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**THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS:
A MODEL FOR A SYRIAN/ISRAELI PEACE AGREEMENT**

BY

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A Model for a Syrian/Israeli Peace Agreement

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines the Camp David Accords as a model for a Syrian/Israeli peace agreement and the potential role of the United States in the peace process between Syria and Israel. Using the Camp David Accords as a successful model for American diplomacy in Middle East peace processes, it examines the principles that underpinned the Camp David Accords for their application to the current Israeli-Syrian peace process. The role of American political, economic and military support in the Camp David Accords is explored with a vision of how that model could be applied to the current situation between Israel and Syria. It includes an examination of the conditions under which United States forces could be successfully employed in the Golan Heights overseeing and implementing a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement. Using the paradigm of the Camp David Accords as an example of the successful use of US elements of national power, it pursues the potential for the United States to promote confidence and security between the two countries and improve the overall chance of success in the process.

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The Camp David Accords: A Model for a Syrian/Israeli Peace Agreement

The Middle East is an area in which the United States has a vital interest. The maintenance of peace in that area, which has so frequently seen disturbances in the past, is of significance to the world as a whole. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, March 1944

The Middle East has long been an area of strategic importance to the United States.

Today, with the United States and the world economies relying on the free flow of oil from this part of the world, America remains engaged and committed to promoting peace, stability, and security in the region. While these are elusive goals in an area historically known for strife and war, they are attainable as evidenced by the success of various diplomatic and peace agreements that have endured to change the face of conflict in the area in the past twenty years. Indeed, since the end of the second Gulf War in 1991 and the follow on peace conference in Madrid, the momentum for peace in the region is encouraging.

In terms of peace agreements in the Middle East, the Camp David Accords stand out because of their durability and their impact on the nature of the conflict between Israel and its neighbors. The Camp David Accords, brokered by the Carter Administration and signed by Egypt and Israel on March 26, 1979, significantly altered the course of one of the longest and costliest conflicts in the region, the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹ Peace between Egypt, the most populous and militarily capable Arab neighbor, and Israel virtually eliminated the possibility of another war between Israel and its border Arab countries. Careful examination of the Camp David Accords negotiating process combined with an understanding of the political, economic, and military arrangements that established the foundation of this successful agreement could provide a model worthy of consideration for achieving peace between Israel and Syria.

United States Interests in the Middle East

What exactly are the United States interests in the Middle East and why are they important? First, the United States is engaged in promoting peace and stability throughout the world with a commitment to stable international order and basic human rights for all people. In a region of the world where so few democratic institutions exist, and conflict has become a way of life for some, the leadership of the United States will be crucial to fostering democratic processes and challenging the abuses of human rights.² To assist in establishing a stable and peaceful environment, an enduring and comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors is a cornerstone for United States foreign policy.

Second, and some would argue most importantly, the United States is committed to ensuring the “free flow of oil (from the Middle East) at reasonable prices” to protect both the United States’ and the world economies.³ The Middle East contains approximately two thirds of the world’s proven and probable reserves of oil and is, therefore, critical to the health of the world economies.⁴ Any conflict in the region threatens the unencumbered access to this vital energy source and makes the promotion of peace and stability all the more important. Threats to energy supplies by Iran, Iraq, and Libya and on-going tensions between Syria, the Palestinians, and Israel all serve to destabilize and undermine the world economies and threaten access to the region’s oil supplies.

Finally, America is committed to the security and well being of the state of Israel. America’s special relationship with Israel began in 1948 with the early diplomatic recognition by the United States of the founding of Israel as a nation. Since then, the American commitment to the defense and security of Israel has been well established. Today, the United States commits

approximately \$5.6 billion annually to the economic and military security of Israel. Of that amount, approximately \$3.5 billion dollars is committed to military and economic assistance while the remaining \$2 billion is provided in grants and loans.⁵ The special relationship between the United States and Israel is built on America's strong cultural and religious ties to the Jewish community and the political strength of the Israeli lobby in Washington.⁶ Israel enjoys a unique status among America's allies and President Clinton reconfirmed the strength of that relationship and commitment in the annual National Security Strategy for the United States when he said, "The United States has an enduring interests in ensuring the security and well being of Israel...".⁷ Ideologically, economically, and politically, the United States is committed to the long term peace, stability, and security of the Middle East and that security is inextricably tied to the peace and stability of Israel and its neighbors.⁸

