Hotel. But if one cannot condone terrorism, one can at least identify its roots, and historically terrorism has been a psychotic response to a military occupation. Thus, the way to end terrorism is to remove the cause. The longer the conditions that produce such a response are permitted to continue, the more difficult will be its eradication, for it is dangerous to let a whole generation grow up conditioned to terrorism as a way of life.

I have dwelt at great length on the Arab-Israeli struggle as a principal element in the complex politics of the Middle East because I feel a deep sense of urgency that we get on with an Arab-Israeli settlement and thus eliminate that single most important cause of political instability. We should have learned enough in the last thirty years to recognize that, in our bipolar struggle still continuing with the Soviets, Moscow's great opportunity for mischief is the exploitation of situations of discontent that arise from other causes. To allow discontent to persist in what is clearly the strategic center of the world today would be an irresponsible rejection of reality. We face many tasks in the Middle East, of which the final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is merely the most important. We must also assure the military security of the Persian Gulf, which means not only increasing our naval presence in the Indian Ocean but greatly beefing up our capacity for quick response. If we have learned one thing from our experience with Iran, it is the fatuity of the Nixon doctrine, the idea that America can, by stuffing arms into a relatively backward country, create a strong nation that will act as our champion in a key area. That was fantasy, as experience has shown. We can assure the protection of the Persian Gulf only if we ourselves develop adequate capabilities to defend our interests as well as build the political relationships in the area that an attentive diplomacy should make possible.

The course of conduct I have suggested here will involve difficult political decisions. But we should not fail to take them. We no longer have the luxury of indecision. The dangers are too great and time is not on our side.
vulsions in their own right—one the convolution of a presumed stable order, the other the convolution of peace, or partial peace. Yes, the establishment of peace in the Middle East can be convulsive, and no one should have expected otherwise. Both events are viewed, usually with distorted logic, as American handiwork, and new mythologies are already taking shape as to American purposes. This is to be expected. However phantas-magoric the alleged American motivations may appear, they should not unduly trouble us. It is the price we pay for the pervasive American involvement and presence in the Middle East in the past two decades.

Nevertheless, it is well to reexamine our lack of success as well as our successes in the Middle East as lessons for the future. An old army general for whom I once worked used to say, "Judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment." No criticism of the exceptionally dedicated and able people who work on the problems of the Middle East, nor of those who have done so in the past, is intended when I say that this adage applies to governments as well as individuals.

For a quarter of a century American policymakers have been conscious of the regional power aspirations of the now deposed shah of Iran. They have at times been deeply troubled by them. I recall more than one occasion on which senior officials of our nation spoke bravely of constraining the seemingly insatiable appetite for military equipment of the Iranian monarch. Seldom did such determination endure. Personable, opinionated but eminently rational, persistent, speaking English—always an asset in dealing with American public leaders—the shah was imperially persuasive. He offered security of a sort to the northern and eastern flanks of the volatile Middle East. In the absence of objective criteria on the nature of the military threat to Iran, his estimate of force requirements was as good as any. Such doubts as existed were swallowed as un-duly trusted. It is the price we pay for the pervasive American involvement and presence in the Middle East in the past two decades.

With the departure of the British from the Gulf in the late Sixties, American policymakers saw Iran as a new sheet anchor of security in that economically important area. The ambitious shah could fill the power vacuum that had been created by British withdrawal. Translated into practical terms, this meant restraining radical Iraq in the Gulf.

Iranian petroleum offered further leverage to the shah in dealing with the United States, especially as American interest in Middle East petroleum shifted in the early Seventies from producer to consumer dimensions. Even when the shah was among the first to demand substantial price increases in 1973, other Middle East oil producers could more conveniently be blamed for this disturbing but inevitable development. The shah played it skillfully with American and other leaders, and it must be acknowledged that the United States received a good measure of strategic value in thus dealing with him—for as long as it lasted.

