# EVANGELICALS AS ZIONISTS AND PEACEMAKERS IN ARAB AND ISRAELI PEACEMAKING THROUGH TRACK II DIPLOMACY

by

Rev. Johnnie Moore

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study contributes to the literature at the intersection of religion and foreign policy by focusing on one of the modern era's most protracted and relevant foreign policy issues (the conflict between Israelis and Arabs), the influence of one of America's most powerful religious constituencies (evangelicals), and one of the most widely used tools of non-governmental diplomacy (Track II diplomacy). It provides original research related to the relevancy of Track II diplomacy by evangelicals, specifically pro-Israel or "Zionist" evangelicals, in Israeli and Arab peacemaking. The study analyzes three relevant case studies to answer the research question: *"How are evangelical Track II diplomatic efforts relevant to Israeli and Arab peacemaking?"* The historical case studies include the Camp David Accords, the Oslo Accords, and the Abraham Accords. Each reflects significant undertakings involving the United States Government—and the Norwegian government in the case of the Oslo Accords—as a broker for peace between the State of Israel and the nation's Arab neighbors, including the Palestinians. The case studies are conducted through interviews with participants or eyewitnesses to each event and the analysis of relevant documents, including historical records.

*Keywords*: evangelicals, Jerry Falwell, foreign policy, Abraham Accords, Camp David Accords, Oslo Accords, Track II diplomacy, constructivism, Israel, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Palestinians, policy history

## Dedication

To Andrea, Edward, Catherine, and Alexander

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This qualitative research study seeks to contribute to the literature at the intersection of religion and foreign policy by focusing on one of the world's most protracted and relevant foreign policy issues (the conflict between Israelis and Arabs), the influence of one of America's most powerful religious constituencies (evangelicals), and one of the most widely used tools of non-governmental diplomacy (Track II engagement). Track II diplomacy is "a conflict resolution method" that brings together "influential but non-official citizens of countries in conflict for a special kind of dialog" (Jones, 2022, p. 79). The term Track II diplomacy was "coined by American diplomat Joseph Montville and Psychiatrist William Davidson" to define a practice of "informal interactions between unofficial but influential actors" (Palmiano Federer, 2021, p. 428). Track II diplomacy involves "interactions between private citizens or groups of people within a country or from different countries which are outside the formal governmental power structure" to advance a cause of mutual concern (McKnight, 1991, p. 16).

Evangelicals represent approximately one-third of the electorate in the United States (Holder & Josephson, 2020), and the majority of evangelicals support Israel as a matter of theological and/or political conviction (Inbari & Bumin, 2024; Inbari & Bumin, 2020; Inbari et al., 2021). The repercussions of the persistent conflict between Israelis and Arabs are widely known (Carlill, 2021). Some have argued that evangelicals have exacerbated the conflict by only embracing a hardline policy in the Middle East, particularly as it relates to Israel (Baumgartner et al., 2008). Yet, this research could demonstrate a more nuanced view given the apparent involvement of evangelicals in two of the most significant peace accords forged between Israelis and Arabs. Academic research sometimes discovers "different forms of analysis make different claims to knowledge and result in different 'truths.'" This work may demonstrate that "diverse conceptions of knowledge and truth" exist here as well when it comes to the role of evangelicals

in foreign policy, even as it relates to Israel (Freeman, 2016, p. 4). It may be that evangelicals are historically, and could be in the future, significant contributors to successful peacemaking among Israelis and Arabs in the Middle East. It may also be that evangelical engagement in Track II diplomacy has other effects that complicate peacemaking. Or, it may be that the effects are somewhere in between the two polar views.

Studying the role of evangelicals in peacemaking in the Middle East is important because international relations scholars and public policy professionals should seek to better understand the role of religion in foreign policy generally (Hoover, 2008), and evangelicals represent one of the most influential religious constituencies in the United States (FitzGerald, 2017). Unfortunately, despite a "global religious resurgence in the post-secular world, the field of international relations finds itself unwilling or unable to situate religion back to theoretical paradigms subject to the Westphalian–Enlightenment prejudice" (Yang & Li, 2021, p. 1).

The Westphalian-Enlightenment bias of international relations, emerging in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War (a religious war among protestants and Catholics), favored a type of secularization of foreign policy where the "authority structure is the Westphalian system" taking into account its "four component norms of authority" including the ultimate victory of the sovereign nation-state, a commitment by temporal authorities to not spread their religion (resulting in pluralism), a similar commitment to "refrain altogether from seeking actively to promote the work and welfare of churches and religion in their own realm," and, finally, the overall power of religious leaders was diminished in various ways including the adoption of temporal offices, taxation and limitations on land ownership (Philpott, 2002, pp. 71-76). The result was that nation-states are seen "as the sole unit of analysis and major foci of attention under the Westphalian worldview" and, therefore, religion is ignored or at least discounted. All of this is made worse by an "Enlightenment assumption embedded in the social sciences" with its

"teleological assumption of modernization…consistently proclaiming irreconcilable barriers between the superior secular sector and primordial religion, the antithesis of human rationality" (Yang & Li, 2021). Liberal internationalist ideas in international relations are also often rooted in the Enlightenment belief that "peace and prosperity" are possible in a wholly secular world through "democratic regimes, liberal ideas, economic interdependence, and effective international institutions" yet "rarely do liberals consider religion as a shaper of states' ends" (Philpott, 2002, p. 81).

Yet, religion is stubborn, predominant, and profoundly relevant in our world (Berger, 1999; Philpott, 2002, p. 82; Stark, 1999). As one example, Philpott references the September 11 terrorist attack, which he says was "the greatest assault on the United States since the end of the Cold War" and it "had little plausible origin in the dynamics of alliances and polarity, in the rise and fall of great powers, in any state's quest for security, or even in the actions of any state at all" (2002, p. 66). The attack didn't require weapons of mass destruction but "box cutters, flying lessons, and some elaborate planning." The story of September 11 "eludes the emphases of realism" and "it had little to do with international organizations or international institutions or with trade." It was rather "animated by a kind of conception" and "organized around a kind of idea" that "appraised the international system according to a kind of notion to which international relations scholars have paid relatively little attention: religion" (pp. 66-67).

Yet, when religion has entered into the foreign policy analysis, even in such stunning form, "religion in a variety of ways is perceived to be a new problem, a new kind of threat that needs to be handled in a variety of extraordinary legal and political ways" (Thomas, 2010, p. 517). But what of the historical and contemporary examples where religion contributed meaningfully and positively to foreign policy? There are many historical examples where faith played, with varying degrees of intentionality, a role in significant events relevant to foreign

policy (Blanke, 2004; Doenecke, 2022; Roy, 2016; Tan, 2013; Taydas et al., 2012; Taydas & Olson, 2022). However, there remains a gap in the research at the intersection of faith and foreign policy. This is remarkable considering "US foreign policy in the first decade of the twenty-first century has been dominated by religion in a way that would not have seemed possible for most of the second half of the twentieth" (Marsden, 2012, p. 953). Nevertheless, it is also the case that "religious factors rarely trump traditional strategic imperatives on matters of war and peace" (Smith, 2012, p. 512).

When it comes to the intersection of religion and foreign policy, there is a need to better understand the way certain religious constituencies contribute to or complicate diplomacy or have an impact somewhere in between. This is especially the case in certain conflicts where a pronounced religious component exists, such as the Israeli and Arab conflict, and via foreign policy tools where religion can play a more official role, such as Track II diplomacy.

Virtually no previous research appears to focus exclusively on the role of Zionist, or pro-Israel, evangelicals in Track II diplomacy in Israeli and Arab peacemaking. As a result, this study will produce original qualitative research in the form of a policy history, and it seeks to lay a foundation for additional future research in various fields of study, especially as it relates to religious peacemaking in the Middle East, evangelicals and foreign policy, and Track II diplomacy. The lack of research is quite remarkable given that prominent evangelicals such as Jerry Falwell, Sr. were at least present in direct meetings with Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Israel's Menachem Begin over 45 years ago in the lead-up to Camp David negotiations (Hummel, 2019b, p. 168) and other prominent evangelicals appear again in meetings leading up to the Abraham Accords in 2020 (Boorstein, 2018b).

This raises many questions: *Did these efforts make a difference? Did they constitute Track II diplomacy? Were they an anomaly? What was discussed? Did it relate to the substance of the*

*negotiations? Has this happened in other peace efforts between Israelis and Arabs? How does it confirm or contradict assumptions about evangelicals and the Jewish state or Muslims? Are these efforts successful, or do they create unintended consequences? Should evangelical Track II diplomacy be pursued with intentionality in future efforts to build bridges among Israelis, Arabs, or others? Were the participants aware that they were participating in Track II diplomacy? How do evangelical Track II efforts compare to other Track II efforts?*

Therefore, this research study seeks to answer the question, "*How are evangelical Track II diplomatic efforts relevant to Israeli and Arab peacemaking?"* A three-case study will be conducted to address the research question. The case studies include the Camp David Accords, the Oslo Accords, and the Abraham Accords. The *Camp David Accords* are a peace accord brokered by the United States between Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt in 1978 (Luttwak, 1979; Princen, 1991). The *Oslo Accords* are a peace accord facilitated by the Kingdom of Norway between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organizations in 1993 and signed at the White House (Bauck & Omer, 2013; Rosler, 2016). The *Abraham Accords* are a peace accord brokered by the United States between Israel and the United Arab Emirates in 2020, which also led to subsequent agreements with the Kingdom of Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco (Guzansky & Marshall, 2020; Jeong, 2021). Each reflects significant undertakings involving the United States Government as a broker for peace between the State of Israel and the nation's Arab neighbors, as well as the Kingdom of Norway in the case of the Oslo Accords.

This study is organized by the selection of cases where the dependent variable is the emergence of an actual peace agreement, which is defined as the successful negotiation and signing of a formal treaty or accord between two or more parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict (the Camp David Accords, the Oslo Accords, and the Abraham Accords). The explanatory variable (i.e., a factor that may explain the emergence of the peace accords) is the existence of an

evangelical Track II initiative in the respective peace accord negotiation. While this study doesn't seek to analyze intervening or antecedent variables, it will identify potential other variables for future researchers, including other forms of religious engagement, other forms of Track II diplomacy, economic considerations, and security considerations that emerge in the data collected. Given the original nature of the research and the gap of research in the field, the aim of this research project is modest. It seeks a reasonable benchmark of descriptive inference in the data. It leaves other considerations entirely to future research and future researchers, including any speculation about causal inference.

## Significance of the Study and Definitions

Evangelicals are a substantial political force in the United States and around the world (Holder & Josephson, 2020; Louwerse & Dart, 2017; Schenker & Abuzayyad, 2020; Smidt, 2022; Trangerud, 2022), yet their involvement in U.S. foreign policy remains under-researched. Even defining the term "evangelical" is a conceptual challenge, in large part because of the diversity of the tradition (Joustra, 2019, p. 8). Joustra notes, "Evangelicals can be found in many major traditions and denominations: Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Mennonites, Pentecostals, and more. Given the diversity, especially the theological diversity, one may rightly ask how evangelicalism could be understood as a unified movement at all" (p. 9).

For this study, evangelical Christians are defined as Protestant Christians who are commonly described by David Bebbington's quadrilateral definition, noting beliefs and practices focused on conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism (Ditchfield, 2022; Joustra, 2019). Evangelicals have sometimes been defined simply as "those Christians who like Billy Graham" (Silliman, 2021). When this study uses the term evangelical it presumes that the group it is referring to is supportive of the State of Israel except as otherwise specified. An evangelical

is assumed to be a Christian Zionist based upon overwhelming survey data which identifies a supermajority of evangelicals as being Christian Zionists (Alper, 2022; Inbari & Bumin, 2024; Lipka, 2013, 2014; Tevington, 2023). There are notable exceptions to this, which are cited in this paper with specificity (ex. Jimmy Carter and John Warwick Montgomery), which should be considered proxies for approximately one-third of evangelicals who are either avowedly not Zionists or have more nuanced views of Israel, though the percentage varies especially according to age and theological views related to eschatology (Inbari et al., 2021). Even in the case of Carter, whose views did not reflect the average evangelical Zionist, one finds warm feelings toward Israel, and they are noted in this study (Wagner, 1998, p. 42). When it comes to foreign policy, complexity is often intermingled with America's infamous partisan divides. Joustra et al. show the unique nature of evangelicalism when they "argue that the presidential style and foreign policies of Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush cannot be fully understood unless the personal religious dimension has been taken into account…. Carter and Bush exhibit a similar style of leadership, one that draws heavily from their evangelical faith" (p. 607). The meaning, history, and relevance of Zionism and Christian Zionism are more comprehensively defined in the literature review within the context of evangelical engagement with foreign policy.

It could be that evangelicals have played a constructive and underappreciated role in Track II diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. It may be that evangelicals have demonstrated a unique ability to bring diverse parties to the negotiating table and facilitate dialogue in some of the most intractable conflicts in the world. Evangelicals' deep-rooted values, extensive networks, and commitment to peace could have the potential to provide fresh perspectives and approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It could also be that evangelical motives, convictions, or political power complicate peacemaking and exacerbate conflict. Evangelicals may suffer from a certain naivete when it comes to complex issues of international statecraft. A more

comprehensive understanding will help policymakers and scholars appreciate the nuances of evangelical engagement in foreign policy and help evangelicals better understand the intentional and unintentional effects of their international engagement.

Meanwhile, peace between Israelis and Arabs remains elusive in the Middle East. In fact, over the course of this study, another war emerged between Israel and Hamas after a devastating terrorist attack on October 7, 2023. This study seeks to analyze whether evangelicals have something more to contribute to building bridges of peace between Arabs and Israelis, have made achieving peace more difficult, or have had some kind of effect between the two extremes. It seeks to contribute substantively to the broader discussion of the role of faith in foreign policy. It may prove inconclusive, but it could reveal an underutilized tool in the toolbelt of policymakers. At a minimum, it will add to the academic literature an understudied story about the relevancy of religious Track II diplomacy in Arab and Israeli peacemaking by Christians—*evangelical* Christians. It will also make a considerable contribution to the way international relations theorists understand the role certain faith actors play in foreign policy, contributing to the literature on Track II diplomacy.

As a complement to the religious ambitions of this study, another study of the effectiveness of other types of Track II efforts related to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict noted among their practical recommendations that future researchers must:

> Put greater emphasis on recruiting to Track Two Diplomacy … Israeli–Jews who are not "the usual suspects" of peaceniks and left-wing supporters. Instead, future Track Two Diplomacy workshops should focus on recruiting participants from groups in the Jewish–Israeli society that are severely underrepresented in these interventions and include more religious, hawkish, Sephardi/Middle Eastern, low socio-economic status, and female Israeli–Jewish participants, so as to potentially increase the workshops' influence. (De Vries & Maoz, 2013, p. 71)

Evangelicals are not generally perceived as "peaceniks" or "left-wing" supporters. Ironically, in that entire research project, which focused on "assessing the effectiveness of Track

II Diplomacy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" (p. 62), there is not a single reference to faith, rabbi, mosque, synagogue, Judaism, Islam, Christianity or religion at all. Yet, the article notes, "Track Two Diplomacy is central to the long-standing attempts to resolve the intractable asymmetrical conflict between Israelis and Palestinians" (p. 64). A similar conclusion can be made from a cursory read of another journal article published in the same year, citing the same study. There is no reference to faith, rabbi, mosque, synagogue, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, or religion at all (Kellen et al., 2013). Could a lack of direct Track II engagement with religious actors, perhaps involving evangelicals, be a lost opportunity for those pursuing peace among the Israelis and Palestinians, as well?

## Conclusion

The researcher is an evangelical Christian who has been both an eyewitness and a participant in evangelical Track II efforts throughout the Middle East for many years, especially as it related to the forging of the Abraham Accords (Boorstein, 2017a, 2018b; Boorstein & Bailey, 2018; "Evangelicals Seek Detente With Mideast Muslim Leaders As Critics Doubt Motives," 2019; Frantzman, 2023; Hoffman, 2020; "Saudi Arabia, UAE use Bahrain as 'trial balloons' for warmer ties with Israel: Report," 2018; Zieve, 2023). The researcher is also a graduate and previous staff member at Liberty University and was mentored by its founder, Dr. Jerry Falwell, Sr. Falwell appeared to play a prominent role in the history of Track II diplomacy in the Middle East, especially as it related to the Camp David Accords. While various efforts will be undertaken to guard against researcher bias, this study should be zealously critiqued by those with no conflicts of interest as a guarantor of its credibility. Some external reviewers who reviewed various drafts and provided critical notes are listed in the acknowledgments. The

researcher's proximity to the subject matter also adds a unique vantage point as well as access to principal negotiators.

This introduction seeks to provide an overview of the research which will contribute to the literature at the intersection of faith and foreign policy. It summarizes the inspiration, background, and purpose of the study while making a case for its significance through a presentation of the research puzzle or problem. It summarizes the aim, context, and process of the research study. It will be followed by a review of the literature, a clear summary of the research design, each case study, its findings, and a conclusion meant to also provide recommendations for future scholarship.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## Overview

This literature review aims to situate this project within the broader research on the relevant subjects. It begins with the literature related to the theoretical frameworks which influence the research, especially constructivism. Lamont notes that "constructivism, as a theoretical approach to international relations, often relies upon qualitative techniques to advance constructivist claims" (2015, p. 77). The study continues with a summary of important literature related to each individual case study, as well as Track II diplomacy, the role of religion in foreign policy, Zionism and of evangelicals as political actors.