Given these strong security and special interests, the United States is committed to the peace process in the region. Israel accepts the American role as arbitrator based on the strong relationship it enjoys economically, politically, and militarily with the United States. The Arabs, while noting the apparent disparities in the United States' relationship to Israel and some of its other Arab allies in the region, still see the United States as the most honest and capable arbiter in this dispute. The United States does not come with the colonial baggage of many of the European countries and this permits it a degree of credibility in dealing with this issue other western nations are incapable of.

The Basis of Success for the Camp David Accords

Careful examination of the principles and procedures that established the foundation for the success of the Camp David Accords is revealing and relevant to the region today. As President Carter and his administration addressed the thorny issue of peace between Israel and Egypt in 1977, they approached the process by establishing a broad set of principles that became the framework upon which each party agreed prior to conducting substantive and direct negotiations. The process of constructing a peace agreement necessarily involved direct consultation between Israel and Egypt and was followed by a phased implementation of the plan. The Camp David Accords that were signed by both parties and the United States.⁹ In addition to being the middleman to moderate the negotiations, it also fell to the United States to provide significant diplomatic, economic, and military resources to execute and monitor the agreement.

There were five general principles that laid the foundation for the Camp David Accords; 1) pursuit of a comprehensive peace for Israel and its Arab neighbors, 2) reliance on United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for negotiations, 3) establishment of normal diplomatic relations between the two countries, 4) defining Egyptian and Israeli borders and establishing a phased withdrawal schedule from the Sinai, and 5) addressing the issue of Palestinian rights.¹⁰ Each party agreed to these five principles prior to direct negotiations and they formed the basis for the eventual agreement between Israel and Egypt. In the end, only two of these five principles were actually fully implemented in the spirit in which they were proposed. The implementation of the remaining principles met with limited success.

Egypt and Israel did establish normal diplomatic relations and the Sinai was returned as agreed on through phased withdrawals of Israeli forces. The other three principles remain open and are part of the larger issue of peace and stability between Israel and its neighbors. A comprehensive peace with all Arab countries, and in particular those bordering Israel, and the issue of Palestinian rights are directly tied to the implementation of United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338. These issues, while politically important to Egypt in its attempt to maintain its relations with the other Arab countries in the Middle East, were beyond the capabilities of Presidents Carter and Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to negotiate. In fact, what became clear from these negotiations and subsequent developments in the region is that successful bilateral agreements, such as the Camp David Accords, the Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Agreement on the Golan Heights, and the 1994 peace agreement between Israel and Jordan, are much more likely to succeed than any attempts at a single major comprehensive peace agreement involving large numbers of direct participants from the region. Peace with Israel is so sensitive and complicated, from a political perspective, that bilateral negotiations provide the best opportunity to address specific issues with each participant and resolve disputes on those issues without direct ties to other countries' political interests.

From a bilateral agreement with Israel, President Sadat achieved his objectives of recovering lost Egyptian territory, ending Egypt's military confrontation with Israel, and securing significant economic and military assistance from the United States.¹¹ Likewise, Prime Minister Begin promoted the security of Israel by inaugurating a peace agreement and normalizing relations with a major adversary. Even though Egypt and Israel were not completely successful in achieving all the goals established within the negotiating framework, it provided a

much needed foundation for an ultimately successful negotiation process between the two countries. These same principles remain a sound basis for future negotiations between Israel and Syria. The disputes over land, security and a comprehensive peace with normal relations remain central to resolving other ongoing disputes in the Golan, the West Bank, Gaza, and southern Lebanon, and are central to the issue of a Palestinian state.