But all was not well. Inadequate weight was given to the shah's growing isolation from his subjects. The Iranian people, as opposed to their former ruler, have traditionally been neutralist. They have been endowed with a full measure of xenophobia. Having long opposed Russian and British involvement in Iran, the new American connection was hardly likely to be more congenial to them. It was shortsighted to believe otherwise. American benevolence was not the issue: an overwhelming foreign—read American—presence came to be increasingly resented. The sizable and growing American expatriate community—numbering at one time some fifty thousand—deployed to meet the training and servicing requirements of newly introduced sophisticated military equipment, inevitably grated on national sensibilities. Granted, the purpose of that presence was to help, and help it did. By the same token, the high American profile and the graphically different way of life it projected in a basically impoverished society (not to mention the inevitable prejudices that travel with large American communities abroad) served to emphasize the disparity of cultures and engendered bitterness. It was bound to cause friction. Worse still, critics of the shah could use it to imply American sanction for the internal oppression that marked the shah's regime, however repugnant this was to many Americans living in Iran. The "green revolution," by adding a "modernization" dimension to the shah's policies, may have salved the consciences of official and private American economic development buffs. There was precious little appreciation in Washington, however, of the limited absorption capacity of the supposed beneficiaries of this imperial bounty. Because it was "modernization," it was reckoned by Americans—officials and many academicians—to be inherently good. Like an old-fashioned New England cure, it was believed that the more bitter the medicine, the better it was for one. It took a fundamentalist Islamic revolt to teach Americans that excessively forced modernization can have a repellent effect.

In short, sound analysis of Iran and its complex political dynamics, of the seething discontent just beneath the surface, of the power potential of rightist Shiite religious leaders, of the negative public reaction to a high American profile, was sadly slow in developing. Had there been greater perception, it might conceivably have been possible to ameliorate the situation, but even this is uncertain.

The sudden demoralization and concomitant indecision of the shah in those last six months—so uncharacteristic of this customarily forceful leader—were a shock to all who had known him. Was it the strain of office, or did he suddenly recognize more clearly than outsiders his own isolation and the strength of the neutralist, religious forces arrayed against him? Perhaps he will in due course write an autobiography and provide us with belated enlightenment on this crucial point.

The United States, inevitably, has received its share of brickbats, from friend and foe alike, for what happened in Iran. Opponents of the shah censure us for having uncritically supported him. There is some measure of truth in this. Others in the area, more well disposed toward us and toward the shah, profess puzzle-ment at why the United States did not act to save him. They translate the shah's demise into America's lack of
will or capability to help beleaguered friends. American credibility in the area has indeed been weakened. Such a charge obviously lacks substance, since there was little that could have been done by anyone in the shah's last year to save him. The cumulative effect of years of public complaints and bitterness could no longer be redressed by short-term corrective measures. But the impression persisted and must be redressed.

Regrettably, unnecessarily secretive handling of the United States role in the final weeks of the shah produced an image of confusion and indecision. This sowed seeds of suspicion in the minds of worried Middle East friends about true American purposes. Nor did the American handling of the shah's request to live in the United States endear itself to friends in the area. There may have been good reasons for it, but these were never explained to area leaders who were interested and concerned.

We must now seek to build a new relationship with the present government of Iran. Whether this is possible with the Khomeini regime is in doubt. It will, in any event, take a long time. Any effort to do so should entail a fundamental rethinking on our part about Iran and its role. First, we should remember that Iranians make better neutralists than allies, and constructive neutralism has a place in our world. Second, support should be proffered, if requested, but should be given with discrimination and in a manner that avoids offense to the sensibilities of the Iranian people. Third, we should avoid a recurrence of the previous unhelpfully high American profile. The latter, in political terms, is unhealthy—not only in Iran, but elsewhere. If there is any satisfaction to be derived from the Iranian tragedy, it is that the Soviets are doing no better than we in dealing with the new regime.

Let me now turn to the second major event in the Middle East, the peace between Egypt and Israel. It represents one-half of the comprehensive peace edifice envisioned in the Camp David accords. The other half, autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza as a first step to a meaningful resolution of the tragic Palestinian problem, has yet to be achieved. I believe that the three leaders who signed the Camp David accords—President Sadat, Prime Minister Begin, and their host, President Carter, though their views differ fundamentally on what West Bank/Gaza autonomy should entail—are equally sincere in wanting this problem resolved.

The negative Arab reaction to the Camp David accords and, by extension, to the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, is disappointing but not surprising. It was predictable for a variety of reasons. It is regrettable but true that the collective Arab approach to a Middle East peace has for too many years been based on lowest-common-denominator concepts. The bold action of President Sadat in breaking out of this mold, after American inability to obtain agreement from his Arab associates on the conditions of a Geneva conference, was bound to elicit Arab criticism. By the same token, it was also understandable. Egypt has throughout the past thirty years made the greatest sacrifice of any Arab state in the Arab-Israeli confrontation. It could hardly be expected to remain indefinitely hostage to indecision—"auctioneering," as one Arab leader has called it, on the part of lesser Arab participants on practical means to bring an end once and for all to this protracted conflict and the inestimable loss of life and treasure that it has entailed.

