

AN INTERVIEW WITH LESLIE JANKA

LESLIE JANKA was until recently Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs at the Pentagon. He was another keynote and summation speaker — with Eric Rouleau whose interview has been published in the *Gazette* early this week — in Washington at the recent Middle East Institute annual conference. The *Saudi Gazette's* Washington correspondent MARK BRUZONSKY speaks to Janka, who thinks Carter should have impressed upon Israelis the need to make the Camp David accords more tempting for Syria, Jordan and Palestinians.

●BRUZONSKY: WHAT'S THE meaning of what is happening in the Egyptian-Israeli talks in the broad perspective of the Arab-Israeli conflict?

■JANKA: THE first meaning is a clear recognition all around that a comprehensive settlement is simply not in the cards. The hopes and expectations that have built up over the past year and a half and the criticism of the step-by-step diplomacy have brought us to the recognition that there is no quick, comprehensive settlement; that only a strategy of moving in steps is really going to work.

The question really is then, are the Camp David accords the way to bring about a process of step-by-step movement toward a final solution? There are many questions.

Secondly, and I think the most significant thing about Camp David, is what President Sadat has referred to as the U.S. being a "full partner." The only way the Camp David framework is going to work is if the U.S. is fully involved in the negotiations among all the parties.

Comprehensive settlement

●Do you then support the new step-by-step policy?

■It's really a question of whether you support step-by-step tactics leading up to a comprehensive settlement or whether, as the Carter administration started off to do, you try to achieve some comprehensive settlement and then implement it step-by-step.

I don't think it was necessarily wrong for the Carter administration to start out to see what could be done as far as a comprehensive settlement. I think what has been strange is the very sudden transition where the Carter administration dropped the idea of a comprehensive settlement for something far, far less — without either preparation of the American people or our negotiating partners.

●Do you think a comprehensive settlement was dropped by Carter because he found that Begin had outmanoeuvred him — that Carter had been blocked in the course he had set and so chose another?

■It is clear that the Israelis gave far less or better defended their positions than did the Americans or the Arabs. The flexibility came from the Arab side.

●Are there winners and losers at



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Camp David?

■There's no question that the Israelis are the big winner from Camp David.

Camp David was a big step followed by lots of crossed fingers that other pieces would fall into place.

To a large extent Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians run a risk of being major losers if indeed they do not exert pressures to be brought into the process and to amend the Camp David process in a way which better fulfills their interests and their goals.

■The U.S. runs a risk of being a big loser if the process doesn't work and we are as deeply involved in that failing process as we appear to be. Then our losses would be much larger than if Camp David had a different outcome or hadn't occurred.

●You're a former Kissinger aide. If you had been at Camp David what would you have advised the Secretary of State and the President to do differently?

■I would have pushed for a much clearer framework and set of principles on the West Bank and the Golan in a way that would have made things more tempting — or easier — for Assad and Hussein to join the peace process and for others to support it.

Figleaf about West Bank

What happened can give people the impression that those at Camp David were satisfied to simply get away with a separate peace, regardless of the figleaf about the West Bank for President Sadat.

I would have advised a much stronger effort for a more balanced package.

Another tragic omission is not a clearer reference to the Palestinian people. We Americans have a much greater obligation to speak out more strongly for fulfilment of the aspira-

The big step — followed by crosse

tions of the Palestinian people.

There was no reason in the Camp David accord for the U.S. on its own behalf not to speak a lot more for the Palestinians. We didn't necessarily have to have the Egyptians and the Israelis agree to anything on the Palestinian issue. We should have said a lot more on our own behalf about what we believe are the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

●Putting aside beliefs and hopes and focusing just on realpolitik, what do you think are Israel's intentions after they sign the separate peace with Egypt?

■Probably the most encouraging thing from Camp David is not necessarily the process between Israel and its neighbours, but the process which has been started inside of Israel.

Acceptance of Palestinians

I don't think one can separate realpolitik from the hopes that the very real political ferment which started with President Sadat's visit to Israel and certainly now with the Knesset vote and a process of beginning a dialogue with the Palestinians on the West Bank towards autonomy has to produce in Israel the kind of debate

and ferment that indeed could lead to Israeli intentions to accept a fully autonomous Palestinian entity.

●You're really hoping. Do you really think the intention of the Begin government is to move in that direction, or even to consider that direction?

■You're asking me to make a judgment, and a judgment's not much better than a hope.

●But a judgment is all we have from Camp David. All we have are vague words on paper and unless we consider the intentions of the parties we have almost nothing. Many people at this conference are far more sceptical than you about Israel's intentions.

■I'm sceptical myself, though I have a hope. If the Israelis had no intention whatsoever of fulfilling or even moving in the direction of the Camp David accords they wouldn't have fought so hard over the agreement.

If the "spirit of Camp David" means anything there is indeed some intention of the Israelis to realise that their security does necessitate solving the West Bank-Palestinian problem.

●What factual basis, what statements of Israeli leaders or what attitudinal shifts can you point to? What of substance has there been before or after Camp David leading you to this view that the Israelis have any intention



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other than to continue to settle the West Bank and to allow autonomy only over local issues for the local Palestinians? What can you point to beyond that?

■ Nothing..... But my point is that — and this comes from my discussions in Israel last May — the Israelis have now agreed to discuss autonomy, withdrawal of forces, some term of freezing of settlements.

Political discussion

Even these shifts will launch a further process of debate and political discussion inside of Israel. So at least there's the intention to have this kind of debate. That's all I can point to.

■ Doesn't the U.S. have to be more sceptical of Israeli intentions? For

instance, isn't it incredible that on the major issue of a moratorium on West Bank settlements, Begin and Carter are actually debating whether even the three month minimal freeze is tied to the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations or to eventual negotiations about the West Bank?

■ That is incredible and it's very scary. And, I agree with you, one would have thought that if the Israelis have positive intentions about the West Bank they would have realised there can be no progress there without a freeze on settlements.

I can see no surer and quicker way to derail the peace process than to begin a single new settlement or to expand significantly a settlement that is already there.

■ Is Camp David a great victory for the

strategy and views of Henry Kissinger? Doesn't what happened between Egypt and Israel highly legitimise what Kissinger did in his years in office?

Price for deviation

■ To a degree yes, but I think to another degree the mountain-top drama of Camp David between two parties was not foreseen by Kissinger's step-by-step process. One of the attempts of the Kissinger process was never to leave anybody out.

The inability, even at the last minute, of Carter to confer with and bring in, even to a degree, the Jordanians and the Saudis is antithetical to the way in which the Kissinger process proceeded.

You'll recall that during step-by-step diplomacy there was always the requisite stop in Jeddah or Taif or Amman. That didn't occur in the Camp David process and we're paying the price for it.