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The Camp David Accords
A Case Study on International Negotiation

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On November 19, 1977, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat shocked the international community by traveling to Jerusalem to speak before the Knesset. This unprecedented olive branch, offered to a country upon which he had ordered a surprise attack just three years before, set the stage for a peace process that would culminate sixteen months later in the Egypt-Israeli Peace Treaty. The pivotal point in this process came in September 1977 when President Carter brought Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to the table and helped to hammer out the Camp David Accords. What factors caused these two players with seemingly incompatible interests to agree to a stable peace on behalf of their nations?

There have been many attempts to answer this question from a variety of angles. The Camp David negotiations are rich with lessons for students of diplomacy, and they are worth revisiting as a case study. I will examine the events from two perspectives: the impact of two-level games and the characteristics of the leaders that made agreement possible. The first half of the study will trace the strategies of the players throughout the negotiations, and the second half will analyze how the outcomes were reached.

I. BACKGROUND

At its heart, the Arab-Israeli conflict is a struggle between Zionist and Arab nationalism. Since the late 19th Century, these forces have fought over two major issues: control over Palestine and the existence of a Jewish state within the Muslim Arab world. The Jewish call for a homeland to protect them from persecution began in the 1880s, and continued with increased fervor after the Holocaust. In 1948, Israel came into being when the UN divided what had been the British protectorate of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Fighting broke out immediately, and by 1949 there was no Arab Palestinian state at all. Israel controlled all of the old Palestinian territory except for the Egyptian Gaza Strip and the Jordanian West Bank (Eisenberg and Caplan 5-7).

The Arab-Israeli clash continued to create armed conflict: first in the 1956 war between Israel and Egypt and then in the Six Day War of 1967. Winning a decisive victory in 1967, Israel wrested control of the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank from Jordan, and Gaza and the Sinai from Egypt (Eisenberg and Caplan 7-11). In the aftermath of the war, the tenor of the situation began to change when all of the Arab states accepted UN Security Council Resolution 242. This document called for Israel to pull out of the occupied territories, but it also guaranteed secure borders to all nations, thereby accepting Israel as a sovereign country for the first time. Further progress towards a long-term solution seemed possible in 1972 when Sadat hinted that he might accept a peace treaty with the Israelis if they would return the occupied territories. However, the U.S. government was focused on dealing with the Soviets at the time and opted not to facilitate talks. The opportunity for peace faded, and Egypt and Syria joined forces in a surprise war on Israel in 1973 (Telhami, Pew Study 1-2).

In retrospect, it is generally agreed that this war was the first step by Egypt in the negotiating process. It raised awareness of the need for a lasting solution to the conflict

and galvanized the U.S. and the Soviet Union to take action. The two superpowers convened meetings in Geneva aimed at bringing all the key players in the Middle East to the table to discuss a settlement. This format favored the Arab states because they outnumbered Israel and had greater leverage; Israel preferred the possibility of bilateral negotiations. The 1975 Geneva Conference failed because the parties could not reach consensus on the issues of Palestinian representation and the future of the occupied territories (Telhami, Pew Study 2-3).

Throughout the mid-1970s, the United States was taking more and more of a leadership role in the Middle East peace process. U.S. interests in the region, particularly our alliance with Israel and our reliance on Arab oil, along with President Carter's personal desire to solve the problem, fueled this new engagement. Meanwhile, both Egypt and Israel were showing new enthusiasm for the peace process largely because they both realized that they would benefit from a closer relationship with the U.S. (Telhami, Pew Study 3). In 1976-7, Carter's strategy focused on convening another Geneva conference. He gained Soviet support for a joint statement in October 1977, that called for reopening the Geneva process (Stein 214-5). The Egyptians and the Israelis opposed this idea, so they both undertook bilateral initiatives aimed at undercutting the Geneva process. These initiatives opened a new dialogue that led directly to the Camp David negotiations almost a year later.

