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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 9 May 1979 from the Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have been instructed by my Government to bring to your attention the following information in connexion with negotiations that have been taking place between the State of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

On 26 March 1979, a treaty of peace was concluded between the State of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt. The treaty had previously been approved by the Knesset on 22 March 1979 by an overwhelming majority and was ratified unanimously by the Government of Israel on 1 April 1979. This treaty is binding without regard to action or inaction of any other party. On 25 April 1979, instruments of ratification were exchanged, thereby bringing the treaty into force.

The negotiation and ultimate signature of the treaty was carried out in implementation of an earlier agreement - "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel" - signed at Camp David on 17 September 1978 by Prime Minister Menachem Begin and President Anwar El-Sadat, and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter. This framework sets out the basic principles to be incorporated in the treaty of peace. These include the termination of the state of war between Israel and Egypt, and the establishment of peace and of normal peaceful relations between them. Israel and Egypt have stated in the treaty that its conclusion is an important step in the search for a comprehensive peace, and have invited the other Arab parties to the dispute to join the peace process with Israel.

On 17 September 1978, another agreement was also signed between Israel and Egypt, entitled "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David". This agreement establishes, inter alia, the principle of a self-governing authority (administrative council) to be set up in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and of negotiations to be commenced between Egypt, Jordan and Israel on this subject. Both

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Governments have invited the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to join them in the peace-making process. However, to date, there has been no acceptance by the Jordanian Government. Notwithstanding this fact, in a joint letter signed by Israel and Egypt, dated 26 March 1979, it was agreed that negotiations for the implementation of the provisions of this document relating to the autonomy for the inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and Gaza would commence one month after the exchange of instruments of ratification of the peace treaty, that these negotiations would be carried out continuously and in good faith, in order to conclude them at the earliest possible date, and that Israel and Egypt set themselves the goal of completing the negotiations within one year so that elections would be held as expeditiously as possible after agreement had been reached between the parties.

I should like to point out some of the principles contained in the "Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David" and in the joint letter.

1. The objective of the negotiations is the establishment of a self-governing authority (administrative council) in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, in order to provide full autonomy to the inhabitants.

2. The self-governing authority is to be established and inaugurated within one month after it has been elected. The Israeli military Government and its civilian Administration will be withdrawn, to be replaced by the self-governing authority (administrative council). A withdrawal of Israeli armed forces will then take place and there will be a redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces into specified security locations.

3. All necessary measures will be taken and provisions made to assure the security of Israel and its neighbours.

Israel will fulfil all the commitments it undertook in accordance with the Camp David agreement:

1. Full autonomy for the Palestinian Arabs, inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District will be the just solution of this problem.

2. Under no circumstance will Israel contemplate or permit the establishment of a "Palestinian State" in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Such a state would constitute a mortal danger to the civilian population of Israel and to its security. It would also be a peril to the free world.

3. Jerusalem is and will always remain one indivisible city - the eternal capital of our country, as it has been ever since King David transferred the seat of his kingdom from Hebron to Jerusalem more than 3,000 years ago. Under Israel's sovereign jurisdiction, Jew, Christian and Moslem alike have always enjoyed and will continue to enjoy free and unhindered access to the Holy Places. This was not the case during the 19 years of Jordanian occupation. During that entire period, Jews were unable to pray at the Western Wall, as they have done for centuries.

Now and forever, nobody, whatever his faith, will be hindered from praying at his holy shrines.

I have the honour to request that the text of this letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 25 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations