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# AN ASSESSMENT OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AUTONOMY TALKS, NOVEMBER 1980

GOVERNMENT

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SIXTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

NOVEMBER 21, 1980

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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WASHINGTON : 1980

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## AN ASSESSMENT OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AUTONOMY TALKS, NOVEMBER 1980

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1980

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST,  
*Washington, D.C.*

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Lee H. Hamilton (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. HAMILTON. The meeting of the subcommittee will come to order.

The Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East meets today to hear testimony from Ambassador Sol M. Linowitz, personal representative of the President for the West Bank and Gaza negotiations.

The subcommittee has been interested for some time in holding a public hearing to review the status of these negotiations, which have been going on in some form for nearly 18 months.

The only other open hearing devoted solely to this subject was held 13 months ago in October 1979 with Ambassador Linowitz' predecessor, Ambassador Robert Strauss.

In 2 months, there will be a new administration in power in our country and there may well be new departures on Middle East policy matters. It is an appropriate time to examine what has been accomplished in the autonomy talks to date, what problems remain and what alternatives exist for pursuing the Middle East peace process and reducing tensions in the region.

It is clear that significant progress in the peace process, in the form of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, has occurred. It is equally clear that we need to build on that accomplishment to preserve that crucial gain, to protect important national interests throughout the region and to insure the stability and security of many friendly states in the area.

Critical issues in the West Bank and Gaza talks, involving both serious security concerns of the Israelis and the legitimate rights of the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza to a greater voice in their own affairs are matters which must be satisfied if any meaningful peace is to be achieved.

Ambassador Linowitz, we welcome you before the subcommittee. You have a statement which has just been handed to me. You may proceed with whatever remarks you wish to make, after which we will turn to questions. Your statement, will be entered into the record in full. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR SOL M. LINOWITZ, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AUTONOMY NEGOTIATIONS

Ambassador and Special Representative of the President for Middle East Peace Negotiations (1979—); senior partner of the international law firm of Coudert Brothers, One Farragut Square South, Washington, D.C. 20006; 200 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10166; Chairman, Presidential Commission on World Hunger (1978-1980); formerly co-negotiator (with rank of Ambassador) of Panama Canal treaties (1977-1978); Co-Chairman (former Chairman), National Urban Coalition.

Member: Board of directors, Pan American World Airways, Inc.; board of trustees, Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York; board of trustees, Center for Inter-American Relations; board of trustees, The Salk Institute; board of trustees, National Humanities Center; board of trustees, The American Assembly; board of directors, The International Executive Service Corps; board of trustees, The National Institute for the Humanities; Council on Foreign Relations.

Fellow: American Academy of Arts and Sciences; Royal Society of Arts.

Previous Positions: U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (November 1966 to May 1969); U.S. Representative to the Inter-American Committee of the Alliance for Progress (November 1966 to May 1969); chairman of the board, Xerox Corporation; previously chairman of executive committee and general counsel (1955-1966); Senior partner, Harris, Beach, Wilcox, Dale and Linowitz (Rochester, N.Y., 1958-1966); chairman, National Committee for International Development (1964-1966); vice chairman, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (1965-1970); Chairman, State Department Advisory Committee on International Organizations (1963-1966); Assistant General Counsel, Office of Price Administration (1942-1944); Lieutenant, U.S. Naval Reserve (1944-1946).

Education: A. B. Degree (1935): Hamilton College (Salutatorian; Phi Beta Kappa; Delta Sigma Rho; Phi Delta Epsilon). J. D. Degree (1938): Cornell Law School (Editor-in-Chief, Cornell Law Quarterly; Phi Kappa Phi; Order of Coif)

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I greatly appreciate this opportunity to appear before you in order to discuss the present status of the autonomy negotiations for the West Bank and Gaza and the general progress we have made in the Middle East peace process since the signing of the Camp David accords a little over 2 years ago.

With the election behind us, and with the transition from one administration to the next now underway, this is a particularly appropriate moment to assess where we are and to focus on the challenges and opportunities ahead.

CAMP DAVID ACCORDS

As you know, the Camp David accords established a framework for peace which Egypt, Israel, and the United States hoped would make possible the achievement of a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

To try to make this dream a reality, the framework set forth three basic goals:

First, the achievement of peace and a constructive working relationship between Egypt and Israel.

Second, the establishment of transitional arrangements for a 5-year period in the West Bank and Gaza which would provide the inhabitants of these areas with full autonomy while assuring preservation of Israel's security.

Third, the commencement of negotiations among Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West

Bank and Gaza to resolve the final status of these territories following the 5-year transitional period.

During the past year, I have served as the President's personal representative to the autonomy negotiations, and I shall want to discuss with you where they stand today and their prospects for the future.

Before doing so, however, I want to focus on the extraordinary and deeply gratifying success achieved with respect to the first goal of the Camp David framework, the peace between Egypt and Israel. For this is and must be the cornerstone of our efforts to help bring a broader peace to the Middle East.

#### EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE TREATY

On March 26, 1979, Egypt and Israel signed a treaty of peace. This treaty, let me remind you, marked a peace without victor or vanquished, entered into by two nations determined to reject a legacy of hostility and warfare.

Since then, both Egypt and Israel have scrupulously adhered to their commitments under the treaty. Thus, Israel turned over to Egypt on schedule not only the major portion of the Sinai, but also the Alma oil fields, despite the immense burdens that the loss of this oil imposes on the Israeli economy.

For its part, Egypt has proceeded diligently to normalize its relations with Israel in the face of strong, even fierce opposition of its Arab neighbors and former allies. Embassies have been opened and Ambassadors exchanged. Today, the flag of Israel flies in Egypt and the flag of Egypt in Israel.

Even more important than these tangible achievements, however, is the achievement in spirit. Today, an atmosphere of cooperation and trust prevails where only bitterness and hatred and suspicion once reigned.

Every time I sit down with President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin and with my colleagues in the autonomy negotiations, I am reminded that these shifts in attitude are deep and genuine and reflect the steadily evolving attitudes of their peoples.

Over the past year I have watched the mutual trust and confidence grow—slowly but steadily. This was vividly evidenced by the historic welcome that the President of Israel, Yitzhak Navon, received just 3 weeks ago when he paid the first official Israeli state visit to Egypt.

My frequent travels to both Egypt and Israel during this past year have convinced me that both nations have set their feet firmly on the road to peace, both understand there can be no turning back, and both are determined that there will be no turning back.

#### AUTONOMY TALKS

Against this backdrop, I want to move to the autonomy negotiations in which we have been engaged as a "full partner" with Egypt and Israel during the last 18 months.

The Camp David accords call upon the parties to devise transitional arrangements which would provide full autonomy to the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza and permit them to elect a self-governing authority.

The accords call for the parties to define "full autonomy" by negotiation of the powers and responsibilities that the elected body would exercise during the transitional period. They also call for the autonomy agreement to include arrangements for insuring internal and external security and public order during this transitional period.

In sum, and in the words of the accords, the transitional arrangements are to give "due consideration both to the principle of self-government by the inhabitants of these territories and to the legitimate security concerns of the parties involved."

No one at Camp David in 1978 believed that the negotiation of these matters would be easy. The issues are exceedingly complex, they are extraordinarily emotion laden for the parties, and they could involve matters of life and death, of war and peace.

Accordingly, throughout the negotiation process, all three partners have had to insure that the substantive issues were meticulously examined, and we have had to proceed with extreme care and with sensitivity to the legitimate concerns of both Israel and Egypt, as well as the Palestinians.

#### DIFFICULTIES OF TALKS

Unfortunately, the negotiation process has been made even more difficult in recent months by a host of external and tangential disturbances and distractions which have diverted attention from the central issues under discussion.

Such developments as violence on the West Bank, the seemingly endless stream of U.N. resolutions and the various actions and statements bearing on the status of Jerusalem have interfered with and even interrupted our efforts to focus on the complex and critical substantive issues.

But despite the frustrations and disappointments, I am gratified to be able to tell you that we have made considerable progress in the autonomy negotiations during the past. I remain hopeful that a continued and sustained effort to achieve an autonomy agreement as called for by the Camp David accords can be successful in the months ahead.

The progress made has included agreement on a large range of powers and responsibilities to be exercised by the elected self-governing authority and the modalities for the free election pursuant to which the members of the self-governing authority would be chosen.

#### FIVE CRITICAL ISSUES

In recent days we have been focusing on five critical and decisive issues which the autonomy negotiations must resolve if we are to reach agreement:

One, how can Israel be assured that its security interests will be fully preserved and protected under the autonomy arrangement?

Two, how can we be assured that the limited water resources of the region will be fairly and equitably shared? As you know, of course, water is life in the Middle East.

Three, how should we deal with the public lands in the West Bank and Gaza during the transitional period, and how should such an arrangement bear on Israeli settlements in these areas?

Four, what should be the nature of the powers exercised by the self-governing authority, recognizing that the autonomy arrangements are transitional and that the final status of the territories will have to be determined by agreement among Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians?

Five, and perhaps the most difficult, should the Arab inhabitants of East Jerusalem participate in the elections for the self-governing authority?

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Ambassador, I do not like to interrupt you, but I think I have to. The second bells have rung on a vote in the House. I think we will have a recess for about 10 minutes while we vote. Then we will return and continue with your statement.

[Brief recess.]

Mr. HAMILTON. The subcommittee will resume its seating.

You may proceed, Mr. Ambassador.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Mr. Chairman, when we recessed I had just raised five tantalizing questions, which was a fine moment of suspense. I will pick it up from there.