II. OPENING MOVES

The events that brought Egypt and Israel together in 1977 seemed surprising at the time, but in retrospect they were merely the best moves available to the two players, given the strategy of each. Carter's push for a new Geneva round inadvertently caused the interests of Sadat and Begin to coincide for the first time, and they took advantage of that opportunity.

Egypt:

Sadat's opening move was his historic trip to Jerusalem to speak before the Knesset on November 19-21, 1977. In doing so, he officially recognized Israel, a step no Arab state had yet taken and one that was sure to be opposed by many Egyptians. Because of its historic and symbolic value, opening diplomatic channels with Israel was one of the most powerful trump cards that Sadat held at this time. Thus, the trip was a dangerous gambit for him because he was giving up much bargaining leverage without being certain of a worthwhile payoff.

It is instructive to look at why Sadat made this move. He was worried about the possibility of another Geneva conference for two reasons: 1) he did not want to deal with the Soviets and 2) he was afraid that Egypt's desire to regain control of the Sinai would be eclipsed by other pan-Arab interests (Touval 288). Sadat felt that Egypt's power in the Arab world was eroding, and his strategy focused in part on reasserting its leadership role. To achieve this goal, he could not afford to be obstructionist and damage Egypt's

relationship with the United States. So the best strategy facing Sadat was to work bilaterally with Israel and head off the Geneva process.

Sadat knew very well that Arab fundamentalists would criticize him for working with Israel. But he also realized that the more dramatic his move, the more it could galvanize support for the peace process. Furthermore, he knew that public opinion is swayed more by symbolic gestures than by political arguments or secret deals. He thus took a calculated risk that the psychological effects of a high visibility trip to Jerusalem, which would give the peace process momentum, would overpower the negative backlash expected from the Arab world (Eisenberg and Caplan 39). The gamble paid off. Sadat's well-publicized visit and passionate speech in the Israeli Parliament "played a crucial role in convincing Israelis of a new reality" (Eisenberg and Caplan 39). Pressure immediately began to mount for Begin to take advantage of this new opportunity for peace. Meanwhile, public demonstrations in Egypt also expressed some support for the new initiative, but opinion was clearly more divided in that country (Eisenberg and Caplan 39). Nevertheless, Sadat's visit to Jerusalem achieved its major goal, which was to create an atmosphere in which it would benefit Begin to respond with concessions of his own.

Israel:

The Israelis also opposed reopening the multilateral Geneva talks for several reasons: 1) they resented the U.S. invitation to the PLO and the implication that America favored establishing a sovereign Palestinian entity, 2) they distrusted the Soviets, and 3) they feared isolation with so many Arab states at the table (Touval 287). So their interest at the time in heading off the U.S. initiative coincided perfectly with Egypt's. Furthermore, Prime Minister Begin's strategy for negotiating with the Arab world was to pick off individual states and make bilateral deals with them. The public pressure for a deal set off by Sadat's visit largely served to provide political cover for continuation of this strategy. Begin found himself freer to act in Israel's best interest without opening himself to criticism. By unilaterally recognizing Israel and opening a channel for dialogue, Sadat had played directly into Begin's hands.

Begin's opening move was to concede on one of Egypt's most important priorities, control of the Sinai Peninsula. Shortly after Sadat's visit, Israel agreed to withdraw its troops and restore Egyptian sovereignty over the disputed territory. One might question the prudence of surrendering so much this early, especially since Sadat's unilateral concession had given Israel the bargaining advantage. But this course of action fit Begin's strategy for two reasons. First, this issue was not as important to Israel as it was to Egypt. Much more crucial to Begin was blocking the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, so he made concessions on the Sinai to divert international attention from the other issue (Eisenberg and Caplan 31). Second, he perceived Israel and Egypt to be in competition for the favor of the United States, and since Egypt had demonstrated a willingness to work for peace it behooved Israel to do the same. In short, Begin chose his opening move to "earn credit for flexibility and cooperativeness in the eyes of the U.S. Administration, while at the same time sidestepping the Palestinian issue as much as possible" (Eisenberg and Caplan 31). Thus, one can see that the opening

moves made by Sadat and Begin fit their overall strategy and their desire to undercut the Geneva process.

