

Camp David Accords

Introduction

The crisis in the negotiations between Egypt and Israel dragged on, President Carter's efforts notwithstanding. In an effort to prevent any agreement, which perforce would restrict it to the sidelines, the PLO, stepped up its operations in and against Israel, reaching their climax on 11 March 1978, in the massacre on the Coast Road, in which thirty-five people were killed and eighty wounded. A few days later, in the Litani Operation, massive IDF forces attacked and temporarily occupied a strip in southern Lebanon, from which the PLO had launched many of its operations.

In the course of an official visit by Prime Minister Begin to Washington at the end of March 1978, the relations between him and Carter, and—by implication—between their nations, reached a nadir. President Carter openly attacked the government of Israel, publicizing the six noes which in his judgment prevented a peace settlement. At the end of April Begin returned to the U.S. for a private visit aimed at reconciliation with Carter. On 15 May 1978—by coincidence the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of Israel and the beginning of the first Egyptian invasion—President Sadat declared that his patience had been exhausted and that the October War would not, after all, be the last one.

Early in July Egypt presented to the U.S. an alternative peace plan, involving a precise return to the *status quo ante bellum*, including the return of the West Bank to Jordan and of the Gaza Strip to Egypt. The U.S. government, anticipating outright rejection, did not transmit the plan to the government of Israel.

Later that month the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and Israel convened at Leeds Castle in England. Dayan agreed that the definitive status of the West Bank should be decided upon after five years of autonomy. Beyond this there was no noticeable progress. A half-hearted promise by Kamal, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, to meet again at Foreign Minister level was not honored by Sadat.

President Carter, however, deduced from the very fact of the meeting at Leeds Castle that both sides wished to continue the peace process and, at the very least, were loth to assume public responsibility for its interruption. Moreover, it appeared to the U.S. that whereas in Egypt President Sadat was more amenable than his closest advisors, in Israel the opposite was the case, with Begin more unbending than his closest advisors, Foreign Minister Dayan and Minister of Defense Weizman. A meeting including all of them, with the active participation of the U.S. President, seemed the best, possibly the only, way of saving the peace

initiative. The White House had to go back seventy-three years to find a precedent for such a procedure—in 1905, at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, then President Roosevelt had convened and presided over the conference which put an end to the Russo-Japanese War.

On 5 September 1978 the three leaders, with their entourages, arrived at Camp David, the idyllic White House retreat. They were to remain there, practically isolated from the outside world, particularly from the media, in a “gilded cage,” for the following twelve days. The ups and downs, proposals, counter-proposals, compromises, crises and denouements of those twelve days have been described by several participants.

On 17 September 1978, in the East Room of the White House, the three leaders signed the final document, the Camp David accords. Although under no constitutional obligation to do so, Begin presented them, one week later, to the Knesset for approval.

The sitting at which this issue was debated proved to be the longest in the history of the Knesset, lasting without interruption for seventeen and a half hours, from 10 a.m. to 3:32 a.m. of the following day. (The previous record had been set in 1973, in a debate concerning the elections—though there the motivation was a filibuster by the smaller parties in the House.) In this case, in addition to the manifest importance of the subject, one may assume that the fact that for the first time a Knesset sitting was to be transmitted live in its entirety by TV contributed to the multiplicity of participants: eighty speakers. Only a fraction of these, selected to reflect all relevant viewpoints, are reproduced.

Sitting 145 of the Ninth Knesset

25 September 1978 (23 Elul 5738)

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset—

G. Cohen (Likud): I call on the Prime Minister to resign before the Knesset approves the Camp David accords.

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: Please be quiet. Will the Prime Minister kindly continue.

G. Cohen (Likud): —the commander of the IZL.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, I bring before the Knesset, and thereby before the entire nation, the tidings of the establishment of peace between Israel and the largest Arab country and, in the course of time, inevitably, with all our neighbors. The documents which were agreed upon at the Camp David conference, and which were signed by me on behalf of the government of Israel—

G. Cohen (Likud): Not on behalf of the nation in Israel.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: —are in front of you. Therefore I will not take up the Knesset's time by reading them. However, I am unable to disclose the contents of two other documents, the Egyptian one which was submitted to President Carter and myself at our first meeting at Camp David on the first day of our talks, and the American one—

G. Cohen (Likud): Why can't you disclose it? Tell the nation.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: —which was submitted to us during the course of the talks—

G. Cohen (Likud): Mr. Prime Minister, tell the nation what's in it. Stop deceiving the nation.

(From the floor: That's going too far. Have some respect.)

I have respect for Israel, not for you....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Will the Speaker kindly protect me from MK Cohen.

G. Cohen (Likud): I am trying to protect the Land of Israel from the Prime Minister.... We sent people to die for the Land of Israel....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: ...One day it will be possible to publish the two documents, today it is not, for reasons which I will call psychological-political....

G. Cohen (Likud): You cannot bring a statement of that kind before the nation....

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: MK Cohen, I call you to order.

G. Cohen (Likud): I'm in order. It's the others who aren't.

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: MK Cohen, kindly be quiet.

G. Cohen (Likud): The Prime Minister has already been removed from this Knesset because—

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: MK Cohen, I call you to order for the second time....

G. Cohen (Likud): The performance isn't here, it was at Camp David.

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: I call you to order for the third time.

G. Cohen (Likud): I heard you. I'm telling you that I will not let the Prime Minister tell the nation things which are deceptive and misleading—I was elected by tens of thousands of Jews to continue—It was not because of Begin that I was elected but because of the love of Israel which Begin once shared....

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: MK Cohen, I am calling you to order for the last time....

G. Cohen (Likud): Settlers have already been removed from the Land of Israel. You can remove me by force from the Knesset too....

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: Under clause 69 of the Knesset rules of procedure the Knesset will vote without a debate on the proposal to remove MK Cohen from the Chamber.

(The proposal to remove MK Cohen from the Chamber is adopted.)

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: Will MK Cohen kindly leave the Chamber.

G. Cohen (Likud): I'm going. I respect the Knesset. I don't respect the Prime Minister....I think that he is bringing us neither peace, security nor honor. He is bringing the repartition of the Land of Israel.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: ...When the two documents I referred to are published one day everyone in Israel and the world will realize what we did and did not achieve, what we prevented, what we postponed, what we received and what sacrifices we made for peace, to prevent bloodshed, for the welfare of our nation and the nations around us.

First of all I would like to thank all the members of the team, without whom the accords would not have been attained....We worked as a team, round the clock, consulting and being consulted, and everyone contributed his share, regardless of rank and position....I would also like to thank President Carter of the U.S. for his initiative in holding this unprecedented meeting....President Carter organized and ran the talks, investing countless hours of tireless efforts, contributing his original ideas, proposing compromises, listening to our suggestions and displaying endless patience in dealing with both the larger ideas and the minutest details....

There were inevitable difficulties. There were crises, which were also unavoidable. The U.S. President did not despair for a single moment, always believing that things would turn out well in the end, and doing everything in his power to ensure that this was indeed the case....From this Chamber I would like to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to him....

The crucial importance of the agreement with Egypt is that this time we are committed to signing a peace treaty. No more partial or interim agreements, but a peace treaty on the basis of similar international agreements, usually beginning with the phrase: "The state of war between the two countries is terminated." That is the difference. It is extremely important. It means the complete normalization of relations, including the establishment of diplomatic, economic and cultural ties, the end of the economic boycott, the free passage of goods and people....

Defense experts verify that we have obtained adequate and sufficient security conditions for Israel by determining demilitarized zones, as well as areas with a minimal military presence and early-warning systems. It is true that there is a problem with the airfields, re-

garding which there is a change from the original agreement reached last December, and our three airfields in the Sinai will be handed over to the Egyptian civil authorities. But our American friends have assured us that they will help us establish two airbases in the Negev, making very little difference in strategic and defense terms....We will not leave the present airbases until the new ones are ready and working....

President Sadat and I agreed to try and reach a signed agreement within two months, rather than the three in the official agreement, so that there is a possibility that we will sign the peace treaty between our two countries by the end of the year....The most painful feature concerns our settlements in the northern and southern Sinai. It has been said that we relinquished them even before President Sadat visited Jerusalem and in order to make that visit possible. I would like to say here and now that that is an unfounded accusation....We have written proof that this is not so....There are also those who claim that we did not fight hard enough for the settlements at the Camp David talks....

(Shouts from the floor.)

The interjections do not disturb me. I realize that in every party there are differences of opinion on that point today. Let us respect one another's views and afterwards each one can decide according to the dictates of his or her conscience....

Y. Allon (Alignment): Israel's delegation gave up the settlements before the negotiations began.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: If it were possible to ask President Carter and one of his principal aides how Israel's delegation fought for those settlements—

Y. Allon (Alignment): Too late.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: —you would receive a detailed reply. But that's not—

M. Shamir (Likud): Where was your "no"? A simple word, with no need to put up a fight or to beg Carter for anything. All you had to do was to say N-O, no....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: It is very painful. Not only will I not conceal my pain, I will express it in every way I can.

M. Shamir (Likud): Apart from the way of action.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: But today, as you know, we have to choose between accepting the proposal brought before the Knesset by the government and refusing to embark on negotiations for a peace treaty, which involves rejecting everything that was agreed upon at Camp David....

J. Rom (Likud): That is an ultimatum, sir.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Those are the alternatives....Professor Rom, when you are elected prime minister you can say different things. For the moment I have been elected by the Knesset to fulfill that function, and you will kindly hear me out patiently and respectfully. Those are the alternatives, there is no third way....I say here with a grieving heart but a clear conscience that I recommend choosing the alternative which we chose at yesterday's cabinet meeting, because that is the path which leads to peace. It is the supreme national interest, for my friends the settlers too. I therefore propose that the Knesset approve the Camp David accords, agree to conduct negotiations for a peace treaty with Egypt and authorize the government to remove and relocate the settlers from the Sinai....

The basis for the agreement regarding Judea, Samaria and Gaza is the autonomy plan we proposed last December, i.e., the abolition of the military government, including its civil branch, and the election of an administrative council by the Arab inhabitants. We will not interfere in the running of their daily affairs. As regards our national security, the main point is that the IDF will remain in Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

S. Arbeli-Almoslino (Alignment): Even after the autonomy ends?

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Hear me patiently to the end. In the original agreement we said that there would be a withdrawal of Israeli armed forces and the redeployment of the remaining Israeli troops in specified security areas. In other words, we agreed to withdraw some of our soldiers, while the rest will remain in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. The redeployment will take place soon, and only Israeli soldiers will preserve our national security. Our army will remain in Judea, Samaria and Gaza after the transition period. That is the basic change in the discussions during the past two years....

Y. Allon (Alignment): That's not written down, sir....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: We left no one in any doubt and made it quite clear that after the transition period of five years, when the question of sovereignty comes up, we will make our claim to sovereignty over Judea, Samaria and Gaza. If an agreement is reached against the background of conflicting demands, all well and good; if no agreement is reached, the upshot will be that Israel's autonomy and security arrangements will continue....

T. Toubi (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): Is that what you call peace? The occupation will continue, the Palestinians will still be deprived of their rights....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Mr. Tewfik Toubi, I have read many articles from *Pravda*, and Moscow's position is perfectly clear to me, I have no need of you....What we have attained by these accords is that

there will be no referendum in Judea, Samaria and Gaza...and on no condition will there be a Palestinian state.

T. Ziad (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): It doesn't depend on you. It depends on the Palestinians.

M. Wilner (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): If there is no Palestinian state, all your talk of peace is meaningless....