I had, you remember, been raising the five issues on which we are now focusing.

#### PROGRESS ACHIEVED

During the past few months, working both bilaterally and trilaterally, with Israel and Egypt, we have been able to help the parties make significant progress on several of these fundamental issues. Specifically, Israel and Egypt have narrowed their differences on the key issues of land and water.

In addition, our work during the past months indicates that the parties are far closer on the vital issue of security than many had thought. We have also begun, I believe, to narrow differences on the nature of the powers that the self-governing authority should appropriately exercise during the transitional period.

In sum, through their serious and constructive efforts over the past months, Israel and Egypt have begun to bridge their differences on even the most critical, complex and emotional issues. That, as I say, sir, is a matter of profound significance.

#### SEPTEMBER 1980 REAFFIRMATION

In early September, President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin authorized me to release a joint statement on their behalf. In that statement they affirmed that Egypt and Israel "remain firmly committed to the Camp David accords and process and are convinced that they offer the only viable path toward comprehensive peace in the Middle East."

Both emphasized their determination "to see the process through to a successful conclusion regardless of temporary difficulties that may arise along the way." Last week, during his visit to the United States, Prime Minister Begin reasserted this determination.

The reaffirmation of commitment by President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin is of immense importance. It is premised on their confidence that despite the disagreements, frustrations, and enormous difficulties of the negotiations, the Camp David approach remains essentially sound.

To their vote of confidence, I want to add my own. My experience during the course of these negotiations has convinced me more than ever that this approach remains both valid and promising.

#### ANSWERING CRITICS

Some have criticized the Camp David process for its failure to address immediately the ultimate questions: the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, the final arrangements regarding Jerusalem, and the permanent assurance of Israeli security.

These critics, however, miss the central point. For it was the genius of the negotiators at Camp David to recognize that too many past efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East had failed precisely because they had grasped for too much too soon.

They recognized that the issues in this region are so complex, the emotions so deep, the contending forces too many, the stakes so great, that the problems defy shortcut solutions.

The wisdom of Camp David was to recognize this fact, to understand that bitterness dies hard while trust grows slowly.

The key to Camp David was its recognition that the best hope for enduring peace lay in a phased process, one in which agreements attainable at one stage become building blocks for future progress on more difficult issues.

At no time during my involvement in these negotiations have I discovered any viable alternative course, and I have consistently sought the advice of leaders and experts in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States to ascertain if any alternative exists which would offer greater promise of success.

The simple undeniable fact is that there is none. Not only is the Camp David process the only game in town, it is the only sensible approach at this time.

#### BIPARTISAN ISSUE

In closing, let me say that this is an appropriate occasion to underscore an important point well understood by the members of this committee, that the foreign policy of the United States has been and remains a bipartisan matter and one where continuity is vital. Perhaps in no other area of the globe is the importance of such continuity and bipartisan commitment better evidenced than in the Middle East.

The efforts of the Johnson administration after the June 1967 war led to U.N. Resolution 242, which today remains the cornerstone for Middle East peace.

The intensive shuttle diplomacy of Secretary Kissinger under both the Nixon and Ford administrations enabled Israel and Egypt and Syria to take the first steps toward peace.

Now President Carter's unprecedented efforts have brought about peace between Israel and her largest and most powerful Arab neighbor and established an ongoing negotiation process which, for the first time, places on the same agenda the rights of the Palestinians and security for Israel.

In all these developments the United States has consistently and increasingly played an active and essential part. Our commitment to work actively and unceasingly to move closer to the comprehen-

sive peace we seek is based on a number of factors, not the least of which is the unthinkable threat to world peace that a future conflagration in the Middle East region might present.

Such a U.S. role in pursuit of peace advances our strategic interests while furthering our moral commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes throughout the world.

I know that President-elect Reagan joins President Carter in recognizing the importance of maintaining the continuum of our foreign policy and the vital role the United States must play in the search for peace in the Middle East.

#### U.S. ROLE

Throughout the autonomy negotiations, the United States has sought to play an active and essential part as a full partner. Indeed, as recently as 2 days ago, representatives of the three countries met in Cairo in furtherance of the negotiations.

We have undertaken to act as a catalyst and a constructive spur to progress, and have tried to help both parties find common ground and narrow the differences between them. In doing so, I like to think that we have earned the trust and respect of both Egypt and Israel.

I believe that meaningful further progress can be made in the coming months if the United States remains resolute in its commitment to work intensively, tirelessly, and patiently for peace in the Middle East. That is both the challenge and unique opportunity which will greet the incoming administration.

Egypt and Israel, and nations and people throughout the region and around the world, expect the United States to continue to respond to that challenge and that opportunity. I am confident that we will not fail them.

The words of Theodore Roosevelt in another context are truly relevant to our position in the Middle East today:

The United States does not have an option as to whether it will or will not play a great part on this issue. It must play a great part. The only question is whether we will play that part well or badly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Ambassador Linowitz' prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR SOL M. LINOWITZ, PERSONAL  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AUTONOMY  
NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I greatly appreciate this opportunity to appear before you in order to discuss the present status of the autonomy negotiations for the West Bank and Gaza and the general progress we have made in the Middle East peace process since the signing of the Camp David Accords a little over two years ago. With the election behind us, and with the transition from one Administration to the next now underway, this is a particularly appropriate moment to assess where we are and to focus on the challenges and opportunities ahead.

As you know, the Camp David Accords established a Framework for Peace which Egypt, Israel and the United States hoped would make possible the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. To try to make this dream a reality, the Framework set forth three basic goals: First, the achievement of peace and a constructive working relationship between Egypt and Israel; second, the establishment of transitional arrangements for a five-year period in the West Bank and Gaza which would provide the inhabitants of these areas with "full autonomy" while assuring preservation of Israel's security; and third, the commencement of negotiations among Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza to resolve the final status of these territories following the five-year transitional period.

During the past year, I have served as the President's Personal Representative to the autonomy negotiations and I shall want to discuss with you where they stand today and their prospects for the future. Before doing so, however, I want to focus on the extraordinary and deeply gratifying success achieved with respect to the first goal of the Camp David Framework, the peace between Egypt and Israel. For this is and must be the cornerstone of our efforts to help bring a broader peace to the Middle East.

On March 26, 1979, Egypt and Israel signed a treaty of peace. This treaty, let me remind you, marked a peace without victor or vanquished, entered into by two nations determined to reject a legacy of hostility and warfare. Since then, both Egypt and Israel have scrupulously adhered to their commitments under the treaty. Thus Israel turned over to Egypt on schedule not only the major portion of the Sinai, but also the Alma Oil Fields, despite the immense burdens that the loss of this oil imposes on the Israeli economy. For its part, Egypt has proceeded diligently to normalize its relations with Israel in the face of strong, even fierce reaction of its Arab neighbors and former allies. Embassies have been opened and Ambassadors exchanged. Today the flag of Israel flies in Egypt and the flag of Egypt in Israel.

Even more important than these tangible achievements, however, is the achievement in spirit. Today an atmosphere of cooperation and trust prevails where only bitterness and hatred and suspicion once reigned. Every time I sit down with President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin and with my colleagues in the autonomy negotiations, I am reminded that these shifts in attitude are deep and genuine and reflect the steadily evolving attitudes of their peoples. Over the past year, I have watched the mutual trust and confidence grow -- slowly but steadily. This was vividly evidenced by the historic welcome that the President of Israel, Yitzhak Navon, received just three weeks ago when he paid the first official Israeli state visit to Egypt. My frequent travels to both Egypt and Israel during this past year have convinced me that both nations have set their feet firmly on the road to peace, both understand there can be no turning back, and both are determined that there will be no turning back.

Against this backdrop, I want to move to the autonomy negotiations in which we have been engaged as a "full partner" with Egypt and Israel during the last 18 months. The Camp David Accords call upon the parties to devise

transitional arrangements which would provide full autonomy to the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza and permit them to elect a self-governing authority. The Accords call for the parties to define "full autonomy" by negotiation of the powers and responsibilities that the elected body would exercise during the transitional period. They also call for the autonomy agreement to include arrangements for ensuring internal and external security and public order during this transitional period. In sum, and in the words of the Accords, the transitional arrangements are to give "due consideration both to the principle of self-government by the inhabitants of these territories and to the legitimate security concerns of the parties involved."

No one at Camp David in 1978 believed that the negotiation of these matters would be easy. The issues are exceedingly complex; they are extraordinarily emotion-laden for the parties; and they could involve matters of life and death, of war and peace. Accordingly, throughout the negotiation process, all three partners have had to ensure that the substantive issues were meticulously examined, and we have had to proceed with extreme care and with sensitivity to the legitimate concerns of both Israel and Egypt, as well as the Palestinians. Unfortunately, the negotiation process has been made even more difficult in recent months by a host of external and tangential disturbances and distractions which have diverted attention from the central issues under discussion. Such developments as violence on the West Bank, the seemingly endless stream of U.N. resolutions, and the various actions and statements bearing on the status of Jerusalem have interfered with and even interrupted our efforts to focus on the complex and critical substantive issues.

But despite the frustrations and disappointments, I am gratified to be able to tell you that we have made considerable progress in the autonomy negotiations during the past year; and I remain hopeful that a continued and

sustained effort to achieve an autonomy agreement as called for by the Camp David Accords can be successful in the months ahead.