Following these concessions, the parties conducted negotiations throughout the first half of 1978, but little progress was made towards a settlement. Fearing that the talks would dissolve completely, President Carter decided to invite Sadat and Begin to Camp David for secret meetings in September. The bargaining strategy involved in these negotiations, which ultimately led to the signing of the Camp David Accords, will be the focus of this analysis.

III. THE NEGOTIATIONS

A. Initial Positions

There were four basic issues to deal with at Camp David: 1) a peace treaty and normalization of relations between Israel and Egypt, 2) demilitarization and removal of Israeli settlements from the Sinai, 3) linkage between these issues and the future of the West Bank and Gaza, and 4) a statement on principles, including Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories and the right of Palestinians to self-determination (Telhami 631).

Egypt:

Fortunately for Sadat, Egypt's international and domestic interests coincided and led him to one dominant strategy. The Egyptian economy had been flagging throughout the 1970's, due in part to large defense expenditures (Eisenberg and Caplan 30). Sadat realized that recovery would depend upon both increased investment from his oil-rich Arab neighbors and reduced military spending. He could not lower the defense budget until he was sure that Israel no longer posed a threat, a guarantee that would require a peace treaty and a withdrawal of Israelis from the Sinai. These security needs could not be met without the active engagement of the United States (Stein 81-3).

Sadat's strategy thus aimed at impressing both the Americans and the other Arab states. The former he felt could easily be achieved by continuing to demonstrate flexibility and, in the words of his Foreign Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil, "expose the Israeli intransigence before the U.S. and before the world" (Eisenberg and Caplan 30). The latter aim was more difficult, as Sadat had already lost some political capital with his Arab peers by recognizing Israel. To regain Arab support, he had to secure Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied territories and to establish the right of self-determination for Palestinians. These two goals became Egypt's bottom line at Camp David (Stein 81-3).

Israel:

Israel had largely the same domestic and international considerations as Egypt, but its position at the outset of the negotiations was much different. It too was facing an economic downturn, as spiraling defense budgets were causing rampant inflation. Internationally, the Israel's principal concern was security, and the 1973 war had

demonstrated that mere military superiority was not a strong enough deterrent to its Arab adversaries. Begin felt he could solve both problems simultaneously by striking a bilateral peace with Egypt. By eliminating the largest member state from the Arab coalition, Israel could afford to ratchet down defense spending while still feeling secure against potential military threats. Therefore, Begin's bottom line was a peace treaty with Egypt and demilitarization of the Sinai, while avoiding as much linkage to the domestically volatile Palestinian question as possible. Maintaining the support of the United States was also crucial to the strategy because America was seen as the only party that could help broker and enforce such a deal (Stein 83-4).

The United States:

Though President Carter was officially only a mediator, the United States had clear interests in the negotiations that must be taken into account. Carter faced numerous opposing interests from widely varying constituencies. The influential Jewish community would only support an agreement that met all of Israel's needs. The energy sector cared more about the U.S. relationship with the oil exporting Arab states. Corporate America in general wanted merely to avert future conflict for economic reasons (Stein, 84). However, Carter's major interest was in salvaging his presidency. Having already sunk much political capital into the Middle East peace process and with the next presidential election just over the horizon, Carter needed to produce results. His goal was to achieve "any agreement, not necessarily an agreement that protected each side's interests" (Princen 67).

B. The Bargaining Process

The negotiations at Camp David lasted for 13 days. Each delegation had its own cabins at the Presidential retreat, and members often did not mix except during structured negotiating sessions. Furthermore, the press was excluded from the proceedings, and very little contact was maintained with the outside world. At times, many of the delegates found the intense and isolated atmosphere to be claustrophobic (Quandt 235).