T. Ziad (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): There will be a Palestinian state in this region, just as Israel came into existence. The Palestinians will get what they want. It doesn't depend on you....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Thirdly, the murderous organization known as—

T. Ziad (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): Which is the leader of the Palestinians, and is recognized by the Palestinian nation and the U.N.

Z. Atshi (Change and Initiative): What leader? For you, perhaps.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: I would like to say to the mayor of the Israeli town of Nazareth that since the Nazis there has not been an organization so barbaric and inhuman as that known as the PLO.

T. Ziad (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): That's what you say. That's demagoguery, that's not true. It is the recognized representative of the Palestinian people....

The Speaker, Y. Shamir: I call on the Knesset Members to refrain from any further interruptions, and on the Prime Minister to continue....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Of course I'll continue. Did you think I wouldn't? I repeat, the murderous organization known as the PLO is not and will not be a factor in the negotiations. We had the satisfaction of hearing the U.S. President compare it with the Nazis, because that organization seeks not only to overthrow Israel—which it will never do—but to make the civilian population the target of its attacks. And now it is in internal turmoil, and is beset by internecine strife. You know very well what is happening in Beirut. Observe it well and learn your lesson, gentlemen. One day you too may be the victims of that organization.

M. Wilner (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): At the inter-parliamentary conference the Knesset's delegation heard the PLO representative agree to peace with Israel on the basis of the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: The subject of Jerusalem was also raised at Camp David. It was proposed that the flag of an Arab country be raised above the Temple Mount. We refused, and the flag was lowered

before it was raised....We made it clear that Jerusalem, the eternal capital of Israel, is under Israeli sovereignty and will never be divided again....

With regard to the settlements, we made it clear that existing settlements in Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan Heights would be strengthened by the addition of more families....I promised President Carter that during the negotiations for a peace treaty, i.e., during the next two or three months, new civilian settlements would not be established....I have a letter from President Carter stating that wherever the terms "Palestinians" or "Palestinian Arabs" are used the reference is to what we call "the Arabs of the Land of Israel," and that wherever the phrase "the West Bank" is used the reference is to what Israel calls "Judea and Samaria."...

A. Linn (Likud): I would like to know what the phrase "the legal rights of the Arabs of the Land of Israel" means?

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Everyone uses his own language. We say "the Land of Israel" and "Judea and Samaria." That is what we agreed, and that is what will be. Neither at Camp David nor at the White House did we sign a secret document. All the documents have been published and are in front of you....

I realize that at present we are going through a period of what might be called "birth pangs." This is a free nation, with differing views within it. This is a democratic parliament, with different parties, and differences of opinion within parties. But this is one of the major events of our generation. After thirty years, after five wars, bloodshed, bereavement and orphanhood, we have reached the moment when, by making great sacrifices, we can sign a peace treaty with an Arab nation numbering more than forty million people. After that there is hope, a basis for believing, that the day is not far off when we will sign a peace treaty with our other neighbors. It is a turning-point which can without a doubt be called historic. We pray that our course succeeds and that the peace we all long for comes. We have made every effort and sacrificed as much as we could so that that day may come.

We lay the documents before you. Each one of you must think the matter through, consult his conscience and vote as he thinks fit. I call on all the Knesset Members, irrespective of party group, to do this. I only ask that all the Knesset Members, the representatives of a noble nation which has suffered a great deal, fought a great deal, sacrificed a great deal, to appreciate the moral significance of this turning-point. For thirty years we hoped that the moment would come when we would sit down face-to-face to sign a peace treaty, with the complete normalization of relations, the cessation of wars, the assurance of life not only to our generation but to our children and our children's children. This is a great moment....

S. Peres (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, at the meeting of the Labor Party yesterday a twice-bereaved mother, an example of heroism for the entire nation, Rivka Gruber, addressed the audience, saying: "The peace we all hoped for is within our grasp. Can we let it elude us? If we do there will be no justification for our existence. We must take risks for peace just as we must endanger ourselves in war."...That is a great Zionist truth. After all, we hoped to implement Zionism by peaceful means, not by war. It was the Arab side, not the Jews, which always refused to make peace. It was also that side which brought wars upon us, and had we not been victorious, even at a high price, there would be no Jewish side....

I congratulate the government and the Prime Minister unreservedly for the difficult but necessary decision to go towards peace, at a price which it had seemed would be too high for this government, to relieve itself of its commitments, preconceptions and ideology and progress towards a new direction in the history of the Middle East....I would like to express my appreciation of President Sadat who, with the support of his people and despite the vociferous opposition of the Arab world, came to Jerusalem, sought peace, offered peace and found a response to peace. I am sure the House is united in its gratitude to U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who displayed resourcefulness, a sense of timing and adherence to the objective, giving unsparingly of his time, efforts and prestige to bridge the gaps on the way to peace.

The birth of peace was accompanied by pain, its progress involved difficult decisions and the negotiations revealed grave mistakes whose repercussions are being felt still today and may have an adverse effect on Israel and its security. The peace treaty before us today also exacts a double price, the price of peace itself, which cannot be avoided, and the price of the mistakes made along the way, which could have been prevented. During the course of the negotiations the government established new settlements in the Sinai and the West Bank, causing damage to Israel, and then was obliged to stop the activities after the damage had been done....At first the government refused to apply Resolution 242 to the West Bank, then hesitated, and finally agreed, again after the damage had been done....It hesitated to sign a declaration of general principles, and then signed detailed and dangerous principles which were not included in the first document. It refused to answer the two American questions, but in the end answered copiously and far more extensively. It did not believe that Sadat would agree to an IDF presence in the West Bank, but erred once more and had to agree to a partial presence. We paid a high price because of those mistakes.

One fine Jerusalem evening this government relinquished all the Sinai. Then it conducted negotiations to try and get something back, but failed. In the Sinai this government crushed Israel's credibility. We had defensible borders with settlements and airfields....The Prime

Minister's arguments for abandoning the airbases, namely, that nowadays a few miles make little difference, were neither credible nor consistent with what the Prime Minister has said in the past....We relinquished a territorial strip from Sharm el-Sheikh to Eilat.

Some people say that this plan is reminiscent of the Rogers Plan. With regard to the Sinai it is worse than the Rogers Plan, which left room for negotiations regarding the fate of Sharm el-Sheikh. We abandoned Sharm el-Sheikh. We relinquished artillery in the Yamit area. That is what we said to one another. That is what we told the settlers. The Prime Minister called that national consensus....The national consensus has sunk in the sands of the Sinai. We have returned to the 1967 borders. We have abandoned a defensible border and airfields, and now the government is saying that the U.N. will constitute the barrier....That is a precedent for the Golan Heights and elsewhere....

We have to come to grips with the grim truth of yesterday and tomorrow, and face the settlers, who were the emissaries of the nation, many of them idealists and new immigrants....Can the Knesset give them an answer which embodies honor, security and credibility?

The situation with regard to the future of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, is no less serious. It now transpires that the autonomy plan is not a substitute for Resolution 242 but a supplement to it, and that the principles contained in that resolution will apply to all the territories. A joint Jordanian-Israeli committee with the elected representatives from the territories will have to decide on the basis of Resolution 242 "the position of the borders and the character of the security needs." We will still have to decide on the border together with security needs. For publicity purposes it is autonomy, in actual fact and in the not too distant future it is withdrawal....The military government will be cancelled, the inhabitants will have the authority to govern themselves and full autonomy. You may choose not to call that a Palestinian state, that is mere semantics, for it will have all the trappings of independent rule, apart from the IDF presence....

In presenting the document at the White House, President Carter read out: "The framework document proposes a five-year transitional period. It also provides for Israeli forces to remain in specified locations during this period to protect Israel's security."...The Authority will decide how things are to be run in Judea, Samaria and Gaza....I do not imagine that it will beg the IDF to stay on there after the five-year period is up. It will be an elected and independent body with an administration and a police force and, most important, with aspirations and the ability to announce them from a formal platform, as regards both the IDF's remaining there and the possibility of self-determination.... What is most amazing is that it is precisely this government which has agreed to recognize "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian nation and its just needs." That puts an end to the historic debate among us. We

have recognized the existence of the Palestinian people. It is not difficult to guess what are the legitimate rights of a nation which constitutes an overwhelming majority on the land where it lives.

It is true that in the exchange of letters the Prime Minister said that the reference was not solely to the inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and Gaza....But it is impossible to state one attitude in a public document and whisper another in a private letter....The position of the Labor Party is that a compromise must be reached....We acknowledged the existence of a Palestinian problem...and advocated resolving it within a Jordanian-Palestinian framework, warning this government that the alternative to this would be a Palestinian entity....

The government has played with definitions of sovereignty, and in my view has lost the chance of attaining defensible borders. It has lost, Israel has lost and peace has lost, because this time the Palestinian people comprises not only the inhabitants of the territories but also, according to the government of Israel, all those who left the territories after 1967. A Palestinian nation with the right of return. The supposed consolation that we can buy land is merely verbal, because in order to buy there must be a willingness to sell, and that does not exist....

This plan does not make our hearts sing, and the responsibility for it is solely this government's. Israel had to accept it or be accused of being responsible for breaking up the Camp David Conference, leading inevitably to Israel's isolation....It would also have harmed our relations with the U.S. and injured President Sadat, the first Arab leader who came to speak frankly about peace. It would have jeopardized the chances of peace in this generation and possibly in generations to come, too.

It is easy to guess what Menahem Begin would have said today had he been in opposition. Geula Cohen said it for him, though not for me. We did not do that because our movement is a responsible one....We did not take the easy course and, although cognizant of the risks and dangers involved, chose to support peace, the only available chance of peace....I know that by expressing support for the Camp David accords we are also indirectly taking upon ourselves the government's mistakes in the past and difficulties in the future....

The expected burden is heavy because if Jordan joins the negotiations it will obviously set new conditions, and if it does not Egypt will make no concessions, and if neither of them do a Palestinian entity will be formed, and if nothing is done the unresolved problem will weigh on the world, on peace and the U.S., strengthening the rejectionist front and leading to the reconvening of the Geneva Conference....

The shaky peace which is now in the process of being born is threatened on all sides, but is on the verge of becoming a living, breathing thing which will change our lives....We have become accustomed to concerning ourselves with Israel's defense. That will not cease. But for

the first time Jewish and Arab parents, the ancient Egyptian and Jewish nations, may experience something new. Fine phrases about vision may become reality. Instead of a Middle East of barbed-wire fences, one of open borders may emerge. Arid battlefields may become fertile wheat fields.

On the basis of our national economy we may erect a second storey of a regional economy; a region criss-crossed by waterpipes, so that ancient deserts may be made fertile; roads which will reveal to all the antiquities of our nation and the changes wrought by hard work, heroism and vision; seas which will support fishermen and holiday-makers; an economy which can produce energy from the light of the sun and the depths of the sea.

We appeal to all the nations of the Middle East to bring peace to the entire region, enabling us to wage the one just war against poverty, sickness, desolation, ignorance, corruption and discrimination. Peace offers new opportunities to the Jewish people. We owe the attainment of peace to those who have fallen in Israel's wars, with the hope of a revival of immigration to this country. The Alignment, the Labor Party and Mapam, will take a part in the efforts for peace, doing everything we can to forge an Israel which is not dependent on the generosity of others or on stock exchanges but lives by the labor of its own hands, one which cultivates its fields rather than living from speculation, a state without masters and servants, one which looks to the future and takes care of its needy....Zionism is not solely a movement for changing the nation's location, it is also a movement for changing the structure of the nation....We will face the dangers the future holds for us with open eyes. I have described them without embellishment. We are aware of the mistakes which have been made and cannot be changed. We believe in the hope of peace. That, in the final event, is what we are all striving for....