## Theoretical Framework

This dissertation assumes that the research question is best understood through conventional constructivist theory, a branch of constructivist theory (Checkel, 1998; Wendt, 1995). The constructivist theory in international relations emerged in 1989 (Onuf, 1989; Peltonen, 2017, p. 3), but it was mainstreamed in international relations theory in the 1990s as an alternative to the domineering realist and neoliberal theories. It was "inspired by Weberian sociology, linguistic philosophy, and post-modern or post-structuralist theory" (Bobulescu, 2011, p. 50). Constructivism "expand(ed) mainstream American international relations theorizing and (made) it more sensitive to the role of social and cultural forces" (McCourt, 2016, p. 481). It refocused or focused, for the first time, international relations theory on "human consciousness and its role in international life" (Ruggie, 1998, p. 856). As Risse-Kappen, Ropp, and Sikkink note in their landmark work on human rights, "constructivists emphasize that ideas and communicative processes define in the first place which material factors are perceived as relevant and how they influence understandings of interests, preferences and political decisions" (1999, p. 6).

A key reason for the popularization of the constructivist view was the end of the Cold War, which came to a "relatively peaceful dissolution of the Soviet bloc, and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union itself," which sent a shockwave through the "foundations of international relations theory" (Price & Reus - Smit, 1998, p. 265). The predominant international relations theories seemed to not consider the probability of such an outcome (Price & Reus - Smit, 1998, p. 265). Though it may be that with the rejuvenation of Great Power politics in a world dominated by Putin's Russia and Xi's China, realist and neoliberal frameworks are each being rejuvenated. For instance, was the collapse of the Soviet Union—and its ideologies—indeed a pivot point in world politics, or was it a pause eventually leading the way to a rejuvenation? These are questions for other scholars.

Adler argues that constructivism represents a middle ground between the so-called "rationalists" in international relations theory, which he defines as realists, neorealists, and neoliberal institutionalists, and adherents of "interpretative epistemologies," which he defines as postmodernists and poststructuralists, critical theorists and feminist theorists (1997, pp. 319-320). It anchors international relations theory in the "social" part of social sciences (p. 320). As an interdisciplinary researcher trained in both international relations and religious studies, including theology, this researcher feels comfortable dealing with the philosophical domain of constructivists, especially as a rubric through which one aims to interpret the relevancy of religious actors to foreign policy outcomes. One might say that the power of religious actors is the power of ideas through discourse. Realism may represent good public policy for powerful nations, but does it explain the world as we encounter it with all of its intersecting characteristics and nuances?

While some constructivists write in unnecessarily deep philosophical terms, finding international relations theory in Plato's "appetite, reason, and 'the spirit'" (Lebow, 2008),

constructivism also "rests on an irreducibly intersubjective dimension of human action," and "this capacity gives rise to a class of facts that you do not expect in the physical object world: social facts" (Ruggie, 1998, p. 856). These social facts are relevant to the sociological characteristics of religion. While the constructivist argues that "international relations are best approached in ideational rather than strictly material terms" (Brown, 2013, p. 1240), their perspective can be inherently practical because the facts of interest to the constructivist "depend on human agreement that they exist and typically require human institutions for their existence" (Ruggie, 1998, p. 856). Bobulescu notes that for "social constructivists, human mind or consciousness in IR is the origin of socially constructed reality…not homo economicus, but interconnected social beings, with a subjective insight" (2011, p. 52). In other words, constructivists appreciate the human element, and that human element may also evoke power or influence. That power or influence may be amplified when different groups of individuals intersect with one another in meaningful ways, such as evangelicals who live in different countries and speak different languages but share similar theological convictions on the importance of the State of Israel. It may also be that sincerely religious people of different faiths feel that they can trust one another even if their politics are different because they share a similarly high view of God, cherish the importance of the family unit, or feel a divinely mandate obligation to pursue on earth a goal of peace and of justice for all.

Constructivist theorists note that "institutions, first, might not be the product of conscious design but rather emerge out of patterned interactions that become routinized and institutionalized" (Barnett, 1995, p. 5). They also "represent an important source of state identity, roles, and interests, and third, encourage order by creating relatively stable expectations and shared norms among actors that occupy set roles" (p. 5). Some constructivists embrace the "logic of appropriateness," where appropriate action is an action that is essential to a particular

conception of self" as opposed to the "logic of consequences" (March & Olsen, 1998, pp. 951-952) in order to account for the roles of identities, rules, and institutions in shaping human behavior but others are skeptical (Sending, 2002).

Constructivism is uncomfortably close to Critical Theory for some critics because constructivism is "the view that the manner which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world" (Adler, 1997, p. 322). Constructivists, according to Price and Reus-Smit, "advance a sociological perspective on world politics, emphasizing the importance of normative as well as material structures, the role of identity in the constitution of interests and action, and the mutual constitution of agents and structures" (1998, p. 259). The theoretical framework "does not view institutions as necessarily a product of conscious choice and design but rather as a consequence of patterned interactions" (Barnett, 1995, p. 3).

Among the variations of constructivist theory is conventional constructivism, popularized by Hopf (1998). Rather than being guided by "discourse" alone as the critical theorists are, constructivists in this vein "follow similar methodological tasks of rationalist or utilitarian camps; gathering evidence, assessing it and arbitrating among explanations" (Jung, 2019). Jung, drawing from Hopf, Wendt, and Ruggie, notes that constructivism does not treat identity as an exogenous component of international relations as neorealists or neoliberals are inclined to do but instead sees identity as dependent variables as opposed to something that is mainly being transformed by institutions or states (Hopf, 1998; Jung, 2019; Ruggie, 1998; Wendt, 1992). Constructivism seems to address what critical theorists are grasping to explain while rejecting their methodology, and conventional constructivism—the theory of this study—outright rejects critical theory.

Hopf notes that his conventional constructivism is purposely a criticism of constructivism's roots in critical theory while recognizing that realist and neoliberal theories fail

to explain the world; he says "to the degree that constructivism creates theoretical and epistemological distance between itself and its origins in critical theory, it becomes conventional constructivism" (1998, p. 181). Moreover, conventional constructivism welcomes the role of religion as a potential form of power outside of the domain of states (Hopf, 1998).

Hopf writes,

> Constructivism offers an account of the politics of identity. It proposes a way of understanding how nationalism, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, and sexuality, and other intersubjectively understood communities, are each involved in an account of global politics. Understanding how identities are constructed, what norms and practices accompany their reproduction, and how they construct each other is a major part of the constructivist research program…. Although nationalism and ethnicity are receiving more attention in mainstream international relations theory, attention to gender, sexuality, race, and religion have received much less, and certainly none of them is part of either neorealist or neoliberal accounts of how the world works. (pp. 192-193)

Constructivists see that "identities … are embedded in the domestic norms and institutions" and that "elements defining national identity and aspirations are socially constructed and fluctuating" (Bobulescu, 2011, p. 53). While neorealist and neoliberal theorists "assume that material power, whether military or economic or both, is the single most important source of influence and authority in global politics" (Hopf, 1998, p. 177), constructivists "argue that the likelihood of conflict depends on the nature of shared understandings regarding norms and identities between actors" (Brooks, 1997, p. 456; Wendt, 1995). This is because "ideas are a form of power; that power is more than brute force, and that material and discursive power are related is not new" (Hopf, 1998, p. 177). Could anyone reasonably argue that the longstanding conflict between Israelis and Arabs, especially Palestinians, is anything but a conflict that "depends on the nature of shared understandings regarding norms and identities between actors?"

Constructivists see "a very strong relationship between knowledge and power" as "knowledge is rarely value-neutral but frequently enters into the creation and reproduction of a particular social order that benefits some at the expense of others" (Adler, 1997, p. 336). For the

constructivist, "both material and discursive power are necessary for any understanding of world affairs" (Hopf, 1998, p. 177). One of the aspects of religion is that knowledge is itself a node of power for religious actors. Similarly, ideologies of various sorts are, at their basis, fundamentally powerful ideas, ideas that are so powerful that they can cause true believers to suspend all rationality in pursuit of those ideas or to persevere in pursuit of those ideas amidst failure.

Hopf writes about the difference between "conventional and critical" constructionism at length (Hopf, 1998, pp. 181-185). The primary difference between the two is the degree to which constructivists rely on critical theory, and Hopf notes that constructivists do not have to be critical theorists at all.

Among the differences, Hopf argues that:

> Critical theorists see power being exercised in every social exchange, and there is always a dominant actor in that exchange. Unmasking these power relations is a large part of critical theory's substantive agenda; conventional constructivism, on the other hand, remains 'analytically neutral' on the issue of power relations. Although conventional constructivists share the idea that power is everywhere because they believe that social practices reproduce underlying power relations, they are not necessarily interested in interrogating those relations. Critical theory's assumption that all social relations are instances of hierarchy, subordination, or domination ironically appears similar to the expectations of realists and neorealists about the world. (p. 185)

Drawing on similar sentiments to Hopf's "conventional" versus "critical" paradigm, Paul, referencing Barkin, notes that "in general, constructivists have also started to look at material factors as playing some role in outcomes, in addition to their preferred ideational and identity-based variables" (Barkin, 2010; Paul, 2011, p. 980). Price and Reus-Smit similarly distinguish between "modern and postmodern" forms of constructivism (Price & Reus-Smit, 1998, p. 268).

Bobulescu provides a case study conducted from the perspective of a "conventional" or "modern" constructivist: "From the constructivist point of view, for example, one can study companies' ecological turn as a response to a change in aspirations of the civil society, thus the collective intentionality becoming increasingly concerned with sustainable development" (2011,

p. 39). This study, like Bobulescu's example, embraces a conventional or modern approach to constructivism which will "stand at two intersections … between materialism and idealism and ... individual agency and social structure" (Adler, 1997, pp. 325-326).

## Constructivism or Realism?

An alternative conceptual framework to consider for this study is a form of realism, especially neoclassical realism. Realism may be effective foreign or security policy in Great Power politics, but it struggles to explain the world as it is. For realists, including neorealists, "international politics consists of 'like units' – states – duplicating one another's activities – their functional similarity rendering variations between states at the unit level irrelevant to explaining the international outcomes of interaction between them" (Kitchen, 2010, p. 121). Realists often suffer from a well-established aversion toward religious factors because of their obsessive focus on economic and security indicators as the key units of power of a state and since most states are not theocratic. Realism, like neoliberalism, emerged from a secularized western perspective where religion was not considered a material factor (Modongal, 2023, p. 1).

Rose helpfully led realists to a neoclassical realism in an attempt to address these challenges; a neoclassical realism which "explicitly incorporates both external and internal variables, updating and systematizing certain insights drawn from classical realist thought" where "the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level" (Rose, 1998, p. 146). Neoclassical realism allows significant room for the role of the individual actor, perceptions of power, allotments of resources, religious influence, and other links between "power and policy," which require "close examination of the contexts within which foreign policies are formulated and implemented" (p. 147). But what if those factors are non-state factors

working as independent multilateral variables with enough power to influence the decisions of states while being independent of the states, as is the case with some Track II diplomacy? What if the actors in question have only the power of ideas? Rose's attempt to solve a problem is an affirmation of the fundamental flaw in realist responses to a nuanced world that is increasingly religious, complex, and interconnected. It isn't necessarily that the world is more diverse—it has always been diverse—but that a modern, interconnected world gives voice and power to countless previously underrepresented communities, beliefs, ideas, and actors. A single person can produce a single TikTok video, which can create an international incident that, in effect, makes an entire nation-state subservient to the ideas of that individual as the state attempts to manage the outcome of the unexpected event. Prior to the digital age, such actors would have been invisible, or if they were not invisible, they would not have had the potential to exercise the full power of the mainstream press.

There have also been attempts to inject a Judeo-Christian perspective into realist thinking more directly, but it seems especially cumbersome when it comes to a project like this one, which seeks to analyze a predominantly Muslim Middle East, where the view's Augustinian perspective prompts the philosopher to ask yet again, "What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?" (Miller, 2018; Patterson, 2020). Then there are the so-called moral realists who are not as interested in Christianizing realism as the Christian realists (Patterson, 2020), but when one considers religious actors partnering with governments in regions known for deprioritizing human rights and limiting religious freedom, the researcher has to ask, "What role is morality playing to begin with in this Track II religious diplomacy?" Regardless, constructivists welcomed religious factors from the onset of their theory, with conventional constructivism making even more space for religious elements, and in all cases, realist perspectives have, at best, tacked on religion.

However, Barkin notes that constructivism can actually be a complement to neoclassical realism rather than running in opposition to it. It can complete Rose's neoclassical approach,

> Constructivism provides a useful set of methodologies for the historical narratives that neoclassical realists generally prefer. An example of such a historical narrative argument that will be familiar to most readers is Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He uses an argument about a social norm widely held in a particular society, what he calls the Protestant ethic, to explain a particular but historically important case: the emergence of Holland as a core player in the global political economy in the 16th and 17th centuries. (Barkin, 2020)

Barkin goes on to further argue for reconciling neoclassical theory with constructivism by embedding "neoclassical realism in an appropriate methodological setting," which he views as constructivism. Kitchen believes each theory needs one another. "Neorealism states that ideas don't matter, and constructivism tells us that material capabilities aren't important. The unavoidable conclusion is that where structural realism reduced ideas to interests, social constructivism reduces interests to ideas" (p. 123).

In other words, constructivism – but especially Hopf's conventional constructivism—sets the table for independent religious actors with sufficient flexibility to adapt to various systems. As a framework that can integrate faith identity into foreign policy, it is far more developed if it is freed from the excess of its roots in critical theory, which seems to act like a religion in and of itself.

Constructivism uniquely "offers a different conception of the function of moral concepts" (Papish, 2011, p. 452). Realists see "national interests as objects that have merely to be observed or discovered." However, constructivists see "national interests" as "social constructs created as meaningful objects out of intersubjective and culturally established meanings" (Weldes, 1996, p. 280). Realists see social "concepts as guiding our response to certain independently existent truths that hold unconditionally," but "a constructivist instead sees notions about what is good or forbidden as the solution to an agent's practical problems" (Papish, 2011, p. 452).

Also, within constructivism, there are further alternatives to conventional and critical paradigms. There is a so-called "new constructivism," which McCourt divides into two categories: practice theory and relationalism (2016, p. 475). Practice theory argues that actors are motivated by "practical imperatives, habits, and embodied dispositions," and relationalism "rejects" that actors are "basic units of world politics" but holds that international relations is the product of "ongoing processes" (McCourt, 2016, p. 475). However, these views are substantially less developed. By embracing conventional constructivism, this paper outright rejects critical theory and affirms the limitations of neoclassical realism in describing the influence of religious, non-state actors, even when those actors are acting politically. Philpott, referencing Realism's definitive work by Kenneth Waltz (Waltz, 1979), notes that Realism is "essentially secular" (2002, p. 80).

Finally, it is worth noting that others have chosen a conventional constructivist approach, particularly in relation to the Middle East. Barnett, for instance, chose this approach when analyzing how Arab states managed state and non-state actors to organize regional life against the "demands of Arab nationalism" in a post-Westphalian order (Barnett, 1995). Burton also analyzed the post-Westphalian era from a constructivist framework "as the quest for standing and honour, which sometimes manifested itself in warfare, but often enough in conspicuous consumption" (2010, p. 93). Another constructivist scholar who studied the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians noted: "that the significant component of the conflict is religion" and, therefore, "Constructivists examine the religious creeds as an intervening variable affecting the choice of conflict behavior" (Söyler, 2004, pp. 26-27). Adler succinctly summarizes it all: "Constructivists believe that international relations consist primarily of social facts, which are facts only by human agreement" (1997, p. 323).

The predominance of the last century's realist (or neorealist) and neoliberal international relations theories may have blinded IR scholars to religion's role in foreign policy. The lack of religion-focused literature in international relations may represent a flaw in the predominant conceptual or theoretical frameworks. Constructivism allows the researcher to provide further credence to the role of religious identity. Certain Christian scholars and other conservative or traditionalist religious scholars may have underutilized constructivism because of its historical link to critical theory. Critical theory is, in part, fixated on a particularly critical view of religion intersecting with "the discourses of colonialism," which, according to certain theorists, "sought to protect the interests of the powerful and privileged, not least the so-called right to dominate other cultures that hegemonic 'civilized' Western (and Christian) discourses constructed as 'uncivilized' and 'barbaric'" (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 2020, pp. 68-69). The former dean of Yale Divinity School, a critical theorist, writes similarly that "Christian racial and cultural homogeneity" serves "the white self-sufficient man," and he anchors his view in the comingling of "the nationalist and evangelistic aspirations of colonial missionaries" (Jennings, 2020, p. 7). Critical theory is, at best, transparently biased toward Judeo-Christian concepts and, at worst, is anti-Judeo-Christian. The ethicist Nigel Biggar takes issue with critical theory, arguing that politics, by another name, manipulate historical records in order to make a moral argument against their adversaries (Biggar, 2023).