As for American leaders, they have by now learned that involvement in the turbulent Arab-Israeli equation is fraught with hazards and false imputations. Their task is indeed awesome. Achieving some measure of equity between seemingly incompatible Israeli and Arab aspirations has been the challenge of American policymakers for years. It will continue to be so before a final solution is in sight, if indeed such is possible.

Camp David, whether one likes its accords or not, was a cardinal event in the history of the Middle East. It built upon Sinai I and II. It may not have warranted the euphoria that it initially evoked in some American circles, but it was by any odds a major achievement.

No American president has given more of himself to bring about a just and durable Middle East peace than has President Carter. No American president has sought to learn as much about the complex Arab-Israeli problem or has striven to maintain a sense of balance between conflicting claims and counterclaims. I find it unconscionable, therefore, that the president, in some circles at least, is denied the credit which is his due.

"Camp David, whether one likes it or not, was a cardinal event in the history of the Middle East."

Since my return to the United States I have been astonished to hear suggestions that Egypt and Israel could have worked out by themselves their points of dispute without presidential intervention. Earlier Egyptian-Israeli bilateral talks, proponents of this view contend, had made significant progress, and allegedly there was virtual agreement on a declaration of principles. Another public version alleges that it was the conveyance to the Egyptians of Israeli intelligence reports about threats to President Sadat that clinched the deal. President Carter's involvement only delayed the settlement. Nonsense! The president's personal involvement was critical to an agreement. Without it there would have been none.

The Dayan-Tuhami meetings in Morocco, word of
which has been leaked, produced no results that could possibly have given either side cause for satisfaction. There was virtually no agreement on a declaration of principles. As for passing along a threat estimate to Egypt, this was an appreciated gesture, but it was only one of many such acts by interested and concerned friends. It clinched nothing and was, in fact, skeptically received. To my knowledge, none of these few direct contacts brought about the major change in relations needed to arrive at an agreement. That depended on the personal intervention of President Carter and the enormous personal effort that he put into bringing the parties together.

This in no way underestimates the critical role of President Sadat or of Prime Minister Begin. Camp David confronted each of them with serious decisions, decisions that were bound to evoke domestic and external criticism. Yet they made them. Despite censure by their critics at home and abroad, they succeeded in establishing peace between Egypt and Israel and also committed themselves to a broader peace process. Since I know President Sadat better than I do Prime Minister Begin, I am perhaps more conscious of his contribution to peace. Over the past five years, I can personally attest, he has consistently and strongly fought for a comprehensive peace and for Palestinian rights. He has never wavered on these points. He has repeatedly urged that the United States enter into a dialogue with the PLO, and he continues to do so. His statesmanship and courage are matched only by his patience and quiet persistence. Larger political structures, he understands, must be built painstakingly through the placement of smaller building blocks. A large part of President Carter’s success in brokering the Middle East peace—as, I am sure, he would be the first to admit—is due to President Sadat’s understanding and his unstinting help in critical situations. Leaders such as Anwar el-Sadat are rare anywhere. He deserves our continuing support in full measure, and I hope we will continue to give it.

Some in the Middle East and elsewhere castigate the treaty as a separate peace. They charge that it has divided the Arabs and that it has set back the quest for a comprehensive peace. Camp David and the treaty, perhaps because they have overturned a situation which had for long come to be viewed as a “natural” state of affairs in the Middle East—namely, a state of belligerency—have been greeted negatively in some Arab circles. From the rejectionist states this was inevitable. From friendly, moderate Arab states one might have wished for more understanding but, given the realities of the situation, one should not really have expected it. The likely reaction of friends was misgauged by all the participants, the United States included.

It is not axiomatic, as some planners believed, that whatever Egypt and Israel accept, others must also accept. This is likely to be true only if the substance of negotiated bilateral arrangements is also at least passably acceptable to the Palestinians—those in the occupied territories and those in the diaspora. In the same manner, while United States Saudi Arabian relations are close, it is a mistake to overesti-

mate United States influence on Saudi Arabia in matters where Saudi interests are not adequately understood or weighted. There may have been no intention of taking the Saudis for granted, but unfortunately this impression was projected.