The progress made has included agreement on a large range of powers and responsibilities to be exercised by the elected self-governing authority, and the modalities for the free election pursuant to which the members of the self-governing authority would be chosen. And in recent days we have been focusing on five critical and decisive issues which the autonomy negotiations must resolve if we are to reach agreement:

1. How can Israel be assured that its security interests will be fully preserved and protected under the autonomy arrangement?
2. How can we assure that the limited water resources of the region will be fairly and equitably shared?
3. How should we deal with the public lands in the West Bank and Gaza during the transitional period, and how should such an arrangement bear on Israeli settlements in these areas?
4. What should be the nature of the powers exercised by the self-governing authority, recognizing that the autonomy arrangements are transitional and that the final status of the territories will have to be determined by agreement among Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians?
5. Should the Arab inhabitants of East Jerusalem participate in the elections for the self-governing authority?

During the past few months, working both bilaterally and trilaterally, with Israel and Egypt, we have been able to help the parties make significant progress on several of these fundamental issues. Specifically, Israel and Egypt have narrowed their differences on the key issues of land and water. In addition, our work during the past months indicates that the parties are

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In early September, President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin authorized me to release a joint statement on their behalf. In that statement, they affirmed that Egypt and Israel "remain firmly committed to the Camp David Accords and process and are convinced that they offer the only viable path toward comprehensive peace in the Middle East." Both emphasized their determination "to see the process through to a successful conclusion regardless of temporary difficulties that may arise along the way." Last week, during his visit to the United States, Prime Minister Begin reasserted this determination.

The reaffirmation of commitment by President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin is of immense importance. It is premised on their confidence that despite the disagreements, frustrations, and enormous difficulties of the negotiations, the Camp David approach remains essentially sound. To their vote of confidence, I want to add my own. My experience during the course of these negotiations has convinced me more than ever that this approach remains both valid and promising.

Some have criticized the Camp David process for its failure to address immediately the ultimate questions: the final status of the West Bank and Gaza; the final arrangements regarding Jerusalem; and the permanent assurance of Israeli security. These critics, however, miss the central point. For it was the genius of the negotiators at Camp David to recognize that too many past efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East had failed precisely because they had grasped for too much too soon. They recognized that the issues in this region are so complex, the emotions so deep, the contending forces so many, the

stakes so great, that the problems defy shortcut solutions. The wisdom of Camp David was to recognize this fact, to understand that bitterness dies hard while trust grows slowly. The key to Camp David was its recognition that the best hope for enduring peace lay in a phased process -- one in which agreements attainable at one stage become building blocks for future progress on more difficult issues.

At no time during my involvement in these negotiations have I discovered any viable alternative course, and I have consistently sought the advice of leaders and experts in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States to ascertain if any alternative exists which would offer greater promise of success. The simple undeniable fact is that there is none. Not only is the Camp David process the only game in town; it is the only sensible approach at this time.

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In all these developments, the United States has consistently and increasingly played an active and essential part. Our commitment to work

actively and unceasingly to move closer to the comprehensive peace we seek is based on a number of factors, not the least of which is the unthinkable threat to world peace that a future conflagration in the vital Middle East region might present. Such a U.S. role in pursuit of peace advances our strategic interests while furthering our moral commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes throughout the world. I know that President-elect Reagan joins President Carter in recognizing the importance of maintaining the continuum of our foreign policy and the vital role the United States must play in the search for peace in the Middle East.

Throughout the autonomy negotiations, the United States has sought to play an active and essential part as a "full partner." Indeed, as recently as two days ago, representatives of the three countries met in Cairo in furtherance of the negotiations. We have undertaken to act as a catalyst and a constructive spur to progress, and have tried to help both parties find common ground and narrow the differences between them. In doing so, I like to think that we have earned the trust and respect of both Egypt and Israel.

I believe that meaningful further progress can be made in the coming months if the United States remains resolute in its commitment to work intensively, tirelessly, and patiently for peace in the Middle East. That is both the challenge and the unique opportunity which will greet the incoming Administration. Egypt and Israel, and nations and people throughout the region and around the world, expect the U.S. to continue to respond to that challenge and that opportunity. I am confident that we will not fail them. The words of Theodore Roosevelt are truly relevant to our position in the Middle East today:

"The United States does not have an option as to whether it will or will not play a great part on this issue. It must play a great part. The only question is whether we will play that part well or badly."

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Ambassador, we thank you for your statement. I know that all of the members of the subcommittee would feel very strongly that you personally have played a great part in trying to bring peace to this difficult area, and that you have played your part very well indeed. We are grateful to you for the work that you have done.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Thank you, sir.

#### ADVICE FOR INCOMING ADMINISTRATION

Mr. HAMILTON. I take it that if you were asked to give advice to the incoming administration, one of the things you would say is that the Camp David accords, the Camp David process should be continued.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir, without hesitation.

Mr. HAMILTON. You say in part because you just don't see any other alternative approach. I think your statement makes that quite clear.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir, and because I think there is an ongoing momentum and a commitment on the part of both parties to go forward with these negotiations.

Mr. HAMILTON. It is your judgment that both Mr. Begin and Mr. Sadat share that point of view with you?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir. In September they authorized me, as I said, to read that statement which made absolutely clear their recommitment and their own sense that this is the only viable path toward peace.

#### UPBEAT TONE OF TESTIMONY

Mr. HAMILTON. Now, in listening to your statement, one cannot help but be impressed, I think, with the rather upbeat tone of it in contrast to the press and the media which clearly have indicated they don't think much progress is being made.

How do you account for that difference? Are you in fact genuinely optimistic about this process?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. One of my biggest problems, Mr. Chairman, has been trying to keep up with what the press presumes is going on rather than what I know to be going on. I can assure you that no member of the press has sat in on our negotiations and, therefore, I am very surprised and view with some incredulity the assurance with which they undertake to tell the world what has or has not happened.

Mr. Chairman, negotiations which are to be successful in a matter as delicate as the one with which we are now dealing have to be in confidence and have to be in secret.

Very often we leave a session, having talked intensively and constructively about some important issues, and can only say to the press: "We had a good discussion." That is translated in press terms as nothing much happened, or they didn't reach any agreement, or there was no progress.

As I learned from my earlier experiences, the one way to assure that you don't make progress is to expose to the pitiless light of publicity everything that gets said behind closed doors.

I think we would not have reached a treaty on the Panama Canal if we had had to work in the same light of publicity that shines on every aspect of our work in the Middle East. So, I have tried to say to the press, give us a break, recognize at the right time and the right way we will let you know what we have done, but don't make it impossible for us to deal effectively.

To the extent that there is a conflict between what I believe and what I see in the press, it is because we have tried very hard not to say more than we should. The answer to your question, however, is, Mr. Chairman, yes, the tone you detect is the accurate one.

#### NARROWING OF DIFFERENCES

Mr. HAMILTON. The part of your statement, of course, that I would like to develop further with you is the top part of page 5, where you speak of the narrowing of differences on key issues.

I recognize you might have to speak under some restraints but I would like for you to elaborate to the extent that you can on the way in which the differences have been narrowed, with regard to land, water, and security issues and the self-governing authority, all of these issues which we know to be crucial.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. That does confront me with a bit of a problem, Mr. Chairman, but I will try to be responsive. For the reasons I have already outlined, we have to deal in confidence and in secrecy on some of these discussions because a premature revelation of a point of view or a premature indication of what has or has not taken place may be met with a denial for local political reasons or because one party or the other does not feel that it wants its position to be known at this juncture.

As you know—and forgive me for saying the obvious—the whole region is watching what is going on in these negotiations, and there are many in the region that don't wish it well. So, we have to be very careful about how we announce what we are doing and what we have been up to and the progress we have been able to make.

Having said that, perhaps I can add this, which may be more responsive.

The issue of land, particularly public lands, has, as I indicated in my statement, involved settlements. The question has been what about these Israeli settlements, past and future.

In the first place, I would call to your attention the fact that the present Government of Israel has indicated that it will not establish any additional settlements in the West Bank beyond the four that were most recently announced. That becomes kind of a cutoff point, at least for this administration, for this present Government, with respect to the West Bank.

In addition, there has been some indication that Israel understands that if further settlements are to be considered in the future, it ought to be with the concurrence of the Palestinians.

So, we have had some movement in that area. You will forgive me if I don't elaborate beyond that, except to say that we are at long last dealing with this issue of settlements in a way that may perhaps give us common ground.

In the area of water, I said before, water is life, and therefore what happens to the water supply present and future is of vital significance to all the parties concerned.

We also are dealing regionally here because water also affects Syria and Jordan and so forth.

I think what we are finding is that the parties are now thinking in regional terms and recognizing that while their present rights ought to be preserved, they ought, on an equitable joint basis, to undertake to deal constructively with this whole water problem.

That is progress. We have not been able in the past to talk about, even to describe the possible mechanisms. So, we have moved that far.

#### LAND AND WATER RIGHTS

Mr. HAMILTON. Do the Israelis acknowledge that the Palestinians are entitled to land and water rights?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Oh, yes. There is no question that if they are to be there, they are to have certain rights with respect to land and water. The question has been what those rights ought to be with respect to land and water. That is what we are trying to flesh out.

They differentiate those rights, by the way, from the grant of rather broad, full rights which apply to certain other areas, where they have said yes, virtually all rights in these areas are to be those of the self-governing authority.

They do recognize that certain rights with reference to land and water must be exercised by the self-governing authority.

#### FINANCE, TAXATION, AGRICULTURE

Mr. HAMILTON. Has there been any agreement on what measure of control the self-governing Palestinians will have over finance, taxation, agriculture?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. We have substantial agreement, in a number of areas, which we have agreed not to make public yet, but which perhaps in confidence I could make known to the committee.