The first two days consisted of each side establishing its position in separate meetings with the American delegation. President Carter was not surprised to hear an extreme position from the Israelis, but was dismayed when Sadat also presented him with a very uncompromising stance. However, because Sadat valued his personal friendship with Carter, the Egyptian leader felt that maintaining an open relationship with the Americans would best serve his interests. He therefore presented a letter to Carter on the second day outlining the concessions Egypt would be willing to accept. Disclosing his fallback position gave Carter a renewed optimism that agreement was possible, but ultimately turned out to be a strategic mistake for Sadat (Telhami, Pew Study 6).

The role that the U.S. delegation would play became clearer throughout days 3 and 4. The first trilateral meetings occurred on the third day, and personality conflicts were immediately obvious. The meetings quickly devolved into shouting matches between Begin and Sadat, and the Americans realized that the leaders "could not interact constructively on a personal level" (Telhami, Pew Study 7). From then on, the two

leaders were kept apart while Carter and his aides proceeded with a kind of “shuttle diplomacy,” constantly moving between cabins to speak with each delegation separately. It was at this point that the Americans truly took on the role of mediators: their job was to bring the two sides together while only being able to talk with each side individually.

During days 5 through 7, the U.S. delegation played its part well. Carter and his aides began by developing a draft proposal that addressed many of the major issues at stake. Each consecutive version would be critiqued by both sides and then rewritten by the American drafters to reflect the comments (Telhami, Pew Study 8). This process achieved some initial progress on the sticky issues of the Sinai and the future of the West Bank and Gaza, but Begin was proving to be intransigent. Needing a way to galvanize the negotiations, Carter revealed to the Israelis that he had been given the Egyptian fallback position. Knowing that Carter needed an agreement and that he would offer Sadat’s concessions to keep the negotiations on track, Begin was in a powerful position. For the remainder of the negotiations, he would offer inconsequential concessions and expect Carter to respond with larger concessions on behalf of Egypt (Quandt 225).

The process reached a stalemate between days 8 and 10. The iterative drafting process had achieved as much accord as possible, and it became largely an exercise in cleaning up the language on smaller issues that had been settled. Having eliminated many of the side issues, the fundamental gap between the two sides became clear. The parties had reached an impasse on the Sinai and on the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and everyone was discouraged (Quandt 233). After another discussion between Sadat and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan fell short of resolution late on day 10, Carter “seemed to be convinced that the Camp David talks were headed towards failure” (Quandt 234).

C. Endgame

On the morning of the eleventh day, Sadat’s delegation packed their bags to leave in frustration. Though Carter was pessimistic about finalizing an agreement, he realized that his presidency would be greatly jeopardized without one. He convinced the Egyptians to stay by threatening to end the US-Egypt bilateral relationship as well as his personal friendship with Sadat (Quandt 239). Carter then shifted his strategy to be more proactive in offering incentives to overcome sticking points. The Sinai issue was at an impasse because Begin would not agree to abandon Israeli settlements and air bases there. Carter persuaded him to do so by offering both to guarantee Israel continued access to oil supplies and to build two new air bases in the Negev Desert (Touval 306-8). While he was wary of “buying peace,” Carter realized that he could use America’s “vast economic and military resources [to] help to change the calculus of benefit and risk for the parties to the conflict by making bilateral commitments to them” (Quandt, Political Science Quarterly 359).

By day 12, only one major issue remained outstanding: the future of the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. It was clear that no definitive resolution of this question was possible, so language was drafted to gloss over the disagreements. After a

long negotiation session that night, Carter failed to receive a firm commitment from Begin even on the vague, undefined language (Quandt 253). But Carter forged ahead, despite the lack of clarity on settlements, because he feared derailing the negotiation process just when a deal was in sight. While in retrospect most historians agree that leaving the settlements issue unfinished was a mistake, at the time it made sense for the sake of expedience (Quandt 253). Having bypassed that final hurdle, the three parties finalized the deal on the thirteenth day, September 17, 1978, and returned to the White House for the official signing ceremony.