M. Arens (Likud): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, I would like to raise the painful subject of the settlements in the Rafah area and the Gulf of Eilat, and the Egyptian President's demand—which can be called an ultimatum—that we decide to dismantle them before he will conduct negotiations with us....The demand to remove families from their homes, to uproot farmers from their villages, is unprecedented in modern history and in the relations between civilized countries and peaceloving leaders.

M. Wilner (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): Civilized countries do not establish colonialist settlements on occupied land....

M. Arens (Likud): In my view, those who represent those settlements and settlers as an obstacle to peace are also in the wrong. That is a distortion of the facts. Only a few days ago they represented the Prime Minister as an obstacle to peace, and that was a distortion of the facts, too....The principal aspect to be taken into account in discussing

whether or not to dismantle the settlements is their value for our security....In this day and age, when the Arab armies possess tanks, planes, artillery and other weapons commensurate with that controlled by all the NATO armies together, what can the settlements do to bolster our defense...? The answer is that they are there, in Judea, Samaria and the Golan Heights, and because they are there, the IDF is also there. In other words, their presence immunizes us against pressure to withdraw the IDF from the territories. That is the tradition of Jewish settlement activity in the Land of Israel ever since Tel-Hai. I think all here are agreed that if we take out one stratum of that wall, if we remove the settlements from the Sinai, that wall will never be as stable and strong again....

As for the actual agreements, we would all have been surprised had there been no differences of opinion between us on such a complex and difficult subject....We all want the basis of our considerations to be objective, uniform and correct. The leader of the opposition, Mr. Peres, has said that that is the painful price we have to pay for peace. Are we really talking about a predetermined problem, as if we were in a store and all we had to decide was whether we were prepared to pay the price for the item and withdraw half our savings from the bank to cover it? That is not the case....

It is true that the Prime Minister has also said that this is the price we have to pay, this is the path to peace, this is the way to assure the lives of our children and our children's children....Which of us can really speak with such confidence about future events...? That is precisely our problem. The part concerning the price is clear, the results are not.... The first rule of decision-making in conditions of uncertainty is to be aware of the uncertainty. Omitting to do so is certain to lead to failure. We learned that the hard way on the eve of the Yom Kippur War, when the decision not to mobilize the reserves was made while ignoring the uncertainties and the various possibilities....

What is certain at this stage is that the Camp David accords oblige us to make concessions. I will refer solely to those with direct security implications....First of all, we will have to return to the Eilat-Nitzana-Yad Mordecai border, abandon the airbases, remove settlements and return to the 1967 border. Secondly, IDF forces will have to withdraw from Judea and Samaria and redeploy, in reduced numbers, in "specified security locations." Thirdly, the security forces will be limited in maintaining law and order in Judea and Samaria in combating the terrorists and a "strong" police force will be established there....

What will happen? The Prime Minister has said that Jordan and Syria will follow in Egypt's footsteps and we will have peace on all our borders, describing that as an inevitable process....I do not think that that phrase is justified, though it is not impossible....The future may be less rosy, however, and Jordan and Syria and the other Arab countries

might not follow in Egypt's footsteps. We will have a separate peace agreement with Egypt, driving a wedge between it and the other Arab countries, and although we will be threatened on our eastern front, our southern front will be quiet....Another possibility is that despite the fact that we have signed a peace treaty with Egypt, when the specter of war looms on the horizon, Egypt will be drawn into the fray....

The future may be even less rosy still. We sign an agreement, withdraw to the Eilat-Nitzana-Yad Mordecai border, start negotiations with Jordan, these break down, there are sufficient causes to threaten war, tension develops between us and Egypt, the caricatures we have seen in the past depicting our prime minister as Shylock start appearing in the Egyptian press, we sever ties and find ourselves in the same situation as we were in May 1967, with war threatening Ashkelon and Eilat and with 6,000 soldiers trapped in strongholds in Judea and Samaria.

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): Can't your imagination work in the direction of peace?

M. Arens (Likud): None of us can say that all that is unlikely. The problem confronting us is that we do not know what the future will bring. Our problem is not one of buying a product but of taking risks, I would even say gambling, buying a lottery ticket....Should a country which is facing a security problem act on the basis of its rival's assumed intentions or its known capacity...? The lesson that world history has taught us is that a country which acts on the basis of another country's assumed intentions without taking its assumed capacity into account is liable to make a very grave mistake....

Israel's defense strength consists of the IDF, the men, the equipment and the defense borders we reached and which the whole world has agreed we need....Now the Camp David accords say that we must return to the borders of 1967 in the south, and possibly on the other borders too, eventually....

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: How can you say that we are returning to the borders of 1967 when Egypt is not entering the Gaza Strip?

M. Arens (Likud): We are returning to the Eilat-Nitzana-Yad Mordecai border. As regards the Gaza Strip, our position will be very similar to what it was in the past....I would like to remind the House and the Prime Minister that he cited Mr. Eban in calling the 1967 borders "Auschwitz borders." He has also said that the 1967 borders are an invitation to wage war on us, and that is the danger. Thus, the question every MK must answer today is, after assessing all the hopes and hazards, to which borders should we commit ourselves? We have made far-reaching concessions in the peace plan....We have agreed to withdraw to positions which seemed to us to be the last line in the Sinai and in

Judea and Samaria. Concessions more far-reaching than those, such as are proposed by the Camp David accords, impose unreasonable risks on us and could constitute an invitation to wage war on us in the future instead of paving the way to peace. I oppose them.

...

Z. Warhaftig (National Religious Party): Mr. Speaker, gentlemen, I would like to begin by thanking the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Defense and the Israel delegation to the peace negotiations at Camp David and all those who had a hand in the efforts to attain peace....I must admit to being concerned about the sacrifices this peace obliges us to make. I would have been surprised if the need to uproot settlements had not led to consternation. That decision will inflict educational damage and weaken the pioneering spirit....

It gladdens me to know that after approximately one hundred years of the Zionist revival, after thirty years of the Jewish state, there is a basis for peace with the largest Arab country at present, but with the hope that other Arab countries will follow suit, and there is a chance that warfare will end. Zionism and the State of Israel have done a great deal to liberate the Middle East from the yoke of foreigners, servitude and colonialism....The time has come for the Arab countries to repay Israel the moral debt they owe it and for Israel to be able to live in peace with its neighbors....

Despite all the hesitations and doubts, I am in favor of taking the long and painful road which leads to peace, for the road of war is longer and more painful....The recognition of Israel's right to exist by Egypt and the beginnings of this by Jordan and Syria, even within the 1967 borders, is a great victory for the Zionist idea and practice....

The tidings of peace are like a rose among the thorns, however, and the thorns are very manifold. The greatest fear is that the abandonment of the settlements will be regarded as a precedent to be applied elsewhere, though the sanctity of the Sinai for Jews is not like that of Judea and Samaria....There is no need for us to be too anxious, however, for we are still strong enough to insist on our settlements remaining in Judea and Samaria....

Another apprehension is the mistrust of the Arabs' sincere desire for peace. I do not know why we should have those doubts....We may be witnessing cultural and psychological changes among the neighboring countries, and in Egypt in particular. Egypt is also weary of war and seeks peace....And if they want peace, they will reach the conclusion that just as there is no war without sacrifices, neither is there peace without sacrifices. We see that there is an ever-widening rift within the Arab camp....Although there are some among them who believe that the conflict will be decided only by the sword, there are others who wish to put their weapons away and strive for economic and cultural development, with peaceful relations with Israel. Why should we not try that

course after decades of the other? Let us not be those of little faith, let us try the other course and hope that it succeeds.

Although there are differences of opinion within the party I represent, I would like to commend the Prime Minister for bringing the subject *en bloc*, i.e., calling on us to approve the Camp David accords as well as the dismantling of the settlements....The agreement which has already been signed by our Prime Minister states that we recognize Egypt's sovereignty over the whole of the Sinai....How can we expect Jewish settlements to remain there against their will...? To separate the two subjects would be dishonest and would involve sidestepping the basic issue of agreeing to peace and accepting Egypt's condition....We are taking a difficult course, let us pray that it succeeds and peace comes to Israel.

M. Shamir (Likud): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, Mr. Prime Minister, I have no confidence in you, in the path you have chosen, in your policy or in you. I do not know if someone has cheated us, I have been cheated and I think that the nation has been cheated. I was told that the settlements in the Sinai would not be uprooted, but yesterday attempts were made to put pressure on the Likud party group....First we heard that getting the Soviets out of the Middle East was the main point as far as the Americans are concerned. Now we hear that the Americans are trying to bring the Soviets back into the picture. We were told that the Camp David conference and the peace plan and the meetings with Sadat relieved us of the dangers of the Geneva Conference. Now the Americans are trying to get us to the Geneva Conference again.

We were told that the Americans would help us build airfields in the Negev, and now we hear that they are delaying approval for the necessary funds until the issue of the settlements in Judea and Samaria is clarified....Was territorial compromise an obstacle to peace? Of course it was, because it meant that the Arabs would have to give something up, and from this plan it is evident that the Egyptians will give nothing up....

Let us stop beating about the bush and go straight to the simple facts....Sadat will be prepared to sign the so-called peace with us on the model of the Sinai, namely, if we withdraw completely from all the territories and uproot all the Jewish settlements. Only yesterday that was against the national consensus in whose name you spoke, Mr. Prime Minister, representing what you termed "the irrelevant fringes of Israeli public opinion."...Today it is the center of Israeli policy....

When I say that I do not believe, I do so with pain, Mr. Prime Minister. If you may speak of your pain regarding the uprooting of settlements, I may also do so with regard to you, your government and the Likud. I do not know how to believe that Jerusalem will not be similarly relinquished. In my view, the die has been cast. All that is left are my words here....Mr. Prime Minister, your policy is based on the assumption

that there is no basis for the Zionist enterprise in the Land of Israel....

(From the floor: There's a limit to stuff and nonsense!)

At Camp David you succumbed to the pugnacious and narrow-minded pressure of that evil man, Sadat, which was intended to humiliate us, saying that he would not even begin talking to you if you did not dismantle the settlements....Why did you give in to him...? For Sadat that means that wherever we are it is not by right, that we are occupying Arab land....At Ismailia you still had the wisdom and pride to say that land taken in a defensive war belonged to the victor by right....By uprooting the settlements you legitimize the Arab contention that we have no right to the land....

I have no confidence in a policy which confuses what it regards as certain with what has been promised, agreed on and signed. On the subject of Jerusalem the government presents its position and the Knesset's decision as if it were something certain. But there is Sadat's demand and Carter's letter reminding us of the American position that the annexation of East Jerusalem is illegal....

We have heard examples. We have heard how the Israeli delegation approved the concept of the legitimate rights of the Arabs of the Land of Israel, the Palestinians. But we opposed that. Because of that we were on the verge of a crisis in the past, and now we have suddenly accepted it.... It is evident that the argument is with you, Mr. Prime Minister. Though it grieves me to do so, I will give you another reason why I do not believe you. There was a time when the Likud was fiercely opposed to the "Peace Now" movement and accused its supporters of misleading the public.... I think that those who suggest that we approve this agreement are misleading the public.

I have no confidence in principles which demand that we deal such a heavy blow to settlers, farmers, land that has been settled by Jews.... Zionism is not a matter of formulae and decisions. Zionism is people. It is people who are prepared to make the greatest sacrifices, endure the severest trials....The blow which has been struck at the settlements in the Sinai is a blow to the human element in us, a blow to the Jew who has stood up straight and been prepared to fight back....I have the impression that by making this decision this government has returned to a state of receiving the charity of others, of begging for handouts, of bowing one's back to those who are one's benefactors.