The United States' role as a mediator in this process helped to form the framework principles for the Camp David Accords and was essential in implementing the final agreements. Clearly, President Carter's personal involvement was indispensable to the final signing of an agreement between the two countries.¹² His personal involvement in the talks lent focus to the objective of a formal peace agreement, provided the credibility of United States resolve in supporting the accords, and forced both parties to approach these talks with the serious resolve and commitment necessary for establishing peace in the region. Ultimately, the United States' role in implementing the final agreement would require substantial American diplomatic, economic, and military commitments.

United States Economic and Military Commitments to the Camp David Accords

The Camp David Accords included the basic text of the final agreement, three annexes dealing with security arrangements, maps, and seven interpretive notes attached to the basic documents. Other separate letters were sent between Sadat, Begin, and Carter concerning the negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza.¹³ Within these documents, the United States committed itself economically and militarily to the support of the peace agreement. Diplomatically, the United States committed to the support of both Egypt and Israel in their bold

bid for peace by counteracting the political and economic boycott of the Arab League against both countries. The United States' support at the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund provided the political and economic support necessary for the maturing and implementation of the agreement in an environment conducive to its success.

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown signed memorandums of agreement with their counterparts in Israel and Egypt guaranteeing them of the United States' economic and military support. For Israel, the United States resolved to put its full weight behind the security of Israel in the event the agreement failed. This included reaffirming previous security commitments and a resolution to supply Israel with oil should they prematurely lose access to the oil fields in the Sinai.¹⁴ The United States also committed \$3 billion in aid annually for military construction, grants, and weapons systems sales to Israel. This commitment continues today at approximately the same level through the United States Security Assistance Program.¹⁵

Similar arrangements were made with Egypt for economic and military assistance from the United States, but at different levels of funding. The United States initially pledged \$1.5 billion in aid over a three year period and provided a list of military equipment that Egypt would be allowed to purchase.¹⁶ The Security Assistance Program currently funds Egypt at \$2.1 billion annually.¹⁷

The most significant commitment of United States resources came in terms of personnel dedicated to the Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO) contingent for overseeing the implementation of the Camp David Accords. After the United Nations proved unwilling to organize a peacekeeping force to monitor the agreement, the United States, along with nine other

nations, organized the Multinational Force and Observers contingent of approximately 2,700 personnel to help monitor and verify the Camp David Accords implementation in the Sinai.¹⁸ Confirming American resolve to the success of the agreement, the United States contributes approximately 1,000 soldiers and civilians to the Multinational Force and Observers, provides the director general for the force, and funds about \$50 million annually in its operating expenses.¹⁹ As a result of this commitment, the American presence in the region provides both Israel and Egypt with an added measure of confidence in the United States' resolve and commitment to the agreements, and provides a critical stabilizing force in the peace process.

The Camp David Accords: A Model for the Syrian-Israeli Dispute

Much as the Egyptians and the Israelis struggled for peace, the Syrians and Israelis are also trying to reconcile differences to bring about peace between their two countries. The process and results will be no less complicated or deliberate than that of the Camp David Accords. The key issues of the Camp David Accords, the return of land acquired by war, military and economic security and stability for the two countries, and a comprehensive peace that addresses third party interests are also the key issues involved in ending this conflict. Since the issues are substantively the same between Israel and Syria as they were between Israel and Egypt, the principles that laid the foundation of the Camp David Accords provide a logical starting point for addressing this problem.

The five principles that established the foundation of the Camp David Accords could be modified as follows to apply to the Syrian and Israeli problem; 1) pursuit of a comprehensive peace for Israel, Syria, and Lebanon 2) reliance on United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338 as

the basis for negotiations, 3) establishment of normal diplomatic relations between the two countries, 4) defining a Syrian and Israeli border and establishing a phased withdrawal schedule, and 5) addressing the issue of all displaced people as a result of the war and peace between Israel and Syria.²⁰ Of these principles, the return of land acquired by war, is central to the issue of negotiations between the two countries and settlement of this dispute.