There will be full responsibility or authority in the self-governing authority subject to cooperation and coordination with Israel. But except for that, there has been an agreement on a very significant number of areas, including those you just mentioned.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mrs. Fenwick? I think you were here first.

#### VIEWS OF ARAB STATES

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wondered if there had been any change in attitude on the part of any of the Arab States of late in regard to Camp David, or is that something you would rather discuss in private?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No. I think I can respond in part to that although some of the indications we have had privately I would not want to talk about.

I think I have testified about this before this committee in a closed session previously, and I might say it in open session. I have met with King Hussein, and also he was here as you know for a visit in which we had a further chance to talk with him.

Also, I have talked to Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia, to King Hassan of Morocco and so forth, and to Palestinian leaders both on the West Bank and Gaza and here in this country, in an effort to ascertain how we might be able to first get the Palestinians somehow engaged in these negotiations as Camp David envisaged; two, how to get Jordan to participate as Camp David anticipated; and three, how to get the understanding, and we hope ultimately the support of moderate Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia.

I guess I can only say that there is real interest in what we are doing, but skepticism that we are going to be able to achieve our goal. This skepticism is based on the fact they don't think that Israel will be forthcoming enough in order to move toward the full autonomy which they believe was promised by Camp David.

On the other hand, I think from the outset they have had misgivings about Camp David. None of the other countries came in and said that even if you have full autonomy this will solve the problem or deal with the problem.

So, we have had an uphill fight constantly. What we have tried to get them to understand is that we are making progress, that we are going to be in a position, if we stick to it, of giving the Palestinians a far better life than they could get any other way, that there is no alternative course, despite suggestions and intimations and pronouncements, and that if they want really to do what is best for the Palestinians, they ought to help us in this effort slowly to move toward an agreement.

Mrs. FENWICK. I wondered if the breaking of relations between Saudi Arabia and Libya had any effect or indicated something new?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I don't know what it may have indicated, but it had no effect on our negotiations.

#### VOTE OF ARABS OF EAST JERUSALEM

Mrs. FENWICK. I see. I noticed in your statement a reference to voting by the Arabs in east Jerusalem. How large an element is that?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I don't know the exact number, but approaching 100,000. The question is really whether they will or will not participate.

Mrs. FENWICK. Full autonomy—courts, schools, police, taxes, water, settlements, all those are part of it. I thought I read in the paper that some of the courts and schools were already agreed upon to some extent and published.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Some things have been.

Mrs. FENWICK. Are they accurate reports?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. To the extent that I recall, there were reports about certain areas in which agreement has been reached, such as education, such as health, agriculture, and so forth.

Mrs. FENWICK. Magistrate courts and so on.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Well, the magistrate courts are now subject to the system of Jordanian law anyway.

Mrs. FENWICK. Would this be under the control of the self-governing authority.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes.

Mrs. FENWICK. And that self-governing authority would be elected by the local people?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, by the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza. They would set up a transitional government which they would elect, that would have these powers and responsibilities as agreed upon for a period not to exceed 5 years, after which the final status of the territory will be determined by agreement among Egypt, Israel, the Palestinians, and Jordan.

Mrs. FENWICK. That is in the accords, that Jordan will be included in that?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes. It was so intended from the beginning.

Mrs. FENWICK. I see.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Studds.

#### OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Mr. STUDDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, my real question is a general one which Mr. Hamilton tried to elicit in the beginning and which I don't think we are going to get more of an answer than we have; that is, behind the language of diplomacy, just how fundamentally optimistic or pessimistic you really may be.

When you read your statement, I think one accustomed to diplomatic language could reach either extreme conclusion, that you are ready to go home and throw up your hands in utter dismay and the hell with all of them, or you really think remarkable progress has been made and your remarks bear on shifts of attitude at this point, rather than concrete points.

I will not ask you again. I will watch you very carefully as you respond to questions.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Let me just say, however, if you detected an ambivalent note, I didn't mean it. I hope you did not think that I was saying one of the possibilities was to say the hell with it because I am quite clear in my own mind that a right course for us is to stick to what we are up to, to remain a full partner in these negotiations, to help them move forward, because they need our help, and to take encouragement from the fact that we are quite a distance from where we were 6 months ago or a year ago.

The skeptics, those deriding the Camp David process, simply have not focused on what has happened in the interim period. I am optimistic or have a sense of hope because I have seen this progress made, and I am aware of the commitment of the parties.

I cannot tell you that I am sure that the result will be achieved. I think it is worth doing because I don't know a better one.

#### PALESTINIAN CONTACTS

Mr. STUDDS. I think all of us owe you, and anyone else engaged in the negotiations, a debt of enormous gratitude for your patience. As we have sat here over the years listening to the accounts of the negotiations of Camp David before and after, it really resembled a medieval scholastic debate at some points. I think you are quite remarkable.

Have there been any contacts between you and your staff and representatives of the Palestinians in Gaza or the West Bank?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes. I have met with some of the leaders of the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza, and also met with some Palestinian leaders in this country. Other representatives of the United States have been meeting with them.

We have tried in every way possible to elicit their own points of view, to try to figure out how we can get them to become involved in these negotiations, so we can have the benefit of their personal participation. They are reluctant and hesitant, but remain interested in what we are doing.

Let me just say one further word. When I first became involved in these negotiations, I said publicly that if I were a Palestinian, I would not have wanted to join the negotiations then. This was a year ago. I felt at that point what had been dealt with was largely semantics and procedures rather than substance.

My conviction today is that the Palestinians ought to look long and hard at what we have really done and where we are moving and take heart from the fact that they are going to be in a position to assert a very significant measure of control over their lives if they move with us on this autonomy arrangement.

#### WILL PALESTINIANS SUPPORT PROCESS?

Mr. STUDDS. I can appreciate that is how you feel they ought to feel. My concern is how they do feel. Can you see any indication, even remotely, that they support the process?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, I think I would answer that question but with some guarded words of caution. They are concerned about whether they can publicly assert their support for the process.

You may have noticed this morning, in this morning's newspaper—and I don't know the facts except I read the newspaper, as you may have—that a Palestinian who had been a supporter of the Camp David process was killed.

The Israelis allege that is because an extremist was opposed to his position and they killed him. I don't know whether that is the fact. What I am saying is we have had enough indications that people who are outspoken in that regard are fearful of saying so publicly.

We have had some indications that if we can make enough progress, enough to assure them that perhaps they can look forward to a better life for themselves, that we might be able to evoke a positive response.

Mr. STUDDS. Let me ask you one final thing. You were asked earlier with respect to Jordan, one of the things that has been particularly discouraging I suspect to you as well has been the apparent inability to involve the Jordanians, the Syrians, the Saudis, at least in any public way in the process or even their willingness to state their support of the process.

For me particularly, it has been the absence of any indication I gather publicly or privately, and it is the private to which I would direct your attention now, from the Saudis, which has been particularly galling because, as you will recall, this committee several years ago was asked to support the sale of those sophisticated aircraft to Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia.

The argument of the administration at that time with respect to the sale to the Saudis hinged in large part on their private diplomatic helpfulness in support of the peace process in the Middle East.

Since that time I don't recall seeing any evidence that that was then or has subsequently become the case. I wonder if you can give us any news of contacts with the Saudis that indicate that either because of, in spite of or not withstanding that sale they have been of any help or support whatever in this process.

#### SAUDI POSITION

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Well, we have maintained contact with them, of course, and been assured they are aware of what is going on. As I said earlier, they have had their misgivings from the outset about the Camp David process. Apparently they retain these misgivings. It is also quite clear that if tomorrow we could come up with an arrangement, an agreement, which really represents the kind of control over their own lives that the Palestinians might respond to, the Saudis are going to look favorably upon it.

At this juncture, they don't feel that they can offer us their support. All we can do is keep plugging ahead and hope in due course we can have it.

Mr. STUDDS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Findley.

#### INVOLVING THE PALESTINIANS

Mr. FINDLEY. Mr. Ambassador, you have demonstrated many times in your public service patience and attention to detail, and candor in dealing with the Congress. That I appreciate.

I have viewed the Presidential campaign year as a year that almost guaranteed stalemate in the Middle East process. I think some progress has been made, but it has not been a year of great progress.

We face critical months immediately ahead. Some people are waiting for the next Israeli elections for a breakthrough. Some are waiting for the new administration here.

I imagine that you would agree that the PLO, whatever its record, could be engaged more heavily in violence than it is today. It could find itself more directly in the Soviet camp than it is today; in other words, things could get worse.

My concern is that we give the Palestinians some glimmer of hope, some sign that there are better days ahead. Yet, I don't detect anything from your report given this morning that you have succeeded in drawing Palestinians of prominence and authority into the process.

I suspect that when you took the assignment you at least had some hope that you might be able to seek out and find Palestinian leaders who would break from the central organization and provide some support and encouragement in the process.

Do you see any challenge to the existing Palestinian leadership? Is there somebody waiting in the wings that might be expected to take over, to move out, to be a force?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I don't know the answer to that, but you raise a very significant question.

I have been disappointed that Palestinian leadership has not seen fit to try to ascertain whether it is really in the best interests of the Palestinians to remain aloof from what we are doing.

We have tried to talk to them, talked to several mayors about it, and tried to indicate to them why we thought it was in their own best interests to work with us in some fashion. But they have not seen fit to do so.

It may well be that their concern is what the reaction would be on the part of the PLO if they undertook to do so. There is some reason to believe that that is the case.