Finally, this peace for which everyone is demanding that we make such great sacrifices is false. Peace based on Israeli submission is not peace....It will not bring us tranquillity. In its wake will come a rise in terrorism and constant unrest....We are being sold false illusions.

Z. Wertheimer (Movement for Change and Initiative): What does your peace look like?

M. Shamir (Likud): My peace is one with a strong Israel which insists on its demands and the justice of its claims—

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): From the Euphrates to the Nile.

M. Shamir (Likud): The Israel of Tel-Hai, Mishmar Ha'Emek and Negba. An Israel of settlements which have not been uprooted from the Negev. An Israel which keeps its word. I would like to appeal to the Knesset Members to examine their consciences carefully....We are jeopardizing our existence, we are beginning a descent from which there is no return, we are endangering the desire of our younger generation to live among us. Let us prevent this injustice, this disaster....Let us not be led astray by delusions, by forgeries, by words. The Knesset must appear as the backbone of the nation, must show that it will not swallow this fraudulent scheme....A new formula can be found....We must refuse to accept this poisoned potion....

H. Grossman (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, Israel's citizens are divided today into those who are glad, those who are mournful and those who are apprehensive. I am not one of those who are mournful, I am one of those who are happy but are also apprehensive. The agreement is still very fragile, and what was achieved at Camp David can easily be lost....I am sure that the Prime Minister knows that most of the nation wants peace and is aware of its price....There is nothing to fear from the nation, and there is no need for the Prime Minister to continue with his customary high-flown rhetoric about honor and straightening backs when the situation is painful. There is no honor greater than telling the nation the truth, no courage higher than facing it and convincing it that the most painful peace is infinitely preferable to the pain of bereavement of the most successful war.

My joy is mixed with sadness because of the necessity of uprooting settlements....The settlement activists who are engaged in vociferous protests, and for whom the Prime Minister has inexplicable affection, do not impress me....The creature you fashioned has risen up against you, tying down the IDF and using up its resources after having become accustomed to being permitted to go against the government, the Knesset and the law....

We members of the agricultural sector are particularly sensitive to abandoning land which one has plowed, sown and harvested....That might be one of the reasons why we could not usually countenance the supplanting of farmers of the neighboring nation from land which they had plowed and sown and planted....We wanted to see the settlements in the Rafah area as a defense belt from El-Arish to Sharm el-Sheikh, cutting Gaza off from Egypt. We never regarded the Rafah area as a purely territorial achievement....We advocated border adjustments for security purposes in the Rafah area and the West Bank. In the final

event, however, the Zionism of "not one inch" has gone bankrupt, and the founding fathers of Zionism who advocated settling the maximal number of Jews on the minimal possible area of land were right. The situation we have reached eleven years after the Six Day War is a minimal number of Jews on the maximal area of land. That is not true Zionism and does not embody security for our state. Perhaps the time has finally come for the nation to discover Galilee, the Negev and the Arava, which are almost empty of Jewish settlements. Once peace comes I hope that many Jews will immigrate to Israel, and that is the greatest Zionist vision for me.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister sought to put the responsibility for the dismantling of the settlements in the Sinai on the Knesset. The only person who said straightaway that the choice was between an agreement or settlements in the Sinai was the Minister of Defense. That is the sad truth which a brave leader has to face fairly and squarely, or be accused of cowardice and failure to accept responsibility....Egypt is the most important Arab country with the greatest military potential. Taking it out of the circle of war against us makes the greatest contribution to our security, despite all our pain over the settlements in the Sinai....There is no security greater than peace itself.

I do not begrudge the fact that the agreement with Egypt has been attained during the rule of the Likud under the leadership of Menahem Begin, provided the Prime Minister ceases trying to confuse the issue, using linguistic trickery and flights of rhetorical fancy. I presume that this was the only peace that could have been attained in the political circumstances obtaining at Camp David. We will not cast aspersions on what was achieved, but we will criticize the continuing demagoguery....It's time the Prime Minister began calling a spade a spade, acknowledging that "Palestinian people" means just that and "legitimate rights" means precisely what it says....There's nothing to be ashamed of. Did you promise President Carter to freeze settlement activities for the three months of the negotiations or the five years of the transition to autonomy, as the President announced...? I understand that there can be no negotiations with the inhabitants of the West Bank in the shadow of new settlements. There is a political connection between the two parts of the agreement. There's no reason to hide that. The nation will understand, even though the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education incited Gush Emunim to act against the decisions of the Knesset and the Alignment government. Even though the Prime Minister promised that during his term in office many new settlements would be established. But this is a democratic country, and the majority will decide, not a handful of fanatical extremists.

When you brought the plan for autonomy in Judea and Samaria plus Israeli sovereignty as the solution to the Palestinian problem we criticized you fiercely, advocating a territorial compromise. We claimed

that your plan was evasive and dangerous, embodying the delusion of ruling one million Arabs forever in exchange for the Sinai. With President Carter you reached the formula of autonomy as a transition stage....In the final event you both came up against a blank wall. Your movement has always preached totem and taboo, while mine has advocated attaining defensible borders. Your slogan of sovereignty was offset by our demand for border adjustments for defense purposes. We do not wish to rule one million Arabs.

I suggest that we refrain from spoiling what has been achieved by idle chatter. Perhaps the government is relying on the Arab rejectionist front, because the Palestinian leaders have always had a special talent for spoiling their own chances....They still adhere to the path which the Prime Minister has only recently abandoned of all or nothing. The Camp David accord was attained by virtue of the previous stages and the process of the conclusion of the war. There was the separation of forces. There were the interim agreements of the Alignment government and which the leader of the opposition of the time termed "Munich agreements."

I suggest that we refrain from boasting. The Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip deserve to be allowed to express their national yearnings. The Palestinian tragedy derives primarily from a leadership which thrives on working itself into a frenzy of enthusiasm and fanaticism, but that tragedy does not serve Israel's interests....We are walking a tightrope between Jordan and the Palestinians....We do not want Israeli sovereignty over Judea and Samaria, but neither do we want a separate Palestinian state. We believe that the Palestinians should implement their right to self-determination through association with Jordan. In the final event, however, the Palestinians will decide for themselves....

M. Wilner (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, the positive aspect which emanates from the Israeli public at present is the fierce desire for peace. This has been a test. It transpires that the major part of the nation gladly accepts peace and is ready to slaughter the sacred cows of both the Likud and the Alignment. We have always advocated peace, peace with the Arab peoples, and first of all with the other nation which dwells in this land with us, the Palestinians. By doing so we expressed the true feelings of the entire nation, it now transpires. Such phrases as "no more war," "no more bloodshed," "no more widows and orphans," "no more bereaved parents," are sacred and we will do our utmost to see that they are fulfilled.

Peace is the supreme interest of both the Israeli and the Arab nations. Peace is the key to security, for without peace there is no security....Our assessment of the Camp David accords is based on its contribution to a genuine and just peace....We are forced to conclude that they have not led to a substantial change in the policy of the Likud gov-

ernment and its leader Begin. They have not led the Begin government to abandon the idea of the Greater Land of Israel. He signed the Camp David accords under American pressure. He is prepared to return the Sinai to Egypt and apparently also the Golan Heights to Syria in order to hold onto the Greater Land of Israel. That is nothing new, really. We all know that the National Unity Government of the Alignment and the Likud decided already in July 1967 to hand the Sinai back to Egypt and the Golan Heights to Syria if they agreed to leave the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in Israel's hands and abandon the Palestinians completely.

Now, at Camp David, President Sadat has signed the Likud government's "autonomy" plan....That is the significant change which Camp David has brought about. Sadat has agreed that the IDF should continue to rule the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for five years and more, and the Prime Minister has said that we will continue to demand Israeli sovereignty over the territories....He has also said that existing settlements will be expanded and after three months the government will discuss establishing new ones. Is that a policy of peace? Is it not a prescription for renewed war...?

The main issue which should have been dealt with at Camp David is not the Sinai or the Golan Heights, it is an independent state for the Palestinians on the West Bank—including East Jerusalem—and the Gaza Strip, and it is unfortunate that Sadat seems to have forgotten things he originally said....The decision to establish a Palestinian state was made thirty years ago by the U.N....

E. Moyal (Alignment): They refused in 1947.

M. Wilner (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality): If a specific leader refused that doesn't mean that a nation is to be deprived of its basic right to self-determination and an independent state. At Camp David it was decided to deprive the Palestinians of that right, and it is strange that that has not been mentioned here. If it had been decided to leave that central issue open, that would have been marginally better...but Carter, Sadat and Begin agreed at Camp David that on no account would there be an independent Palestinian state, the Palestinian people would not be allowed to determine its own fate and that of its occupied lands, and only Palestinian collaborators would sit with Hussein, Sadat and Begin to discuss matters....

No one has the right to tell another nation it has no right to a state of its own....That kind of approach can have a boomerang effect. It is in Israel's own best interests, for the sake of its security, for the sake of its younger generation, to enable the Palestinian people to attain a state of its own....We are embarking on a dangerous adventure. Who empowered Sadat to conduct negotiations on behalf of the Palestinians? That is megalomania. He scarcely represents the Egyptians. There is widespread opposition to him in Egypt. All the Arab nations oppose the

Camp David accords. Most of the Egyptians oppose that dictatorial ruler, and everything he does is built on sand....

The Prime Minister has omitted to mention a secret clause in the Camp David accords, namely, that he has agreed to the establishment of an American naval base in Israel, as well as other U.S. military bases, if required, for the protection of the "free world."...In other words, Israel may be dragged into a global conflict which does not concern it....We oppose the Camp David accords and the establishment of U.S. military bases in Israel. We do not wish to replace British occupation with American occupation. We want an independent, peace-loving Israel with a foreign policy of non-alignment.

Genuine peace will come to us only by means of a comprehensive peace with Egypt, Syria and Jordan, and first of all with the Palestinians, through the Geneva Conference with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the recognized representative of the Palestinians, the PLO, with the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. in the chair....All the neighboring countries and the PLO are prepared to recognize the independent State of Israel within the borders of 4 June 1967. I propose that on that basis the Knesset sign a peace treaty with all the neighboring countries, including the Palestinian state, thereby bringing true peace and genuine security to the region.

...
S.J. Gross (Aguda): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, there is no doubt that we are facing a very difficult, even crucial and cruel, decision...."Peace" is a magical word. It is the word we use to greet one another each day. On the face of things it would seem that the yearned-for day has arrived and we are on our way to peace. Nonetheless, the hands of all of us will shake as we raise them to approve the Camp David accords, first because of the high and painful price we are being asked to pay, and second because we do not know how genuine Egypt's intentions are....No one can know the answer because the future is unknown and we need a great deal of Divine assistance to reach genuine peace. Nonetheless, my party group has decided to vote in favor of approving the Camp David accords....

For thirty years we have been awaiting the day when we could sign a peace treaty with our neighbors, or at least one of them....That day is now approaching, and we cannot reject the hand proffered to us in peace....We have known thirty years of war and tension, bereavement and suffering, and we must take the chance of peace, even though the price is high....Could we accept the responsibility for rejecting the opportunity being offered to us...? Apart from anything else, it would heighten still further our isolation in the world....

The U.S. President, Jimmy Carter, has jeopardized all his prestige in order to lay the foundation for peace in the Middle East. For that purpose he shut himself in at Camp David for almost two weeks, neglecting

all his other duties as leader of a Great Power, with the backing of the entire American nation. From the viewpoint of security, economics and global strategy, how could we turn our backs on the U.S. President and the American people? Neither the world nor the majority of the Israeli nation would have understood it had we refused to accept peace at the price of dismantling the settlements in the Rafah area, however close they are to all our hearts....

