

Camp David Revisited

Peace Process? What Peace Process?

By Mark A. Bruzonsky

Stephen Green, writing in *The Nation* last September, said correctly that "in 1986, Israel need not worry about an invasion. The situation is more serious than that. The potential exists, or soon will exist, for a missile exchange that could reduce many Middle Eastern cities to smoking rubble in a matter of hours, and in the process draw the United States and the Soviet Union into the conflict."

What is the United States doing about this? Not much. Until Reagan took office, few international dilemmas had so continuously occupied U.S. diplomacy as the Arab-Israeli conflict. After the 1956 war, President Eisenhower demanded that Israel withdraw from the Sinai, threatening a cut-off of aid and an end to the tax-

exempt status of Israeli bonds. After the Six Day War in 1967, there was U.N. Resolution 242, calling for Israeli withdrawal and negotiated treaties. In '69 it was the Rogers Plan, in '73 the Geneva Conference, in '75 the U.S. "Reassessment," in '77 the Joint U.S.-Soviet Statement, in '78 the Camp David Accords, and in 1980 the Egyptian-Israeli treaty, signed on the White House lawn.

By contrast, in the Reagan years Israel has lashed out at three Arab capitals, actually invading one (Beirut) in 1982. Israeli arms and advisers have greatly escalated their operations in Africa and Latin America in coordination with Washington's policies, allowing Israel to pursue a sustained effort at enforcing acceptance of the American-Israeli *diktat*.

Almost 10 years ago, I sat alone with Anwar Sadat as he made up his mind about how to change an ominous future. A few days later, he emerged onto the tarmac in Israel. Many who were there at the time, including myself, had an almost religious experience in believing that men of courage and vision could somehow triumph over the forces of hatred and destruction.

But Sadat's vision took root in the politics of neither Israel nor the U.S. His unprecedented gambit was followed by more than a year of wrangling and discord that led to Camp David, and then by another year of bickering before the White House ceremony with Jimmy Carter standing between them, literally bringing the hands of Sadat and Begin together in an uneasy truce.



Anwar Sadat: Left in the lurch by the Americans and the Israelis?

Yet the much-discussed "linkage" between the "separate peace" and the Palestinian issue never came about, even though President Carter had given his personal promise at Camp David to keep Sadat from leaving the conference, assuring him that he would "make things right" in his second term.

What has followed can hardly be called peace. Israel first annexed East Jerusalem,

then the Golan Heights, all the while continuing to build new settlements on the West Bank (despite language in the Camp David accord calling for "withdrawal of the Israeli civil and military administration" to allow the Palestinians to begin to exercise "full autonomy" in the area). In June 1980, just days after a Begin-Sadat meeting, Israel attacked the nuclear reactor

continued on page 14