I can only say to you that the choice we have is this. Either say, because the Palestinians so far have not joined, we are not going to go forward with this process, without having an alternative avenue available, which in my judgment is going to exacerbate the tensions and the hostilities and so forth.

Or, keep working at this one, hoping that at some point the Palestinians will sit down with us and let us know firsthand what it is that they are really seeking, so that we can have the benefit of that as we go forward with the negotiations.

The Israelis point out to us—and I think this ought to be said in fairness—when we are at Camp David we all agreed that Jordan would come and sit with us, that the Palestinians would join the delegations of Egypt and Jordan, and we would have a chance together to determine how this full autonomy is to be made effective.

When the Palestinians said no, and Jordan said no, we could have said we will wait until such time as the Palestinians are in and Jordan is in. We decided not to do that. We are willing to go forward. Meanwhile, no one at this table is able to tell us what the Palestinians really want.

Mr. FINDLEY. That is still true today, is it not?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. That is still true today. So one of the other problems we have had to overcome is to achieve the understanding and the cooperation of Israel to positions that we think are important for the Palestinians when we really don't know.

That, I must in all candor tell you, has been a problem. We are trying to say if we come up with a situation which is good enough and promising enough and productive enough, that we can in good conscience call upon the Palestinians to come in, letting them help us then put the final touches on the agreement we seek.

#### PALESTINIAN FEARS

Mr. FINDLEY. You have now had an experience in the Middle East that is very unique, and covering quite a period of time, with many personalities. I sense from one of your remarks today that some of the reluctance on the part of Palestinians to cooperate may arise from fear.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, I think that is probably true.

Mr. FINDLEY. I would hope you wouldn't want to leave the impression that that is the sole motivation.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No, no. I certainly would not. There have been unfortunate developments on the West Bank. We ought not to

dissemble about that. Some of the actions taken by Israel with reference to the mayors, for example.

Mr. FINDLEY. For example, the shooting at the legs of the students causing injury surely will make it very difficult to get Palestinian cooperation.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. The problem, Mr. Findley, that we are dealing with there, that is almost heartbreaking, is that every event has a counterreaction, and every time one party takes one step, the other feels it has to take another step, and the tension builds, and the hostility builds, and these people are not moving toward working together as amicably as they might.

For a long period of time there is quiet, then suddenly something erupts, there is a guerrilla attack, or one person or another is shot on either side, and then you are back again in this churning maelstrom, which is another reason why we cannot leave it alone and say we will pack up and go back and let them worry it out, because the dangers are so great.

#### CRITICAL TRANSITION MONTHS AHEAD

Mr. FINDLEY. I started out by voicing my anxiety over the events of the next few months. I presume and I expect and hope that you will continue to be in your present capacity, at least until February, and perhaps longer. These could be very critical months.

Do you see any way in which the transition could be smoothed by having an observer from the new administration present for talks that may be ensuing in the next month or so?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I have talked to Richard Allen several times about what is going on. I intend to keep the representatives of the new administration fully informed as to what we are up to and why.

I believe the President, when he meets with Governor Reagan, perhaps tomorrow, will tell him about what is happening. I would certainly welcome any such participation.

As to my own role, I will strongly urge that the new President designate someone who is close to him who has his full trust and confidence, and who can with full authority on his behalf as his personal representative move forward now with these negotiations.

Mr. FINDLEY. Thank you.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Barnes.

#### APPRECIATION FOR AMBASSADOR'S WORK

Mr. BARNES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join my colleagues in telling you how much respect all of us have come to have for the job you have done, Mr. Ambassador. I have followed it closely.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. You were on a trip with us. We enjoyed it.

Mr. BARNES. No one can envy the responsibilities you have and the dedication you have given to it. I was about to say everyone in our country, but given your responsibilities, everyone in the world really owes you a debt of gratitude.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Thank you.

## SUMMIT POSSIBILITY

Mr. BARNES. Just following up on Mr. Findley's last question, concerning the discussion of the possibility of a summit, including the leaders of the three countries to help move the process along.

Do you see any benefit from such a meeting very early in the new administration. Are the talks at such a stage that that would be helpful? What is your sense for the need of the leaders of the three countries to meet at an early date?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I would encourage that. I would encourage it because I think it is very important for the leaders to get to know one another, to have a sense of their respective views with reference to the situation and to ascertain how they can work together most cooperatively in order to advance their common commitment.

As I see it, in the Camp David accords we have a solemn commitment of the United States. The new President will want to ascertain for himself how he can best and the country can best play its role during the months ahead.

It would be exceedingly useful for President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to sit down with the new President and take counsel with one another about where things stand and how they might move.

So, I hope that quite early such a summit will be arranged, and I think it would be very useful, not only in giving the three participants a chance to come to know one another, but also to have a sense of how they feel about the several remaining issues which are really at the heart of the negotiations now and will call for resolution at the highest levels if we are finally to come up with an agreement.

## SUMMIT DECISIONS

Mr. BARNES. Am I correct in assuming that you are saying that some of the issues are essentially ripe for a decision now by officials of the highest levels?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir.

Mr. BARNES. So the groundwork has been laid by the working groups for a summit?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir. I can say that some of the issues, the critical issues, can be resolved on the highest levels politically. I indicated earlier the five issues on which we are now focusing. Several of those involve matters which call for resolution by the Chief Executive of the country.

As negotiators, we can just go so far, but then the decision has such profound significance that only the Chief Executive of the country can make that decision.

I think there are a few of those in this list of issues that ought to be discussed. I cannot say that they will be resolved, but they could be resolved.

## IMPACT OF IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Mr. BARNES. On a different issue, has the war between Iran and Iraq affected the negotiations in any way? Has it distracted the Egyptians or the Israelis from these negotiations? Have either of those countries been engaged in any way in supporting one side or

the other? What is your assessment of what effect that war has had on the relationships between Israel and Egypt and the negotiations?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Well, it has not directly affected the negotiations; that is to say, it has not in my judgment had anything to do either with the pace or the content of the negotiations.

It hovers over our negotiations. We can't meet without being aware that Iran and Iraq are engaged in hostilities and that this could spread to a larger conflagration.

Moreover, Israel, quite understandably, is troubled by what Jordan is doing with reference to Iraq. It views Iraq as a sworn enemy. It is troubled by the role of Libya. It is troubled by the Syrian arrangement with the Soviet Union.

There are other things in the area which cause it concern and which lead it to believe that it must be even more careful about its security than perhaps it had indicated before. At least that is the position that is asserted to us.

The Egyptians, for their part, are troubled, troubled about Iran and what may be going on there, troubled about the danger of this war spreading. So both parties are conscious of the fact that the war is there as a possible explosive situation that could get far worse, and could reach even closer.

Now, one of the results of this has been a sense that perhaps this issue with which we are now dealing, the Palestinian issue, ought therefore to be resolved if there is a way to resolve it because this is one dangerous trouble spot where there is an avenue for peaceful resolution that ought to be advanced.

I think both parties have a sense of that, to get this at least behind us, not only resolving the issue but perhaps setting a precedent for how to deal with other issues.

#### POSSIBILITY OF U.S. TROOPS IN ISRAEL

Mr. BARNES. In the context of Israel's increasing concern about its own security, there has been a lot of discussion in the press that Israel will seek from the United States the actual placement of troops on Israeli soil, or in a buffer area, or certainly as Begin has said when he was visiting the United States, an increased military presence.

Has that been discussed in the context of the negotiations, or can you give us some insight into the Israeli desires with respect to American troops in the Middle East?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No, sir, not in the context of the negotiations. There has been discussion, but I have not been party to them.

Mr. BARNES. It is totally unrelated.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. It is, because it really has to do with a broader strategic problem and not with these negotiations themselves.

Mr. BARNES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Pease?

#### TIMETABLE FOR FUTURE PROGRESS

Mr. PEASE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, welcome to our committee.

You have discussed the progress that has been made over the last year. I think it is very helpful for you to do that in as much as many of us have been preoccupied with other matters over the last few months.

Some of the progress has escaped our attention. It is good to have you outline the progress as you have.

I am interested in having your reaction to or your thoughts on the rate of progress as it projects into the future, based on the amount of progress made in the last year.

Would you expect there would be some hope of concluding this process for the interim arrangements—not for the ultimate arrangements, interim arrangements—within the next 6 months or 1 year or 2 years or 3 years? How long is it likely to take, based on the rate of progress that has been achieved in the last year?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I would rather, Mr. Pease, answer your question this way. The rate of progress achieved in the past months ought not to be the determining factor.

No. 1, there was an interruption, as you perhaps know, for several months. The Jerusalem issue, which I referred to in my remarks, though extraneous to our negotiations, nonetheless brought them to a halt.

So, we had to start up again when we had an ongoing momentum and suddenly there was a halt for a couple of months. That is very difficult in any negotiation.

Notwithstanding that, however, we have made the progress I have outlined. If the present momentum, if the present commitment continues, as I hope it will, and if the new administration wants to go forward with these discussions, then I think we have cleared away so many subsidiary issues that there is real promise for coming up with answers to the most difficult issues.

That could happen in 6 months. It all depends on what the commitment is of the parties, what their determination is, and whether or not there is the sense that this problem is one that ought to have priority attention and concern.

What does worry me, frankly, is that perhaps there will be a hiatus, perhaps there will be a feeling, well, we need a lot of time now, or some time to go back over this and understand where we are going from here.

I don't think that situation is going to hold still. I don't believe it is one we can put to rest and say behave yourselves and don't do anything to trouble us until we are ready to talk to you.