Syria: The Land Issue

In addressing the question of the return of the Golan to Syria, the salient issues of the five principles for peace negotiations revolve around the implementing United Nation Resolutions 242 and 338 and the establishing normal diplomatic relations between Israel and Syria. United Nation resolution 242 states that land acquired through war must be returned. In fact, that has been Syria's unrelenting demand since the cessation of open hostilities in 1974. In order for Israel to concede the return of all of the strategically important Golan, there would need to be the assurance of peace and normalizing of relations that only a formally signed agreement could bring. Peace for land, as was the case between Egypt and Israel in 1979, remains the sine qua non in resolving this dispute too.

The Egyptian and Israeli peace agreement that ended in the return of the Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty set a benchmark precedent in the Arab states' negotiations with Israel. It demonstrated the viability of the concept of land for peace, and it established an expectation that all land lost in war could be returned through a diplomatic process. Clearly, this has been the Syrian expectation on negotiations as evidenced by the opening statements of Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara at the Madrid Peace Conference in October, 1991 when he unequivocally stated,

“Every inch of land which was occupied by Israel in war and by force--the Golan, the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip--must be restored to its legitimate owners.”²¹

This position reinforces President Hafaz al-Assad’s remarks on peace with Israel as far back as 1977 when he indicated three points were necessary to proceed with peace; the return of occupied territories from the 1967 War, the rights of the Palestinian people to their own state, and the termination of the state of war.²² All of these three points have moved forward significantly, if slowly, since 1977. The return of occupied territories from the Sinai to the West Bank is under way. The movement toward a Palestinian state is proceeding today as a result of the Oslo Agreements, albeit with some difficulty. The cessation of extended open warfare with Israel and its border neighbors ended with Israel’s partial withdrawal from Lebanon in 1985. For peace to move forward with the Israelis and the Syrians, the return of the Golan to Syria will need to be assured.

Debate on Israel’s capability to return the Golan and maintain its security requirements is still passionately discussed both in Israel and abroad. Clear evidence of Israel’s understanding of the requirement to negotiate the return of the Golan can be found in statements by former Prime Minister, Yitzhaq Rabin, who said, “I believe the public wants peace, and whoever says that we can reach peace while preserving the entire Golan Heights or most of it is simply lying.”²³ Former United States Ambassador to Israel and Syria, Edward Djerejian, recently reiterated this point to Prime Minister Netanyahu after returning from a visit with Syrian President Hafaz al-Assad and bringing the message that the fundamental issue is an agreement on the return of the Golan.²⁴ The Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, the principle of land for peace, remains the starting point for serious negotiation with the Syrians.

The willingness and the understanding of the need to negotiate land for peace is present within the Israeli government and public. The return of the Golan is always possible, but the politics of the government in charge in Israel will inevitably play a decisive role in the outcome. While the return of Syrian land is the starting point for negotiations with the Syrians, the security of Israel is the focus of all negotiations with that government. The potential dangers posed by Syria coupled with the tactically decisive position of the Golan Heights gives this terrain more significance to the overall security of Israel than the return of the Sinai did in the Camp David Accords.

Israel: The Security Issue

Just as the return of the Golan is the essential part of the peace equation for Syria, security is the essential part of the equation for Israel. The various elements of the security issue, from Israel's perspective, were discussed with President Assad in April 1994 when Secretary of State Warren Christopher carried a detailed Israeli proposal concerning the return of the Golan to him. This proposal contained six principal points that formed the basis for Israeli security concerns in the Golan. These concerns are: 1) early warning stations, 2) a demilitarized zone, 3) phased withdrawal, 4) foreign peace keeping forces, 5) water rights, and 6) a timeline for establishing normal peaceful relations between the two countries.²⁵ Phased withdrawal, foreign peace keeping forces, and a timeline for establishing normal peaceful relations between the two countries are more closely related to the mechanics of the implementation of a peace agreement. The remaining three, early warning, demilitarization and water rights, are significant security issues for one or both parties.