Much the same holds true for Jordan, although Jordan was invited to participate in West Bank/Gaza autonomy talks. It has opted not to do so—at least for now. President Sadat believes Jordan may join next year. Perhaps so, but Jordan’s present posture is one of wait and see. Clearly, much will depend on the progress of the West Bank/Gaza autonomy talks.

The United States needs a better dialogue with the Saudi Arabsians and with Jordan. This should be accompanied by a sympathetic understanding of their concerns. Saudi Arabia has repeatedly sought to be helpful to the U.S. in petroleum matters, often at the risk of courting unpopularity with some of its fellow OPEC members. The recent Saudi decision to continue a higher level of oil production for another three months—a decision made by King Khalid and Prince Fahd—should be welcomed rather than branded, as some have sought to do, as blackmail. The Saudi Government, no less than any other foreign government, has a right to seek to influence the government of the United States on matters of direct and immediate concern to the former. This is consistent with the close and longstanding relationship between two countries that have enjoyed the rights of the Palestinians and the East Jerusalem problem are genuine Saudi concerns. There is no reason why they should not express them to their American friends. I have enough confidence in the wisdom of American leadership to believe that it will continue to pursue American interests and honor American commitments in the Middle East in terms of what it, the American Congress, and the American people deem to be right.

It is regrettable that the American relationship with Saudi Arabia remains a bit strained. This should be corrected. Among other things, we would be well advised to desist from shortsighted bluster or threats of using military force to “protect” the Gulf oil fields. Such talk is idle rhetoric, except in times of the gravest national emergency, and simply embarrasses or alienates traditional friends. It provides grist for the mill of our ill-wishers in the area.

It has been suggested that the principal deficiency in the Camp David peace structure is the inadequacy of its Palestinian component. This may be true, although the final readings are not yet in. In a sense it is ironic that this should be the case. No American president before Carter has recognized so clearly the centrality of the Palestinian issue in a real Middle East peace and has said so publicly. Both he and President Sadat exerted major efforts to realize maximum Palestinian participation in the determination of their own future. They fought for, and succeeded in getting, agreement that the Palestinian problem had to be resolved in all—all repeat, all—of its aspects. They fought hard to obtain appropriate language for a framework that would enable this to happen.

The Camp David General Framework document, the basis for the West Bank/Gaza autonomy talks now under way, may not have been as specific or all-embrace-
ing as they would have liked. Camp David was a negotiation, an agonizing negotiation for all the leaders concerned. No party obtained its maximal demands. Diplomatic negotiation rarely leads to precise, clearcut answers. Many items that cannot be resolved at the time must be deferred for future consideration and negotiation. The Camp David General Framework was no exception, especially with respect to the Palestinian issue.

Yet it did provide for a measure of participatory opportunities for Palestinians in establishing West Bank/Gaza self-government—a self-government that, if it can be established and if it works well, could be a major factor in determining the future of these territories after the five-year transition period. In this sense it offered more of a practical nature to a deprived community than have any United Nations resolutions. Regrettably, but again not surprisingly, the proposed participatory structure has been branded by critics as a sham. Its vagueness, the inevitable result of extensive and repeated redrafting, inevitably reduced whatever impact the drafters hoped it might have.

But even then it might have been passably attractive to Palestinians. I am convinced, had it not been accompanied by a longer-term settlements freeze in the West Bank and Gaza. It cannot be emphasized enough that President Sadat, not to mention President Carter, signed the Camp David accords believing that such a settlements freeze had been agreed upon. The misunderstanding on this point, undiscovered until a day after the signing, was certain to make the General Framework language on Palestinian participatory arrangements weak in Palestinian and Arab eyes. Prime Minister Begin’s public statement immediately after Camp David, setting forth his view that the Camp David participatory language was no more than the essence of the earlier Israeli autonomy plan, seemed to confirm Palestinian and Arab skepticism. It was not the view of the Egyptian or American sides, but it was hardly conducive to encouraging Palestinian participation in the current round of West Bank/Gaza autonomy talks.

These talks are now being conducted, in their preliminary stage, by ministerial representatives of Egypt and Israel and by Ambassador Robert Strauss representing President Carter. For Gaza this may be feasible, since Egypt has residual, pre-1967 status in that territory. For the West Bank—Judea and Samaria in Israeli lexicography—which is really the crux of the Palestinian territorial issue—Jordanian abstention, coupled with the refusal of West Bankers to participate, gives a metaphysical quality to the negotiations. Is it really feasible to negotiate Palestinian autonomy without Palestinian participation? In Gaza perhaps, yes; in the West Bank, hardly.