The potential for problems there is so significant that I hope it gets the priority attention it deserves and, if so, I then am confident we can make progress.

#### NEED FOR JORDANIAN AND PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION

Mr. PEASE. Thank you.

Some reference has been made in previous questions to disappointment over lack of participation by the Jordanians and the Palestinians. I am interested again to hear what you might tell us about whether it is possible at all to come to the conclusion of discussions on the interim arrangements, whether it is 6 months or longer, and to finalize those interim arrangements and begin to

implement them without participation by the Jordanians or the Palestinians, or will you reach a point short of the implementation stage for the interim arrangements where you will have to say we, the Americans, and the Egyptians and the Israelis have gone as far as we can go, and we are at an absolute stalemate unless we can get some input from the other two parties.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I think it is inevitable that prior to implementation you are going to have to have some kind of participation by the Palestinians.

First, this is intended for them. What we are trying to do is devise a system which will lead them to elect a self-governing authority. If we hold an election and nobody comes, we will have gone through an exercise that has been agonizing and frustrating and utterly unproductive because they will stay away.

So, we have to devise something that will encourage them to participate, to want to join in the election. We can only do that, I submit, if we know that this is the kind of thing they want, and if they have given an indication that they are willing to participate.

That is why we are making efforts constantly to try to bring them in, either directly or through others in other countries that may have some influence with them.

My hope still remains, as I said earlier, that if we can find a way to let them know what it is we are doing, and how it is we are doing it, that they will respond.

We have had some private indications that if we make enough progress, that will be the result, but we are a long way from that point.

#### TIME NEEDED TO BRING OTHERS IN

Mr. PEASE. Again thinking of the timetable, it would seem optimistic to assume that within 6 months Israel, Egypt, and the United States might reach the point where they are agreed on the issues, and at that point you still have to involve the Palestinians and perhaps the Jordanians.

What kind of a time period would you see to get them involved? Presumably, once they make known their desires, then the principal parties have to go back and renegotiate again among themselves, each one contributing his own attitude toward the changes.

Isn't that another year or 2-year process?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Well, first let me lay to rest any notion that I see myself as a prophet. I wouldn't want to indicate to you that I can look into any kind of a ball, crystal or otherwise, and tell you what will happen in 6 months, a year, and so forth. I would like to say this.

First, you ought to know—and I don't think I have said this—that not only we, but the Egyptians and the Israelis, are trying to find ways to be in touch with the Palestinians in order to ascertain what they have in mind.

The Egyptians particularly have been active in this regard. When we had a meeting here of heads of delegations at Blair House in October, all three parties agreed that an important objective should be to try to reach out to the Palestinians in any way we could, together or individually, in order to get their views, in order to get them somehow involved in what we are trying to do.

So there is a determined effort, a genuine effort. Unhappily, tragically, the incident of a day or two ago, a shooting taking place, sets it back because it again increases the tension we have been talking about.

There have been quiet efforts by the Israelis, for example, to try to reach out and understand, by the Egyptians and, as I have said, by us.

Now, I listed five issues of major concern. We know that those issues are of major interest and concern to the Palestinians. If we could focus on those issues and resolve them in a way that would seem to respond to what the Palestinians want, that shouldn't take a great deal of time.

That merely calls for the determination and the commitment of the parties to find answers, in which case it seems to me we are a long way towards interesting the Palestinians and perhaps bringing them into a negotiation.

#### ROLE OF EUROPEAN INITIATIVE

Mr. PEASE. Thank you.

One last question, if I might, Mr. Ambassador.

Could you just comment briefly on how the so-called European initiative has been received?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes. I am glad you raised that because it is one area of this problem that I should have alluded to.

I have no question in my mind that the European initiative was born out of a sincere desire to try to be helpful, and that the nine countries hoped that what could result would be some kind of alternative avenue which might advance the Palestinian problem, the solution of the Palestinian problem productively.

The countries said in issuing their pronouncement in Venice, you remember, that they were supportive of the Camp David process, but they wanted to enunciate their own program, which was not a problem except in two points that they made—one, that they thought that the PLO should become associated with the process; and two, they used the term self-determination, which is translated in Israel as being an independent Palestinian state.

It is important to recognize that they did not offer a path, an avenue towards a better resolution of the problem. They merely issued the pronouncement.

I am sure that it was done out of the best of motives, as I have indicated, but the impact on us was this. It seemed to suggest to the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza that a better answer may be coming down the pike before very long, and you can just wait perhaps and something better will be showing up.

That didn't help us, working as we are to try to attract the Palestinians into some participation in the Camp David process.

I must tell you I have so said to the Ambassadors from the EC-9 countries. They are meeting again at the beginning of December. Foreign Minister Thorn of Luxembourg was around the Middle East. He is the chairman of the group, and he talked to the various countries, including specifically Egypt, Israel and other places.

What he came back with was the conviction that both Egypt and Israel believe the Camp David process is the right one, that the European initiative does say some things which perhaps can be

helpful, but that in general it may have suggested to Palestinians that there could be an alternative, and yet none is being devised.

I don't know how they will deal with the issue ultimately. For the moment, they recognize that the only game in town, to say as I said before, is the one we have. When all is said and done, that still is the course we have to pursue if we are really looking for a practical route to be helpful to the Palestinians.

Mr. PEASE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Gilman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, I welcome you before the committee and want to commend you for all of the sincere and diligent efforts you have made to help bring about peace in this area.

I think it is going to be a great loss if you soon leave the work that you have been performing. We hope you won't get too far from the peace process.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Thank you.

#### SYRIA AND JORDAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Ambassador, have you had an opportunity in the last few months to talk to any of the Syrian or Jordanian leaders with regard to the peace process?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Not the Syrians, sir, though our Ambassador has I think had some discussion. The Jordanians, the last time I personally was involved was with King Hussein when he was here.

Our Ambassador has been talking to King Hussein, and we have had other conversations by others in the government with the Jordanians about the issue.

Mr. GILMAN. Are you encouraged with regard to your meetings and talks with King Hussein that there is a changing attitude or a more receptive attitude by the Jordanians in trying to help work out a satisfactory arrangement on the West Bank?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I think there is no question that King Hussein and his government are genuinely interested in trying to work out an arrangement for the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza.

I think thus far I can not say I am encouraged that he is ready or willing to support the Camp David process. He has indicated to the contrary, but his misgivings arise from the fact he doesn't think that we are going to be able to come up with a successful resolution of some of these problems that I have alluded to.

My own feeling is—and I can only answer you as candidly as possible—that if we could resolve these issues, we could go back and talk to King Hussein and point out to him where we have come and how this meets what he has conceived to be the needs of the Palestinians and, therefore, why we ought to have cooperation and possible support. Then I think he would listen.

Mr. GILMAN. At that point do you think he would become involved in the negotiation process?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I can't say he has told us that exactly, but he has indicated to us that he would be most interested if we are able to do that.

## SYRIAN ROLE

Mr. GILMAN. In the past, President Sadat has said that once the West Bank problems were resolved, he had no concern about being able to find a more cooperative attitude by the Syrians with regard to the negotiating process.

Do you feel that that is still a valid assessment?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I must tell you I really don't know, and I don't know how the Syrian attitude has been affected by the recent arrangement they made with the Soviet Union. I don't know how their attitude is affected by some of the discussions in Israel with reference to the Golan Heights.

I know President Sadat apparently still hopes that at some point Syria might be involved. I don't know at the moment how this could be accomplished, but he has expressed his hope that this could come to pass.

## MODERATE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP

Mr. GILMAN. Has there been any moderate leadership among the Palestinians that has come forward to try to be helpful in the process?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Not come forward, but there has been some moderate leadership that has talked with us, that we have looked for, that has indicated the kind of thing that might evoke support among Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza.

As I said earlier, perhaps before you arrived, Congressman Gilman, it is not necessarily in the best interests of Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza to go public these days with anything which indicates support, approval or even very great interest of what we are up to in these negotiations.

I alluded to the story in this morning's newspaper about, as you saw, the killing of a Palestinian who apparently had publicly said that he was supportive of the Camp David process.

We understand that. Therefore, we don't expect them to subject themselves to danger by doing that. If they can quietly give us a sense of what it is that they would like, so that we can present them, if negotiations move forward, with a result which must say to the Palestinians here is something you can get no other way, that we will be able to attract their interest and support.

Let me just add one thing. I have said this to the leaders of Arab countries, I have said this to the Palestinians with whom I have talked, and I think I ought to say it to you. I have said it to the Europeans.

There are three ways you can deal with the situation on the West Bank and Gaza.

One, you can allow the present situation to continue, the military government of Israel remains there, the present situation goes on, there is no resolution of the problem, and we know what that is going to result in. Intensification of tensions and hostilities and so forth.

Two, you can encourage the onset of violence so that the Palestinians, armed by some other countries might undertake by force to try to seize the land. That means war. That war could rapidly envelop other countries beyond those immediately involved.

Or third, you can follow the negotiation process and in that process try to make progress slowly, keeping the parties together while you move towards the desired result. The third course is the only one that makes sense in the interest of the parties and in the interest of peace. That is the one that we are on.

#### IRAN-IRAQ CONFLICT

Mr. GILMAN. Just one other question.

Has the Iranian-Iraqi conflict accelerated the desire by some of the Arab nations to try to want to bring about a solution to this problem?

I know you commented earlier about whether or not the conflict has stalled the peace process. Has it in any way accelerated the efforts to find a solution?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. In some cases it has intensified the expressions of Arab neighbors to the effect that we have got to move more quickly on this issue; you cannot allow it to fester; you have got to move forward and resolve the Palestinian issue.