Based on the evolution of the bargaining, it is not surprising that the agreement ultimately favored Israel. The two leaders signed a formal peace treaty and agreed to a phased normalization of relations that would culminate in the exchange of ambassadors. Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai settlements was linked to the timetable for this normalization. In addition, much of the Sinai territory would be demilitarized, and a UN force was created to implement this process (Eisenberg and Caplan 36).

The Accords failed to solve the dispute on the future of Palestinian self-determination. Sadat and Begin could not concur on language to address this issue, so the final document used the constructions favored by both parties, calling for the creation of a “self-governing authority (administrative council) in the West Bank and Gaza” (Camp David Accords 93). This vague wording did nothing to solve the underlying disagreement. Furthermore, no timetable was specified for the development of the authority, so the Israelis were given the ability to block the process from going forward. By failing to decide the future of the Palestinians, Camp David merely perpetuated the status quo (Eisenberg and Caplan 38-9).

The outcome of the negotiations was much closer to Israel’s initial position than to Egypt’s. Begin accomplished his major goals of securing a peace treaty and demilitarization of the Sinai without sacrificing much ground on the Palestinian issue. Sadat, in contrast, gained an Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai and some other small concessions, but failed to establish Palestinian self-determination. I will now address two factors in the negotiations that help to explain their unbalanced resolution.

IV. PERSONAL AND POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ACTORS

Sadat:

Both Sadat’s personality and his political position affected his bargaining success at Camp David. Having had little negotiating experience before this time, Sadat was too trusting of his counterparts (Telhami, Pew Study 55). Most importantly, he relied too heavily on his personal friendship with Carter and entrusted the Americans with too much information on his bargaining position. In effect, Sadat showed Carter his cards and even allowed him to play out the hand. But Carter had his own incentives to craft an agreement, and he did not want to appear to favor one side over the other. It was therefore politically difficult and against U.S. interests to maintain Sadat’s hard line Arab

position for long. Not surprisingly, Carter did not play the hand as conservatively as Sadat might have wished (Telhami 648).

The centralized political system in Egypt limited Sadat's leverage in the negotiations and likely led to bargaining mistakes. As the President, he wielded ultimate decision-making authority and the political power to influence public opinion. Shibley Telhami quotes from Carter's memoirs: "The people of Egypt could be easily manipulated by Sadat, and their beliefs and attitudes could be shaped by their leader" (640). Therefore, Sadat could not credibly reject a certain agreement on the grounds that he could not mobilize domestic support behind it. Because everyone knew that his hands were not tied politically, he had little room to maneuver strategically. Also, this concentration of power led to overconfidence. Sadat would often override the better judgment of his advisors, sometimes even to the point of causing public humiliation (Telhami 640). One example of such behavior was his costly decision to divulge his bargaining position to Carter over the explicit protest of one of his top aides (Telhami, Pew Study 58). Thus, Sadat's penchant for overly trusting his counterparts and his strong position in the Egyptian government harmed his ability to negotiate an optimal outcome for his country.

Begin:

Begin was more practiced at bargaining and was able to view his interests both from the level of technical detail and grand strategy. For instance, Telhami states that while Begin often frustrated his counterparts by arguing over minutiae of wording in a proposed agreement, he would not lose sight of the larger goal of maintaining a working relationship with them (Pew Study 58). In addition, Begin kept his personal and business interactions with his counterparts strictly separate. While he maintained personal friendships with some of the other leaders, he was careful not to reveal information that could undercut his bargaining position. Sadat complained that after all the work he had done for peace, Begin did not trust him (Princen 63-4). Most likely Sadat was right; Begin's political career developed in an Israel that had experienced only adversarial relationships with its Arab peers. This tradition prepared Begin well for playing hardball at Camp David.

