

# 3. The world responds to Camp David

## The Arab world

*The reaction by Arab leaders and governments to the results reached at Camp David has been swift and highly critical. This has been true not only of Arab leftists and radicals, but also of the strategically key Saudi and Jordanian regimes.*

### Saudi Arabia

*A Sept. 20 Saudi government communiqué, shocking even more for its timing — on the eve of Secretary of State Vance's arrival in Riyadh Sept. 21 — than its content, read:*

*"The government of Saudi Arabia cannot consider what has been reached at the Camp David conference a suitable formula for peace. It does not explain in a definite manner Israel's intention to withdraw from all territories which it has occupied by force, foremost of which is Jerusalem. It does not stipulate the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their state on the soil of their country. It ignores the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which Arab summit conferences have considered the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people whom Israel rendered homeless."*

*On Egypt, the communiqué noted that Saudi Arabia does not claim*

*"the right to interfere in the private affairs of any Arab state, nor to dispute its right to restore its occupied territories through armed struggle or through peaceful efforts in as much as that does not clash with the higher Arab interest....The current circumstances the Arab nation is undergoing require more than at any time previously reunion and unification of views and adoption of a unanimous Arab stand in order to bring about its supreme objective."*

### Jordan

*A similar reaction came from Jordan Sept. 19, when a cabinet communiqué was issued following an emergency meeting:*

*"...The Jordanian nation has no legal or ethical commitment to the Camp David agreement in which it took no part....(Jordan) considers separate action by any of the Arab parties...a weakening of the Arab position which diminishes the chances of reaching the aspired just and comprehensive solution."*

*Jordanians close to King Hussein spoke privately of the necessity of new pan-Arab action to offset Sadat's bilateral approach.*

### The West Bank Mayors

*Among the most poignant of denunciations of the Camp David protocols have been those from the current leadership of the West Bank, from elected mayors who would be expected to play a role in the Camp David framework's planned Egypt-Jordan-Israel-West Bank commissions on the fate of the territory.*

*The moderate pro-Jordan mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, declared Sept. 18:*

*"What I've heard is not in the interest of the Palestinians. Any separate agreement between Israel and Egypt would be a death blow to the Palestinians and won't lead to peace."*

*The Mayor of Jericho, Abdel Aziz Swaiti, declared on the same date:*

*"Since the beginning of the initiative of Sadat, we feared to see Egypt sign a separate peace with Israel. Our fears are justified. The whole Arab world will be opposed to this accord, for it is the Palestinian problem that must be at the center of the political debate."*

*The most powerful West Bank denunciation of Camp David came from Mayor Karim Khalaf of Ramallah, at a press conference in Washington Sept. 20:*

*"Once again the cart has been placed before the horse. Camp David is a big disappointment, maybe the disappointment of the century."*

*"The courage and wisdom of the participants failed...(the conference) culminated in a Zionist dream...it shied away from the Palestinian people....We only deceive ourselves if we think peace is near. I am sure that after this wave of sensationalism and euphoria has subsided, Sadat, Begin, and Carter and the rest of the world will realize that peace unfortunately is still far away...."*

*Charging that a separate Egypt-Israel peace had been reached at Camp David, Khalaf emphasized that "the travesty of Camp David not only violated human rights, but added insult to injury by excluding the only legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people (the Palestine Liberation Organization)."*

*Khalaf concluded with*

*"an appeal to the world not to be deceived: Camp David is a victory for Israel, and a dire defeat for the Palestinian people....Jews, Muslims, and Christians (must) live together as equals and in peace in Palestine."*

### Syria

*These charges were echoed by strategically key Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization. A*

*succinct Radio Damascus commentary noted Sept. 18:*

*"Begin has won all and Sadat has lost all."*

## **The PLO**

*On the same day, PLO Beirut spokesman Labady stated:*

*"There can be no Mideast peace without the PLO. The accords of Camp David completely ignore the right of the Palestinians to have a nation and independent state. A facade of legality has been created for five years of Israeli occupation...Consequently, the Mideast will remain a place of tension in the world, because the new accords solve none of its real problems."*

*On Sept. 19, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat told a Palestinian rally that the Camp David accords*

*"stink of conspiracy...Sadat is a quisling and a traitor."*

*The PLO initiated a general strike in Beirut Sept. 19 against the Camp David agreements. This occurred amidst a growing fear that the accords were the trigger for a new round of extremely bloody hostilities throughout Lebanon. The English-language Beirut newspaper *Ike* Sept. 19 predicted "more intensive Syrian and Israeli clashes in Lebanon," and editorialized:*

*"Seen from Beirut, the Camp David agreement appears to be an agreement to split Arab ranks once and for all and start a new chapter in Lebanon's horror story."*

## **Western Europe**

*While European leaders were very careful not to blast Camp David as a total diplomatic failure, mainly because of their concern that a collapse of the summit's agreement should not be used as a point of destabilization against Carter's already delicate political position, it was clear that their perception of the agreement was that it was totally inadequate.*

*The nine European Community members convened a special meeting on Sept. 19 to discuss the outcome of the summit, and West German Foreign Minister Genscher released a statement to the press as President of the European Council of Ministers, which read in part:*

*"The Nine for years now has championed a fair, comprehensive and lasting peace arrangement in the Middle East on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338 of the United Nations Security Council. The attitude of the Community was expressed with absolute clarity in the statement made by the Council of Europe of June 29, 1977 (calling for a Palestinian homeland — ed.). That resolution reflects the EC's unaltered position today. . . .*

*"The nine member governments hope the results of Camp David will prove to have been a further signifi-*

