made."⁵² The American objective clearly was to keep the negotiations going and try to reach a separate agreement on the basis of a common American-Israeli-Egyptian entente before the Egyptians pressured Sadat to go back to the Arab fold. Within this context, Carter issued his invitations for the Camp David Summit. When Vance arrived in Alexandria to invite Sadat to Camp David, Sadat and Vance met alone for several hours. After the meeting, it was Vance who told the Egyptian Foreign Minister that Sadat had accepted to come to Camp David. The decision was once more taken without consultation with anyone in Egypt.⁵³

On August 30 the Egyptian National Security Council met in Ismailia to plan strategy for Camp David. The meeting was chaired by Sadat. He repeated his public position of rejecting any separate solutions with Israel. With regard to the occupied Arab territories and the Palestinian people he said: "Gaza will be restored to Egypt and the West Bank to Jordan. This is approved by everyone. Were King Hussein to refuse . . . I shall not hesitate to pursue the negotiations and will pay no heed to their allegations that I am not entitled to speak on behalf of the Palestinians. . . . With respect to the question of a Palestinian state, our project maintains the stand we adopted three years ago namely that '*the Palestinians have their right to self-determination, with a tie to Jordan. I want to go to the limit. I shall object to the PLO even if it is accepted by Israel.*'"⁵⁴ [emphasis added].

Notes

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Child Mortality

IN 1900, the United States was the richest country in the world. By and large, it was a nation of well-fed, well-clothed, and literate people. Yet, 18 percent of the population was dying before the age of five, a figure that was among the world's worst. Why did such a rich nation have such a high child mortality rate? And what caused the mortality rate to drop dramatically in the first decades of the twentieth century? *Fatal Years: Child Mortality in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1991) attempts to answer these questions.

The analysis is based on the census of 1900, which was the first to address child mortality. Coincidentally, 1900 marks a major turning point in child mortality rates after which they plummeted. Before, they were appallingly high. Earlier studies theorized that the improvement was caused by greater economic affluence. Authors Samuel H. Preston (Frederick J. Warren Professor of Demography and Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania) and Michael R. Haines (Banfi Vintners Distinguished Professor of Economics at Colgate University) demonstrate that this interpretation is flawed. They prove that the chief factor behind the swift decline in child mortality was vastly improved measures of public health. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the field of bacteriology was finally accepted by the medical community. This acceptance led to radical new initiatives to protect the U.S. population from harmful bacteria.

Going beyond the mere examination of their sample, the authors present their analysis in the context of the social and cultural conditions existing in the country at the time. They look at the public health practices of the period, the general prevailing wisdom in the medical community, the chief causes of child mortality, the differences in mortality in urban vs. rural areas, and between various immigration and racial groups. The book has an interdisciplinary appeal to social historians, demographers, economists, and sociologists.

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