However, the maturing of constructivism into conventional constructivism provides researchers with options to balance the profane and irrational excesses of critical theory with the practical advantages of realist and neoliberal views. Religion is undoubtedly more understandable within the context of foreign policy through the ideation-friendly framework of constructivism than either the institutionalist framework of the neoliberals or the power-only or structuralist

framework of realists. Conventional constructivism recognizes what critical theory is grasping to explain, but it leaves behind its biases, vices, and impracticalities.

Hopf also welcomes the rejection of simple, monolithic answers to complex puzzles, "Constructivism rejects the mainstream presumption that world politics is so homogenous that universally valid generalizations can be expected to come of theorizing about it." Instead, it looks "for communities of intersubjectivity in world politics … within which actors share understandings of themselves and each other, yielding predictable and replicable patterns of action within a specific context" (Hopf, 1998, p. 199). Rather, constructivists "stress the ideational because institutionalized meaning systems are thought to define the social identities of actors and … social identities are said to constitute actors' interests and shape their actions" (Price & Reus - Smit, 1998, p. 266). In this sense, constructivism is better designed for qualitative research conducted through the thematic analysis of interviews with elite figures because it gives greater credence to the influence of narrative without succumbing to critical theory.

In contrast to neorealism and neoliberalism, constructivism offers a middle ground between rationalist and interpretative epistemologies, enabling researchers to explore the social aspects of international relations more naturally. The constructivist view acknowledges the strong relationship between knowledge and power, recognizing that ideas (including religious ideas) are a form of power and that material and discursive power are essential for understanding world affairs. Borrowing from the theological vernacular, constructivism invites a hermeneutical approach to foreign policy by religious actors who are accustomed to interpreting texts viewed rationally through hermeneutic lenses.

By employing the constructivist framework, this research study aims to investigate the complex and dynamic relationships between evangelical religion and foreign policy because Track II diplomacy is about individuals engaging in people-to-people discourse whether or not

the states they reside in have the Great Power advantage or are endorsing or sponsoring those efforts (even if they benefit from them). This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the role of religion in international relations. It offers valuable insights into how faith-based perspectives and initiatives may influence foreign policy decisions and outcomes.

Constructivism provides sufficiently flexible tools required to analyze how evangelicals have, or have not, contributed to Track II diplomacy in the Middle East as non-state actors powerful enough to influence state policy. It may lay the groundwork for additional research at the intersection of faith and foreign policy.

## Related Literature

### Track II Diplomacy Defined

In a precursor to Track II diplomacy, in the 1960s, John Burton "sought a conflict resolution method which would bring together influential but non-official citizens of countries in conflict for a special kind of dialog, facilitated by a third party" (Jones, 2022, p. 79). However, the more well-defined, or popularized, concept of "track two diplomacy" was articulated 40 years later when the formal term was "coined by American diplomat Joseph Montville and Psychiatrist William Davidson" to define a practice of "informal interactions between unofficial but influential actors in armed conflict" (Palmiano Federer, 2021, p. 428). Graham and Kelley recall Montville's unique contribution to foreign policy as emerging from his experience as a career foreign service officer serving at the Department of State.

> Montville had grappled with a ''deep sense of frustration'' over the spasmodic communications between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the most acute instances, bilateral tensions between the two produced an uneasy silence impeding official-level negotiations. The nature of these highly visible feuds often erected barriers to limit the maneuverability of official negotiators, who did not want to appear weak in the eyes of their own publics, their adversaries, or those of the wider world. Time acted as a force multiplier in such instances, allowing both sides to become entrenched in their positions and thereby magnifying damage to

> the overall relationship. Montville reflected on alternatives to the risks and constraints of official-level diplomacy … concluding that the behavior of leaders is fraught with constraints rooted in political psychology: the need to ‘‘posture’’ in order to minimize vulnerability to adversaries and risk of reprisals at home. Montville offered a visualization of diplomacy operating on two different–but complementary–tracks. When the first track became impaired by the psychological and normative barriers, a second track could ‘‘make its contribution as a supplement to the understandable shortcomings of official relations.” (Davidson & Montville, 1982; Graham & Kelley, 2009, p. 82)

Montville wrote about “a variety of nongovernmental and unofficial forms of conflict resolution activities between the representatives of adversarial groups that aim at de-escalating conflict, improving communication and understanding between the parties, and developing new ideas to be used in the official peace processes” (Cuhadar & Paffenholz, 2020, pp. 654-655; Thompson & Jensen, 1991, pp. 253-269). He saw Track II negotiations as creating “a space in which groups can discuss their disagreements as well as potential solutions—while working through the feeling of fear and perception of the other side as threatening and recognizing each other’s needs and sufferings” (De Vries & Maoz, 2013, p. 63).

While Track II diplomacy takes varying forms, it always involves “interactions between private citizens or groups of people within a country or from different countries which are outside the formal governmental power structure” to advance a cause of mutual concern (McKnight, 1991, p. 16). It has “increasingly been recognized as a third-party intervention method to deal with intractable conflicts because of its ambition to address underlying causes of conflicts and its aim to improve relationships between adversaries” (Cuhadar, 2009, p. 641).

While the “goals and practices” in Track II diplomacy “vary,” it is anchored in the “belief that contact and interactions between members of adversarial groups in an unofficial and friendly setting, often with the help of a third party,” can “help improve relations and generate a joint understanding of the conflict” (Cuhadar, 2009, p. 641). Track II diplomacy also “offers a range of activities that broaden official negotiations, such as problem-solving workshops, conferences,

seminars, training, and dialogue groups" (Dilek, 2021, p. 293). Malhotra and Liyanage write about Track II workshops where participants "live together for a few days or weeks and attend group discussions on such topics as conflict resolution and diversity and engage in role-playing activities, group projects, and so on" (2005, p. 909), and afterward "participants showed significantly greater empathy"(p. 918). In writing about a Track II methodology he calls "comparative consultation," David Mitchell describes a workshop where Track II "peace process actors" with experience in "negotiation, transitional justice or civil society peace-building" are themselves introduced to others who "have similar roles within their own situation" for the purpose of learning from one another in order to better facilitate their own Track II efforts in their countries of residence or focus (Mitchell, 2021, pp. 65-66). However, at the heart of these activities is the primacy of "dialogue as the chief mode for reconciliation in conflict settings" in people-to-people settings (Graham & Kelley, 2009, p. 84).

It is not enough, however, to build relationships between adversaries. Track II diplomacy seeks to parlay improved connections into "jointly formulated ideas" that "are transferred" and eventually "incorporated into the society and/or official policymaking process," resulting in "an impact at a larger scale" (Cuhadar, 2009, p. 641). Track II efforts can be divided among "outcome-focused initiatives" and "process-focused initiatives," with the former aiming to "generate ideas for political agreements that can be adopted by official diplomats" and the latter aiming to "build relationships, trust, and mutual understanding among adversaries at both the elite and grassroots level to prepare the groundwork for peace to take hold" (Çuhadar & Dayton, 2012, p. 158).

One of the strengths of Track II diplomacy is that it does not "primarily rely on coercion or exercising power" (Böhmelt, 2010, p. 170; Diamond & McDonald, 1996, p. 36). Track II diplomacy also can network trust across different stakeholder communities when a trusted third

party is involved. It can do all of it in a less high-pressure environment where participants feel free to share their points of view (Böhmelt, 2010, p. 170).

Çuhadar and Dayton put it this way:

> Advocates of track two work claim that it can have many positive benefits to peace processes, including providing a safe, off-the-record, and sustained venue for dialogue among adversary groups; engaging adversaries in dialogue when official peace processes fail or are not possible; testing out proposals for conflict management prior to the initiation of formal mediation or diplomacy; empowering citizens as participants in peace processes. (2012, p. 158)

By the 1990s, scholars were actively exploring the role of Track II diplomacy in resolving intractable conflicts or addressing other global issues. Often, the effectiveness of a Track II process is contingent upon transferring knowledge, relationships, and ideas from a second track to official channels (Cuhadar & Paffenholz, 2020). Sometimes, "although informal, non-official, and often discreet, some Track II meetings do receive government acknowledgment and support" (De Vries & Maoz, 2013, p. 63). Unofficial Track II initiatives can be considered successful if there is:

> The emergence of a sense of possibility; belief that at least some elements on the other side are interested in a peaceful solution; greater awareness of the other's perspective; initiation of mutually reassuring actions; a shared vision of a desirable future; exploration of ideas for the overall shape of a solution to the conflict; exploration of ideas for moving the negotiations forward; and development of "cadres" with direct experience in communicating with the other side. (Kelman, 1996; Lieberfeld, 2002, p. 370)

### *Selected Examples of Track II Diplomacy*

Arthur saw Track II diplomacy as a solution to preserve policy continuity across changing administrations related to the persistent challenges in finding peace for Northern Ireland (1990). McKnight wrote about Track II diplomacy as a solution to address the "growing hazard of orbital debris," proposing "the use of an informal, citizen-to-citizen approach to encourage an international effort to control this environmental problem" (1991). Others have sought to apply

Track II methodology to public health challenges, noting that Track II methods "will not be a panacea to all divisive health policy problems, but empirical and prospective exploration could help" in "solving intractable public health conflicts or preventing them from becoming intractable in the first place" (Bharwani et al., 2022, pp. 333-334).

Fisher presents four case studies where Track II efforts had positive, if limited, outcomes: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, conflict in Tajikistan, the Peru-Ecuador Peace Process, and the Moldovan-Transnistrian conflict. In these cases, carefully planned workshops resulted in effective transfer from Track II to Track I efforts. Still, these efforts benefited from substantial strategic coordination between official and unofficial diplomats from the beginning (Fisher, 2006). Fisher finds efficacy in "a logical and psychological rationale for the transfer process by which the effects and outcomes of problem-solving workshops can help pave the way for successful negotiations" (p. 69). He cites how it is essential for Track II coordinators "to clarify their distinct roles and to work with respect for each other's efforts" (p. 88). Lieberfeld evaluates the role of Track II efforts in resolving conflicts in South Africa before the end of apartheid (Lieberfeld, 2002). He notes the Track II efforts over "the four-and-a-half years from September 1985 to February 1990 … made limited but significant contributions to the pre-negotiation process in South Africa" (2002, p. 370).

Dilek studied Track II strategies used by the Democratic Progress Institute to bring together Kurdish and non-Kurdish leaders in Turkey. They "formed a channel through which Turkish and Kurdish middle-and-high-level-actors engaged with comparative insights on peace processes through meetings, comparative study visits, and roundtables and also through reports and research papers" (2021, p. 307). Another scholar analyzed "track two diplomacy from a track one perspective" by comparing the perceptions of Turkish and American diplomats but most notably came to the conclusion that Track II diplomacy remains insufficiently tested such that it

is hard to determine whether such efforts are actually "complementary to official negotiations" (Gurkaynak, 2007, p. 80). Gurkaynak also writes at length about the potential unintended harms of Track II processes, including risks of manipulation by participant parties, corrupt personal benefits from the efforts, Track II efforts overwhelming official diplomacy, or the Track II outlets becoming channels for propaganda by the parties engaged in the efforts (pp. 68-75). Kraft also writes about a list of problems that emerged from his study of the United States and Southeast Asian Track II efforts and includes these issues of concern: Track II channels are too intertwined with governments in the region, the security discourse in Southeast Asia is too narrow, Track II is nothing but a "talk shop," and the infrastructure of Track II in the region is fragile (Kraft, 2000, pp. 347-349).

In 2009, one scholar analyzed the role of Track II efforts led by businesses in facilitating and strengthening the relationship between Canada and China, noting that "Asian and trans-Pacific relations have been transformed less by changes in regime type and diplomatic initiatives" (Evans, 2009, p. 1027). Others have written extensively about business's role in "creating sustainable peace" as a second track (Oetzel et al., 2009). Similarly to Evans, Graham and Kelley discuss the utility of Track II efforts in United States diplomacy in East Asia, noting that the Track II "approach to statecraft" is "central to furthering America's bilateral and regional interests vis-a`-vis China in issue areas involving regional security, economy, politics, and transnational problems" (Graham & Kelley, 2009, p. 98). In analyzing the role of Track II diplomacy in the Falklands/Malvina dispute, Peter Jones passionately argues for the utility of Track II efforts in very practical terms.

> The prospects for official talks, or even non-official ones aimed at 'resolving' the sovereignty aspect of this dispute are slim for the foreseeable future. However, a danger exists that this view is becoming self-reinforcing; that the perception of the absence of any room for serious discussion will acquire an aura of permanence and inevitability. This is exactly what hard-liners on all sides want. There are good reasons to resist this trend. While the prospect of renewed fighting over the Islands

> is remote, the dispute poisons Anglo-Argentine relations and complicates Britain's relations with other Latin American countries. It provides those in Argentina who wish to avoid the difficulties of dealing with serious internal problems with a diversion they can use to deflect public opinion from their own failings. It means, though their standard of living has improved since the war, that the Islanders cannot explore to the full the prospects for economic cooperation with the mainland. Against this reality … informed discussion at the unofficial level, including, but not limited to exploring existing, and perhaps even developing new concepts to address the sovereignty issue, should not be seen as impossible…These kinds of dialogues have been an element in a slow process of helping to ripen situations which appeared hopeless into ones where progress was eventually possible. (2022, pp. 87-88)

From its inception as a novel approach to diplomacy, Track II diplomacy has become mandatory training for Department of State officials. Examples of Track II efforts can be found in virtually any diplomatic issue of priority concern for the United States (Montville, 2009). However, despite the ubiquity of religion in our world, it seems that the usefulness of religious actors as Track II participants remains underutilized and understudied.

### *Faith and Foreign Policy, including Track II Diplomacy*

Religion has always been with us, and religious actors generally maintain a unique understanding of the conflicts within which they find themselves. Despite a dearth of scholarship, some have argued forcefully for increased partnership between governments and faith-based humanitarian assistance organizations, which, in effect, is a second track (Thomas, 2004). One scholar noted that the "soft power potential of foreign assistance" alone should command the attention of every U.S. president (Anderson, 2008, p. 24). Most presidents have engaged with faith and policy actively, but fewer have explicitly engaged faith with foreign policy. Carty analyzed the role of faith in the John F. Kennedy presidency (2011), Schwarzwalder analyzed it in the Warren G. Harding administration (Schwarzwalder, 2021), and Cooper did so for the Wilson presidency (2009).

Scholars who focus on the role of faith in U.S. foreign policy have the opportunity also to analyze literature related to faith and the foreign policy of other democracies, such as India (Bauman, 2016), Guatemala (Turek, 2015), France (Birdsall, 2014a), Switzerland (Birdsall, 2014b), Italy (Petito & Thomas, 2015), the United Kingdom (Lindsay, 2014), and the Netherlands (Ubachs, 2014). Of course, faith plays a role in the foreign policy of the world's theocracies, including the Vatican (Campbell, 2009) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (Kamrava, 2003). There are many historical examples where faith played a role, with varying degrees of intentionality, in major events. Blanke has written, for instance, about the vicious persecution of religious figures during the bloody civil war in El Salvador in the 1970s (2004). In addition, there is work related to the so-called "American Century" after World War II linking the Christian character of American history to key political decisions and cultural institutions (Doenecke, 2022). However, more scholars are beginning to give more attention to religion as a tool of soft power, especially in the Middle East (Hoffman, 2023). Hoffman, however, asks how politics affect religious outcomes as opposed to how religion affects politics, while his work provides particular context to recent developments in the Middle East (p. 314).

Others have analyzed the role of religion in shaping the opinion of domestic constituencies about U.S. engagement in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Gulf (Taydas et al., 2012), with one scholar noting that "within the literature on the role of faith in shaping foreign policy perceptions, there exists a disagreement regarding the ways in which religious factors interact with political predispositions in predicting such attitudes" (Roy, 2016, p. 258). It is also true that "U.S. foreign policy in the first decade of the twenty-first century has been dominated by religion in a way that would not have seemed possible for most of the second half of the twentieth" (Marsden, 2012, p. 953). In American foreign policy, "a prominent theme … is its singular commitment to monitoring and promoting religious freedom across the globe" (Tan, 2013, p. 76).

However, it is also the case that "religious factors rarely trump traditional strategic imperatives on matters of war and peace" (Smith, 2012, p. 512).

Yet, there is very little literature on the role of religion as a form of Track II diplomacy. Some existing examples may include the role of evangelicals in response to the war in Sudan (Agensky, 2020), the path from apartheid to democracy in South Africa (Balcomb, 2004), in Africa more broadly (Jacobs, 2018), and the general role evangelicals played in a post-colonial world (Chapman, 2009). There is substantially more literature as it relates to the general policies of the United States vis-à-vis the State of Israel and the influence of Zionist evangelicals on the religious right, but this work does not generally touch on Track II diplomacy between Israel and its adversaries or regional neighbors (Friedman, 2009; Shalom Goldman, 2020; Miller, 2014; Rynhold, 2021). One scholar conducted a deep analysis of evangelical views on the West Bank, or what Zionists often call Judea and Samaria (appropriating the biblical terminology), theorizing a coalition could emerge of evangelicals and orthodox Jews in the United States to advocate for Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank (Israel, 2013).

Others have written generally on interfaith diplomacy in other countries, including on the subject of facilitating peace and social cohesion in Bosnia (Suljic, 2018), in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Gutkowski, 2016), in Qatar (Fahy, 2018), in the Vatican's work in Africa (Gorokhov et al., 2022), and in facilitating democracy in the Muslim-super-majority country of Indonesia (Grzywacz, 2020). Zhang wrote broadly on interfaith dialogue's "goals, power, strategy, and influence" in public diplomacy (2022).