After two weeks of exhaustive and exhausting discussions at Camp David, the Prime Minister rose to the occasion and, out of a sense of the supreme responsibility of a leader who understands the heart of the nation and loves it wholeheartedly, he and his companions decided to sign the framework agreement....The Prime Minister was right to leave the decision about removing the Rafah settlements for the Knesset....We must take that difficult decision upon ourselves so as not to miss this historic opportunity of signing a peace treaty with Egypt and laying the foundation for peace with all our neighbors. The hopes and the hazards are intertwined. No one can predict what the morrow will bring and what developments may follow, but we must take the first step, and if not now, then when...?

Many people ask, rightly, how it can be that Menahem Begin, the member of the IZL and the underground, the great patriot, is prepared to make such far-reaching concessions....King Solomon, the wisest of men, gives us an explanation in Proverbs: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."...Thus, Begin the member of the IZL and of Herut, Begin the leader of the opposition, is not like Prime Minister Begin. The decision is not in his hands. We believe that it is the hand of Divine Providence that has brought Menahem Begin to power at this time and led him to sign peace agreements with Egypt out of the sense of responsibility of a leader who has had to abandon principles which were sacred in order to prevent war and bloodshed. The success of the peace agreements depends to a great extent on our unity at this fateful moment....To my religious colleagues and the members of Gush Emunim I would like to say that the Messiah has not yet come, and we must still pray for complete redemption.

We must make sure that settlement activity is stopped during the course of the peace negotiations, so that these are not jeopardized. I appeal to the members of the government to say as little as possible, because the various conflicting statements harm us....During the negotiations with Egypt every effort must be made to avoid dismantling settlements, possibly by offering other concessions....We hope that the peace treaty with Egypt will be signed in another two or three months, but we are concerned at the prospect of free and open communication between Israel and Cairo. This could lead to moral deterioration, the establishment of joint nightclubs and places of entertainment, assim-

lation and the erosion of our unique Jewish character and values....This has happened in our distant past, and we must not let it happen again....

Consequently, once the peace treaty with Egypt is signed, the government of Israel must devote itself to tackling internal problems, improving the education system and heightening the sense of attachment of Israel's children to our holy places. The government must allocate more funds for welfare purposes, reducing social gaps and improving the work ethic. Internal peace and a good, healthy society based on the values of religion and morals will assure genuine and stable peace....

...

S. Hillel (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, in all this government's policy statements and actions it is difficult to disentangle deception from self-deception, denial from denigration. By now everyone knows that this government has denied the traditional principles and positions of the Likud and the NRP, and above all Israel's defense needs. But worse still are the attempts to obscure the issue which have accompanied every step this government has taken. At first they denied having promised Sadat Egyptian sovereignty over the whole of the Sinai, claiming that the Prime Minister's "chemistry" had had its effect. After that they had to change their tune and explain that had they not said that Sadat would not have come....

When we said that the true significance of the government's plan for the Sinai was abandoning the belt of settlements which assured our security, the government denied that vehemently and even began selling plots of land in Yamit....Now that it is evident to everyone that the autonomy plan involves our complete withdrawal from the West Bank, the government is selling land there. This is a government with an ideology of land speculation. We have all heard the pathetic descriptions of the way our delegation at Camp David worked, what it worked so hard on and at what time its members went to bed. For that they are to be praised, but not for the result, which smacks of dictates, an imposed settlement and submission to an ultimatum. Otherwise how can one explain Israel's undertaking to build a road between Egypt and Jordan near Eilat...? For what purpose and why...? And that is just one example of many....

At Camp David our delegation walked about in an Americans' paradise, but its members knew perfectly well that they had to give President Sadat and President Carter what they wanted. Upon arriving in the U.S. the Prime Minister said that he regarded it as his duty to enhance the prestige of the U.S. President. That objective was indeed attained in full, and the price is primarily the fate of the West Bank and the Golan Heights, because the Sinai was sold in advance. What was it President Sadat used to say? "The Sinai is not a problem." The Sinai with a road thrown in gratis.

At Camp David you walked about as if in wonderland—golf courses, bicycles, a rocking horse, colored balloons and the compliments flying. It was in fact Disneycamp. And you accepted dictates and decisions appropriate to the concepts of the world of Alice in Wonderland, playing "pretend" and "opposites:" granting autonomy and cancelling the military government—the only authority for issuing legislation, including the sequestration of land—holding elections, establishing an Arab police force and closing the IDF in camps, while at the same time saying that there would be no foreign rule and nothing had happened. Is that deception or self-deception...?

You have undertaken to remove settlements and to establish no new ones in the West Bank, while at the same time the Prime Minister speaks of expanding existing settlements....We are witnessing boasting, self-aggrandizement and a lack of realism. The Prime Minister has stated in public that the IDF will remain in the West Bank for more than five years....That is all very well and good, but until quite recently he was saying that the settlements in the Sinai under Egyptian sovereignty would be defended by "Israel's security forces." Now it transpires that it was just an empty boast, or perhaps deception....

Even before the negotiations began we had relinquished the West Bank, just as we had relinquished the Sinai....The autonomy plan will inevitably lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state....In the West Bank the government is repeating the mistake it made regarding the Sinai. We have maneuvered ourselves into a position whereby once Hussein and the Palestinians come into the picture we will appear as those who are unmindful of the great sacrifice they are making, of the risk they are taking, and because we have nothing to give we will doubtless throw a road in free....

Like everyone else in Israel, I pray for the success of the peace negotiations with Egypt, and together with my party group I will vote for the proposal to approve the Camp David accords....But I do not accept the government's course at the beginning of the negotiations and its concessions today. What we are talking about is not the "price of peace" which we are supposedly being asked to pay, but the precariousness of the peace which will not be based on defensible borders. Above all, I vehemently reject the distorted idea of autonomy, which is a sure prescription for the establishment of a Palestinian state and the overthrow of the agreement, especially if the policy of establishing settlements in the West Bank is adhered to....

The government's ideas and actions in the West Bank will lead either to a direct confrontation with Egypt, the U.S. and Jordan—if it joins the process by then—or to the daily deterioration of the situation and the weakening of our hold on the Jordan Valley, the Etzion Bloc and the Golan Heights. The deterioration will not only pertain to security, it will also be moral, and the latter has already begun, being a direct and

inevitable result of the government's policy....At Camp David Begin was in a cleft stick, caught between accepting dictates or being responsible for the collapse of the talks....He will drag us into that situation again with his policy of all or nothing, which always ends with nothing....

We would all be betraying our mission if we were to let things happen in the future as they have now. We must take steps to prevent a recurrence of what happened at Disneycamp—submission to dictates accompanied by verbal pyrotechnics and denials....We should have taken action ten months ago and since then....My colleagues in the opposition have not done enough to encourage a dialog with the Arab countries, perhaps because they failed to realize that those who demand everything vociferously relinquish everything off-handedly. The members of the coalition who are protesting today did not want to see the outcome of this process and work to prevent it when that was still possible, either because they still believed that their leader would not let them down and deny his statements, or because they hesitated to harm their young coalition.

Now they have woken up, but too late, and it is doubtful whether the damage can be repaired. But it is not too late with regard to the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, the Etzion Bloc and Jerusalem, if we act wisely and well, beyond party interests and coalition or opposition convenience. I appeal to all those who are concerned for Israel's security to act in partnership henceforth, to prevent the continuation of the path which involves pulling the wool over people's eyes, deception and self-deception, denial and denigration, and to prevent the end-of-season sale which will become a closing sale which we are currently witnessing.

...

Y. Sarid (Alignment): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, if the Prime Minister had returned from Camp David empty-handed, if the peace initiative had fallen by the wayside, I would have condemned him.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: I would still have survived.

Y. Sarid (Alignment): But as you saw, it helped nonetheless. Our prompting during recent months was not in vain all the same, it seems.

D. Shilansky (Likud): If you think that your nagging had any effect, you don't know the Prime Minister and you're very wrong.

A. Rubinstein (Movement for Change and Initiative): Even the Prime Minister's party group thinks it had an effect.

Y. Sarid (Alignment): MK Shilansky, you're preventing me complimenting the Prime Minister. If you listen patiently you'll hear that too.

Now that the Prime Minister has returned with tidings of peace I say, render unto Begin that which is Begin's. Whatever his role in attaining the Camp David accords may have been, I will not detract from his achievement in any way. Anyone who brings peace to Israel will have the country's eternal gratitude. Nine months ago, when the Prime Minister first presented his autonomy plan to the Knesset, we supported him unreservedly....Had not the Foreign Minister made his speech about bayonets there would have been no doubt in our hearts about voting for the Prime Minister's plan and encouraging his efforts. Peace is at the forefront of our concerns, and we will not let any narrow party interests foil it in any way....

T. Eshel (Alignment): Who is "we"?

Y. Sarid (Alignment): A few minutes ago MK Hillel spoke here....I disagreed with a lot of what he said. I understand that he represents you, I am currently representing other colleagues....When the Prime Minister encourages peace he will find us at his side, and when he suppresses the chances of peace he will find us confronting him....

When some of our number said repeatedly over the course of many years that Israel had no interest in having sovereignty over occupied territories and that appropriate security arrangements there would suffice, we were accused of being public enemies. Menahem Begin relinquished the entire Sinai, making do with security arrangements, and he is not a public enemy, and that is his strength. When for many years we said that the price of peace might be the dismantling of settlements we were accused of being heretics. Menahem Begin is now dismantling settlements, and he is by no account a heretic, and therein lies his strength. When we said that the autonomy plan could not be a permanent arrangement and that the bayonets had to be removed from it, we were charged with being defeatists. Menahem Begin turned his plan into a transition plan and removed the bayonets from it, and he is not regarded by the majority of the nation as a defeatist, and therein, again, lies his strength.

When we said that it was necessary to recognize the legitimate rights and just demands of the Palestinian people we were described as traitors. Menahem Begin has recognized their rights and demands, and that is his strength. When we said that a separate and full peace treaty with Egypt was possible we were told that we were in error. Menahem Begin is bringing a separate peace treaty with Egypt before the Knesset today and he is not in error, and that is his strength....Menahem Begin has displayed courage and responsibility at the very last moment....

It would appear that Menahem Begin is about to sign a peace agreement with Egypt which is as good as any which could have been attained, though not because the Prime Minister is a past-master of the art

of negotiations, or because the process was devoid of grave mistakes, inexplicable oddities and unforgivable omissions. He will sign a peace agreement which is as good as any which could have been attained because a basically similar agreement would have been imposed on anyone who conducted the negotiations. Eleven years after the Six Day War there was no escaping a settlement which was imposed to a greater or lesser extent by mighty forces and circumstances which were virtually unalterable.

I have great respect for the Prime Minister for realizing that this is the fateful moment which should on no account be missed, otherwise Israel would be beset by a crisis. But I cannot respect the Prime Minister for continuing to delude the nation, as he has done for many years. When the Prime Minister proclaims with absolute certainty that there will never be a Palestinian state he is deluding the nation, and therein lies his weakness. When the Prime Minister says with complete confidence that what happened with Egypt will not happen with regard to the West Bank and the Golan Heights he is misleading the nation again, and that is his weakness. When the Prime Minister states that many more settlements will be established he is cozening the nation again, and that is his weakness. When the Prime Minister claims that with the Camp David agreement he did not abandon a single one of his principles, he is cheating the nation, and therein lies his weakness. Instead of telling the nation what the situation really is, in order to prepare it for the trials ahead, he gives it an overdose of tranquilizers....Some groups are addicted to those tranquilizers, gladly swallowing tales of the Greater Land of Israel, Israeli sovereignty over Judea and Samaria and endless settlement activities, but they will have to endure a rude awakening in the end....