Israel's more decentralized governmental structure also benefited Begin in the bargaining process. As Prime Minister, he was the leader of the party that controlled the Knesset, the legislative body where most of Israel's political power resides. Any agreement that was reached at Camp David would have to be ratified by the Knesset and supported by the Israeli people, and there was skepticism about the peace process in both arenas. So several times Begin was able to use the strategy that Sadat could not, namely to avoid certain concessions on the grounds that they would not be palatable among his domestic constituency. Additionally, many of the other Israeli delegates were also high-level Knesset members and had power of their own. These advisors could not be ignored like their Egyptian counterparts if Begin wanted to maintain his control over the Likud party. Thus, the political atmosphere led to more of a team effort by the Israelis and a more balanced decision-making process within the delegation (Telhami 641).

Carter:

To complete the portrait of the interaction among the key players at Camp David, it is important to examine Jimmy Carter's role, both as he perceived it and as it played out in reality. He saw himself as a facilitator, and he approached the talks from both moralistic and problem-solving standpoints. First, Carter's strongly religious background caused him to see the Middle East peace process as the responsibility of the United States. America held the moral obligation to use its power to find a resolution to what Carter considered a solvable problem. He believed the actors that perpetuated the situation to be generally well-intentioned and felt there existed a possible settlement that would leave them all satisfied. Second, his training as an engineer led Carter to approach the bargaining process as a problem-solver. All of the components for an agreement were on the table, and as the mediator his job was to assemble them correctly and propose a workable solution (Princen 58-62). This was a somewhat narrow view of his task, and arguably he later abandoned it when he began to offer U.S. concessions to make settlement more attractive to Begin.

The view of Carter as merely a facilitator is not entirely accurate. Regardless of his official role, Carter's personal interests and U.S. national interests required that he be an active player in the bargaining. Telhami makes a distinction between a mediator, who works towards *any* agreement, and a participant, who works towards an agreement that *specifically addresses his or her interests* (631-2). In the Camp David case, this framework presents a false dichotomy. Since finalizing any treaty was simultaneously working in the best interest of himself and the U.S., Carter satisfied both roles. As previously stated, Carter had sunk a large amount of political capital into the peace process, and he needed to demonstrate results to save his presidency. U.S. national interest revolved around promoting stability in the Middle East to shore up its relationships with Israel and the Arab world, as well as to ensure future access to oil resources. Any treaty that addressed even the least controversial topics at Camp David would have helped to achieve these goals. Thus, the coincidence of personal and national interests guaranteed that Carter would be an active third party throughout the negotiations.

Lessons:

Several lessons for international diplomacy can be gleaned from these points. First, while a basic level of trust between negotiating partners is beneficial, one should not rely too heavily on it. One should especially avoid ceding control of one's agenda to another party, as Sadat did. Regardless of any personal relationship or mutual understanding that may exist between the parties, each player always has his or her own interests and should be expected to follow them. While it may benefit two parties with mutual interests to work together, each should maintain the power to "play their own hand." Second, political systems have an important impact on diplomacy. In general, a leader who has a large amount of centralized decisionmaking power has very little leverage in international negotiations. Conversely, a representative leader of a decentralized government has much more ability to avoid unwanted concessions by blaming his or her domestic constraints.

V. TWO-LEVEL GAMES

Diplomatic negotiations are never completely self-contained. Though they may have an international focus, all of the actors have domestic constituencies that must be taken into account in the decisionmaking process. Several political scientists have studied the interactions between international and domestic pressures, commonly referred to as two-level games. Robert Putnam summarizes the issues:

At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among these groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments (436).

Many aspects of the Camp David process demonstrate the centrality of two-level games. I will focus on two of the most fundamental examples.

The most overt and effective use of two-level game strategy was Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977. Janice Gross Stein refers to this event as an example of "suasive reverberation," which Putnam defines as applying international pressure that will reverberate in the domestic arena and alter the other player's win-set (454). Once Sadat decided that he wanted to press the peace process forward, he needed to create similar motivation on the Israeli side. He accomplished this goal with his dramatic trip to Jerusalem, a move that was effective because it was irreversible. Having recognized Israel in this way, Sadat could not go back. Realizing this, many Israelis embraced the development and began to pressure Begin with massive demonstrations. With this new support for the peace process, Begin had more latitude among his constituents to explore possible peace agreements. Thus, Sadat's maneuver on the international stage led to "reverberation" in Israeli domestic politics and expanded Begin's win-set (Stein 86-7).