**Evangelicals and Their Political Activities**

Scholars have analyzed various aspects of evangelical voting in the U.S. by looking at differing types of evangelicals, including the voting behaviors of white evangelical Christian

women in 2022 (Brisbane, 2022) and evangelical views of women in political leadership (Setzler & Yanus, 2017). One large study analyzed how non-evangelical students view evangelical Christianity (Mayhew et al., 2017), and another analyzed the difference between evangelicals who attended a secular college and those who did not (Railsback, 2006). Others have analyzed the activities of evangelicals with particular interest in individual elections. For instance, those interested in the Middle East may find helpful data analyzing the consequential role of evangelicals in the election of George W. Bush, whose presidency ended up being significantly consumed by the Middle East (Claassen & Povtak, 2010; Gushee et al., 2006). Similarly, foreign policy priorities in the presidency of Donald J. Trump included the Abraham Accords and moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem ("Looking at Trump's 'Peace to Prosperity' Plan," 2020; Schenker & Abuzayyad, 2020). Several scholars have analyzed the role of evangelicals in electing presidents and setting the administration's policy priorities (Holder & Josephson, 2020; Louwerse & Dart, 2017; Schenker & Abuzayyad, 2020; Smidt, 2022; Trangerud, 2022). Others have studied the role of evangelicals in the 2008 presidential election (Hackett & Lindsay, 2008) and the 1992 presidential election (Kellstedt et al., 1994). Hightower analyzed how evangelical identity is formed despite the fact that evangelicalism—unlike Catholic, Orthodox, and certain other Protestant traditions—is not organized under a hierarchical polity (2021). Similarly, Mulder and Jonason focused on the "suburbanization" of evangelicals in the U.S. with certain undertones to the much-coveted suburban voter (2017).

When it comes to evangelical engagement in foreign policy, some have researched the question from a broad point of view based on so-called "conceptions of the world" shared by evangelicals (Murray & Worth, 2013) or as a form of "religious soft power" (Yang & Li, 2021). However, much of the existing literature is focused on individual questions or regions. Several scholars have analyzed evangelicals' role in shaping policy within Africa and influencing the

priorities of the United States in Africa (Huliaras, 2008; Jacobs, 2018). Agensky has written about the groundbreaking influence of evangelical humanitarian actors (2013) and the role that evangelicals around the world played in "internationalizing" the Second Civil War in Sudan from 1983-2005 (2020). While Agensky analyzed the humanitarian impact of evangelicals in Africa beginning with the colonial-era figure David Livingstone (2013), Chapman assessed the positive impact of evangelicals through the Lausanne Movement–founded by Billy Graham–in the post-colonial world (Chapman, 2009). Chitwood researched the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Somalia from the perspective of Kenya's evangelicals (Chitwood, 2017).

Another scholar has analyzed how evangelical identities among the Indian diaspora have affected the Commonwealth of India from abroad (Athyal, 2018). Others have studied the relationship among evangelicals in the late Soviet era in the USSR (Beliakova & Kliueva, 2019) or the influence of evangelical identity in countries as isolated as Fiji (Morgain, 2015). Reich and dos Santos focused their work on individual evangelical politicians in Latin America at a time when evangelicalism had grown rapidly on the continent and significantly influenced Latin American politics (Reich & dos Santos, 2013, p. 1). Turek analyzed the role of evangelical groups in U.S.–Guatemalan relations (2015), and Uruena wrote about the influence of evangelicals at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2019). Amstutz published an entire book on evangelicals and foreign policy (2014).

Some have written overtly about the influence of evangelicals on American foreign policy in the Middle East (Baumgartner et al., 2008), noting that "evangelicals stand out as the strongest supporters of a hawkish foreign policy in the Middle East" (p. 172). Others looked at the influence on Brazilian foreign policy by evangelicals during the Bolsonaro presidency, noting the power of links between "conservative cabinet members" and "evangelical groups" (de Sá Guimarães et al., 2023). Marti analyzed how Muslim conversions to evangelical Christianity

have broadly influenced the Middle East (2016), and Marzouki focused specifically on conversions by Muslims to evangelicalism in Algeria (2012). Much work has been done critically analyzing the influence of evangelicals in the United States on America's Israel policy within the context of Christian Zionism (Samuel Goldman, 2020; Hummel, 2018; Louwerse & Dart, 2017; Rosenson et al., 2009; Salleh & Zakariya, 2012). Others have compared the views of evangelicals in the U.S. to evangelicals abroad on issues such as climate policy (Chaudoin et al., 2014; Stover, 2019). Hummel wrote a definitive work on the background and contemporary history of Christian Zionism (2019a), as did Walter Russel Mead, although Mead couched his work more broadly in the overall "arc" of American foreign policy(2023). Chancellor compared the fundamentalism of American evangelicals to the fundamentalist Islam predominant in Egypt at the same time, finding that they share "a mutual experience of alienation and discontinuity within their respective societies, stemming from the growing implications of modern secularism" (Chancellor, 1988, p. 4).

**On The Political Influence of Jerry Falwell**

Jerry Falwell, Sr. played a singular role in awakening a "moral majority" of evangelical Christians to engage actively in the electoral process with an intent to advance policy priorities that aligned with the evangelical worldview, and these policy priorities included foreign policy (Herz, 1999; Murray, 2011; Williams, 2010). This was a substantial change from the politically inactive evangelical movement before Falwell's activism (Williams, 2018). The political activism of the Moral Majority also aligned with a resurgent theological conservatism among evangelicals more broadly (Israel, 2009). Liberty University, founded by Falwell, has extensive archives that include most of Falwell's sermons, writings, and other personal documents, as well as Liberty University material, including archived editions of student newspapers, which often include Falwell's views and experiences. These archives are available almost entirely online, and they are

a treasure trove of material for future scholars interested in evangelical political influence in modern American history ("Archives and Special Collections," 2024).

Flippen compared Jimmy Carter and Falwell, whose shared Baptist faith seemed to have no bearing on their pronounced political disagreements (2013). Of Israel specifically, Flippen notes, “When Carter described Israel’s treatment of Palestinians as ‘apartheid,’ Falwell thought it a sin” (p. 50). Others have written about Falwell’s role in promoting Christian Zionism among evangelicals while advancing Zionist, pro-Israel policies in United States foreign policy (Boyer, 2007; Shalom Goldman, 2020; Shindler, 2000; Williams, 2019). Still others have taken a more focused approach analyzing the relationship between Falwell and specific prime ministers (Wagner, 1998) or political parties in Israel (Shindler, 2000). Merrill Simon published a book-length interview with Falwell in which he answered virtually every controversial question at the time; half of the book is reserved entirely for questions about Israel and the Jewish people, with the other half dedicated to general topics (1984). Speaking about anti-Semitism within his own organizations, Falwell said, “As far as I know, anti-Semitism has never once raised its ugly head among these dedicated workers. If it ever does, I would deal with it pointedly and promptly” (pp. 30-31). He spoke of his first trip to Israel (p. 60), his views on the Reagan administration’s plans to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia (pp. 68-69), his views on peace (p. 76), the Palestinians (pp. 76-79), and the rise of anti-Semitism (p. 96). He gave three reasons why he supported Israel, which included humanitarian, political, and theological considerations (p.65).

Falwell’s high-profile visit to Egypt in 1978 prompted *Esquire* magazine to refer to him as “the next Billy Graham” (Flippen, 2013, p. 43). In the aftermath of the trip, Falwell expressed particular frustration that the White House never asked for a briefing (Flippen, 2013, p. 43). Falwell’s point of view on his potentially consequential visits to Egypt and Israel and corresponding meetings with Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat are documented in the archives

of Liberty University (Begin, 1978; "Falwell, Religious Leaders Confer with Sadat, Begin," 1978; Harris, 1978). The visits are written about by two biographers (Simon, 1984; Stroeber & Tomczak, 1979) and referenced by Hummel (p. 160, 168). The archives include the unpublished transcript of a private meeting with Falwell and Begin in 1978. The transcript includes the details of a specific message Sadat asked Falwell to deliver to Begin, and it includes a message from Begin for Falwell to convey back to Sadat (Begin, 1978). One can read the contemporaneous news reports surrounding the controversial decision to award Falwell the Jabotinsky Prize alongside 100 others, mainly Jews ("Begin Cites Jabotinsky's 'vision' As Architect of Jewish State," 1980). The *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* has extensive archives online, which include many references to Falwell. One (whose date is mislabeled as April 16 instead of May 16) is entitled "Pro-Israel Founder of Moral Majority, Falwell, Left Jews with Mixed Feelings," but the article then cites expressions of gratitude and admiration from the leaders of the Union of Reform Judaism, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Ambassador of Israel to the United States ("Pro-Israel Founder of Moral Majority, Falwell Left Jews with Mixed Feelings," 2007).

**Zionism and Christian Zionism**

Those who are pro-Israel are generally said to be Zionists. Zionism is the movement attributed to Theodor Herzl and popularized by his book Der Judenstaat, published in 1896. Herzl defined the movement as the Jewish ambition "to secure for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secured home in Palestine" (Kessler, 2010, p. 153). Herzl "almost single-handedly set up the institutions that gave Zionism its organizational form," and while he didn't see his dream become reality in his lifetime (he died at 44) he laid the foundation of Jewish ambitions to return to their ancestral homeland as a democratic nation-state in what was then called Palestine.

Herzl is referred to as the "father of the state of Israel" (Beller, 2021). Penslar argues there were many "forerunners" of Zionism "before the establishment of the Zionist movement in the late 1800s," and they included Christians whose "speculation about the restoration of Jews to Palestine was common in Protestant Christianity since the time of the Reformation" (Penslar, 2023, pp. 24-25). This was apparent in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, when Herzl gathered 200 delegates for the First Zionist Congress. Theodore Herzl invited 10 Christian observers to the first Zionist Congress. It may have been Theodore Herzl himself who coined the term "Christian Zionist." One of the first people Herzl called a "Christian Zionist" was Henri Dunant — the founder of the Red Cross**.** Dunant was a Swiss banker who was so traumatized by a bloody battleground he visited in Tunis in the 1850s that he began to advocate passionately for an international body to care for wounded soldiers. Dunant's humanitarian ideas led to the formation of the Red Cross and the Geneva Convention, and he was awarded the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901. He was also a passionate Christian Zionist because of his belief in the Bible. In fact, as early as 1866, Dunant had begun advocating for the return of the Jews to the Holy Land (Weisz, 2017). Despite being personally invited by Herzl to the Congress, Dunant was not able to attend due to an illness, but he was important enough to Herzl that Herzl mentioned him by name in his closing remarks. That prompted another attendee and close confidant of Herzl, the famed Max Nordau, to write Dunant a personal letter on the same day, which read in part:

> The day when Zionism is so secure that it can take a look back to its rise and ponder on its origins and its history, your efforts for it will have the recognition they deserve for their astonishing foresight and for their true Christian generosity. You have so many claims to the everlasting gratitude of your fellow men. Your place in the history of civilization is so exalted and so touched with glory that your service, prophetic as it is, to the cause of Zionism may indeed be lost sight of in the scale of those other achievements of your noble life. (Steele, 2018, p. 92)

Among the Christian Zionists were those who "saw the return of Jews to the Holy Land and their conversion to Christianity as necessary to bring about the end of this world and the final

judgment of humanity" but also "protestants in the United States and Britain who began to conceive of the millennium more in terms of universal peace attained through human activism, and they saw in the restoration of Jews to Palestine an essential component of attaining this idyllic state" (Penslar, 2023, p. 25). One scholar defines Christian Zionists as those who hold orthodox Christian beliefs, are politically active, and support a Jewish right to the Biblical promised land (Israel, 2013, p. 5)

Eventually, there were three schools of Christian Zionism. The *covenantal* school aligns with historic Protestantism, and it is mainly committed to Israel because it is committed to the truth of the Bible and its promises, including in Genesis 12:3. There is a *prophetic* school represented by the premillennial dispensationalists, and there is a *progressive* school that finds its commitment to Israel in a shared commitment to Judeo-Christian ideas related to democracy and human rights (Amstutz, 2014, pp. 127-129).

Christian Zionism achieved widespread adoption among evangelicals in the United States through the popularization of premillennial dispensationalism in the late 19th century. It was John Nelson Darby who was most responsible for this view becoming the prevailing view among evangelical Christians as he taught that Biblical prophecies should be interpreted literally and, therefore, Christians should expect the church to be "called away" upon the return of Jesus through an event called "the Rapture" prior to the "Tribulation" leading to the Battle of Armageddon. All of this, first, required the return of the Jewish people to Israel. This view hinged on a few simple points,

> First, Jewish "restoration" was emphasized as a necessary historical and political phenomenon. Second, careful charting and interpretation of present-day events would become a primary task of informed Christians, who with sufficient study and inspiration, could decode the signs of the times pointing to the "end." Third, the restored Jewish nation in Palestine would be a sign of the end of history and prelude to Jesus' return to earth. (Wagner, 1998, p. 37)

Darby's views influenced some of the most powerful figures in American Christian history, such as D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and William E. Blackstone. It was Blackstone who built the first bridge between this theology and policy when he collaborated with J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, and others to pressure President Benjamin Harrison to support the establishment of a Jewish state in the Holy Land. Blackstone, who was a Methodist, coordinated a petition that was "signed by more than 400 leading American political, civic, business and religious leaders," demanding Harrison call a conference in order to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine (Amstutz, 2014, p. 126).

The premillennial, dispensational approach was further popularized when C.I. Scofield "became a follower of Darby's teaching" and included the ideas in his wildly bestselling Scofield Reference Bible (Wagner, 1998, pp. 37-38). The re-establishment of a Jewish state in the Holy Land in 1948 "stimulated premillennial dispensationalist advocates and gave them new momentum … to see the Jewish people restored as a nation was a sign that the clock of Biblical prophecy was ticking and history was rapidly approaching the final eve leading to the return of Jesus and the close of the church age" (p. 40).

Then, in 1970, Hal Lindsey wrote *The Late Great Planet Earth,* which described the intersection of Biblical prophecy and current events in a way that captivated Americans unlike anything before, eventually selling over 25 million copies (p. 41). A generation later, Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins would do it again, publishing the 16-volume "Left Behind" series of novels, which sold an excess of 80 million copies from their first publication in 1995 (Byle, 2016). The Left Behind series was "unabashedly fundamentalist fiction, based on literalist interpretations of the 'end of time' as understood through the prophetic books of the Bible" (McAlister, 2003, p. 773). In 2002, the Left Behind books made it to the cover of Time Magazine, giving "The sense that fundamentalist culture was not only tapping into the

mainstream of American life but indeed might *be* the mainstream of American life" (pp. 792-793). McAlister puts this against the backdrop of the failure of the Oslo peace process in the Middle East, noting that by 2002 the Oslo process was "all but over" and "there were increasing numbers of suicide bombings" by Palestinians against Israeli civilians coupled with America's war on terror. Reading the novels felt like one was reading "history written in advance" (p. 793).

**Premillenialism as Zionism, Liberty University and Jerry Falwell**

Jerry Falwell, Sr. was a Christian Zionist of the premillennial, dispensationalist type. In 1981, Falwell was raising money to support Liberty University. In exchange for a gift to his 15,000 Club, he offered a study Bible with study notes by W.A. Criswell. As Falwell appealed to his audience for a donation, the study Bible's commitment to premillennialism is what Falwell chose to highlight about the Bible,

> [it] is the King James text, but it has footnotes that are premillennial as far as eschatology is concerned. I happen to believe in the premillennial, pretribulational coming of Christ for all of his church; so does Dr. Criswell, and this book deals with that. This book is local church-centered. This study bible believes that the local church is God's agency for world evangelization, and Dr. Criswell believes that a church is a body of born-again, baptized believers banded together for the purpose of world evangelization. (Falwell, 1981a, p. 14)

When Falwell spoke of his own conversion, he spoke about his first Bible, the Scofield Reference Bible, and he said, "I purchased a Scofield bible at the time. It served me well, and I thank God for the Scofield Bible." Why did he thank God for the Scofield bible? Falwell preached, "The only reason I place this ahead of all study Bibles is because it not only is premillennial and pretribulational in its approach to the Lord's coming, but it's also very evangelistic, and more than that, it's very strongly local church oriented" (Falwell, 1981b, p. 6).

The course catalog for Liberty Baptist College listed as a distinction of the university's graduate school the "pretribulation, premillennial coming of Jesus Christ" alongside doctrines

like the inerrancy of scripture and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (*1983-1984 Graduate Catalog*, 1983, p. 39; *1984-1985 Graduate Catalog*, 1984; *1985-1986 Graduate Catalog*, 1985, p. 51; *1988-1989 Graduate Catalog*, 1988, p. 46)." On television, Falwell offered a commentary on the full Bible written by Liberty University professors as a gift to donors. While the commentary covered the entire Bible, Falwell chose to specifically reference only a handful of distinctive characteristics, explaining that it was written from a perspective that was "premillennial, evangelistic, local church oriented, and, of course, (a) literalist perspective" (Falwell, 1983b, p. 4).