Not all of them believe that we can do it through the Camp David process, but many of them are telling us this is center stage. Israel, of course, does not agree with that. Israel says that even if the Palestinian issue were to go away, we would still have a very dangerous situation in the Middle East. But, to a number of the Arab countries this occupies center stage, at least in their statements to us.

Therefore, they are pressing for trying to deal with this thing effectively.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

#### THE JORDANIAN OPTION

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Ambassador, you mentioned, of course, several times in your statement that the Camp David approach is the only game in town. Moshe Dayan and Abba Eban in recent weeks and other Israelis have said that the Palestinians are against these talks, as they are now constituted, and that they are not going to join them—period.

The Labor party in Israel, as well as President-elect Reagan, have often indicated that Jordan is the key to the settling of the problem, and Mr. Reagan has said that an early meeting with King Hussein would be advisable.

I raise these points simply to go further into your observation about the Camp David approach being the only game in town. It is clear, it seems to me, from Abba Eban, Moshe Dayan, and others, and apparently from the Reagan administration—although they certainly have not spelled out their view in any detail in this area—that they may think otherwise.

Is that your impression? After all, the two Israelis I cited are gentlemen whose opinions ought to be respected and they apparently have given up on the Palestinians in the current talks.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Mr. Chairman, I have talked to Shimon Peres, I have talked to Abba Eban, to Yitzhak Rabin, to Moshe Dayan, I have talked to all the leaders that are apt to play an

important leadership role in Israel, not once, but a number of times, about the issue.

Not one has told me that he thinks the Camp David process is not the right course at this juncture.

#### ONLY GAME IN TOWN

Mr. HAMILTON. Would they all agree with your statements in the record here today about it being the only game in town?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I think there is no question that they would recognize it is the only game in town.

What they are saying is that perhaps at some point we need another game. Let me tell you how I think the positions are wholly reconciled and make sense together.

Mr. HAMILTON. Yes.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. We are talking about a transitional arrangement, remember, no more than 5 years. At the end of that 5 years, the final status of these territories is determined. To me it makes eminently good sense, regardless of what you think ought to happen with reference to Jordan, to put this interim arrangement into effect while you have a chance to observe the situation: try to worry where we go from there; begin discussions; and you know the Camp David accords say something about within 3 years you start negotiating and it can start tomorrow, on the final status, and while you have your autonomy in effect, work out what the deal ought to be.

It may be that the final status ought to be this arrangement with Jordan, but that is not inconsistent with what we are talking about. I see perfect working together here for the transitional arrangement, cooperatively, and I think they so understand, if we can just keep moving and don't allow the feelings to become so intense that there is no opportunity for cooperation.

#### MODALITIES OF ELECTIONS

Mr. HAMILTON. Now, let me go into more detail with you on some of the areas of negotiation. Again, I recognize the restraints, and you may not want to respond to all of these questions, but I would appreciate it if you could respond to them as fully as you can.

What progress has been made in reaching an agreement on the modalities of an election in the West Bank and Gaza?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Very great agreement. The method of holding the election, the fact that there shall be free campaigning and electioneering, the agreement on the supervision and the access by the media, and so forth.

Mr. HAMILTON. Is that supervision by an international body?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. By representatives. We haven't said international. Representatives of the Palestinians, representatives of Israelis, and other civilians. That agreement was worked out for "other civilians," but it would leave room for involvement of international representatives.

Mr. HAMILTON. Now, are the principal problems there that remain the number of people that are going to be elected to the self-governing authority? That is one of the major problems, right?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. That is one of the major problems.

#### QUESTION OF ARAB VOTERS IN JERUSALEM

Mr. HAMILTON. And then, second, the question of the eligibility of Arab voters who are resident in Jerusalem?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir, those are the two most difficult ones.

Mr. HAMILTON. You indicated in your listing of your five tough questions here that that was the toughest?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes.

Mr. HAMILTON. Why did you say that?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Because it affects Jerusalem. The Israelis take the position that you are in some manner implicitly dividing Jerusalem if you allow people living in one part of Jerusalem to participate in the election of a self-governing authority on the West Bank and Gaza.

The Egyptians take the position that it is disenfranchisement of these Palestinians who want to have some way to participate in the election even though Jerusalem itself may not be part of the autonomy arrangement.

#### OTHER PALESTINIANS VOTING

Mr. HAMILTON. In your discussions, has it been suggested, or has there been any agreement, on permitting Palestinians who are not resident on the West Bank at the time of the elections, but from those areas, to have eligibility to vote?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. We have dealt with that, Mr. Chairman, through the notion of perhaps an absentee ballot. We haven't made really considerable headway in that regard yet, but it is one of the possibilities that has been suggested.

Mrs. FENWICK. Could the chairman yield?

On that point, which side is apt to object more? In other words, if there were an absentee ballot standing for not only the Palestinians who now work in other Arab emirates or countries, but also for the residents of East Jerusalem—suppose they all had absentee ballots. Who would object?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. The Israelis are concerned mostly about that, yes.

#### SECURITY ISSUES

Mr. HAMILTON. To move to the security issue for a moment, the Camp David accords call for withdrawal of the military government and the placing of the Israeli security troops in encampments. How many encampments? Has there been any discussion about that?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No. The Israelis have put together a schedule, but remember, it says at specified locations, and the understanding is Israel will specify.

We have not yet seen that precise delineation of areas with numbers, but we understand Israel is prepared to put that forward.

Mr. HAMILTON. Has there been any distinction drawn between internal and external security?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir. One of the problems we have had, and when I said we have made progress I was alluding to this, is that the Camp David accords call for a strong police to participate, to be involved in connection with internal security.

How that gets worked out between Egypt and Israel is a problem of consequence to both groups—between Israel and the self-governing authority.

Israel, for its part, doesn't want seditious efforts, terrorism, guerilla activity to emanate from the West Bank and Gaza threatening its own security.

On the other hand, Egypt feels that part of the responsibility of the self-governing authority ought to be to deal with internal security. Both agree there ought to be coordination and cooperation and what has been evolving is a closer understanding between the two of them as to how that might be brought into being.

#### NUMBER OF TROOPS

Mr. HAMILTON. Now, I have seen in the press, for example, that 5,000 to 6,000 Israeli troops might be stationed in the West Bank and Gaza. Is that a figure that has had any validity so far as the discussions are concerned?

Have you discussed where those troops might be located?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. We haven't focused on a precise figure or as yet on the specific locations because, as I say, Israel will at a given time put them forward.

Mr. HAMILTON. Now, how about the number of the Palestinian police force during that 5-year interim period? Has there been any discussion about the size or the nature of that?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No. The only point is that it calls for a strong police force and then I guess at some point there will have to be conversation about what represents a strong police force.

Mr. HAMILTON. Any discussion about the kind of equipment, for example, that that police force might have?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No, sir.

Let me just say, Mr. Chairman, the idea is, at least my idea has been that once you agree to the principle, as we did indeed in the Panama Canal Treaty, you have appendixes, and in the appendixes you spell out precisely these things.

We haven't reached the point where we have the basic agreement yet to which to append the appendixes with the specifics.

#### POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PALESTINIANS

Mr. HAMILTON. With regard to the powers and the responsibilities of the self-governing authority, I wonder if you have any sense as to what the minimal terms may be on the part of the Palestinians for accepting an agreement?

For example, in the list of questions you make on page 4 of your statement, what are their minimal conditions?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I don't know how I can answer that because, as I say, they are not parties to the discussions.

Mr. HAMILTON. It is a difficult question.

For example, are they saying anything like we must have certain kinds of rights with regard to land and water, or we are not going to participate in the process?

You mentioned earlier you have had some discussions with the Palestinians. Are they setting forth any minimal terms to get involved in the process?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I think perhaps the most helpful ideas we have had in that regard have come from the Egyptians who have been talking directly to the Palestinians, and trying to convey to us what they learned from the Palestinians about their demands and their requirements.

I can tell you without breaching confidences that in the course of our negotiations they frequently allude to what they have been told by the Palestinians are the kinds of things they want, and the kinds of progress they would like to see made in order to begin to meet their concerns.

#### IMMIGRATION ISSUES

Mr. HAMILTON. Yes.

Now, with regard to the immigration question, has there been any progress made on that? The provisions of the Camp David accords, of course, provide for a committee to work out procedures for readmission of persons that have been displaced.

Have you had any discussion on that?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No, sir. The continuing committee, you will notice, to be established under the Camp David accords, would undertake to look into that problem and that committee has not yet been set up, of course, but it will as soon as the autonomy arrangement begins operation.

#### U.S. POLICY ON PLO CONTACTS

Mr. HAMILTON. Do you think that any new U.S. policy of informal, either direct or indirect, political contacts with the PLO would help or hinder the peace process?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Hinder.

Mr. HAMILTON. Why do you say that?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No. 1, we have to start with a basic fact. If we were to involve the PLO in some fashion tomorrow, try to get them to join in the discussions, the great risk we run is that Israel would leave the negotiating table.

Israel, rightly or wrongly, sees the PLO as committed to its extermination. It is concerned about the provision in the covenant and it feels that despite the occasional statements by Mr. Arafat and some of his colleagues about wanting to find a balanced answer, the PLO is still sworn to the destruction of Israel.

That is the Israeli position.

Under those circumstances, and recognizing that Israel is a party essential to our negotiations, we would be risking undoing the negotiations if we moved without a clear reason for doing so.