If one accepts the critical importance of an acceptable Palestinian solution to any durable and comprehensive peace, and not everyone does, the question immediately arises of how Palestinians can be persuaded to participate now or later, to take a chance, admitting all of the Camp David General Framework’s imperfections on this score, in an effort to make something meaningful of the proposed West Bank/Gaza autonomy structure.

There are some West Bankers and Gazans who would like to do so, however disgruntled they are with the General Framework provisions. Yet none has thus far been willing to stand up and be counted. Foreign Minister Dayan’s probing of West Bank leaders—among them pro-PLO people who would doubtless be PLO if legally permitted to be so—has not produced results thus far. Perhaps it will still do so, though I rather doubt it. The recent assassination of the imam of Gaza for alleged pro-Egyptian activities, and PLO threats to the mayor of Gaza for having said mildly positive things about West Bank/Gaza autonomy negotiations, have had an inhibiting effect. The assassination also raises questions about the efficacy of Israeli security protection in Gaza. Perhaps Israel ought to reconsider its objection to Egyptian participation in Gaza security as a means of protecting those Gazans who might like to participate in the talks.

The refusal of King Hussein of Jordan to encourage his West Bank protégés to participate eliminates that possibility, at least for now. Whether one likes it or not, it looks more and more as if only a PLO key can open the lock. This salient fact will have to be recognized sooner or later by all of the parties concerned.

There is, of course, a possibility that Egypt, Israel, and the United States can somehow forge a West Bank/Gaza autonomy structure that, by its merits alone, will overcome prevailing Palestinian and Arab doubts. I may be wrong, but the present Israeli proposal is hardly likely to do so. Perhaps no autonomy structure negotiated without Palestinian participation can have real appeal, but this has still to be tested.

The powers and responsibilities of the self-governing body will have to be broad if the concept of Palestinian self-governance is to have any meaning. They will have to apply, not only to people, but to the land that they occupy, always consistent with Israel’s legitimate security requirements. Unless this is achieved, preferably for both the West Bank and Gaza, or at least, in a more limited demonstration sense, for Gaza alone, the autonomy talks are likely to be inconclusive and will sooner or later collapse. The effect of any such collapse or suspension of autonomy talks will inevitably have an adverse impact on the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. There may be no legal linkage between the two Camp David documents, but there is, and remains, a strongly emotional overlap. I am convinced that Egypt will honor its essential normalization obligations toward Israel, but failure of West Bank/Gaza negotiations will at the least weaken the quality of that incipient bilateral relationship.

I judge that at some point the United States will once

"The PLO leadership must by now be fully aware that the cost-effectiveness of its raids... is absolutely nil."
again have to submit proposals of its own to try to break what seems certain to become an impasse. Such U.S. proposals will, I hope, espouse broad powers and responsibilities for the self-governing body. President Sadat, no less so than Arab critics of Camp David, expects this from us. President Sadat has reason to do so.

In the meantime, the Israeli Government’s decision to allow the purchase of land in the West Bank and Gaza has aroused new concerns as to Israeli intentions; it was regrettable, untimely, and hardly consistent with the spirit of Camp David. The distinguished foreign minister of Israel expressed surprise that there should have been negative American reaction and recalled that it had been proposed by the American side at Camp David that Israelis be allowed to purchase land in the West Bank and Gaza. Surely this was in the context of an eventual agreement between Israel and the proposed West Bank/Gaza self-governing body and not in the present situation, in which the Israeli military government authorities are all powerful. If Arabs wish to sell land to Israelis, this should clearly be their legal right. But if Israel also wants a settlement of the Palestinian issue, a sine qua non of good as opposed to merely correct relations with Egypt (and I believe it does), it is incumbent upon Israel to prevent forced or coerced land sales prompted by Gush Emunim or other Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza. Arab land sales in the West Bank and Gaza warrant close monitoring if potential abuse is to be avoided. I am sure that Ambassador Strauss and his associates will be alert to this potentially disruptive element.

The role of the PLO continues to evoke sharp controversy, as well it might. The PLO was formally designated at the Rabat summit conference of 1974 as the sole spokesman for the Palestinians. That designation has never been repudiated. President Sadat, one of the American partners in peace in the Middle East, despite his displeasure with the negative attitudes of the strife-ridden region, has not done so. To attempt to ignore this fundamental fact, as we have for so long done, has an ostrich-like, head-in-the-sand quality about it.

Ambassador Andrew Young clearly recognized this fundamental fact when he entered into a dialogue with the PLO observer at the United Nations. It cost him his job and has produced a serious split between the American black and Jewish communities. The issue of whether or not a dialogue should be conducted with the PLO has, in my judgment, been blown out of all proportion to its intrinsic significance. The question should not be dialogue for the sake of dialogue, but how to get Palestinian participation in the peace process.

Few would deny that PLO actions against Israeli women and children and other noncombatants have been reprehensible in the extreme. Even in a wartime context they deserve severest censure. But this does not alter the fact that the PLO is a political force, one that neither the Syrian Tel Za’atar massacre nor fierce and incessant Israeli raids into South Lebanon has been able to extinguish. It is a force that would-be peacemakers must reckon with. From all accounts, including those of our closest Arab friends—among them President Sadat—there are sensible men in the PLO leadership ranks. Whether they can continue to assert themselves against extremists in the PLO conglomeration they have yet to prove. A cautious dialogue strikes me as essential, if only to test the bona fides of avowed PLO claims to want a peace. Whatever symbolism there may be in dialogue, it does not constitute formal recognition; nor does it mean acceptance or endorsement of PLO views. If unsatisfactory in content, it can always be terminated or suspended.

Our friends and allies in Europe and elsewhere are acutely aware of the quandary that nondialogue poses for us. They find our posture puzzling and sterile. Mr. Dayan, one of the most fertile and imaginative minds among the peacemakers, recognizes that the PLO is a fact and has publicly acknowledged, much to the annoyance of his cabinet colleagues, that it has a role to play. He is a realist, who perceives more clearly than some of his colleagues the political dynamics of the Palestinian movement. Members of the American Congress have conducted dialogue with PLO figures, though it must be admitted that not all have found such meetings edifying in terms of identifying negotiating flexibility. Why shouldn’t the executive branch engage in direct dialogue with the PLO for the sake of probing peace prospects and, one would hope, of persuading the PLO to curb its guerrilla raids on Israel? The PLO leadership must by now be fully aware that the cost-effectiveness of its raids, in terms of altering the Arab-Israeli equation, is absolutely nil. As in the past, Israeli retribution will be swift and drastic.

There is of course the so-called Kissinger commitment of 1975 not to enter into a dialogue with the PLO unless it recognizes U.N. Resolution 242 and the right of Israel to exist. It was part of the price the United States paid for Sinai II. Whether the commitment is as ironclad as strict constructionists insist, or whether it is more along the lines of Mr. Ezer Weizman’s recent explanation of what “consult” means in the use of American arms in South Lebanon, is a subject for debate. But whatever it means, the commitment should be honored in its essence.

Efforts to obtain such a PLO undertaking, through Egypt and Saudi Arabia, failed in 1977. Pro-Syrian and rejectionist elements in the PLO executive committee banded together to assure nonacceptance. That was a lost opportunity for the PLO, but the search for a mutually satisfactory formula that honors the American commitment to Israel but still enables a dialogue should be continued. Any attempt to resolve the Palestinian problem in all of its aspects must take the PLO into account. Few Arab leaders may want an independent Palestinian state, but the phrase “Bye, Bye PLO” represents a pious wish rather than a recognition of the realities of the situation.

And then there is Lebanon. How can one discuss the Middle East without a word on Lebanon, that scenically beautiful, once prosperous, now tragic land with a demonstrated penchant for national suicide? Lebanon, and especially South Lebanon with its Palestinian refugee camps and its PLO bases, has suffered severely from
Israeli reprisal and preemptive raids.

As in Israel, innocent civilians have been among those killed in the process. American-supplied weapons have been used, much to the chagrin and distress of the United States Government. It has been a frustrating experience for harassed American officials. Their efforts to bring about peace in South Lebanon have been like punching a pillow. American protests and requests for clarification about the use of American arms have, I fear, come to have the credibility of Confederate currency. It would be better not to make such demarches unless they are backed by a determination to do something about it. If they are for the record, fine, but they long ago ceased to make an impression on Arab friends.