When Falwell spoke about Liberty University in 1983, he called it a "fundamentalist Harvard," and among its distinctions was that it would be committed to "the Word of God, to the deity of Christ, to world evangelization, to the local church, to the premillennial, pretribulational coming of Christ for all of his church and at the same time committed to academic excellence" (Falwell, 1983c, p. 4). Falwell noted this was also a distinction of the professors at the university, "professors of ours believe in the literal interpretation of scripture. They believe the bible is the inerrant word of God. It's local church oriented. It's premillennial in approach to the second coming and so forth" (Falwell, 1983a, p. 8).

In sermons, Falwell referenced premillennialism throughout his ministry (Falwell, 1982, p. 2; 1987, p. 15). In July 1978, Falwell was preaching at his home congregation a sermon about the meaning of salvation, and he was direct: "We believe in the premillennial, pretribulational coming of Christ for all of His church (Falwell, 1978, p. 1)."

Not all Christian Zionists embrace this eschatological view. Most of the early Christian Zionists did not. In fact, one needs not to be fixated or interested in the end times at all to be a Christian Zionist,

> Christian Zionism, by contrast, is a belief among Christians that Jews should be able to return to their ancestral homeland. This movement arose in the sixteenth

> and seventeenth centuries when Protestants developed an interest in the Hebrew Bible and the place of the Jewish people in God's plan for redemption. During the seventeenth century, Puritans, in particular, began calling for a return of Jews to Israel. Although some Christian Zionists based their views on eschatology, the primary motivation was the belief that God had given the Promised Land to the Jews, his chosen people. (Amstutz, 2014, pp. 125-126)

Among those who hold this alternative view is Gerald McDermott, whose work *The New Christian Zionism* charts such a path (2016) , and its core ideas include a belief that "God's promises to the Jews are irrevocable and eternal, the Promised Land belongs to the Jews, Christians should care for Jews because God does, and Christians should support the restoration of a Jewish homeland" (Amstutz, 2014, p. 126).

Most Christian Zionists today are premillennialists, and premillennial theology is a key predictor of support for Israel, with 65% of evangelical pastors identifying with premillennialism (Inbari & Bumin, 2024, p. 174). However, one researcher noted that Evangelicals supported Israel for different reasons: "35 percent because of theological reasons, 24 percent because it was a democracy, and 19 percent because it was a U.S. ally" (Amstutz, 2014, p. 141).

**Zionism from the Perspective of Other Evangelicals**

Some argue that Christian Zionism is in a drastic decline among younger evangelicals and that major Evangelical publications and institutions are becoming "soft" with regard to their support of Israel, yet these exact predictions were also made as far back as 1998 (Wagner, 1998, p. 49).

Evangelicals who are either indifferent or have an antipathy for Israel are generally those who fit into the category of formerly progressive Christian Zionists disillusioned with aspects of Israeli politics or who believe in some form of Replacement theology or its theological child in Palestinian Liberation theology.

Replacement theology is based upon the idea that "Christians had replaced Jews as the people of God," and these views helped facilitate the Christian antipathy toward antisemitism that contributed to the Holocaust (Kessler, 2010, p. 149). Kessler argues that "beginning in the first half of the twentieth century, but especially after the Holocaust," many Christians began to reject Replacement Theology, but "there is less agreement among Christians about what replaces replacement theology" (pp. 171-172). Palestinian Liberation theology criticizes the use of the Bible "as a political Zionist text" and anchors its theology in the "everyday experiences of Palestinian Christians living in Israel" (Kessler, 2010, p. 159). Such theology also influences black congregations. Black evangelicals are 33.9% less likely to support Israel than those from other ethnic backgrounds (Inbari & Bumin, 2024, p. 172).

Inbari and Bumin conducted one of the most recent and most comprehensive surveys of evangelical views on Israel but notably their survey did *not* explicitly measure support for Israel and instead measured support for replacement theology (or their preferred term: supersessionism) as a proxy for not supporting Israel (2024, p. 82), and 43% of the evangelical pastors surveyed said that they supported replacement theology (p. 83).

One of the single greatest indicators of support for Israel among evangelicals is a premillennial eschatology (Inbari & Bumin, 2024, p. 92), and those most likely to embrace replacement theology are those with membership in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Church of Christ or those who embrace amillennial eschatology (Inbari & Bumin, 2024, p. 89). It also is the case that "one of the strongest indicators of evangelicals' support toward Israel is the age of the believer," with 18-29-year-olds demonstrating the lowest level of support, while this same divide is apparent when analyzing the sentiments of young Jews in America toward Israel (Inbari & Bumin, 2024, p. 170). One study argues that support for Israel halved in three years

among young evangelicals, and support for Arabs increased five times between 2018 and 2021(Israel, 2024).

The evangelicals cited in this study are premillennial evangelical Christian Zionists unless otherwise stated, such as the case with John Warwick Montgomery, who is an evangelical Lutheran.

**Camp David Accords**

Researchers can study direct testimonies from witnesses of the Camp David Accords process, including memoirs written by Sadat's foreign minister Kamel, Jimmy Carter, Cyrus Vance, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Moshe Dayan, and Ezer Weizmann (Quandt, 1987; Sterner, 1987). One professor provided an analysis of how the Israelis and the Egyptians viewed mediators in the Camp David Accords process (Princen, 1991), noting that mediation is "fundamentally an ad hoc process" (p. 58). Others focused specifically on the nature of the Camp David negotiations, including the role of emotion (Findlay & Thagard, 2014) and the roles of power and bargaining (Johnston, 1991). The Indian researcher Naidu provided a retelling of the broadly relevant historical context within which the Camp David Accords came to be (1992). Khalidi provided the Palestinian context in particular (2013), and Daigle examined the specific context of Sadat's neighbors in Africa (2019). Berggren couched the entire Camp David process as "evangelical-style presidential diplomacy" (2014). Daigle wrote at length about the broader implications of the Camp David Accords, especially within Sadat's own African continent, apart from the implications for Egypt, Israel, and the United States (2019). Gupta similarly took a view from Moscow, given that the Camp David Accords happened at the height of the Cold War (2023). Shindler wrote at length about the unique relationship enjoyed by Falwell and Begin (Shindler, 2000). Winter wrote about Egypt's challenge in creating legitimacy, including religious legitimacy, for its normalization of relations with the State of Israel (Winter, 2020). The Jimmy

Carter Presidential Library has published dozens of documents related to the Camp David Accords, including private correspondence between Carter and Sadat (Carter et al.). The Central Intelligence Agency in the United States has similarly compiled and released documents that are no longer protected by security clearances (Agency, 2019).

President Carter wrote at length about his experience during the Camp David process (Carter, 1995), as did his biographer (Eizenstat, 2018). Eizenstat spoke of Carter's faith in the Bible (p. 411), how the Middle East became a priority for him (p. 416), and said that Carter saw Sadat as "a shining light" (p. 430). Wright wrote close to an official history utilizing government documents (Wright, 2014), and so did Quandt (Quandt, 2016). Jørgen Jensehaugen wrote an entire book on Carter's Arab-Israeli peacemaking (Jensehaugen, 2020). Israeli participants and eyewitnesses wrote their own account entitled *The Year of the Dove* (Haber et al., 1979), and their insights align with Moshe Dayan's extensive writing on Tuhami's personality and religious beliefs (Dayan, 1981). Tignor's biography of Sadat included extensive commentary on the Camp David process while providing helpful context around Sadat's personality and story (2016). Yehuda Avner was an advisor to multiple Israeli prime ministers, including Begin, and his work allowed the reader to better understand the shifts that happened in Israeli politics between Begin and his predecessors (Avner, 2010).

**The Oslo Accords**

The Oslo Accords "were interim agreements that were supposed to lead to a comprehensive agreement that would address the main issues in dispute" (Inbar, 2019, p. 85). Shlaim succinctly summarized the failure of the Oslo Accords (Shlaim, 2021). Ahmad argued that the failure of the Oslo Accords relates to a reliance on "self-enforcement" and an assumption that 'land for peace" was "strategically desired by both parties" (2023, p. 387). Hassassian also

called the Oslo Accords a complete failure (2019), a pessimism shared by others (Hulileh, 2019). Cohen-Almagor also referenced the Oslo process as "failed" in the preface to her interview with Joel Singer, a negotiator during the Oslo process brought in by Washington, D.C. (2018, p. 733). Cohen-Almagor conducted significant document analysis and interviews with subjects directly involved in the history of the Oslo process, including Singer (2021b) and Rabinovich (2019), as well as Hussein Agha, whom she specifically spoke to about the role of Track II negotiations, noting that "Hamas talks with them in terms of Islam" (2021a). Rosler wrote at length about Prime Minister Rabin's roles in the Accords (2016), as did Makovsky (1996). Several participants have written memoirs, which include direct quotes, copies of notes, draft resolutions, and even back-and-forth communications between the parties (Abbas, 1997; Hirschfeld, 2014; Qurie, 2006).

Morrison noted that "The scholarly literature on the (Oslo) Accords is robust, though has tended to focus on the problematic nature of the agreements and their associated process;" therefore, she focused her research on "the relationship between international institutions and the neoliberal conceptualization of Palestine that was initiated during the Oslo process and has continued since that time" (Beinin, 1998; 2020, p. 2466; Samara, 2000).

Kapshuk and Strömbom conceded similar criticisms of the failure of Oslo while also recognizing that it introduced the acceptance of the fundamental idea of gradual change in pursuit of peace between the Israelis and Palestinians (Strömbom & Kapshuk, 2022, p. 321). Susser noted that the failure of Oslo also negatively affected Jordan, which hoped for an economic windfall and a final end to those who aimed to advance the idea that "Jordan is Palestine" (2021). A number of Palestinian figures in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip have written firsthand commentaries on their perception of Israel in the post-Oslo era (AbuShahla, 2021; Dajni, 2019).

El Kurd argued that the entire Palestinian and Israeli relationship has to be defined within the context of the failed Oslo Accords (El Kurd, 2021).

In a rare nod to religion in the literature, one scholar does ask—though does not answer—"what would be the benefit for the Palestinian Moslems and Christians if their religious sites are left under Israeli control and sovereignty?" (Falah, 2021, p. 341). Seliktar addressed the absence of a religious peacemaking track in the Oslo process by highlighting the way hostile Islamist actors linked to Iran managed to leverage religion as "peace spoilers;" in effect, Seliktar argued a hostile track existed leveraging religion to undermine the Oslo Accords (2021).

Fuentes-Julio and Ibrahim noted that "human rights are virtually absent" in the Oslo Accords (2019, p. 261). They added that the Accords "do not address the structural and underlying causes of the conflict, and thus seek to achieve a negative peace rather than sustainable and positive one" highlighting further that "the negotiation process that led to the agreements was not inclusive and representative, as it largely excluded civil society organizations as well as representatives of women and victims of the conflict" (p. 269). Ironically, there is no mention of Islam, Judaism, or Christianity even in their critique. Felty noted that the PLO itself references in Article 15 of the Palestinian Charter that "the realm of the holy land guarantees the freedom of religion and protects holy sites" despite that "Arab-Muslims in Palestine had denied Jews freedom of movement to holy sites and restricted the practice of Judaism for hundreds of years before the creation of the modern Israeli state," and "much of the PLO's charter challenges the existence of the Israeli state, claiming it is illegitimate and occupied by a people whose identity is a religion, not a race" (2019, p. 24).

Despite the absence of addressing human rights from a policy perspective in Oslo and the history of religious freedom violations in the Holy Land, politicized language related to human rights has come to define much of the post-Oslo reality (Nasasra, 2021). While being far from

uncritical of Israel, Tartir's work analyzed how European Union policies post-Oslo have "professionalized" a "Palestinian authoritarianism" and enabled these violations (Tartir, 2018). Almost all of the news discourse around the Israeli and Palestinian Oslo peace process was fixated on security and politics, with very little discussion about religion (Mandelzis, 2002).

Some researchers deal with other sociological factors apart from religion. For instance, Kapshuk analyzed the divergent views of Ashkenazim and Mizrahim communities vis-à-vis support for the Oslo Accords, noting that Jews of European descent (Ashkenazim) supported the Oslo Accords while Jews who immigrated from Muslim countries (Mizrahim) opposed the Accords, principally for economic reasons (Kapshuk, 2020). Rosler, Yuchtman-Yaar, and Alkalay polled Jewish women in Israel on their views of the Oslo Accords and found only a marginally higher amount of support among women than men, noting that political ideology and religiosity were far clearer indicators of support than gender (Rosler et al., 2023), which coincided with earlier research by one of the same researchers (Hermann & Yuchtman-yaar, 2002). Lybarger's work is a tour de force that analyzes the secular and religious motivations of Palestinians post-Oslo, noting even how some Christian Palestinians also indicated divisions among secular and religious lines appropriating the respective rhetoric deployed by their Islamic neighbors who fit in their respective category (2002).

One scholar has analyzed the role of sports in contributing to the people-to-people status quo in the post-Oslo era, and while not explicitly referring to it as Track II diplomacy, it is described as a "unique tool to analyze" the conflict (Belcastro, 2022, p. 644). In so-called Oslo II, there was an attempt at a Track II people-to-people engagement, which was summarized and critically assessed by Naser-Najjab (2019). Naser-Najjab also analyzed the First Intifada in 1986, linking it to Oslo's eventual failure, interviewing actual intifada participants (Naser-Najjab, 2020). Richter-Devroe interviewed Palestinian young people who grew up in the post-Oslo era.

While unconvincingly applying colonial theory to her analysis, she also demonstrated the stark consequences of the Oslo Accords vis-à-vis the rhetoric of demoralized Palestinian young people (2021).

Omar, Slimia, Islam, and Khamis juxtaposed the Oslo Accords with the Trump administration's peace plan but left a noticeable absence of any reference whatsoever to the Abraham Accords (2021). Alternatively, Viveash properly situated the Trump administration's peace ambitions within the context of the Abraham Accords and provided an even broader explanatory context, going all the way back to the Madrid Process, which preceded the Oslo process (Viveash, 2021).

Several scholars have asked, "Where do we go from here?" after the failure of the Oslo Accords but with little reference to the religious dynamics, even when referencing conflicts related to settlements or activities in Jerusalem's Old City (Klein, 2022; Liel, 2019). Mansour wrote candidly about the consolidation of the Palestinian resistance to Israel in a post-Oslo order emanating from the Gaza Strip, comparing it to the south front in Lebanon from 1975-1982. He disputed the overtly religious rhetoric from Hamas and Islamic Jihad and argued the "development did not arise so much from the nature of the leaderships involved or their ideological orientations, whether secular or Islamic" (Mansour, 2022, p. 70).

The Church of Norway, with a nudge from the government, established a Track II religious process to bolster the Oslo Accords, and that process was described in detail by the bishop who was tasked to chair the process (Bakkevig, 2022). Yair Hirschfeld was not only a participant and an eyewitness to the Oslo process on the Israeli side, but he was also an instigator. A Washington Post profile, triumphant after the Oslo Accords, described Hirschfeld as the quintessential absent-minded professor who "bumbles in late, sweating and barefoot" with "his pants ripped at the knees" ready for class "rumpled and frizzed" (Blumenfeld, 1993). He has

written a comprehensive work entitled *Track-Two Diplomacy Toward an Israeli-Palestinian Solution* covering the years 1978–2014 (Hirschfeld, 2014). When Waage was tasked with writing an official history of the Oslo Accords at the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, which initiated and guided the process, he conducted original interviews with virtually all the key individuals involved (2006). Unfortunately, many of the original files and other historical documents related to the Oslo process in Norway are lost (Waage, 2008).

In all the literature related to the Oslo Accords, there is a marked absence of literature specifically related to religion and no apparent reference to evangelicals in the currently published literature. There is remarkably little using the term "Track II diplomacy" either, which may be partly explained by the secret nature of the Oslo process.

**The Abraham Accords**

The Abraham Accords were announced in 2020, and therefore, it will be some time before researchers can fully analyze the historical documents and other material that was confidential at the time of the negotiations. The Abraham Accords were negotiated by a very small group of individuals, and there were virtually no leaks during the process. The lack of leaks was a key part of the strategy to allow the parties to negotiate without managing outside pressure. It was such a part of the strategy that the commitment to "no leaks" was sometimes called the "Kushner Doctrine" (Kushner, 2022, p. 417). This means that contemporaneous information in the public domain is even less available. However, memoirs have been written by figures who were involved in negotiating the Accords on the American side or who were eyewitnesses to key parts of the process (Friedman, 2022; Kushner, 2022; Pompeo, 2023b; Rosenberg, 2021). Guzansky and Marshall succinctly summarized the Abraham Accords and the underlying motivations of each participant (2020), as did Lazin (2023). Zisser gave particular attention to the

broader context of the Abraham Accords within the history and present condition of Arab countries (Zisser, 2023). Though limited, the present research on the Abraham Accords is surprisingly fixated on religion's role in forging the Accords. Jeong's work is a series of case studies reflecting on faith-based diplomacy's role in facilitating the Accords (Jeong, 2021). Elman and Shams gave particular attention to the role of Judaism leading up to the Accords and in fortifying them (2022). Others looked at the role of religion in the Accords through a critical lens, arguing that it led to the disenfranchisement of other groups ("Looking at Trump's "Peace to Prosperity" Plan," 2020; Schenker & Abuzayyad, 2020) or as a means of deflecting from less flattering stories (Hedges, 2023). Using Pakistan as a prototype, Ahmed and Abbas argued that the Abraham Accords created a divide among the world's Muslim countries, especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council (2021). Triantama argued that the chief (and religious) protagonist to Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain is Iran, but Iran's antagonism actually led to the Abraham Accords (2023). One doctoral dissertation that extensively analyzed the case study of the Abraham Accords, completed in June 2023, was remarkably silent on the religious components. It included no mention of the Pope's visit to the UAE, the "year of tolerance," or the Abrahamic Family House. The only exception was a passing reference to the fact that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may be embracing a "softer approach to Judaism" as a signal toward normalization (Chou, 2023, p. 174).