Syria's security concerns parallel Israel's, but there are differences based on the geographic conditions of each country. For Syria, the issues of early warning and demilitarization are key to their security concerns. The early warning requirement relates directly to the lack of strategic depth of each country in relation to the other. The Golan, though a relatively small plateau (twenty-five kilometers at its widest point) provides both sides the ability to monitor military activities in the surrounding countries, including areas of Syria, Israel, southern Lebanon, and Jordan. In addition to monitoring and providing early warning in the event of hostilities, forces present on the Golan can easily engage targets directly and indirectly in both countries. Before the 1967 war, Syria used the Golan to shell Israeli settlements in the Huleh Valley below. From positions currently occupied by Israel in the Golan, they can monitor Syrian military movements on the Damascus plain and range the Syrian capital just fifty kilometers away.²⁶

The concern by the Israelis for demilitarization of the Golan stems from the fact that Syria permanently deploys approximately fifty percent of its standing ground forces (five to six divisions) between Damascus and the Golan. Israel stations only one reinforced division in the Golan and relies on the advantages of the defensive terrain and the ability to mobilize several reserve divisions in the event of hostilities.²⁷ The loss of the defensive positions in the Golan without some agreement for demilitarization would offer Syria a significant military advantage in placing a larger force in a dominant tactical position.

The presence of an armor heavy Israeli force in the Golan with an offensive doctrine that emphasizes preemption is also threatening from the Syrian perspective. Syria is concerned not only with Israel's ability to launch an attack that could quickly reach its capital, but with other

security concerns with Iraq and Turkey. Additionally, the Syrian military is a strong pillar of support in the Assad regime that he will be unlikely to weaken. Demilitarization will be an issue that will not be solved by the reduction of forces on each side, but will be decided on where those forces are physically stationed in Syria and Israel.

The issue of water rights is also pertinent to security concerns. The management and sharing of the water sources in the Golan directly affects significant portion of the water needs of Israel. Water sources from the Golan contribute up to a third of the total water supplied to the Sea of Galilee which is Israel's national water reservoir.²⁸ Any diversion, pollution, or abuse of the source waters in the Golan could have serious consequences for the entire country of Israel and would almost certainly lead to conflict. In resolving this issue, Syrian sovereignty in the Golan will need to accommodate the physical realities of water management that takes into consideration all the downstream consumers such as Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank. Failure to reach an agreement on this issue could cause collapse of the entire process.

Lebanon and the Issue of a Comprehensive Peace

The issue of a comprehensive peace for Israel and its neighbors has traditionally been linked to a resolution of the Palestinian issue. As a result of the bilateral peace agreements between Israel and Egypt in 1979, the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel at Oslo in 1993, and Israel and Jordan in 1994, the concept of a comprehensive peace as part of the overall peace process has lost much of its early significance. In the case of Syria, however, there remains the issue of Lebanon and the strong influence Syria exerts on this country and its politics.

Syria currently stations about 35,000 troops in Lebanon, most in the Bekaa Valley as a counterbalance to Israeli positions in southern Lebanon.²⁹ In the traditional struggle for leadership and power in the Fertile Crescent between Damascus, Cairo, Baghdad and Tehran, Syria has sought to influence the events of the Levant and, more specifically, those in Lebanon. In 1987, Syria deployed its forces into Lebanon to quell the anarchy and fighting between the Shi'a Amal militia and the Druze. Since then, Syria has used its military and political influence to strengthen its position in Lebanon and shape the political landscape of the country. In October 1989 at an Arab summit in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, Syria strengthened its political control through the affirmation by the participants of the principle of "preferential relations" between Beirut and Damascus. The dependent Lebanese relationship with Syria was strengthened again in May 1991 when the two presidents signed a "friendship, cooperation, and coordination agreement." That agreement legitimized a long term Syrian military presence in Lebanon and granted Syria senior status in the security, economic and political affairs of the Lebanese government.³⁰

Israel currently occupies a self-declared security zone in southern Lebanon to thwart continued terrorist excursions into northern Israel. Though Israel has always indicated its willingness to withdraw from all of Lebanon, it will only do so under conditions that ensure its security and freedom from continued attacks by the Iranian backed Hizbullah. Because of the significant military and political influence that Syria wields in Lebanon, any agreements on Lebanon will be clearly linked to an overall agreement between Israel and Syria.