People are saying that two people will go down in Israel's history, David Ben-Gurion as the founder of the state, and Menahem Begin as the leader who brought peace....Ben-Gurion's place in Israel's history is assured. He proved that it is not enough to have the courage to make decisions, one also needs the courage to see the situation as it really is and realize what its results will be. When he saw it he did not conceal it from the nation, he did not mislead himself or others. He saw the situation for what it was and decided to accept Partition. He was prepared to forego extensive territory and dismantle many settlements. I would like to conclude by quoting what Ben-Gurion said in defense of the Partition proposal: "We are aware of the limits of our strength and the spheres of our opposition. We do not exaggerate our strength and are not entitled to be intoxicated by the wonderful displays of heroism of our youth. We must realize that there are limits to our strength and that we need our might not only for resistance, because we utterly reject the anti-Zionist slogan 'might is right.' We need our might first and foremost for our efforts of construction and creation, for maintaining the

basis of our existence. We must use all our power, but our power is limited, and is required above all for settlement and immigration."

When Menahem Begin signs the first peace treaty and accompanies his action with words which are wise and true, without false visions and unfounded formulae, he will also have made a place for himself in the annals of Israel. When the Prime Minister speaks to his nation not only about might and power but also about the wisdom of strength and its limitations, and when he can distinguish the main points of Zionism from its incidentals, the gate of Jewish history will be open to him and he will go in.

A. Eliav (Sheli): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset Members, we will vote wholeheartedly for the Camp David agreements....This is not quite the peace we had hoped for, and it was not from this stable that we expected it to emerge, but that is no reason not to welcome it. We know what difficult birth-pangs accompanied it and how vulnerable it still is....I would like to paraphrase Shakespeare and say: I am a Jew, an Israeli and a Zionist, like my colleagues in my party. Do we not have eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? You who seek to bring peace today attempted to quash and thwart them. If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you poison us, do we not die? For merely speaking about the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and the need to exchange territories for full peace did not some of you prick us until we bled? Did they not try to kill us politically and socially? Shylock concludes with the words: "If you wrong us, what should our sufferance be? Why, revenge." But I say, no. We will not take revenge. We will not demand our pound of flesh. We will ask only one thing of you and the nation, that you listen to us.

Seven years ago we spoke of the need to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in return for peace, after having demilitarized it with mutual guarantees, and to return to the international border....During negotiations between our two countries our representatives may conclude that the Sinai Peninsula can be turned into a peninsula of peace, with local and international tourism passing through on its way to and from Cairo and Luxor, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem....Perhaps it sounds utopian, but it may yet come to pass....

From the outset we opposed the establishment of settlements across the Green Line, claiming that the territories should be occupied by the IDF, and by it alone, as a pledge against the day when peace came. We said that the young settlers had to be told the truth, namely, that one day, when there was peace, they would have to pay a very high price....

As a veteran settler and pioneer I would like to say that there is no joy for us in the discomfiture of the settlers of the Rafah area. We understand their distress and after today's vote will do everything we can to ensure that the government takes care of them and helps them rebuild their homes in Israel....

I would like to appeal to every individual in every sector of Israel to listen to what we have to say and take heed of the problem which still remains unresolved, that of the Palestinians. It is our duty to issue a Balfour declaration, as it were, for the Palestinians....This would have immense psychological and practical significance....We must take the initiative in this, and not wait for the defeated, confused Palestinians to be the first to express readiness to make peace with us....They are not yet ready for that. Their leaders are still trapped in the dream of revenge and destruction or are plunged into despair from which they cannot emerge without our help....

I believe that a declaration of that kind would have a tremendous effect on both the Palestinians and the entire Arab world....The whole world will regard it as a noble gesture which Israel is prepared to make for peace, after having been victorious in so many wars and despite its historic right to the land it has occupied....We must state our readiness to live in peace alongside a Palestinian state on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip and whose special relationship with Jordan will be determined by its inhabitants. We must wait patiently until partners for a dialog with us arise from within the Palestinians. We must not be deterred by a lack of reaction or a hostile response to our declaration....

Our two nations, which are small in size but rich in human resources, can live side by side in peace, encouraging cooperation in commerce and trade, culture and science, and constituting a bridge to larger countries in the region and the world....We must do everything we can to bring peace nearer, and first of all by conducting a dialog with the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular....We must give the Palestinians in the territories the right to hold political meetings and exchange ideas freely....We do not want to live alongside a nation of sycophants and people with a slave mentality....We must help them to stand up straight, not by relaxing our war against those of them who seek to kill us, but by giving an imprimatur to their basic right to self-determination....

Z. Wertheimer (Movement for Change and Initiative): Distinguished Speaker and Knesset, I congratulate the Prime Minister and the team of ministers on their success in the negotiations at Camp David and their tidings of peace with Egypt. Unfortunately, I must add that I think the negotiations could have been conducted differently, that certain statements were unnecessary and that the timing of the settlement activities was unfortunate in the extreme. In my view, those things created a crisis atmosphere, preventing a dialog and leading to an impasse from which it was possible to emerge only by total and complete submission....We must learn from this experience. I ask the Prime Minister not to allow himself to be led astray by those who do not want this peace and to refrain from making superfluous statements....

We must give thanks today to all the fighters and commanders in the underground movements and the IDF who have enabled us to reach today's debate....It is no coincidence that the negotiations at Camp David were conducted by three senior military men, the former Commander of the IZL and hero of the War of Independence, a former Chief of the General Staff and hero of the Sinai Campaign, and a former Commander of the Air Force and the Military Intelligence Service and a hero of the Six Day War....

But now the turn of the commanders of peace has come, and they must be civilians, people with a new, civilian outlook. I hope the era of wars in Israel's history has ended or is ending. Only a new leadership, one which sees things differently, will be able to lead us out of the state of existence of a military camp. In economics a distinction is made between an entrepreneur and an administrator, one not necessarily being able to do the work of the other....It is incumbent upon the Prime Minister to improve the functioning of this government so that its emphasis will be on concepts of peace, with all that this implies....After fifty years of war this means extensive psychological and educational work with maximal faith and love....

This Knesset and all the leaders of the nation were held captive by the military concept. Throughout this Knesset's term, for over a year, no serious debate has been held on economic or social matters. The only thing it has been concerned with is foreign affairs and defense matters. The Knesset has become another military forum....

As someone who has struggled all his life for pioneering Zionist settlement outside the urban centers, my heart bleeds for the settlers of Yamit and its environs who dreamed of pioneering settlement, built their houses and developed their farms. But I regret to say that we appear to have a double standard, because thousands of people have been trying to settle in Galilee for years. They are Zionists and good people, too. Among the Members of this House there are dozens who have prevented this....Zionism means settling inside the Green Line and in Galilee, too.

Finally, I call on the Knesset and the entire nation to prepare itself for peace, to build it, to cultivate a peace leadership, to develop the economy and society and above all to finally implement the Zionist vision of living in peace and honor....This means being economically self-supporting and not relying on \$2.5 billion from the Americans....

...

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): Madam Speaker, Knesset Members, I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Minister of Defense and MK Shimon Peres for having had the courage, after years of illusions, dreams, hopes and lack of realism, to come to their senses and put the situation before us as it really is, telling us that the way is open to peace today and that we have to pay a price for

it....I mention Shimon Peres because the Labor party was at least as responsible for creating illusions, and if there are settlers among us today who have a problem because they thought that they were the emissaries of the government, that misapprehension originated with Golda's government and the Galili document....

What does "uprooting people from their land" in the Rafah area mean? Do we own that land? Having a claim to land also involves a certain amount of time....Zionism never demanded the areas beyond the Rafah-Eilat line. That may have been a mistake, but it did not claim those areas as part of Israel....It did not even annex them. Nor did it annex Judea and Samaria....After the Six Day War the National Unity Government, which comprised almost all the parties, decided not to impose Israeli law on Judea, Samaria and the other territories which we occupied in war but to place them under military rule until peace came.

And now peace has come....Hardly any of the Knesset Members have expressed doubts about the genuineness of the Egyptians' intentions....Attempts have been made to sanctify the attachment to the Rafah area. There are people living in this country who were living in certain places not for eight or five or three years but from the day they were born, and their parents and grandparents had lived there before them, and they were uprooted from their homes. War and peace cause people to move from one place to another....After wars there have been population exchanges all over the world....

E. Olmert (Likud): Do you agree to population exchanges for non-Jews? Don't evade my question. You're always preaching only at Jews. Do you support population exchanges for Arabs too? What is this demagoguery?

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): I'm not preaching, I'm simply noting facts....We never demanded that territory, we did not annex it and we did not impose Israeli law on it. We said that we would hold it until we had peace and security. And for someone who speaks about security to give up airfields so lightly is astonishing. But to say that this is the end of Zionism is going too far.

For nineteen years, until the Six Day War, we developed the Lahish and Ta'anak areas, Galilee and the Negev still remain empty, and we absorbed two million immigrants. Isn't that Zionism...? It is true that we suffer from traumas, but so do our Arab neighbors. Their trauma is that it is impossible to live in peace with us because of our expansionism and our dream of the Land of Israel extending from the Euphrates to the Nile....

I propose that we examine the possibility which has opened before us....I am not impressed by what MK Moshe Shamir said about national pride. Sadat also has a problem concerning national pride and sacred

land....There will be peace and with our national pride we will manage by building Israel.

I have heard that many people refuse to vote for the agreement because it hints at the cessation of settlement activity in Judea and Samaria. Where's the logic in that? Do you want additional settlements there, once again misleading people who will sit in the Knesset gallery and demand to be taken care of because the government sent them? Why entrench oneself in the heart of another nation which wants self-determination just as we did?

A. Lin (Likud): In Galilee too?

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): No, because there is sovereignty there. The conclusion is to start settling Galilee.

E. Olmert (Likud): You support the agreement and regard it as a model for withdrawal to the 1967 borders.

S. Aloni (Citizens' Rights Movement): I regard it as the first step in extricating ourselves from madness and going towards peace, peace in which we will have a sovereign Jewish state where it will be possible to fulfill Zionism without exploiting others, to which it will be possible to bring large numbers of immigrants and where we will not have to live by the sword. That will not happen until we recognize the rights of others. For that reason we must support the agreement and realize that we are facing a difficult time. We must cultivate anew the dream of building things with our own hands.

The people who oppose peace have distributed a leaflet likening this government to that of Petain in Nazi-occupied France....I want the public to know who the adherents of the Land of Israel are. They say that if the Knesset votes for the breakthrough to peace it will be putting an end to Zionism. That is not so. What we are witnessing is a new message for the Zionist movement. I suggest that each and every Knesset Member examine his conscience and think independently, rather than relying on us, the opposition, to support the agreement. You must support it too.

...

G. Hausner (Independent Liberals): Mr. Speaker, distinguished Knesset, the eyes of the world are focused on the Knesset today and the hearts of the Jewish people beat anxiously in anticipation of what will be said and decided. We are at a crossroads unlike any in the history of the state, and must decide today not in response to the actions of others, not to defend ourselves from dangers, but choosing freely as a nation which is the master of its fate....Whatever decision is made will contain both good and bad, both hope and hazard, and that is why the nation is anxious, divided and thoughtful.

Because of the nature of the problem and because of the concessions we have been asked to make, it is inappropriate to praise the agreement

extravagantly....On the other hand, how can its opponents condemn peace...? This is a time for careful thought as we approach an historical decision and an attempt to foresee the future. The agreement has been brought before the Knesset to reject or accept, because that is the agreement which was obtained....There is no guarantee that this was the only agreement which could have been obtained....The relinquishment of sovereignty over the whole of the Sinai, which was done even before President Sadat came to Jerusalem last year, inevitably involved the dismantling of the settlements....Only history will judge whether that was absolutely necessary....