*cant giant stride in the direction of a fair, and all-embracing peace. They hope all involved will be in a position to participate in this development, with the aforesaid in mind. . . ."*

## **France**

*French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing:*

*"This cannot be considered as anything other than a first stage. As long as there is no overall settlement, where the Palestinians would be fully represented, there can be no questions of talking about a peace settlement. France notes that the agreement on Sinai, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip express possibilities as well as uncertainties."*

*President Giscard also insisted on French radio Monday night that the Soviet Union would have to be involved in bringing about any meaningful settlement.*

## **West Germany**

*While no official West German government position has appeared, a government source reached in Washington, D.C. warned that the Camp David settlement would lead to total polarization in the Arab world.*

## **Britain**

*By far the most enthusiastic reaction to the summit came from the British. The British Ambassador to the UN, Ivor Richard, called the agreement "tremendous," while British Prime Minister Callaghan heartily praised Carter and the other participants and called for the immediate participation of the Jordan government in any settlement.*

## **The Soviet Union**

A release by the official Soviet government news agency TASS Sept. 18 denounced the Camp David agreements as a "plot against the peoples of the Middle East and the interests of peace in that strategically important area of the globe." TASS warned that "the USA, Israel and Egypt signed documents which are directed against the nations of the Middle East and which further endanger the security in this strategically important part of the world." The role of Anwar Sadat at Camp David was branded by TASS as an "open rejection of the common Arab demands," a "betrayal of the cause of the Arab people of Palestine," and a "surrender to all the demands made by Tel Aviv and Washington."

The Soviets concluded that the talks "ended in failure. And that is the only way they could have ended. In secrecy from the world public, behind the back of the Arab peoples, a separate bargaining took place in Camp David. Its participants pursued their selfish aims."

## The United States

*After the well-staged announcement Sunday night of the results of the Camp David summit, the Zionist lobby responded with euphoria to the claims that peace had been achieved. However, many political and industrial leaders were cautious, waiting for more in-depth briefings by Administration officials and the release of the actual texts of the agreements. By Tuesday, Sept. 19, skepticism about the feasibility of the agreement and doubt that an actual substantial settlement had been reached began to surface publicly.*

*Here is, first, a sampling of cautious to totally negative comments on the Camp David agreements, followed by some of the euphoric comments of representatives of the Zionist lobby.*

### From the U.S. Congress

**Senator James Abourezk (D-S.D.):** "They sold the Palestinians down the road. The dreaded hour has finally arrived, the separate peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, which President Sadat swore would not come from him. The framework for peace in the Middle East really doesn't amount to much, because the countries who should be parties to that — for example the Palestinians, the Jordanians, and the Syrians — were not present at Camp David. I think there's a great deal of danger yet. The separate peace agreement between Egypt and Israel has a great destabilizing effect throughout the Middle East."

**Senator Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.):** "The President's efforts are heroic, but his success remains to be seen. A probable Egyptian-Israeli settlement will diminish the probabilities for war. It may also diminish the possibilities for peace. Any assessment of the outcome must await the text of the agreement, the reaction of the Arabs to Mr. Sadat's concessions, and the renewal of American diplomacy in the Middle East."

**An aide to the House International Relations Committee:** "In the Congress, those staff members who have had anything to do with the Middle East are very cautious verging on pessimistic about this. The only ones who are happy with it are those who have nothing to do with foreign policy and the Middle East."

### From Around the Country

**A member of Peace Through Strength, an organization supporting a strong military:** "Presumably Camp David can pave the way for a settlement, but I am still highly doubtful. The PLO won't buy it; unless the Knesset gives in on the

settlements, the agreement will fall apart. Sadat gave far more than Begin. Unless the Saudis back it, Jordan won't. I doubt the Saudis will support it. The Zionists and the Zionist lobby are a big problem."

**L. Dean Brown, President of the Middle East Institute:** "The agreement is not in the interest of the United States."

**A Washington D.C.-based think tank's expert on the Middle East:** "This agreement is patchwork and cosmetic. It is just a papering over of differences that were not patched up in substance. Carter needed cosmetics, Israel was prepared to give cosmetics not to embarrass him. Their concessions are superficial — Israel has given nothing away. This was a hastily written document just to claim progress when there was none. If I were briefing King Hussein I would say 'steer away from it like the plague'."

**A high official of the United Steel Workers of America:** "I think of Camp David this way: Kissinger was the turning point. He wrecked everything. He sabotaged the Rogers plan and the Scranton Plan."

**A leading Chicago businessman:** "Carter was so euphoric he thought he was walking on water. What he doesn't realize is that Kissinger and Brzezinski have urinated on the sidewalk in front of him."

### From the Zionist Lobby

**Senator Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.):** "The whole world and all mankind will breathe a sigh of relief that the road to peace has opened."

**Senator Frank Church (D-Id.), soon to become head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:** "Carter has demonstrated that he has mastered the fine art of diplomacy in a manner few of his predecessors have ever equalled before . . . It looks as if peace was born under the star of Camp David."

**Arnold Foster, legal counsel and national co-director of the Anti-Defamation League:** "I was surprised as hell that a bilateral treaty was agreed on. It was a reversal for Carter and Sadat. Begin gave nothing substantial. Sadat took a deal — because he had little choice, he was out on a limb and also because Carter said he would give him economic and military aid to assure the continuation of the Egyptian State."

**Henry Kissinger:** "Everything in the Middle East has a fragile quality, but this is a major achievement. The ground could conceivably still give way, but so much of an advance has now been made, that it will be in totally different circumstances and much better circumstances."