The United States Role in the Peace Process

The Camp David Accords provide an excellent example of the critical role the United States can play in bringing peace to this region. President Carter and his administration took a

deliberate, meticulous, and dedicated approach to facilitating this peace agreement. The five principals for peace were developed and agreed on by both parties with American diplomats providing the needed facilitation to keep the process focused and advancing. President Carter's decision to concentrate on the issue of Middle East peace early in his presidency and then to provide his leadership at the critical stage were key in resolving the dispute between Israel and Egypt. No small amount of credit can be given to President Carter himself and his personal involvement with the heads of state from Israel and Egypt. The Syrian and Israeli issue will be no less demanding of United States' commitment and leadership.

Since the Madrid conference in 1991, the American commitment to the peace process has not been as even handed and focused as it was with President Carter and the Camp David Accords. The Clinton administration seems to vacillate on the issue of the peace process with the Secretary of State's shuttle diplomacy ebbing and flowing with the issues and politics of the moment within Israel and Syria.³¹ The timelines agreed to at the Oslo Conference between the Palestinian Authority and Israel are currently forcing the administration to focus on unresolved issues or risk losing the momentum needed to progress to the final stage of this peace agreement.

Given the critical role the United States plays in focusing and leading the negotiating process, the current situation between Israel and Syria or Israel and the Palestinian Authority will require more than shuttling messages between the various parties. Indeed, a focused commitment by the administration with the president's personal involvement at the critical stages is essential to the success of this peace process. Peace will only come with a serious dedication and focus by all parties involved. The same commitment demonstrated by the United States

during the Camp David Accords to facilitate the commitments agreed on and to provide United States political, economic and military assistance will be necessary here.

Future United States Support of an Israeli-Syrian Peace Agreement

When Israel and Syria arrive at a peace agreement, what will be the United States role in supporting that agreement to ensure its success? Based on the previous analysis of the key issues of such an agreement and the precedents established by the Camp David Accords, the United States can expect to be involved in several aspects of this peace agreement. There will be political and economic questions and there will be the issue of United States military forces implementing the agreement on the ground.

Politically, the United States will need to remain engaged in the implementation of the agreement with the end state being the normalization of relationships between the two countries. The United States will necessarily need to strengthen its ties to both Syria and Israel as well as help the two countries build their own relationships and foster an environment of cooperation and trust. This will be no small task. The psychological mind set of the people of two countries so long in a state of war will require much effort to overcome their reluctance to work and live together in peace. The process of normalization will be lengthy, but necessary to ensure a lasting peace. In order to avoid a "cold peace" like the one that developed after the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement, the United States should closely monitor the economic and diplomatic activities between the two countries applying political and economic incentives to ensure progress in this area.³²

The economic aspect of the peace will provide a "carrot and a stick" to both parties for carrying out the letter and the spirit of the terms of the peace agreement. The peace agreement itself may stipulate levels of United States financial assistance for both countries as it did in the Camp David Accords. Other direct United States assistance or indirect influence by the United States on key financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, will also play a role in the economic development of Syria and Israel in their bid to implement a peace agreement. The United States Agency for International Development, which administers the Economic Support Fund, provides financial assistance for countries in the Middle East to build on the peace process. This fund also supports the Middle East Development Bank which is focused on strengthening the economic foundations essential to a lasting peace in the Middle East for countries like Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. The United States will contribute \$52 million of the Economic Support Fund to the Middle East Development Bank in fiscal year 1998. Syria could expect to draw upon this institution as part of peace agreement with Israel.³³

Another area of United States economic influence is in the Debt Reduction Program. Israel has already benefited significantly from this program over the years. As a result of Jordan's peace agreement with Israel, the Clinton Administration is requesting a \$12 million debt reduction in fiscal year 1998.³⁴ Both Israel and Syria could expect to benefit from this program as they move toward expanded economic cooperation and economic revitalization of the region.

In addition to the direct and indirect influence the United States has on economic aspects of implementing a peace agreement, the United States also has the ability to influence the security of these countries through the Foreign Military Financing and the Foreign Military Sales

Program. Israel and Egypt have benefited significantly from these programs and receive a collective total of \$3.1 billion dollars annually from this assistance.³⁵ Israel could expect an increase in Security Assistance Program support to reinforce their security concerns that would come from returning the Golan.