We are facing a cruel dilemma: everything or nothing, giving up the settlements with the chance of peace, or retaining a settlement and defense advantage with continued hostility. The Prime Minister, the architect of the agreement, is worthy of praise for having risen above party boundaries, shaking off the chains of political platforms and preferring the central national objective. Thus has Menahem Begin been revealed as a statesman and a leader and not merely as the head of a movement and a party.

There are three reasons for our concern. First, will the agreement with Egypt endure and justify the heavy sacrifice? Secondly, will the agreement constitute a precedent for the future determination of borders regarding other areas? Thirdly, we are being required to annul our splendid settlement efforts in the Sinai. No one can know what is in another man's heart. We cannot plumb the depths of President Sadat's mind and know what his intentions, and those of his aides, are. Egypt's agreement to abandon war as a solution to the situation is a political and psychological revolution. It would seem that this time the intention of bringing peace to our two countries is genuine, otherwise why would he have come to Jerusalem, gone to Camp David and risked the hostility of the Arab world...? Sadat could easily have waited for an imposed American solution, which would doubtless have achieved more where Judea and Samaria were concerned...?

There is no guarantee as to what will happen in Egypt after Sadat. It is to be hoped that if an atmosphere of peace prevails it will generate its own momentum and peace will continue. The memory of the destruction wreaked on the region by the wars of the past should also help to maintain peace. Nothing is guaranteed, but we must give it a try. The arrangement regarding the West Bank and the Gaza Strip also gives cause for concern. On no account can the Egyptian example serve as a precedent. Our long, dangerous eastern border will not permit us that....The details of the agreement with Egypt cannot apply to the West Bank, the Gaza Strip or the Golan Heights.

I agree to a Jordanian-Palestinian formula solution. For years my colleagues and I fought for the participation of the residents of the territories in a peace agreement, for without them there can be no permanent

solution. I am pleased to note that the Likud government is implementing that approach. This does not mean that we agree to withdraw to the 1967 border, which was never a recognized international boundary, or that we will agree to remove settlements from there. That will be anathema to us, not peace. We must say this clearly to President Carter, the Arab leaders and the world....There is a very real danger that the autonomy which will be applied in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip may eventually become a Palestinian state. The nation opposes such a state vehemently. We can prevent its emergence not by force but by a sage policy which will make it abundantly clear that the establishment of such a state opposes security and peace. The residents of the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip may therefore rest assured that they will remain where they are forever.

S. Arbeli-Almoslino (Alignment): Who guarantees them that?

G. Hausner (Independent Liberals): It is regrettable that the previous government, in which I participated, did not manage to establish more settlements along the Jordan Valley, which is the front line for defense, because I do not know whether future settlement activity will be possible in areas which will come under the autonomy arrangement....

The entire nation grieves over the necessity of removing the settlements in the Sinai....My movement has settlements there, too. The government must make another supreme effort to try and keep those settlements in place, possibly by an exchange of territory. But if every effort is to no avail and the dismantling of the settlements is unavoidable, it will be done for the sake of peace, than which there is no higher national interest....The central objective of our national enterprise is to dwell in peace, absorb immigrants, develop the state and advance national values. The opportunity to do that has come. That is genuine, fundamental Zionism.

Those who propose that we vote against the agreement must also see the alternative....Today, after Camp David, it is Israel's complete isolation, endangering our sources of supplies for the IDF and jeopardizing our national existence....The main lesson which emerges from the terrible Holocaust our nation underwent in this generation is that disaster overtook us when we were alone and isolated from the outside and split from within. We must not maneuver ourselves into isolation and internal dissension.

In 1947, when the Jewish nation had to decide whether to accept the partition of Palestine in order to establish a Jewish state, there were grave differences of opinion....In the event, history has proved that those who accepted the chance offered then by the political circumstances were right....Had we not seized that opportunity then it is doubtful whether it would have presented itself again for a long time. That is the situation today, too. The advantages of the agreement before us outweigh

its drawbacks....Consequently, despite everything, we will support the government and vote for the agreement, hoping and praying for peace.

...

G. Cohen (Likud): Distinguished Knesset, it is regrettable that the Prime Minister does not have the courage to stay and listen to what I have to say, but I hope it will reach him. Less than a year ago, when the Prime Minister presented his peace plan to the Knesset, I told him that he was mistaken. Today I tell him something far more serious, that he is misleading the nation, and possibly himself as well....

There is nothing worse than deception. The peace plan is a tissue of deception. My colleagues and I feel that we have been deceived, betrayed, cheated....Not just because the peace plan involves far-reaching concessions, but because the Prime Minister did not see fit to put the conception on the basis of which he has led this movement to the test....This means that we have to ask ourselves: were we really wrong all along, and historical Mapai right, or did our leader simply not have the strength to implement our course...?

There was another simple, democratic deception of the voters. The voters voted for something else, the opposite program to this one. If the leader cannot implement it, if he has been maneuvered into a corner, he should say so to the nation and resign. But he did neither one nor the other. And everyone feels cheated. There is a way back, he has been told to take it, but he refuses to do so....There has been a long series of deceptions, starting with statements about retiring to one of the Rafah area settlements and generally assuring the settlers in the Sinai that they could tend their fields and rest easy, that everything would be alright....Why should we believe him today when he tells us to rest easy, assuring us that everything will be alright...? How many promises have you broken? Why should we rest easy about Jerusalem? Where is your credibility...? You succumbed to pressure once....

For thousands of years this nation was told to give in a little, compromise a little, and the nation refused to do so, for if it had we would not be here today....I am not so naive as to think that compromises are not necessary when one is in power, but one compromises on things that are marginal, not on the central issue, not on the very heart of the Land of Israel....Where are the dozens of settlements which you promised? Why have you granted recognition to the Palestinians, with all that this implies...?

The Prime Minister has often stood here and claimed to speak on behalf of Zionism and love for our country....In my eyes, and not in mine alone, Zionism is readiness to sacrifice something now for the sake of the Land of Israel, and not to sacrifice the Land of Israel for something now. That is how we sent people to fight, to sacrifice themselves. That is how the Prime Minister sent people to the gallows....In all the movements people were prepared to sacrifice themselves for the

Land of Israel. There may be some for whom peace is worth confining Israel to within the Green Line. For us it is not, and for the Prime Minister it was not in the past.

I don't believe in this peace either. I think it is a peace of patches, of deceptions, of cracks. It will not come into existence....Not even for genuine peace am I prepared to give up Judea and Samaria, Bethlehem and Shechem....There are people who are prepared to give up those areas for peace but not Petah Tikva, Ramat Gan or Nahariya. But I am not prepared to give up Judea and Samaria. That is the true Zionist approach, in my view.

But first of all and above all it is the truth which matters. Saying today that the only thing that matters is peace is not the truth. Even the supporters of Peace Now don't believe that. Even they have some point or other which they are not prepared to relinquish for peace....But you continue deceiving us, you avoid answering the question as to what will be done with one million Arabs, and you take the steps which will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state, without actually admitting it....Menahem Begin once said that the one million Arabs are a headache, but does one cut one's head off because one has a headache? No, one seeks medicines, solutions. The course you have taken is no solution....

If the Prime Minister has to say that he is being forced to withdraw, let him say it, with tears in his eyes, and the nation can decide whether to follow him or not. But without carnivals and celebrations....The Alignment is greatly to blame for the fact that this nation has lost its fighting spirit. It has not been properly educated, of that there is no doubt....But we expected the Prime Minister to keep his promise to the electorate to imbue this nation with vision, raise its motivation, inspire it....Under the Alignment the nation has become dreadfully materialistic, but the Prime Minister has done nothing to change that....If you want peace now, quickly, you have to pay the price, and the price is high....

People don't want to fight, people don't want to die. In order to fight you have to know what you're fighting for, as it once was in this country....I wish to bring the House regards from the settlements. I think the greatest damage has been done internally, not externally....A shadow has been cast over everything the Prime Minister said in the past about the necessity of establishing settlements throughout the Land of Israel, about there being no such thing as an illegal settlement in the Land of Israel, about there being no need to consider timing in settling the Land of Israel....

I would like to conclude by pointing out to the Prime Minister that the fact that the members of his own party oppose his so-called peace plan should be sufficient to make him think again. In the past I said to you, you are mistaken, go back, but now that is impossible, it is a trap from

which there is no escape except by the resignation of the government and holding fresh elections. If the Prime Minister intended from the outset to introduce this plan and make these concessions it was fraud. If that was not his intention and things have turned out as they have he has failed. In either case he should resign....I appeal to the entire House not to vote for the Camp David agreements, because I regard it as a vote against the Land of Israel.

...

Y. Allon (Alignment): Madam Speaker, distinguished Knesset, I heard from a friend from abroad that after the conclusion of the talks at Camp David President Carter phoned former President Gerald Ford to inform him of the success of the conference and congratulate him for his share in this arising from the part he had played in obtaining the interim agreement between Israel and Egypt....I was happy to hear that Prime Minister Begin also met with Dr. Kissinger and congratulated him on his share in attaining the agreement without which Camp David would not have been possible....

I did not really expect a similar display of civility from our Prime Minister, who phoned neither Mrs. Golda Meir to congratulate her on having achieved the interim agreement with Egypt nor Mr. Yitzhak Rabin....But it is as well that we should recall that we have reached this day by virtue of our thirty years as a state, not to mention several decades beforehand. And although Mr. Begin and his colleagues attacked that agreement bitterly and voted against it, that does not alter the facts.

For us, genuine peace is a necessary component of Israel's future security....In order to be genuine it must be based not only on signed agreements, diplomatic relations and normalization, but also on a reasonable balance of forces, one of the bases of which is the strategic territorial aspect, though this does not mean that we mistrust the Arab party to the agreement....

Since the Six Day War, I and many of my colleagues have maintained that peace will not be attained by holding on to all the territories, just as security will not be attained by relinquishing all the territories. When we spoke of the need for defensible borders which scarcely differ in length from the armistice lines of 1949 we did not do so out of any adherence to the principle of territorial compromise. Territorial compromise is not a principle for me. A defensible border is essential, and on certain fronts there is no substitute for it. There are situations in which modern military technology is not enough without the necessary territorial infrastructure. All we want, in effect, are those undramatic border adjustments which can give Israel those borders and leave broad options, allowing certain countries to regain the territory they lost—because of their own fault—and to provide a just solution for the Palestinian problem.

The Rafah area and the other districts not far from the old border in the Sinai were intended to serve as that defensible border. The settlers were directed there not in order to develop private estates or benefit from other people's property, but because we regarded them as a keystone of our political struggle to create a defensible border....I do not know how these negotiations would have ended had I and my colleagues conducted them....But one thing is clear, we would not have relinquished the Rafah area....When President Sadat left Jerusalem he had the whole of the Sinai in his pocket, according to interviews with the Vice President of Egypt, Mr. Tuhamy, which have appeared in the press....

One of the lessons the government must learn is that what happened with the Sinai must not recur regarding our eastern and northern borders....Just because our military capability in the south has been weakened, we must demonstratively strengthen our eastern and northern fronts....We did not conquer territory in order to settle it. We settled in certain areas so that they could serve us in our struggle....I congratulate the Prime Minister for having freed himself of the irrelevant doctrine concerning the Palestinian problem which has accompanied him all his life. It is good that he has acknowledged the existence of the problem, because without it there will be no peaceful solution. It is good that he has invited Jordan to negotiations, because Jordanian involvement in finding a solution for the future of Judea, Samaria and Gaza is a possible alternative to a PLO state in the Land of Israel....