The two-level structure can also work against negotiators when domestic constraints limit their latitude in the international arena. At Camp David, domestic interests all but required the three leaders to walk away with some agreement. As has previously been mentioned, Carter had to achieve a settlement for reasons of political survival. The other two players needed continued cooperation and engagement from the U.S. for domestic reasons, so they in turn had large incentives to allow Carter to broker an agreement.

Sadat and Begin both found themselves hamstrung by the need to address the economic and security situations in their respective countries. As the Egyptian economy weakened throughout 1978, Sadat began to face increasing political opposition from the right and the left. His repression of dissent and control over public opinion would keep him in power in the short run, but his plans to reform the economy and establish security required urgent action. The United States was a crucial partner in both of these plans: "the strategy of economic liberalization depended critically on American aid, investment, and technology transfer, and resolution of the crisis with Israel depended on the active participation of the United States" (Stein 89). These factors made it imperative that

Egypt maintain its positive relationship with the U.S., so Sadat had to increase his acceptability set to include almost any agreement.

Begin faced a similar, though perhaps less acute, situation. Israel's geo-political isolation meant that America was its most important ally, both as a guarantor of security and as a donor of massive economic aid. Begin could not afford to allow Egypt to gain favor with Carter at the expense of the special U.S.-Israel bilateral relationship. Thus, because Carter was under much pressure to broker a settlement, Sadat and Begin were under similar pressure to agree to it (Stein 87-90). In the end, however, Begin's other political constraints and superior bargaining caused Carter and Sadat to make most of the concessions.

Lessons:

Several fundamental lessons for diplomacy can be drawn from the two-level games at Camp David. First, negotiators should acknowledge that both they and their counterparts inevitably face domestic constraints. Among the most basic elements of preparation for a diplomatic negotiation should be to analyze these parameters and determine how they can be used to one's advantage. Perhaps one could create an opportunity to change the constraints of one's opponent such that their potential win-set is expanded. Sadat's Jerusalem visit is a perfect example of this strategy. Also, if one's opponent faces strong domestic pressure to bring home an agreement, that is an opportunity to play hardball and push for major concessions. Begin confronted this scenario at Camp David, and he was able to force Sadat to agree to a settlement that many considered a loss for Egypt.

VI. CONCLUSION

The signing of the Camp David Accords was not the end of the negotiations. More diplomacy, focused largely on selling the agreement to domestic constituencies, finally culminated in the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty on March 26, 1979. The historical impact of these events is still in debate. Most analysts hold that Israel won the day, achieving security from one of its most powerful adversaries and giving up little in return. They point out that the shifted balance of power was one factor that allowed Israel to attack Lebanon in 1982. Meanwhile, Egypt regained control of the Sinai but effectively traded its prestige in the Arab world for a closer relationship with the United States. Other historians feel that Egypt was the victor because it received tangible territory in exchange for an intangible, and easily retracted, pledge of peace. Regardless of who is correct in this debate, one impact of the Camp David process is clear: in a region fraught with turmoil, Israel and Egypt have been at peace ever since. In this respect, the Accords should be considered a surprisingly successful endeavor and a victory for both parties (Telhami, Pew Study 13).

The Camp David negotiations stand out as a very useful tool for the study of international bargaining. One would be hard pressed to find a more perfect template for a two-party mediated negotiation: the issues were specifically defined and the talks were

self-contained and continued uninterrupted from start to finish. It is easy to trace the strategies throughout the discussions, and thus to draw conclusions on who was successful and why. The Camp David process has been analyzed from many perspectives, and it remains an important case study in the history of international diplomacy.

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