It is difficult to see how there can be a solution to the problem of Lebanon until there is a solution to the Palestinian problem. Without this, Lebanon—and particularly South Lebanon—is likely to remain in turmoil for a long time.

When all of the din and recrimination have subsided (they will never entirely end) and leaders in that part of the world can once again be ruled by rational thought rather than emotions, they must still consider their options for the future. They, and they alone, must decide what their stands will be. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union nor anyone else can do this for them.

But one point should give them pause. Without Egypt, their long-term prospects for military success, never good, are nonexistent. Their short-term prospects are hardly more promising. They face greater personnel and equipment losses in aerial and ground skirmishes. The martial spirit may be there, but the capability to overcome superior Israeli forces is not. And, with no disrespect to the nations and peoples concerned, it will not be there for many years to come.

The alternative is to choose a path of peace, real peace, not merely a return to the status quo ante 1967. This will mean facing the hard decisions necessary to an accommodation with Israel. Trying it may not mean liking it, but it should not be beyond the capacity of men of goodwill to reach honorable settlements. United States help will be essential in any such effort.

The states of the Middle East—Iraq and Libya, excepted—still profess to want peace. They also assert that they will not participate in any process based upon or derived from President Sadat’s initiative. That is their right, but it seems self-defeating. They may hope for a drastic reordering of Egyptian policy, including an unraveling of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, either by President Sadat, disillusioned with hardline Israeli policies, or by his successor. For those who harbor this thought, it could be a long wait.

There are differences between Egypt and Israel over the Palestinians, profound and perhaps unresolvable differences, but the Arab states should know by now that Egypt, while Arab, is a law unto itself. The Arab states, by their own anti-Egyptian actions, have brought out the pharaonic in the Egyptians. They have evoked a sense of public outrage at Arab temerity in criticizing Egypt, which has for so long been the mainstay of the Arab cause. Arab criticism may have the opposite effect from what those who have leveled it hope. It could drive Egypt into a closer association with Israel.

If the United States can somehow galvanize its sluggish AID mechanisms, and if Egyptian economic management sets itself actively to the task, it should be possible to show to the Egyptian people an economic peace dividend. And if Israel shows flexibility in its West Bank/Gaza negotiations, the relationship between Egypt and Israel will strengthen and will enjoy more and more Egyptian public support. The Arab confrontation states may find themselves out in the cold.

A more sensible course of action for them, in my view, would be to work to build upon the peace between Egypt and Israel, to broaden it so that Syria and Jordan may be included. A parallel peace treaty exercise is a reasonable objective, if the will exists to attempt it.

Let the Palestinians be the test case, if a demonstration of the seriousness of the Israeli desire for peace is necessary. But in the meantime let them encourage the Palestinians to try the negotiating waters.

The coming year will not be an easy one for American policymakers and executors in the Middle East. Election years never are, and this one could be exceptionally difficult. The joint letter signed by President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin concurrently with the peace treaty calls for a grant of one year after exchange of ratifications. By that time the preliminary autonomy structure should be in place so that elections can be held shortly after. I hope that this goal can be met.

But if the experience of the past few years has taught anything, it should be that deadlines, timetables, and the like are best avoided. They are seldom met, yet tend to be cast by the media as criteria of success or failure. If it proves impossible to meet an April or a May goal, the effort to achieve agreement should nevertheless go on. Only if acceptable—and I mean acceptable to the Palestinians—self-government agreements are forged can one hope to progress to a comprehensive peace.

The Camp David accords, with all of their imperfections, and the peace treaty are real contributions to that Middle East peace which has for so long eluded us all. I would hope that, in time, they might be more fully appreciated by Arab skeptics, including Saudi Arabia and Jordan. But this will depend upon the outcome of the West Bank/Gaza autonomy talks and on active efforts to resolve the Palestinian diaspora and Eastern Jerusalem problems. We have a long way to go before the Middle East can enjoy the blessings of a real, comprehensive peace, one in which all states of the area—Israel and Arab states alike—enjoy political independence, territorial integrity, and cooperation among them. And I include in this the legitimate rights of the Palestinians—not merely a community of displaced refugees, but one that includes fine, able, and dedicated people capable of making a contribution to the problems of mankind in the challenging period ahead. It will require the sustained best efforts of the highest levels of this government, of Israel, and of the Arab governments of the area. It is a tall order, but the task is not impossible if there is willingness to attempt it.