

**Memorandum of Conversation between US President Jimmy Carter and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan in the Billiard Room at Camp David at 14:00
(17 September 1978)**

Israel State Archives/Box/A4314/1



**Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan at Camp David
National Archives: 181317**

On the final day of the Camp David negotiations, President Jimmy Carter told Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan that “Sadat’s compassion for Jerusalem is very strong; he is willing to be flexible about the settlements if Israel will be flexible with regard to Jerusalem.” Dayan was incredulous that with Egypt and Israel on the verge of a historic agreement the US would pressure Israel on Jerusalem. Dayan responded, “We are here in Camp David in the midst of negotiations and are willing to make peace with Egypt only to be confronted with the US positions.” Carter had promised Sadat to include the US position that East Jerusalem was occupied territory and had apparently planned to raise the issue once an agreement was well within sight. Emphatically, Dayan argued that if the new US proposed formulation were applied, “Hebrew University, the Wailing Wall, Hadassah [hospital], and the Jewish Quarter” would all be considered “occupied territory.” Dayan further stated that “if we had known that you would declare your position on Jerusalem we would not have come here” and called all other issues “insignificant.” Eventually, Carter agreed to make reference to the US position without stating it explicitly. The Carter administration would repeat the view that East Jerusalem was occupied territory in 1980, when the US voted affirmatively for UN Resolution 478. Although the signing of the Camp David accords later that evening marked an unprecedented diplomatic achievement, several outstanding issues—application of UN Resolution 242 to the West Bank, Israeli settlements, Jerusalem, and implementation of Palestinian autonomy—remained contentious and unresolved.

27 August 2018, Ken Stein / Jacob Zack

Meeting Location: Camp David, MD, USA – 2PM

Top Secret

Participants: Walter Mondale, Cyrus Vance, Aharon Barak and Simcha Dinitz

Carter: Sadat's compassion for Jerusalem is very strong. Sadat said that he is willing to be flexible about the settlement if Israel will be flexible with regards to Jerusalem. I told Sadat that Israel cannot be flexible on that issue, and that each party can submit its position on letters and the U.S. will present its position in accordance with UN resolutions.

Dayan: This is the first time that you make the U.S. position in the current negotiations public. The U.S. has a stand on various subjects, for example, on the settlements, but you never came out in the framework of the negotiations with a stand of your own and here will be the case where we will have to deal with the U.S. position.

Carter: I do not know if I will be able to handle it unless you agree to leave East Jerusalem. I told you last night what I intend to do.

Dayan: None of us who participated in that conversation can recollect that you will form the U.S. position on that matter. In your letter you suggest to send Sadat a letter saying that the area in which Jerusalem is located is a conquered territory.

Carter: I suggest that Vance and Barak will go over again over the phrasing of that letter. I can't retract from what Sadat said. I will state U.S. position in a letter that I will send him and you may say in your letter what the Knesset has decided.

Dayan: There is no objection that Barak and Vance will sit together, but here, for the first time we have an argument with you and with the U.S. position.

Carter: This is an announcement of our long standing position, which continues to exist.

Dayan: We are here in Camp David in the midst of negotiations and are willing to make peace with Egypt only to be confronted with the U.S. positions. When you say an occupied territory, the implication is that the Hebrew University, the Wailing Wall, Hadassah [hospital], and the Jewish Quarter are occupied territory just because they were taken from us by force in 1948 by Abdullah and we took them back in 1967. I am not talking about 2,000 year old shrines. I am referring to lands that we purchased from the Arabs before 1948 and built on them a university and a hospital and the Arabs took it away from us by force – is that what makes it an occupied territory? We are saying that we are not conducting negotiations on that right now and we shall present our position during the negotiations. However, when you say that everything that is east of the [green] line is an occupied territory, it is altogether not accepted by us. It came to us as a surprise, because it is the first time that we receive a definition of an American position and not an Egyptian position, and we find ourselves arguing with you and not with the Egyptians. That is not why we came to Camp David. And of all the subjects and of all places, you focus specifically on Jerusalem? This is where we have the strongest case against being defined as an occupied

territory.

Carter: Sadat reiterated that neither he nor the Arabs think that they should get back everything that was taken in 1967, such as the Wailing Wall. This is why I suggested that Vance and Barak will work together on the accepted version and if they will fail to produce a commonly accepted phrasing, then there will be no signing. I can't take back Sadat's words.

Barak: I suggest that Sadat will write to you that this is his position and that in a conversation with you, you told him so and so and you will confirm his letter.

Carter: I can't retreat from the word that I gave Sadat.

Vance: Maybe we can say in our response to Sadat that 'our position remains as stated by Ambassador Yost at the UN on this and this date.' [July 1, 1969]

Carter: (Looking at the draft of a letter for Sadat) First, maybe we can take out Clause 2-A. Do you have any difficulty to accept the definition that East Jerusalem is a part of the West Bank? You cannot prevent us from clarifying our historical position; or dictate to us when we shall say it. We can say that the Holy Sites will be under the supervision of the respected religions. I can say that this subjected to negotiations between Israel and Jordan.

Dayan: If we had known that you would declare your position on Jerusalem, we would not have come here. This is the first time that we are confronted with an American position and specifically on the most sensitive issue. All your positions with regards to settlements are insignificant compared to our confrontation on the issue of Jerusalem.

Carter: The Knesset set the law for the annexation of Jerusalem and our historic position that this is not the case.

Dayan: This is not the point. We are not supposed to be arguing now about the Status of Jerusalem.

Carter: I suggest that Barak and Vance will attempt to reach the proper phrasing and if they will not succeed we shall disperse without an agreement.

Dayan: It may be suffice to say in the letter that your position is known – maybe it will be enough and maybe it will not.

Carter: Barak and Vance will work on it. Another question is – will you be willing if Sadat agrees to have a permanent deployment of UN forces in Sharm that the observers will be stationed on your side, under mutual agreement? Sadat refuses to change the timing of the diplomatic recognition, unless you will complete your withdrawal to the interim borders.

Sadat misunderstood Begin that there should be mutual consent for the deployment of the UN force. He wants it to be based on a unanimous vote at the UN Security Council. As for the Bay of Aqaba he is ready to make it an international waterway.

Barak: Vance and I agreed on Clause C.

Carter: This is between you two. Now Sadat has to agree. Sadat said that if the Knesset will approve the removal of settlements he will extend the Mandate of the UN on October 25th otherwise he will have to bring it for a discussion at the UN. The Negotiations will continue after two weeks. I assume that Begin can bring it before the Knesset within two weeks.

(After the meeting ended, Carter invited Barak to accompany him to his residence.)

Notes taken by: Simcha Dinitz