Syria would likely receive some assistance from the United States in this regard too. Specifically, this aid could include participation in the Individual Military Education and Training program and Foreign Military Sales assistance for de-mining the Golan. Substantial military assistance to Syria would, however, be tied to many other factors including its efforts in curbing the drug trade in southern Lebanon, elimination of all support of terrorist organizations in the region, and normalization of its relationship with Israel. Still, the peace agreement would be a substantial step toward bringing Syria into closer political and economic cooperation with the world community and would open the door for economic and military assistance from the United States.

Recommendations for the Commitment of United States Forces to the Golan

Once a peace agreement is finalized, the United States should be prepared to commit troops to the Golan, much as they did in the Sinai after the Camp David Accords, on a mission similar to that of the Multinational Force and Observers. United States commitment of American troops to the monitoring and implementation of the peace agreement lends credibility to the process and provides a degree of stability no other country can provide. Presidents Bush and Clinton have both backed this concept in terms of supporting the overall peace process between Syria and Israel. The peace keeping forces' mission should include monitoring the phased

implementation of the agreement, verification of compliance on specific requirements, deterrence of aggression, early warning of military activity in violation of the agreement, and a viable defense capability to protect peace keeping forces committed to the Golan.

Once such option for this force would be an expanded role for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force which is already in place in the Golan.³⁶ This organization was formed at the end of the 1973 War and has a very successful track record of operations in the Golan. An expanded mission for United Nations Disengagement Observer Force would capitalize on its successes and offers an international component with an American contingent that would prove to be a more politically acceptable alternative to all parties than an American led multinational force. Given the gravity of the security concerns for Israel in relinquishing the Golan, and the dangers presented to a United States force in this area, a larger more robust combat force would be required initially to enhance force protection of the elements employed and assure a viable presence in the event of hostilities.

Committing United States forces to this volatile area poses special risks and concerns that must be addressed in the stationing of American forces there. Prior to committing United States forces to this operation, there should be a formal agreement between Syria and Israel specifying the military and political requirements for the return of the Golan. Syria should commit to denying safe haven to all terrorist organizations in both Syria and Lebanon, and work to eliminate drug trafficking in the Bekaa Valley that finances these operations. Israel should also pull forces out of southern Lebanon in conjunction with a Lebanese and Syrian effort to disarm the Hizballah militia stationed there and return the area to Lebanese control. While these

are stiff requirements for United States participation, the risks of not addressing them are not acceptable for American forces in a peace keeping operation.

Conclusions

The United States retains a strong interest in peace in the region and possesses the ability to influence the process. Peace with Israel and its neighbors is essential to enhancing regional stability and promoting a peaceful global environment conducive to free trade and regional stability. Within this context, promoting a lasting peace between Israel and Syria (and the expected peace between Israel and Lebanon that would follow) is an important interest to the United States. Such an agreement would go far in promoting a comprehensive peace in the Middle East and would end the conflict that has existed between Israel and its neighbors since the inception of Israel as a nation in 1948.

The talks are currently stalled over commitments previously made by the Rabin government on the return of the Golan heights. During these talks, the Syrian Ambassador Walid al-Moualem, with the American negotiating team present, understood the Rabin government to commit to the full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.³⁷ Comprehensive security measures still need to be negotiated for both sides concerning the conditions of the withdrawal, but the Syrians believe the Netanyahu government has backed away from this previous agreement. In order for both sides to resume meaningful negotiations, the United States must facilitate returning to this point of departure, the return of Golan to Syria. It is the sole non-negotiable condition of the Syrians and is founded on United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338.

The United States should vigorously pursue the peace process along the model that was established by the Camp David Accords and with the idea that a committed effort by the President will be required to lead the process to closure. Once an agreement is reached, the United States should provide the political, economic, and military support necessary to ensure its success and longevity. Careful application of United States resources focused specifically on the normalization of relations and the mutual security of Israel and Syria will be critical to the long term success of such an agreement.