We have said, as you know, since 1975, that we will not negotiate with or recognize the PLO unless and until it recognizes Israel's right to exist in peace and accepts U.N. Resolution 242.

Mr. HAMILTON. That policy would permit informal contacts.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. We are taking the position——

Mr. HAMILTON. Is that right?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Informal contacts on what?

Mr. HAMILTON. Well, the policy——

Ambassador LINOWITZ. On the negotiations, no.

#### POLICY ON INFORMAL PLO CONTACTS

Mr. HAMILTON. The policy of the U.S. Government is that we shall not negotiate or recognize until those conditions are met. It is not that we shall not talk to them.

In other words, I am drawing a distinction between recognition and negotiation on the one hand and informal contacts on the other hand.

You have made clear that you don't think those informal contacts are advisable, but the question now is, are the informal contacts within the bounds of American policy at the present time?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. As you know, Mr. Chairman, this question as to what represents "negotiation," which arises in everything from Andy Young's discussions at the UN to anything else bordering on talking about the issues, or dealing with the issues, raises concerns because remember, we are trying to figure out how to advance these negotiations with the trust and confidence and full participation of Israel.

As you know, there have been some necessary housekeeping relationships with the PLO.

For example, in connection with the United Nations, where they have to have space and so forth, but our position has been and remains that we ought not to get into any relationship with the PLO which could be construed as negotiation, formal or informal, direct or indirect.

Now, I am not now trying to suggest whether that is the course that today ought to be the one initiated by this Government. I am talking about what our Government's policy is, and I believe that it is the right course for this Government.

I believe that the PLO ought to recognize itself that if it wants to play a constructive role, it ought to be willing to renounce whatever it has been saying about destruction of Israel and accept Israel's right to exist, accept 242 as other Arab groups and states have.

#### ROLE OF PLO

Mr. HAMILTON. Do you think there is any realistic chance of that happening?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I had thought so. I had thought so because of some of the comments that were being made, and we were hearing about indirectly. But, frankly, what I think is the problem is that even if Mr. Arafat wanted to, he could not get the support of his own group.

Mr. HAMILTON. Is there any doubt in your mind that the PLO is the representative of the Palestinian people?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir.

Mr. HAMILTON. What other alternative leadership, political leadership, is there for the Palestinians?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Let me just say—you said Palestinian people and I answered too quickly.

I am talking about the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza. We have no reason to believe today that that is really the leadership they would select. It might be, but we don't know that.

Mr. HAMILTON. That the PLO is the leadership they might select?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes. We don't know whether there could not be mayors constituting a council of leaders for the West Bank and Gaza which could operate on their behalf and represent them effectively.

Mr. HAMILTON. Almost all the mayors are PLO supporters, are they not?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Well, they may be, but it is understood that the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza may not be members of the PLO.

Mr. HAMILTON. Now, Mrs. Fenwick, do you have some questions?

Mrs. FENWICK. I noticed in the paper this morning that Mr. Begin hurriedly had gone home.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes.

#### POLITICAL SITUATION IN ISRAEL

Mr. HAMILTON. What do you foresee in the political lineup? What is going to happen, or would you rather not comment on that?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Well, my prophecy is probably as good there as it was here. There is a vote today on no confidence motions, as you know; several of them, before the Knesset and Mr. Begin went back as he candidly said, because he thought there is a real problem there.

They arise from the state of the economy and the concern about what has happened to the economy of Israel.

We are aware, of course, of the polls in Israel which suggest that if an election were held today the Labor Party would probably be successful. The elections are scheduled for November 1981, unless there is a determination to accelerate that, and have them earlier, as some have been proposing.

I think our course must be to proceed on the assumption that we are going to be dealing with Prime Minister Begin's government until November 1981 and if there is to be any change, we will just have to await that, but for the moment I know of nothing we can do except recognize that Mr. Begin, who was a signatory to the Camp David accords, is the man that is going to be running the Government of Israel.

Mrs. FENWICK. But if the government should fall, and I presume it is the Labor Party that would bring up the motions of no confidence—

Ambassador LINOWITZ. The Labor Party has one of them, but there are several now pending, including a far right group.

Mrs. FENWICK. Now, if they should be successful and the government did fall, would you think we would see more or less progress in the talks?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I don't know. There would be a caretaker government for about 4 months. There would be, curiously enough,

an opportunity perhaps to work more effectively then, than otherwise, but I don't know.

I really have no sense about this. It would depend so much on the tenor of the campaign, whether this whole process becomes an issue, and whether or not there is a commitment on the part of the parties involved to go forward with this. I just don't know.

#### IS SADAT TIRED WITH PEACE PROCESS

Mrs. FENWICK. But there is no indication as far as you have been able to see that President Sadat is getting bored or tired?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Oh, yes, occasionally he has indicated impatience. Occasionally he has indicated he is disappointed in the fact there has not been greater progress. He is not a man given to disguising his feelings.

But, as I say, when I saw him in September, he was ready and firm in his determination to go forward with the Camp David process and to say it is the only viable path.

Since then he has told even the representatives of the Labor Party that went to visit him that he feels that the Camp David process is the right course, and you remember, they were talking about trying to involve Jordan, and his response was "Not now. We must go forward with Camp David and in due course talk about that."

Mrs. FENWICK. Was the visit of the President as happy as the press suggests?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. In Egypt? Indeed it was. It was a very moving occasion apparently. He was greeted warmly.

It was a state visit which struck a high note of cooperation between the two countries, and a number of the things that President Sadat apparently said to President Navon were most encouraging, not only about normalization, but about the future relations between the two countries and these negotiations.

Mrs. FENWICK. So it suggested a rapprochement, a closer relationship?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes indeed. And in large part it reflects the answer to your earlier question about how President Sadat feels about the situation.

Mrs. FENWICK. I did have one more, Mr. Chairman, if I may. On what grounds would Israel object to the absentee ballot system—because it would make such a large vote?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. They are mostly concerned about that affecting the Jerusalem question.

Mrs. FENWICK. But if it were an absentee ballot, it would be chaos; wouldn't it?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. I can only tell you I have discussed that with Prime Minister Begin and he continues to have concern and misgivings about it.

Mrs. FENWICK. Thank you.

#### 1981 WINDOW FOR TALKS

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Ambassador, we have a new President taking office in January. The Israelis have elections coming up, not later than November, and maybe much sooner than that. What do you

think about 1981? Is there any real chance, is there a window, maybe, where meaningful negotiations could take place in that time frame or not?

Mr. Reagan has to have some time to put his act together. The Israeli campaign is going to pick up heat. It looks like a difficult year for genuine progress in negotiations.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. It may be, but let me speculate with you in a manner that comes a little more easily to me now than it would have 6 months ago.

If the new President, President Reagan, were to say "I believe this process is important and it ought to go forward even though it has been time consuming and frustrating and disappointing, it nonetheless is a course which does give us some hope of dealing with this problem, at least until something better comes along."

If President Sadat knows that the new President is as committed to this process as President Carter was, who indeed felt that it was one of the great achievements and one of the great objectives of his administration, if—whether or not there is an election in Israel—the feeling on the part of the country is that it is in the best interests of Israel to move forward in order to resolve this issue in a way that will assure the preservation of Israel's security, and yet recognize the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians, then I think we could do a great deal in this year.

If there is a letdown in any of those three, then we are not going to be able to do very much about it.

#### TALKS WITH SYRIANS

Mr. HAMILTON. For my own information, have you had discussions with the Syrians?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. No, sir, I have not, but our Ambassador has.

Mr. HAMILTON. All right.

Have you had discussions with the Jordanians, you personally?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir.

Mr. HAMILTON. And also with the Saudis?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, sir.

Mr. HAMILTON. And have those discussions been fairly frequent, or occasional?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Mine have been occasional, but we have had other discussions more frequent through our Ambassador, and other representatives.

#### AREAS OF DISAPPOINTMENT

Mr. HAMILTON. I don't mean to be too negative with this question, but do you have any sense of disappointment now that you have come down to the end of the road on your assignment here?

You obviously have achieved a lot. You have pointed out the progress that has been made. What would you identify as a disappointment or two?

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Yes, I am disappointed, of course. I have mixed feelings of gratification that we have made some progress, disappointment we have not made more, because I think we could have.

I had originally hoped that by the May 26 date, which was the target date you remember set by the parties, we could really come up with an agreement on principles, and I believe the pressure on all the parties to try to come up with a decision and ultimately an agreement then was moving us in that direction, and we were making progress.

But I had to confront the very real fears and concerns of Israel and the fact that Egypt was trying to move forward some of the issues in a manner that was not agreeable to Israel, and that led to the failure to meet the May 26 date.

Thereafter we did not have a target date so-called except the determination to try to get going again and, indeed, we were on a promising course when extraneous developments, Jerusalem, which erupted in the United Nations, other things which distracted attention, caused a change in the climate of the negotiations.

When that happened, it affected the pace of the negotiations and it was very hard to get them back on track.

It took an incredible amount of this patience that you have been describing here and understanding and if I made any significant contribution it was in helping each side understand the position of the other better so they would go back to the negotiating table with the same kind of feeling of understanding and commitment.

#### COMMENDATION

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Ambassador, the members of this subcommittee are as aware as anybody of the difficulties you have confronted. We do not look upon your failures. We look upon your successes.

You have done a remarkable job. We are very grateful to you. You have served your President and country very well. We thank you for your testimony this morning.

Ambassador LINOWITZ. Thank you.

Mrs. FENWICK. I join in that, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. HAMILTON. The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

