

# WASHINGTON DATELINE

BY TRUDE B. FELDMAN

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## Other Arab Nations Will Join Peace Plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- President Carter is confident that Arab terrorism and violence in response to the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty will only be "transient in nature" and that the rest of the Arab world will soon see the benefits of joining the peace process.

In an exclusive interview in the Oval Office this week, the President voiced optimism that the treaty signed by Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin would demonstrate the advantages of peace and prove to the whole Mideast that "hatred and animosity and terror can be replaced with hope and prosperity and friendship."

"My hope is that the new Egyptian-Israeli relationship will prove so clearly beneficial that the other countries - Jordan and Syria in particular - will see the advantages of working together toward common goals and seize the common opportunities that peace makes possible," he said.

Noting that "Sadat and Begin and Carter will not be in office many years under the best of circumstances," the President said he hoped to help turn the formal words of the treaty into what he called a "kind of people - to - people

commitment based not on a relationship between heads of state or formal documents but rather on a genuine interrelationship among both peoples. "Open borders, free trade, the exchange of students and tourists, the establishment of diplomatic relations, the appointment of ambassadors -- all these can make permanent what has been achieved thus far," he said.

President Carter is of the opinion that many people in Jordan and Syria genuinely want peace with Israel -- "just as the Egyptians do" -- but he conceded that it might take some time before that came about. One problem is the future of the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza.

Asked about Begin's claim that the West Bank territories of Judea and Samaria belong to Israel because of their historic association with the Jewish people, Carter replied: "I'd rather not predicate modern day boundary lines on the Bible, but I can certainly understand the sense of concern about security that must exist among the Jewish people, particularly those who live in Israel, where they are so constantly in danger."

Carter expressed both sympathy and understanding for the Israeli position. "Israelis are still an extreme minority in the Mideast," he told me. "They have a very tiny piece of land in contrast to the nations around them. Their history, and the horrors that have befallen Jews throughout the world in this generation, the threats to their own nation and the terrorism that has afflicted them over the last 30 years, are a very understandable basis for caution and for self reliance. I honor these feelings very strongly."

The President spoke of his recent trip to Israel, where he won agreement from Premier Begin on the terms of the treaty signed on the

White House lawn.

"In Jerusalem," he said, "I learned about the fears and feelings of the people. I also had the chance to present to the Israelis and their leaders, more accurately than I could ever do before, my own attitude toward that country. Both in private and public talks, I think the people of Israel got to know me better and to understand my support for the permanence and security of their own country, about which there had been some doubts."

On the future of the West Bank and the plan for a self-governing authority there, Carter admitted that there were still "major differences" between Egypt and Israel on the meaning of "autonomy" for the Palestinian Arabs.

Egypt and the Arab world see self-rule as the first step toward a Palestinian state; Israel refuses to accept this possibility and says it will do everything in its power to prevent such a state from coming into existence.

"It's not my role to decide what ought to be done," President Carter said. "I'm committed, through my signature on the Camp David accords, to the termination of Israel's military government and the re-deployment of Israel's security forces to certain prescribed locations."

"But the exact definition of 'full autonomy' -- which, by the way, was proposed by Premier Begin himself -- is something that must be negotiated by Israel and the people who live in the West Bank and Gaza territories."

"We'll be part of the negotiating process, but until those talks begin, I don't want to spell out my own position, which is not yet defined."

Carter pointed out that the differences between Israel and Egypt on autonomy were "no wider than those which existed prior to the meetings at Camp David last year."

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