Finally, America's sons and daughters, in both the Armed Forces and in civilian agencies, who will be committed to monitoring and implementing the terms of a peace agreement in this volatile area must not be put at unnecessary risk. The preconditions for their safety and success must be established prior to their commitment and closely monitored for changes in the environment that might jeopardize their safety. A long term end state that sets the conditions for the complete normalization of relations between Israel and Syria and removes United States forces from the region should be the goal of United States foreign policy on this issue.

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ENDNOTES

¹William B. Quandt, Peace Process: American Diplomacy in the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967 (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute and University of California Press), 322. The term "peace agreement" will be used when referring to diplomatic initiatives for peace to differentiate between existing agreements with specific titles, such as the Camp David Accords, and the more technical and legal term of peace treaty.

²The White House, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, (Washington D.C.: The White House, May 1997), i-iii.

³Ibid., 26.

⁴Malcom B. Russell, The Middle East and South Asia, 1997, The World Today Series (Harpers Ferry: Stryker-Post Publications, 1997), 8.

⁵Shawn L. Twing, "Congress and the Pentagon Add \$464 Million in Aid to Israel in 1998," Washington Report on Middle East Affairs Volume XVI, No.3. (October/November 1997): 20.

⁶Richard H. Curtiss, Stealth PACs: How Israel's American Lobby Seeks Control of U.S. Middle East Policy (Washington D.C., 1990), xiii-189. This book documents American-Israeli Political Action Committee activities in the U.S. revealing the strength of this lobby on U.S. foreign affairs concerning Israel.

⁷A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 26.

⁸Department of Defense, United States Security Strategy for the Middle East (Washington D.C., May 1995), 27. In addition to the commitment to Israel, the United States has formal or informal security arrangements with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey.

⁹Quandt, 258.

¹⁰Ibid., 262.

¹¹"International Security Assistance Management," DISAM Journal 19 (Winter 1996-97): 38-51. Egypt receives about \$3.0 billion annually in military and economic assistance from the U.S. as a result of the Camp David Accords.

¹²Quandt, 276. Quandt makes the case that presidential involvement is essential to these negotiations.

¹³Ibid., 322.

¹⁴ Moshe Dayan, Breakthrough: A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israel Peace Negotiations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1981), 356-358.

¹⁵ DISAM Journal 1996-97, 38-51.

¹⁶ Quandt, 323.

¹⁷ DISAM Journal 1996-97, 38, 51.

¹⁸ Department of Defense, United States Security Strategy for the Middle East, 23.

¹⁹ Ibid. 23-24.

²⁰ Quandt, 262, These comments were modified for the Israeli-Syrian issues, but are substantially the same principles as cited by Quandt for Israel and Egypt.

²¹ Aryeh Shalev, Israel and Syria: Peace and Security on the Golan (Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, no.24. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994),65.

²² Ibid. 68.

²³ Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Special Memorandum, Negotiating Peace With Syria: Selected Statements by Rabin and Peres (FB SM 95-10006, 27 June 1995),8.

²⁴“Ex-Diplomat: Syria Vital to Mideast,” linked from America on Line at “New York Times,” available from <<http://nytimes.com/>>; Internet; accessed on 14 JAN 1998.

²⁵ Andrew Bacevich, Michael Eisenstadt, and Carl Ford. Supporting Peace: America’s Role in an Israel-Syria Peace Agreement (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute, 1994), 7.

²⁶ Ibid., 8.

²⁷ Shalev, 120

²⁸ Shalev, 156-157.

²⁹ Russell, 216.

³⁰ Shalev, 90.

³¹Helena Cobban, Syria and the Peace: A Good Chance Missed (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1997), 34.

³²Shelev, 177.

³³United States Department of State, Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 1998. Congressional presentation (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), 13.

³⁴Ibid., 35.

³⁵DISAM Journal 1996-97, 38.

³⁶Bacevich, 34.

³⁷Journal of Palestine Studies, Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations: An interview with Ambassador Walid al-Moualem, Winter 1997, Volume XXVI, Number 2 (University of California Press, 1997), 90.

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