The part of the agreement which concerns the West Bank and Gaza fills me with deep concern. Of course, autonomy will become an interim arrangement—not a permanent solution, as the Prime Minister claims—without enabling a single inhabitant of Judea, Samaria and Gaza to elect freely to accept Israeli or Jordanian citizenship. We must be aware of the danger involved when government is transferred from the military government to the autonomy institutions and extends throughout the occupied territories, because this means that the outlying security areas with their settlements will be under the autonomy institutions and Jordanian law has not been annulled there....That is something which will have to be negotiated....

I still do not know what the term "location" means regarding the re-deployment of our forces. I believe that our forces cannot be enclosed in camps or bases which are cut off from one another. As far as I am concerned, they can leave the inhabited areas and concentrate in the uninhabited mountainous area, with a territorial continuum of camps, bases and fortified settlements. That must be discussed in negotiations.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: We will show you the map and listen to your advice.

Y. Allon (Alignment): Many mistakes were made in dealing with the conflict over the past year, both in words and in deeds, ever since Presi-

dent Sadat's unforgettable visit....To give just one small example: At about the same time as Prime Minister Begin talked about using one small word, no, in negotiations, President Sadat said "The peace negotiations will be conducted with the spirit of love." Both statements were widely publicized. The upshot was that at Camp David the man who had said "no" relinquished everything, and the man who had said "love" did not give up a single grain of sand....

To the settlers of the Rafah area I would like to say that their pioneering endeavors helped the negotiations. According to the plan, if it is implemented, the region in which they live will be evacuated only at the last stage. It has fallen to them to be the captain who is the last to leave the sinking ship, because their captain was the first to abandon them....

The opposition for which I speak, and which has been attacked so vehemently today by the unbridled speakers of the party whose doctrine has been smashed to smithereens before its eyes, will save the peace plan today, despite its failings. The Prime Minister does not have a majority without us. This opposition is worthy of being treated with greater respect. It certainly acts more responsibly than the oppositions of the past which were led by the present prime minister....

Like other party groups, we will also grant our members the freedom to vote as they choose today....I am convinced that in choosing between the two alternatives before us, between an agreement which has good and bad parts and chaos, there is nothing for it but to give the chance of peace a chance. Consequently, and because peace with Egypt and the normalization of relations with that great and important country may be an historical turning-point, the Alignment will vote for the agreement....

...

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: Mr. Speaker, Knesset Members, at this late hour I do not wish to give a speech, but prefer to talk to friends with whom I have worked for more than thirty years, regardless of party differences, and to this I will add some personal thoughts, for which I beg your indulgence. Why is this night different from all other nights...? Because on other nights we fought and signed armistice agreements, yet the state of war remained in force. Because on other days we signed ceasefire agreements, and the state of war remained in force. Because at other times we signed interim agreements, nonetheless the state of war still obtained. But this night we are discussing the signing of a peace treaty, the first sentence of which will read: "The state of war between Egypt and Israel is terminated." That is the first sentence of all peace treaties.

I would like to tell the entire House that we are fortunate in having lived to see this night. For the first time since the establishment of the state one of our neighbors will announce publicly that the state of war between us is terminated. Forgive me if I introduce a personal note. For

fifty years I have served the nation and its liberation movement, Zionism, and in my old age I have heard certain things which I will not repeat here as they are not worthy of being expressed in the Knesset, but certain things have also been said in the Knesset....Moshe Shamir has accused me of having lost my faith in the justice of Zionism....

M. Shamir (Likud): I didn't say that.

The Prime Minister, M. Begin: I would like to say that in my fifty years of service to the nation and Zionism my belief in the justice of Zionism has not become weaker by a single iota....

But to get to the main point, Camp David....For twelve days and nights we explained incessantly to the U.S. President and all his aides how vital the settlements were in security and moral terms, and how right former governments had been to establish them. President Carter was convinced and tried to persuade President Sadat, and I would like to thank President Carter for that....He tried twice and encountered complete rejection....I consulted our team, and we found ourselves unable to agree to remove the settlements, both because we believed that they should remain and because ours is a parliamentary, not a presidential, regime, and our task is to implement the policy which the Knesset has decided to undertake....But in that case the Camp David talks would have failed, no agreement would have been signed, the Egyptians would have returned to Cairo, we would have come back to Jerusalem and the Americans would have gone to Washington.

But as Prime Minister I knew in my heart of hearts that if Israel was responsible for the breakdown of the talks it would find itself up against America, Europe, U.S. Jewry and world Jewry....I know what it is to withstand pressure. I have no need to brag....During the past nine months hardly a single newspaper in Israel or the world has had one good word to say about me....That pressure had no effect, however....But I knew that if Camp David collapsed Israel would stand alone and would eventually have to submit, of that I am convinced....

And so, it was my responsibility. I proposed a third approach to my colleagues, neither saying yes nor no, but agreeing to bring the subject before the Knesset for its decision....I even considered not participating in the debate, so as not to influence the Knesset, but the Foreign Minister, my good friend Moshe Dayan, dissuaded me from taking that course....The precise wording of the proposal on which we decided together with President Carter, i.e., that the Knesset would decide on the issue of the settlements, was reached only after other, more binding, versions had been rejected by us....Upon returning to Israel and finding scathing attacks in the papers on our decision to vote on two separate proposals, one regarding the peace negotiations and the other regarding the issue of the settlements, indicating that the government was evading

responsibility for making a difficult decision, I decided to combine the two....

The choice before the House is, then, whether to embark on peace negotiations, with the attendant dismantling of the settlements, or not. There is no third possibility....As someone with a sense of responsibility, it is my duty to tell the House that this is the only practical way of attaining a peace treaty for the first time in thirty years. The peace treaty is virtually ready. What has been agreed concerning the bilateral relations between Egypt and Israel is almost the entire peace treaty....If you decide that the settlements should remain, all our efforts at Camp David will have been for nothing and the peace treaty will be lost....

Settlements are very dear to me....I make no distinction between party affiliation when it comes to settlements. Everyone knows that I love each individual settler....But as Prime Minister it is my duty to think of the consequences of this decision, when I know that a peace treaty is in our grasp. In making my calculations I am thinking of the sons of those settlers who will have to be uprooted. Those sons will not have to fall in battle, because we will have peace....For it is the duty of a Prime Minister to see to it that there is no more bloodshed, no more orphans and widows and bereaved parents, and that has been my approach throughout the decades of service to the nation, not since 1967 but since 1947....For four and a half years we fought against the British, and not one Arab injured any Jew, but after the U.N. resolution the clashes began, with the first casualties....Since then no one in Israel has wanted peace more than myself. This is a confession....For thirty-one years this man has dreamed of peace with the Arabs, has respected the Arabs and extended his hand to them, calling on them to build this country together and cease the bloodshed. Now the opportunity is within our reach, the document is all but ready, it just needs some minor revisions, and then, who knows, perhaps then the biblical verse: "and the land had rest forty years" will be fulfilled. A Prime Minister has a duty to concern himself with such things, does he not...?

And so, I had no choice. Those who abstain may have a choice. I had to decide, together with my colleagues....The peace treaty was on one side of the scales and the settlements on the other. According to every moral code to which I subscribe the scales tipped on the side of the peace treaty. There is no other way. With the pain, the insults, the shouts—no other way. To my dying day I will believe that this is the right choice. For the entire nation, for the people living in the Rafah area, it is the right choice. We made a proviso that the period must be fixed by an agreement between the two sides. After the peace treaty has been signed, over a period of between three and nine months, we must withdraw with our forces to the Ras-Muhammed-El-Arish line, where we will remain for another two years. We have time to think about everything and do everything. But one thing must be clear, it is a clearcut decision which

we are making today. We will not delude anyone. If the Knesset so decides, the decision will be implemented....

Minister Ariel Sharon has taken it upon himself to deal with the resettlement of the settlers, if that is what they wish, when the time comes. We will look after each family, no one will be neglected....I have brought before you, ladies and gentlemen of the Knesset, the choice with which we were confronted. You can accept it or not. But I am entitled to ask you whether I have put my message across to you clearly and whether you have understood what I have said? There is no evasion here, no flight from responsibility. The responsibility rests firmly on certain shoulders.

To the Likud I would like to say that you must decide and vote as you wish. Some of you wish to abstain, as do some of the members of the NRP....Abstaining on the proposal means leaving the dirty work of removing the settlements to others, to your colleagues in the Likud party, and enables you to wash your hands piously....To the Alignment, for which I have every respect, I would like to say that it is strange to hear its members attack the agreement vehemently, then conclude by saying that they will vote for it....It seems somewhat illogical....

Under the terms of the peace treaty the IDF will remain in Judea and Samaria, guarding the nation. The Suez Canal will be open, explicitly, to ships flying the Israeli flag. The Straits of Tiran will be an international waterway open to everyone. The Sinai will be demilitarized. There will be areas with a minimal military presence. Airfields will be built. A genuine peace treaty....

MK Allon made a certain proposal here. May I point out that I have a suspicion, not a certainty, that if a clearcut decision is not made here tonight someone will use it as an excuse not to start negotiations as the document says. Then there will have to be a special Knesset session to cancel it. Don't do it. We need a clearcut decision today. The Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee will supervise the negotiations constantly, but a clearcut decision is required so that the negotiations may begin, perhaps even next week....

The Egyptians have asked us, via our friends the Americans, to appoint a delegation without delay to be in direct contact with them, so that negotiations on a peace treaty may begin forthwith....I suggest that the House does not wait or impose delays, but works quickly and makes a clearcut decision, as the government has requested....Once the decision has been made and the negotiations for a peace treaty begin we will examine every eventuality by means of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. I would be grateful if you were to heed my advice....I beseech each and every one, for God's sake, vote as you wish but let a clearcut decision be made by the majority in the Knesset so that tomorrow we can begin the work of preparing the negotiations and, God willing, sign a peace treaty....

It is three a.m. It is enough....In the wake of that confession I want to say: the nation is in the throes of birth pangs. It is true to say that everything that is great is born through suffering. The greatest miracle in the universe—the birth of a baby—is accompanied by pain. What we are talking about here is the greatest turning-point in the Middle East, the possibility of signing a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. I am not surprised by the pains. I am not complaining about the demonstrations, though I would prefer it if they were not held at night as my neighbors suffer, their children suffer....But I forgive everything, because there is pain. Peace is born, first and foremost, of our blood. For this peace we have sacrificed 12,000 of our best boys, in five wars, one war after another, one battlefield after another. We want to put an end to that. This is the opportunity, this is the chance. I do not know what difficulties still lie ahead of us, but it is evident that this is the opportunity....We want to preserve the lives of our children, who are the apples of our eyes, and the lives of our grandchildren. We don't want there to be war every five years. Can anyone be blamed for the fact that we have to make sacrifices? Can we be accused of making concessions on those grounds...? I do not think so, because this is something which we all want, something in which we all believe. One-third of our nation has been lost in this generation...; 12,000 of our best, most heroic and sacred boys; bereaved families; tears, pain and sorrow—we want to put an end to that. This is the moment. Now is the hour. That is why this is such a great moment and why I appeal to all the Members of the Knesset, irrespective of party group, to unite around the chance of peace, adopt the proposal and begin discussions. Perhaps, God willing, within the next year we will be able to say that peace has come to Israel....

...

The Vote

Those in favor	84
Those against	19
Abstentions	17

(The coalition proposal that the Knesset approve the Camp David agreements, authorizing the government to resolve all the attendant problems, dismantle the settlements in the Sinai and resettle their inhabitants, if this is necessitated by the peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel, which should be reflected by a written document, is adopted.)