Ashwarya's work highlighted how the Abraham Accords afforded the Republic of India an opportunity to strengthen its Look West Policy since India already had a growing relationship with the GCC countries and Israel (2023, p. 549). Bakhshandeh and Yeganeh sought a similar effect on the entire Eastern Mediterranean, especially as it relates to Greece (Bakhshandeh & Yeganeh, 2023), while others saw a similar effect on the Red Sea area (Lons & Petrini, 2023). Bdour's research proposed a path for Jordan that would see it leverage the Abraham Accords to

form a “regional security architecture that brings prosperity and security to all its members—including the Palestinians” (2023, p. 193). Kriaa sees the Abraham Accords entirely through a security framework (2021).

Benstead’s analysis of Arab Barometer data seemed to reinforce the idea that civil society and people-to-people religious engagement shifted public opinion leading up to the Abraham Accords because “instability undermines the demand for peace” but “civil society engagement develops bonding and bridging social capital that supports conciliatory views,” including through the promotion of “tolerance” (2021, p. 1). Others noted a substantially improving relationship between Jews and Muslims in the world, which may have contributed to the Abraham Accords (Jikeli, 2023). One group of researchers analyzed social media sentiment in the aftermath of the Abraham Accords and argued that the social media response was vastly positive (Fikrie et al., 2022). Others found negative sentiment after the immediate announcement, complete with charged religious rhetoric (Hitman & Zwilling, 2022). Others have defined the process leading up to the Abraham Accords as a juxtaposition between an “axis of resistance” and an “axis of renaissance,” and on each side of the division, religious ideas are seen to play an outsized role (Boms & Aboubakr, 2022). Israel also became an attractive model to certain Arab states, especially as it related to managing security against its own challenges with Islamist extremists or Iran (Fakhro & Baconi, 2022). Some link the Abraham Accords to a new paradigm that could potentially reset the failed efforts at peace between Israelis and Palestinians, including through the Oslo Accords, and that the new paradigm has religious interculturalism at its heart (Goldstein, 2022; Karataş & Uslu, 2022). Some saw the Abraham Accords mainly critically through a post-colonial lens, especially of America (Raheb, 2021), and others accounted for the Abraham Accords with an eye toward the past as a different iteration of Pan-Arabism (Segell, 2022).

Because of the limited research on the Abraham Accords, this dissertation contributes meaningfully to the current academic literature. However, work on this dissertation was ongoing when Hamas perpetrated its terror attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and over the course of Israel's substantial military response. Much research will be undertaken by scholars over many years to determine the effects of these traumatic events on the future of peace in the Middle East. However, it is worth noting that while condemning Israel's response as disproportionate and advocating for a two-state solution, the UAE states that its decision to normalize relations with Israel in 2020 was a "strategic decision" and such decisions are long-term commitments in UAE foreign policy (Cornwell, 2023). Egypt has made similar assertions ("Egypt says peace treaty with Israel safe despite jitters over Rafah offensive," 2024). Meanwhile, the United States, Egypt, and Israel have been working actively and directly with Qatar (a country without normalization with Israel) to facilitate the release of hostages held by Hamas ("US, Israel, Egypt, and Qatar have agreed on 'basic contours' of hostage deal, Sullivan says," 2024).

## Summary

The current literature only sporadically addresses religion, rarely addresses Track II diplomacy, and hardly addresses evangelicals in Arab and Israeli peacemaking at all. This presents an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the academic record. It is remarkable that such a wide gap exists in the research, given the predominance of the Israeli and Arab conflict in international relations, the costs of this ongoing conflict, and the sheer size of the evangelical community, which exercises significant political influence in the United States. This presents a clear opportunity for researchers to seek to understand if or how evangelicals have contributed to Arab and Israeli peacemaking, including through Track II diplomacy. Conventional

constructivism, while imperfect, provides an effective theoretical basis or framework for this dissertation, and this literature will contribute to the broader literature on constructivism.

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

## Overview

A research design "is a plan that shows … how we expect to use our evidence to make inferences" (King et al., 1994, p. 116). This project adopts a qualitative research design focused on analyzing the relevancy of evangelical Track II diplomacy in Arab and Israeli peacemaking.

A qualitative research methodology is particularly useful in the context of a study like this one, which seeks to discuss a research question whose explanations are drawn from the closely guarded experiences of a relatively small group of elite, living witnesses, including the actual negotiators of historic agreements. This is particularly valuable in social science research, where the goal of historical analysis goes beyond simply reconstructing history. In order to assess the public policy implications given the small number of actual eyewitnesses, qualitative research provides a sufficient structure with reasonable flexibility as well. Given the wide-ranging types of activities that are acceptable in qualitative research, it is critical that the researcher is "clear and explicit" about what he or she is doing and that it is actually done (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96). A carefully constructed research design is essential because "research design creates synthesis for the varied aspects of research, including methodological reconciliation" (Osifo, 2015, p. 6). It is similar to the architectural drawings a builder prepares prior to construction.

Here, the principal goal is to achieve descriptive inference through thematic analysis. King et al. (1994) argue that this is acceptable as "causal inference is impossible without descriptive inference" even though "descriptive inference is often unsatisfying and incomplete." However, "to say this … is not to claim that all social scientists must, in all of their work, seek to devise causal explanations of the phenomenon they study" because "sometimes causal inference is too difficult; in many other situations, descriptive inference is the ultimate goal of the research endeavor" (p. 73). This study lets "selected and well-ordered facts speak for themselves" (p. 73).

The benchmark for the success of this design is descriptive inference through thematic analysis, and, as Tarrow notes, this is a reasonable expectation for researchers engaged in original social science research (Brady & Collier, 2010, p. 109).

## Design

This study takes a qualitative approach to answer the research question, given the involvement of a small group of human subjects in the actual negotiating process and the fact that there are so few cases to study when one is analyzing peace accords between Israelis and Arabs. As a pioneering research study in an understudied field, the goal here is to establish a baseline for future quantitative and qualitative studies that will bring more detail and nuance to the broad subject. Tolley notes, "Qualitative research is interactive—composed of many face-to-face, often intimate, conversations with study participants … listening, questioning, hearing, observing" (2016, p. 143). Qualitative research "is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4). Qualitative research methods must be "credible, dependable, and replicable" (Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2019, p. 45; Miles et al., 2014, p. 5). Qualitative research involves "data collection and analysis techniques or strategies that rely upon the collection of, and analysis of, non-numeric data" (Lamont, 2015, p. 79).

According to Yin, qualitative research can be distinguished by five features:

1. Studying the meaning of people's lives in their real-world roles;
2. Representing the views and perspectives of the people;
3. Explicitly attending to and accounting for real-world contextual conditions;
4. Contributing insights from existing or new concepts that may help to explain social behavior and thinking and

5. Acknowledging the potential relevance of multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone (2016, pp. e-book location 1348).

Taking all of this into account, the research question addressed in this design is answered by a qualitative analysis of multiple case studies. An example of the form of case study research deployed in this design is the work of Steiner when analyzing *Diplomacy as Independent or Dependent Variable (2001).* Case studies "are a design of inquiry … in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals," and the researcher collects "detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 13). Importantly, "case study research is not sampling research." Hence, the "first obligation is to understand this one case," and the selection of the case should be made thoughtfully to "maximize what we can learn" since "our time and access for fieldwork are almost always limited" (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Case-based qualitative research methods "allow an understanding of both similarities and differences of cases rather than a single overall representation of the typical case" (Haynes, 2014, p. 581), and "case studies appear prominently in political science, sociology, and other social science fields (Herron & Quinn, 2016, p. 458). The researcher must determine whether to focus on single or multiple cases, but utilizing multiple case studies is considered a "more robust" experiment (Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Yin, 2018, p. 54).

Effectively conducting multiple case studies requires the researcher to preemptively determine the method of analysis to deploy. As Byrne and Ragin note, "There is always at least an implicit and usually explicit process of categorization in which cases are grouped into categories, and there is a qualitative examination of historical trajectories in order to ascertain which trajectories produced which outcomes" (2009, p. 5).

A three-case study will be conducted to address the research question. Those case studies will include the Camp David Accords, the Oslo Accords, and the Abraham Accords. Each reflects significant undertakings involving the United States Government as a significant broker for peace between the State of Israel and the nation's Arab neighbors. The Oslo Accords also involves the Kingdom of Norway. The Camp David Accords represent the U.S.-brokered peace between the State of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt (Princen, 1991). The Oslo Accords represent the Norwegian and U.S.-brokered peace between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (Bauck & Omer, 2013). The Abraham Accords represent the U.S.-brokered peace between the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates (Jeong, 2021).

The three case studies have in common that they are each peace accords between Arabs and Israelis, involving the United States. Dependent variables "should be dependent" so that they do not cause unintentional changes in "explanatory" or "independent" variables (King et al., 1994, p. 107). The "dependent variable should always represent the variable the researcher seeks to explain" (p. 108). In this study, the dependent variable is the emergence of the respective peace accords (the Camp David Accords, the Oslo Accords, and the Abraham Accords). The explanatory variable (i.e., factors that may explain the emergence of the peace accords) is the existence of an evangelical Track II initiative in the respective peace accord negotiations. When an evangelical Track II initiative exists, it is determined to be a *relevant* component of the respective accord. While this study doesn't seek to analyze intervening variables, it will identify potential intervening variables for future researchers, including other forms of religious engagement, other forms of Track II diplomacy, economic considerations, and security considerations that emerge in the data that has been collected. Given the gap in research in the field related to evangelical Track II diplomacy, this research project is intentionally modest. The analysis of the case studies is meant to produce a foundation for future scholarship, even as it

addresses its own very narrow research question. The hope of the project is that its conclusions serve as tools for policymakers in the future as they consider engaging in Arab and Israeli peacemaking. This hope will be achieved through the thematic analysis of the data collected.

Since this study is content to achieve descriptive inference letting "well-ordered facts … speak for themselves," its goal is that future, deeper, and more comprehensive research will determine whether the descriptive inferences are justified after additional inquiry. It will be for future research to move more comprehensively from "descriptive inference" to "causal inference," which will require a more detailed analysis of other explanatory, antecedent, and intervening variables.

Naturally, it is important to recognize that each case represents the study of a historical event whose consequences continue into our present era and whose consequences will likely continue into the foreseeable future. This was painfully apparent when the data collection was interrupted by the horrific terrorist attack perpetrated by Hamas against southern Israel on October 7, 2023, just 30 days after the 30-year anniversary of the Oslo Accords. This extraordinary event certainly affected all of those with an interest in Middle East peacemaking and certainly influenced, in some way, the collection of data related to the Oslo Accords. It also meant that some fieldwork had to be deferred to online research, though fieldwork was still conducted in the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel.

The case studies were produced through interviews with participants or firsthand eyewitnesses to each event, and the interviews were supported by the analysis of relevant historical documents.

## Research Question

A researcher should "pose a question that is 'important' in the real world" and "should make a specific contribution to an identifiable scholarly literature by increasing our collective ability to construct verified scientific explanations for some aspect of the world" (King et al., 1994, p. 14). An effective empirical research question will "uncover a puzzle" within the field of research (Lamont, 2015, p. 32). The "central question is a broad question that asks for an explanation of the central phenomenon or concept in a study" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 133). This qualitative research study has answered a research question through the analysis of three case studies.

The question is:

**RQ:** *How are evangelical Track II diplomatic efforts relevant to Israeli and Arab peacemaking*?

Research questions beginning with "how" or "why" typically "lead to the use of a case study … as the preferred research method" since "such questions deal with the tracing of operational processes over time" (Yin, 2018, p. 10).

## Hypothesis(es)

Forming a hypothesis is not necessary. This is a qualitative research study meant primarily to address a "how" question. As Chigbu notes, "In qualitative research, a hypothesis is used in the form of a clear statement concerning the problem to be investigated. Unlike in quantitative research, where hypotheses are only developed to be tested, qualitative research can lead to hypothesis-testing and hypothesis-generating outcomes" (2019, p. 9). This qualitative study is the type that leads to a hypothesis-generating outcome through thematic analysis.

## Procedures

Conducting a credible case study involves four principles of data collection: the use of multiple sources of data, creating a case study database, maintaining a chain of evidence, and exercising care when using data from certain sources (Yin, 2018, pp. 126-135).

Upon defense of the research design, approval was sought by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University in order to conduct the human research (interviews) required for the case studies. Research was conducted in a way that is ethical, professional, and effective. The IRB's policies at Liberty University exist to protect the subjects, ensure the credibility of the research, and ensure the ethical preservation of information in perpetuity.

Approval by the IRB was granted after the submission of a series of documents via the university's Cayuse system. The documents included a sample of a formal letter and/or email that could be used when requesting a subject's participation in an interview, a notice that described the research that would accompany the outreach, the prospective semi-structured interview questions, and an optional pre-interview survey to provide additional data. Particular attention was given to the involvement of "elite" subjects during the IRB review process since the interviews to be conducted were entirely with "elite" figures (Lamont, 2015; Lancaster, 2017).

After approval by the IRB, requests for interviews were made, and 25 interviews were conducted either through in-person visits to the Middle East or online over the course of five months. Each interview involved detailed notetaking or recordings for transcripts, depending upon the preference of the participant and the sensitivities of interviewing some elite figures who were reticent to be recorded. Each participant was given an opportunity to be quoted in the research by name or anonymously but with certain general descriptors.

Concomitant with the subject interviews, requests were made to review archival material, or the process of identifying and reviewing publicly available archival material was begun. Once

the penultimate draft of the findings was complete, direct quotes attributed to interviewed subjects were provided to the subjects for review over a seven-day period prior to proofreading and the preparation of the final draft for defense. Upon completion and defense of the research, a copy of the final draft of the dissertation will be provided to each participant.

## The Researcher's Role

The researcher is an evangelical Christian who has been both an eyewitness and a participant in evangelical Track II efforts throughout the Middle East for many years, especially as it related to the forging of the Abraham Accords (Boorstein, 2017a, 2018b; Boorstein & Bailey, 2018; "Evangelicals Seek Detente With Mideast Muslim Leaders As Critics Doubt Motives," 2019; Frantzman, 2023; Hoffman, 2020; "Saudi Arabia, UAE use Bahrain as 'trial balloons' for warmer ties with Israel: Report," 2018; Zieve, 2023).

The researcher is also a graduate and previous staff member at Liberty University and was mentored by its founder, Dr. Jerry Falwell, Sr., early in his career. Falwell appears to play a prominent role in the history of Track II diplomacy in the Middle East, especially as it relates to the Camp David Accords and the role of evangelical Zionism generally as it relates to American foreign policy and the State of Israel.

The researcher's personal experience uniquely informs the research project, providing access to historical information, eyewitnesses, and participants in peace processes, but the researcher's conflict of interest–even if unintentionally–influences it. The research has been designed to be reasonably replicable so that it can be tested, critiqued, and built upon by future scholars. However, the researcher's relationships and experience are unique.

The research benefited from the participation of an experienced post-graduate research adviser who conducted some interviews while providing objective feedback throughout the course of the work to hedge against the influence of personal relationships or unintentional bias

by the researcher. Finally, in addition to the work of the doctoral committee, the research benefited from the participation of additional voluntary scholars with terminal degrees from distinguished institutions in the Middle East, America, and Europe who served as additional unofficial readers to provide more objective feedback and accountability. These efforts were all meant to build the reader's confidence that the research was conducted with sufficient rigor, even if the conflict of interest cannot be removed. However, as with any similar research, it is imperative that future scholarship tests the findings thoroughly.

## Data Collection

Cohen-Almagor's extensive research on the Oslo Accords is a prototype of a similar collection process envisioned by this project:

> My research project involves an extensive literature review of historic documents (e.g. the Oslo Accords; the Israel–PLO Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; the Gaza–Jericho Agreement; the Abu Mazen–Beilin Agreement); autobiographies and monographs of peace negotiators; journal and newspaper articles. It is supplemented with archival research and dozens of semi-structured interviews with decision-makers, diplomats and negotiators who were, indeed still are, involved in the peace process. The goal of the interviews is to unearth the historical processes that constituted the peace process. Evidence of people who were part of the process helps identify the factors that move history forward. (2018, p. 734)

The fieldwork required to conduct the case studies of the Camp David Accords, Oslo Accords, and Abraham Accords was conducted from August 2023 to February 2024 in the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Israel, and via electronic means. Archival material originating from governments was collected and reviewed in Israel and in the U.S.

As Yin notes, fieldwork is at the heart of qualitative research, and this forms the evidence used in qualitative research "whether coming from direct field observations, interviews, focus groups or the review of personal documents such as participants journals, daily logs, or even photographs" (2016, p. 116). Fieldwork involves the "collection of data from a real-life setting,"

but it is important to note that "collecting data through archival research would often be considered an aspect of field research" (Brady & Collier, 2010, p. 330). This all contributed to the process of "primary data collection" (Lamont, 2015, p. 144), which took a "systematic approach to data collection" that iterated via "the art of asking, listening, and interpreting throughout the entire data collection" (Tolley et al., 2016, p. 84).

**Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews**

The most important data collection method in this study has been semi-structured interviews with elite eyewitnesses. The study interviewed participants in each of the following categories related to each of the respective peace accords, though some subjects may have knowledge or involvement in multiple cases. The subjects fit into the following categories:

- Government Official—those who can make decisions with regard to peacemaking or who are tasked with facilitating peacemaking
- Peace Negotiator—those who participated in negotiating the terms of an eventual peace agreement
- Evangelical Leader—a participant in a Track II process, if it existed
- Other Eyewitness—an individual observer of one of the case studies with additional relevant information
- Subject Expert—an individual subject matter expert with unique information related to Arab and Israeli peacemaking or one of the cases
- Journalist—a reporter with deep knowledge of the accord who has interacted with primary sources

Conducting semi-structured interviews involves composing research questions, identifying topics and subtopics, deciding on a sequence, developing specific questions, and preparing opening and closing statements (Tolley et al., 2016, pp. 98-99).

All 25 interviews were conducted with elite figures. Research exists noting appropriate considerations and challenges when elite figures are subjects of research (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Harvey, 2010; Lamont, 2015, p. 84; Zuckerman, 1972). According to Lancaster, "It is important to note that the conventions of confidentiality and anonymity, as well as notions of

vulnerability, harm, and privacy which underpin them, are not static and have been both flexibly employed and critiqued within the qualitative methods literature" (2017, p. 98). This flexibility proved necessary when conducting the research. These sensitivities were particularly relevant given the contemporary nature of the Abraham Accords and the fact that several of the countries involved in the case studies do not have American-style democracies as their forms of government. Additionally, others emerge from non-American, non-Western cultures. Several of the figures interviewed are still actively involved in the public square, and others may play significant roles in future administrations in the United States. Moreover, the interviews were conducted during an active war between the State of Israel and Hamas, which was also at the center of the public discourse in the United States while dominating foreign and security policy as well. Several potential interviewees declined to participate, including a number of Christian figures in the Middle East.

The semi-structured interviews, while each unique, were based upon the following set of predetermined questions, and, in each case, specific questions about evangelicals were reserved for the end of the interview.

1. Please introduce yourself to me as if we just met one another.
2. Please describe your personal role, if any, in the Oslo/Camp David/Abraham Accords.
3. From your perspective, explain what factors led to the emergence of the Accords.
4. Please explain how different groups contributed to the emergence of the Accords.
5. In what ways did those same groups complicate the emergence of the Accords?
6. Track II diplomacy is "a conflict resolution method which" brings together, often informally, "influential, but nonofficial representatives of countries" alongside formal diplomatic channels to facilitate peace. It is sometimes referred to as people-to-people diplomacy. Were you aware of any Track II efforts that actually contributed to the Accords?
7. You mentioned religious leaders/business/education/etc. Can you tell me more about those individual efforts, and can you tell me about the role of evangelicals (add specificity for context)?
8. How do you explain the motives of each of these individual Track II actors? Did motives matter?
9. Do you have any observations as to how these separate Track II efforts were ultimately relevant to the Accords, and by "relevant," please feel free to also speak positively, negatively, neutrally, or somewhere in between about their actual effects.

10. Unstructured follow-up question(s)

The interviews mainly concluded with a final, open-ended question, “Is there anything else you’d like to add?” Each interview was conducted with a skilled notetaker present collecting actual quotes, or the interview was recorded and transcribed. To ensure accuracy, any direct quote was provided to each interviewee for review over a seven-day period upon the completion of the penultimate draft of the dissertation. The only exception to this practice was when an interviewee explicitly said in the interview that any material shared could be used as “on the record.”

The 25 figures interviewed included an actual negotiator(s) of each of the respective peace Accords in addition to those with first-hand knowledge of events surrounding the respective accords. Other eyewitnesses and negotiators were represented posthumously through a careful review of their memoirs. Those historical figures are directly quoted in the same way living witnesses who were eyewitnesses are also directly quoted.

**Twenty-Five Elite Figures Were Interviewed**

| The Camp David Accords | The Oslo Accords | The Abraham Accords | Others |
|---|---|---|---|
| John Craig | Trond Bakkevig | Michele Bachmann | Robert Satloff |
| Ronald S. Godwin | Yossi Beilin | Gary Bauer | Jay Strack |
| John Warwick Montgomery | Yair Hirschfeld | Abraham Cooper | |
| William B. Quandt | Obed Wiener | Arab Official Eyewitness | |
| Gerald Strober | | David Friedman | |
| Shibley Telhami | | Robert Greenway | |
| Duke Westover | | Skip Heitzig | |
| Ehud Yaari | | Aryeh Lightstone | |
| | | Michael R. Pompeo | |
| | | Joel Rosenberg | |
| | | Efraim Sneh | |

In addition to the semi-structured interview questions, participants were invited to voluntarily answer a survey requesting additional data to provide context to the confidential comments from the interviewees. In two circumstances, question number nine from the optional survey was asked as part of a semi-structured interview. Ultimately, only partial data was collected via the survey of nine interviewees, with most others declining to do the optional

interview or never replying to the request. It is possible that since these questions cut to the heart of the contemporaneous conflict in Israel, the elite interviewees were reticent to comment.

The optional survey questions included:

1. Would you say you've spent a lot, some, or a little time talking with Palestinians about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict?
2. Would you say you've spent a lot, some, or a little time talking with Israelis about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict?
3. Would you say you've spent more time with Palestinians or Israelis?
4. Do you support a two-state solution?
5. Do you believe a two-state solution is possible?
6. Do you believe other solutions are also possible?
7. Who do you believe is a bigger obstacle to peace: Israelis or Palestinians?
8. Do you believe the Israeli/Palestinian conflict can be resolved within the next 2-4 years?
9. Of the many components of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, such as economic factors, religious factors, security factors, or leadership factors, would you rank from 1 to 4 (with one being the most important and four being the least important) which of these factors is most important to least important in resolving the conflict?

Since the data collected was minimal, it was not integrated into the findings.

**Data Collection: Document Analysis**

Document analysis "is perhaps the most common strategy used by students for research in International Relations," but effective research requires access to primary source information (Lamont, 2015, p. 80). These documents can include "treaties, official reports, policy statements, legislation, or media reports," as long as the researcher is mindful of "focusing too narrowly on a few documents that could give a distorted picture of the topic" and is "transparent about the documents … used and those … not used" (p. 80). In this case, reviewing historical documents served to support the data collected from the semi-structured interviews.

Document analysis was particularly important in assessing the Camp David Accords, given that many of the participants and eyewitnesses are deceased. However, information was available in first-person memoirs written by government officials, negotiators, religious leaders, and other figures. Moreover, subject matter experts published additional information on the

Camp David Accords. Document analysis was additionally important in order to verify and support evidence collected from the semi-structured interviews. Yin notes, "For case study research, the most important use of documentation is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (Yin, 2018, p. 115).

Documents for the other cases also included the analysis of memoirs, quotes in the news media, private correspondence, meeting notes, publicly released statements, and archival material available through private sources or through governmental agencies. In addition to semi-structured interviews and document analysis, there were opportunities for "direct observations" between subjects and evangelicals or artifacts symbolic of the relationship between various subjects, including photos of events (p. 121). An example of a "direct observation" was when two subjects referenced in the Abraham Accords case study were observed interacting with one another over dinner with the researcher as fieldwork was being conducted in a foreign country.

## Data Analysis

The primary method of data analysis to address the research question was *thematic analysis*, analyzing transcripts of interviews and other materials through Delve qualitative software. Thematic analysis is a well-regarded method of qualitative data analysis that has been extensively used across various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and political science (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Flexibility and adaptability are key aspects of thematic analysis that are applicable to a wide range of research questions, theoretical frameworks, and data types (2017). This versatility makes it an appropriate choice for the current study, which seeks to explore the role of evangelical Track II diplomacy in Arab-Israeli peacemaking through an analysis of multiple case studies and various data sources, including interviews and historical documents.

Thematic analysis is also particularly well-suited to the conventional constructivist theoretical framework employed in this dissertation. By identifying recurrent themes and patterns across the case studies, this study can provide valuable insights into the ways in which evangelical Track II actors' beliefs, values, and interactions with state and non-state actors contribute to peacemaking efforts. It is particularly useful to public policy researchers, and this dissertation is submitted in partial completion of a PhD in public policy.

Moreover, thematic analysis is recognized for its ability to capture the complexity and nuance of qualitative data, allowing researchers to go beyond surface-level descriptions and engage in a deeper, more interpretive analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is particularly important in the context of studying religious actors in international relations, as their motivations, strategies, and impact often involve a complex interplay of ideational and material factors that may not be readily apparent or easily quantifiable. The credibility of thematic analysis as a qualitative research method has been well-established in the literature. Nowell et al. (2017) provide a comprehensive review of the trustworthiness criteria for thematic analysis, drawing on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) seminal work on establishing rigor in qualitative research.

In the current study, the credibility of the thematic analysis is enhanced through several means. First, the use of multiple case studies and various data sources (interviews, historical documents) allows for triangulation, which helps to corroborate findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Yin, 2018). Second, the researcher's prolonged engagement with the topic, including extensive fieldwork and interviews with key informants, contributes to the depth and richness of the data and the resulting analysis.

Furthermore, the dissertation provides a detailed and transparent account of the research process, including the data collection and analysis procedures, which enhances the dependability and confirmability of the findings (Nowell et al., 2017). The use of a systematic, iterative

approach to coding and theme development, as well as the inclusion of rich, verbatim extracts from the data to support the identified themes, further strengthens the credibility of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

It is important to acknowledge that qualitative research, including thematic analysis, does not aim to produce generalizable findings in the same way that quantitative research does (Tracy, 2010, p. 838). Instead, qualitative studies seek to provide in-depth, contextualized understandings of specific phenomena, which can then be used to inform theory development, policy, and practice in related contexts (Tracy, 2010). The transferability of the findings from this dissertation is enhanced through the provision of thick, detailed descriptions of the case studies and the broader context of Arab-Israeli peacemaking, allowing readers to assess the applicability of the insights to other settings.

Thematic analysis is a well-established and credible method of qualitative data analysis that is particularly well-suited to the constructivist framework and the research questions of this dissertation. By employing a rigorous, systematic approach to data collection and analysis and by providing a transparent and detailed account of the research process, this study demonstrates the trustworthiness and value of thematic analysis in exploring the complex role of evangelical Track II diplomacy in Arab-Israeli peacemaking.

Data analysis in qualitative research "aims to develop strong theoretical insights or constructs grounded in the collected data to enable complex phenomena to be understood" (Dierckx de Casterlé et al., 2021, p. 1083). It is "dependent upon researchers being able to conduct grounded, rigorous analyses" (Lester et al., 2020, p. 95). Qualitative research is an ongoing process of analysis.

The thematic analysis followed Braune and Clarke's "five phases" in the analysis of data collected by qualitative researchers: familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial

codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (2006, p. 87). The analysis took into account Osifo's note that "Data collection still needs systematization and planning as well as the analysis of data" (2015, p. 2) and that qualitative researchers "work inductively, building patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information" and then "deductively…determine if more evidence can support each theme" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 180).

The primary way the thematic analysis was accomplished in this dissertation was by utilizing coding to analyze the data and then organizing those data in ultimately four themes that emerged from the data. It was a systematic process, and the codes emerged entirely from the data over time as interviews were conducted and ultimately compared with one another and checked against the analysis of historical documents.

While qualitative research is a "nonlinear, iterative process" (Lester et al., 2020, p. 98), it is also essential to code the data and the identity themes that are "a common recurring pattern across a data set clustered around a central organizing concept" (*Beginners Guide to Coding Qualitative Data*, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process is how this dissertation validated its conclusions.

A "code" in the thematic analysis was "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of a language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2021, p. 4). The data collected through interviews and document analysis was coded and organized via thematic analysis, and the themes were, in each case, "an extended-phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means" (p. 258).

It's important to note that thematic analysis "is a method for describing data, but it also involves interpretation in the processes of selecting codes and constructing themes" (Kiger & Varpio, 2020, p. 847). The analysis of the data is apparent through the precise selection of applicable quotes integrated into the findings. The themes, after being drawn from the case studies, are listed in the findings, and they are each further elaborated upon by a synthesis of information drawn from all three case studies in each respective theme.

## Trustworthiness

It is critical to apply quantitative rigor to qualitative research while recognizing that qualitative research is under no circumstances inferior to quantitative research. It is just different, and while trustworthiness may be assessed differently, it is no less important. Trustworthiness was prioritized throughout the course of the data collection and analysis. While in quantitative research the "requirements of reliability, replication, and validity" are "generally associated with demonstrating rigor," they are "less applicable to qualitative studies," giving greater importance to "trustworthiness" as the primary "criterion for evaluating qualitative studies" (Maher et al., 2018, p. 3).

Schwandt, Lincoln, and Guba rightly note that "among the most knotty problems faced by investigators (is) deciding whether an interpretation is credible and truthful and whether one interpretation is better than another" (Schwandt et al., 2007, p. 11). This is the concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Trustworthiness has been strengthened through the quality of the research design and through constant care given to the amount and types of data collected. The key is always that "trustworthiness focuses on the context of data collection and the methods of the generation of data rather than on its inherent 'truthfulness'" (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 18). It was.

"Since qualitative data analysis possibilities are vast and varied," it is essential to choose "the right combination of research methodologies, data collection instruments, and analysis methods" in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the research project (Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2019, p. 44). Trustworthiness can be evaluated on the basis of four components outlined in Lincoln and Guba's classic work, which define "trustworthiness" in qualitative research or, in their phrase, "qualitative rigor." Those four criteria are credibility, transferability (generalizability), dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, p. 152). Throughout the development of the design and the collection and analysis of data, each of these concepts was considered based on the following definitions.

Credibility relates to "truth-value." As Krefting notes, "A qualitative study is considered credible when it presents an accurate description or interpretation of human experience that people who also share the same experience would immediately recognize" (1991; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, pp. 152-153). Credibility exists when a study "provides assurance" that the data has been "properly collected and interpreted" so "that the findings and conclusions accurately reflect and represent the world that was studied" (Yin, 2016, pp. e-book location 3122-3123). The credibility of the data collection in this study has been addressed in a number of ways, including by the construction of the research design, its data collection and analysis plans that included attempts to verify the contents of interviews with participants prior to inclusion in the ultimate research, close consultation with various subject matter experts, and peer consultation throughout the process. Only information collected or reviewed during the research is included in the study.

While "used in a limited way in qualitative research," generalizability is the quality of research such that its "procedures or the cases studied qualitatively may be applied to other cases" (Creswell & Creswell, 2023, p. 266). This is met when "the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects/participants" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985,

p. 290; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, p. 153). Transferability or generalizability is a test easily met through this research design, given its modest ambitions despite its novelty. In other peace processes, similar categories of subjects can be duplicated, and similar documents can be collected in order to answer similar research questions. There are many other researchers who have similar proximity to the subject matter.

Dependability "in quantitative terms, occurs when another researcher can follow the decision trail used by the researcher" (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, pp. 153-154). The step-by-step process outlined in this research design and the logical order of the ultimate findings demonstrate the clear decision-making process deployed to identify the findings apparent in the research. Importantly, "replication is not a term, as a rule, used in qualitative research because, like a river, the water is not the same even if one's stance and perspective from the bank is from the same spot" (pp. 153-154). Ultimately, "confirmability" is "similar to objectivity in quantitative terms," and it "occurs when credibility, transferability, and dependability have been established" (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, p. 154). Multiple forms of data were collected and compared to find correlations to assist in achieving confirmability. Such triangulation involves collecting "different data sources by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build coherent evidence for themes," and then those themes "are established based on converging several sources of data or perspectives from participants; this process adds to the study's validity" (Creswell & Creswell, 2023, p. 213).

## Ethical Considerations

As stated earlier in this chapter, and also in chapter one, the researcher has a conflict of interest given his own role as an eyewitness and participant in Track II efforts related to the Abraham Accords and his longstanding relationship with others involved, including the founder

of Liberty University. That conflict of interest has been disclosed, and the research has been designed to help limit the potential impact on the trustworthiness of the research. However, as with all academic research, the credibility of the work is a combination of decisions made by the researcher and the accountability of having that research criticized, duplicated, and analyzed by peers. While every effort has been made to disclose any bias, and the research has been designed to hedge bias, it is ultimately the job of critics to determine whether the findings are credible. However, the research design is built to produce credible findings. It is also important to acknowledge that all academic research comes with the biases of its subjects and researchers. There is no objectivity immune from bias, and sometimes, the very items that indicate a potential conflict of interest are the keys to unlocking information otherwise unavailable to others in the academy. This study certainly also benefits from the researcher's proximity to modern history and his subject matter.

## Summary

The research design is comparable to similar qualitative work in this area. It benefits from multiple sources of data, including original contributions, which have allowed the researcher to identify its findings. The combination of document analysis and semi-structured interviews, along with the appropriate integration of various observations, allows an effective balance of providing relevant qualitative data within a narrative that is common in historical case studies, even when used in social science research. The trustworthiness of the project is addressed despite the researcher's conflict of interest.

# CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY "CAMP DAVID ACCORDS"

A case study of the Camp David Accords was conducted utilizing a combination of interviews with elite living figures who were eyewitnesses or participants in the negotiations or the events surrounding or leading up to the negotiations. The review of historical documents, including first-hand accounts published in memoirs of other eyewitnesses, the review of declassified government documents, and contemporaneous news reports contributed to the case study. The case study begins with an attempt to benchmark "relevancy," as it is an operative term in this research, before summarizing the relevancy of religion, particularly in the negotiations. The study concludes by analyzing the most significant evangelical aspects of the Camp David process.

## Providing Relevant Context to the Camp David Accords

When attempting to understand the relevancy of parties involved in various peace negotiations, it is helpful to benchmark the idea of relevancy to other widely accepted factors pertinent to the negotiations. There are countless examples of relevancy, but here, a few obviously relevant factors are highlighted, factors that are present in the literature and evident in this original research.

The Camp David Accords occurred against the backdrop of the Great Power conflict waging during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. The ultimate peace between Israel and Egypt, which was brokered by the United States, was also a byproduct of the 1973 war between Israel and Egypt, where Henry Kissinger succeeded in proving "to Middle Eastern leaders that the only way forward was through the United States, not the Soviet Union" (Telhami, 2023; Tignor, 2016, p. 85). The Arab Republic of Egypt did indeed decide that the Soviet Union had proven to be an unreliable ally, and it was actively in the process of reorienting

its own foreign policy in the direction of the United States when the Camp David process began (p. 85).

This pivot toward the United States was accentuated by the power of the personal relationship that formed between President Jimmy Carter and President Anwar Sadat. When Carter became president, he "had not met any Arab leader … and had been to the Middle East only once (a trip to Israel)," yet when he met Sadat, there was particular chemistry; he "hit it off" with Sadat "at once" (Tignor, 2016, p. 148). While some believe the "impetus" for the Camp David talks was as much an initiative of the domestic policy side of the White House as its foreign side because "President Carter's approval rating needed a boost and a boost on the international affairs side," (Craig, 2023) most eyewitnesses and scholars attribute the Camp David initiative as being a personal project of President Carter. Haber et al. (1979, p. 215) note that the State Department was actually excluded from the decision to hold the Camp David talks because it was a personal initiative imagined first and driven by Carter himself from the White House. There is an apparent warmth between the two leaders in the available correspondence between them throughout the Camp David process, and it was not just from Carter but also evident in Sadat's replies (Carter et al.; Sadat, 1978). Sadat's "relationship with Carter was extremely important … maybe a little too much. In fact, Carter said, he was burdened by that trust, in some ways, because Sadat seemed to think that Jimmy Carter could somehow weigh in on his behalf" (Telhami, 2023). John Craig, a career foreign service officer and later Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman was at Camp David for all the talks in 1978 as part of the team from the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, and he believed "it was personal diplomacy" which ultimately led to the success of the talks (2023).

The Camp David process also achieved Egypt's key strategic priority. In the end, the Camp David Accords succeeded "because we (the United States) were able to go to Sadat and

say, ‘we're going to get all your territory back and possibly a little bit more than that,’” and “for him, he was an Egyptian nationalist, first and foremost, and he had told his people he was going to get all Egyptian territory back.” Without the land returned, there would have been no peace (Quandt, 2024).

Yet, it was never the expectation that the Camp David Accords would end with peace only between the State of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt. The Israeli and Palestinian conflict cast a shadow over the entire process, and the Carter administration always viewed the Palestinians as equal parties to the efforts to broker peace between Israel and Egypt. As one of only a handful of Department of State officials present for the entirety of the meetings at Camp David in September 1978, Craig remembered during the morning of the last day,

> sometime about one o'clock in the morning, President Carter went to meet President Sadat, and they had a discussion about what was happening and the fact that there was no agreement. During that discussion, there was a lot of progress made, but President Sadat was unable to agree to an Accord or an agreement because he wanted President Carter's promise that he would help resolve the issues between the Palestinians and Israel. (2023)

The agreement did include provisions that were to lay the groundwork for future peace also between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Peace agreements are deals among leaders and individual human beings who choose to engage with one another on the basis of trust and a shared willingness to pursue peace. The human factor is particularly relevant in the role religion played as a meeting point for Sadat and at least one of his key advisors, as well as for Carter. While perhaps less obviously important for the Israelis, the issue of the land had biblical connections, and the Zionism that animated Begin was partially based upon scripture. Begin also found points of spiritual and religious engagement with the American president.

## Religion as Specifically Relevant to the Camp David Accords

Religious language is very apparent throughout the Camp David process. In an interview with the researcher, William B. Quandt, the Carter administration's National Security Advisor for the Middle East, noted that "Carter brought to it his own religious background." Quandt believed Carter read the Bible every single day." Quandt recalled a particular experience that helped him realize Carter's passion for the Bible. According to the advisor, Carter wanted to learn Spanish, but he did not take classes or read books about Spanish grammar. Instead, "he was spending his time reading the Bible (he knew it so well) in Spanish so that he could learn Spanish while reading the Bible again." While Brzezinski, Vance, and Quandt himself "did not approach" Middle East policy "with biblical reference points," Carter did. Therefore, "when somebody would talk about Judea and Samaria, he had a reference point for … why the Israelis were using these terms." When asked if it made a difference in Carter's approach, Quandt said it may have given "him a stronger personal incentive to try to put his mark on a Middle East peace in the Holy Land." For the rest of Carter's team, "this was about the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the big piece of it that we got actually wasn't the Holy Land. It was the Egyptian part of it," yet "for Carter, I think the idea that he could play a part in bringing peace to the Holy Land meant something." Despite their different approaches, Quandt was quick to note that Carter read every line of the material provided to him by his professional staff—most of which did not exhibit such instinctually religious aspects—and he was a dedicated student of their work, often asking questions and being open to adjusting his views (2024). One scholar argues precisely the opposite, arguing that Carter's personal religious views actually "impeded " his "pursuit of his foreign policy objectives" and that it was only "when he discarded his faith-based approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict" that he succeeded (McDonald, 2012, p. 293).

For whatever lack of religious companionship in his professional diplomatic and national security team, Carter found it in his interaction with Sadat and at the behest of Sadat's key advisor in the peace negotiations, Hassan Tuhami. Esteemed Israeli journalist and Arabist Ehud Yaari, who met with Sadat privately on many dozens of occasions and became a confidante of the Egyptian president's entire close circle, noted:

> Sadat (was) a religious man immersed in Islamic tradition. A man of impulse, he visualized peace as a religious as well as a national mission…. Sadat found a partner to his belief in Tuhami. Once, during the weeks when Sadat was formulating his decision, the two men listened attentively to the dream of one of their colleagues, who declared that the prophet Muhammed had appeared to him, commanding that peace be brought to the Middle East. (Haber et al., 1979, p. 6)

The duo took the dream seriously. Yaari believed that "without a large dose of mysticism, religious mysticism, there would have been no Camp David and no peace between Israel and Egypt." He said, "People didn't really want to realize it at the time because they didn't have that kind of close … connection that I had with the Egyptian leadership," but this was the case. Yaari based his views on his observations as he was "immersed in the Egyptian elite, in the political elite," yet "there was a rejection, almost instinctive" among the Israelis and Americans when it came to "accepting this religious motive behind Sadat and his top advisor, Hassan Tuhami." This rejection included those in the intelligence community in Israel whose leader was "a wonderful man" but who could never fully appreciate the religious motivations of Sadat and Tuhami. This was despite the fact that he discreetly witnessed the religiously charged pre-negotiations in Morrocco, which preceded Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and eventually the Camp David process. The intelligence chief was surreptitiously listening to the secret discussions from behind a curtain so that Israel's prime minister could ensure that the description he was receiving from his own foreign minister was entirely accurate (2023a).

The deeply religious Tuhami was Sadat's direct representative in the secret negotiations in Morocco prior to Sadat's history-making visit to Jerusalem in November 1977. Yet, in addition

to representing his country and carrying messages from and to Sadat, Tuhami carried within himself a vibrant spiritual identity. He "would tell you some things like, 'I can see very well into the future,'" and when Yaari would ask him what he saw, he would say, "I cannot tell you because I become dizzy." According to Yaari, "Tuhami very much believed that peace with Israel was the fulfillment of prophecy," and Tuhami was not alone. Sadat himself saw the mission of making peace with Israel as a "spiritual process" (2023a).

A CIA personality profile of Sadat in the background materials prepared for the Camp David Summit recognized the spiritual dimensions at play and described Sadat as someone who "remains a deeply religious man" (Agency, 2013, p. 25) while the profile of Begin noted his history as the leader of the Irgun, which, according to the CIA document, embraced an ideology "that all of Eretz Israel is historically and biblically the rightful homeland of the Jewish people" (p. 28).

When Lawrence Wright wrote his account of the 13 days of the Camp David Summit with the help of virtually all available U.S. government documents related to the summit, he emphasized that:

> Religion was the elixir that both Carter and Sadat drank in excess. Sadat had gone to the Islamic school in his village, where he memorized the Quran as a young child. Later, he sported the dark callus on his forehead that is the imprint of endless hours of prayerful prostration. This was well before such outward displays of religious zeal were fashionable in cosmopolitan Cairo. He called himself the "believer's president." Although Carter didn't advertise it, that's how people thought of him as well. He had begun memorizing Bible verses at the age of three and publicly declared his faith at a revival meeting when he was eleven. (2014, p. 16)

In each phase of the Camp David process, religion was present, and it was not just about Christianity and Islam. During the first secret meeting in Morocco between Tuhami and Dayan, the King of Morocco began his interaction with them by making a specific point to the Israeli Dayan: "If it became known that you were here, my throne would not topple. I have a large

Jewish community in Morocco. I am popular with them, and to me, they are loyal Moroccan citizens. I speak openly about my contacts with the Jews and my earnest desire for peace between the Arab States and Israel" (Dayan, 1981, p. 40). That meeting also included conversations about the religious significance of the Old City of Jerusalem, though Tuhami was more vexed by these considerations than Dayan. Dayan quoted Tuhami as saying, "We should come with a constructive plan which would satisfy the religious feelings of the Arab States," and "a sympathetic solution to this problem would be proof of our sincerity" because "an acceptable proposal on this matter would lessen Arab anxiety and draw the sting from Arab hostility" (1981, p. 49).

In Morocco, "Tuhami described his religious views to Dayan" at length, which included his belief "that the Middle East had been the cradle of the three great religions but had fallen into a great decline, which was now about to be reversed" due to their efforts. And those efforts required that they "remove the obstacles, among them war, which are preventing a tremendous spiritual blossoming and economic prosperity" (Haber et al., 1979, p. 11). Tuhami saw this as a prerequisite for "the inevitable war of Gog and Magog when the sons of light would overcome the sons of the darkness. Israel would have to decide which camp it wanted to be in" (p. 11).

Tuhami reiterated this belief in at least one other setting, and it was not in the cosmopolitan West. He had made a spiritual pilgrimage to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and there, he found a group of pilgrims to whom he began to lecture at Mount Arafat. His subject was Israel:

> Don't you remember that the Holy Koran says … in Surat al-Asra, the chapter about the Prophet Mohammed's night visit to the Al-Aksa Mosque, riding a legendary horse that could fly, it says that Allah would one day bring the Jewish people back to their land, one group at a time, and there he would put them to the final test. (p. 25)

This was apparently the prophecy that Tuhami had previously referenced in his conversations with Yaari. Dayan, at some point in the conversation in Morocco, told Tuhami that he believed "the problems associated with religion in Jerusalem would be solved with comparative ease to the satisfaction of all parties" (p. 51). Though Dayan was not particularly religious himself, when Sadat visited Jerusalem, it fell to Dayan to ride in the car with Sadat's foreign minister, Boutros Ghali. What did they discuss? The Bible was Dayan's chosen subject as he pointed out the religious significance of the land as they drove by various sites in Israel (Dayan, 1981, p. 78). Dayan became a type of biblical tour guide on the ride from the airport to the King David Hotel (p. 78).

While in Jerusalem, Sadat had religion in mind. He took time during the visit to pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as it was a Muslim holiday when he was visiting. He went to pray at 6:45 am, and afterward, he was surprised to meet Muslims chanting, "With soul and blood, we shall redeem the mosque of Al-Aqsa." The next event on his schedule was to visit Yad Vashem, the National Holocaust Memorial Museum (Dayan, 1981, p. 80). Later, Sadat's speech to the Knesset was filled with religious imagery and language. He said, "I have come to Jerusalem, the City of Peace, which will always remain a living embodiment of coexistence among believers of the three religions" (p. 68). Haber notes that during his intervention in the Knesset after Sadat's speech, "Begin, too, chose to open with Bible stories. He recalled the sacrifice of Isaac, in the course of which Abraham, 'our common father,' was submitted to a terrible ordeal. Begin apparently chose this vein to highlight what was shared between the two leaders, to restore Israel and Egypt to their common glorious past" (p. 70). Ironically, Begin's reference to the "binding of Isaac" might have been taken as an offense to the Muslim Sadat whose faith teaches that it was Ishmael who was bound to the altar, and the events are not immaterial as this story is directly

related to the area of Jerusalem which Jews call “temple mount” and which Muslims Haram al-Sharif.

In the official public statement prepared during Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem, Tuhami tried—and failed—to include the word “divine” and then “providential” in the initial draft, but neither Sadat nor Begin preferred it; they instead chose the word “courageous” (p. 72). Courage was an appropriate phrase given Sadat’s eventual fate, which seems foreshadowed in the prayers of another Arab leader, King Khalid of Saudi Arabia, who later “guiltily admitted that he prayed that the plane that carried Sadat to Jerusalem would crash” (Tignor, 2016, p. 153).

Religion also played a role in the eventual Camp David meetings themselves. First Lady Rosalyn Carter gave President Carter the idea that the three leaders should issue a global call to prayer for the success of their negotiations. Sadat loved the idea (p. 164). So, Rosalyn Carter went to work drafting the prayer herself, which partially read, “The Holy Land is the cradle of the three religions.” However, Begin was not pleased with the text and said, “With all due respect, the land of Israel is the cradle of Judaism and Christianity, but not of Islam. The cradle of Islam is Saudi Arabia.” Eventually, after much deliberation, they settled on some alternative words, “The Middle East, the cradle of civilization and of the three great religions, has not enjoyed the blessings of peace.” Also included in the lively discussions surrounding the call to prayer was a controversy over “wars.” The original draft referenced “four wars,” but Begin said “there were more wars,” and so they agreed to compromise language: “after four wars” (Haber et al., p. 221; Wright, 2014, p. 264). This was an early indication of what became a habit of Begin throughout the summit, taking a rabbi’s approach to scrutinize the language chosen during all the deliberations (Tignor, p. 164).

For Begin, one of the more startling religious occurrences during the Camp David talks was what he perceived as Carter’s total indifference to the plight of Lebanese Christians. Israel

had been supplying weapons to these Christian communities in their resistance against Syrian and Palestinian groups in Lebanon. Rather than accepting Carter's appreciation and finding in Israel's aid a point of mutual agreement, Begin received a rebuke from Carter: "I demand that Israel should not supply the Christians with tanks, with any heavy military equipment. That could complicate the war" (Haber et al., p. 223).

At a critical moment in the Camp David negotiations, Carter decided to take the Israelis and the Egyptians to the nearby field where the Battle of Gettysburg had taken place. It was there, seemingly out of nowhere, that religion came back to the forefront of the conversation. As they stood looking over the field, "Sadat turned suddenly turned to Carter and Begin and said, 'I would like to visit Mount Sinai and pray there.'" Begin reciprocated, "I'd love to join you …. The sunrise, as seen from Mount Sinai, is out of this world." Then he said to Carter, "You're also invited to pray on Mount Sinai" (Haber et al., 1979, p. 249).

Robert Satloff saw the religious characteristics of Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David also as mechanisms to "validate their concessions to each other" as they were all "in their own way … very spiritual figures steeped in their respective religious faiths." This even included Sadat eventually managing to persuade the religious establishment to issue a fatwa "legitimizing peace with Israel, which was in itself a significant religious statement." (Satloff, 2024)

Sadat's religious sensibilities were also apparent in April 1978, when he welcomed to his home in Aswan an unusual delegation of American evangelicals, a delegation which included Carter's arch-political nemesis within his own evangelical community, Jerry Falwell.

## Evangelical Delegation to Cairo, Amman, and Jerusalem

The headline on the front page above the fold of the first edition of the Liberty University *Journal-Champion* school newspaper is, "Historic Mid-East Visit Completed: Falwell, Religious

Leaders Confer with Sadat, Begin" ("Falwell, Religious Leaders Confer with Sadat, Begin," 1978). The date of the edition is May 12, 1978, and the article reads:

> Dr. Jerry Falwell … was invited to accompany a group of conservative religious leaders on a peace mission to the Middle East to meet with the heads of state, including Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israel Prime Minister Menachem Begin … it was felt that the warring factions in the Middle East should be exposed to the opinions of the conservative religious leaders of America regarding a peace settlement in the Middle East. Falwell indicated that he would not be part of the trip unless the Egypt and Israel governments issued a joint invitation. The invitation ultimately came from both governments.… It was the hope of the conservative leaders that the peace trip would achieve a spirit of peace and establish dialogue that would lead to mutual understanding that had not been accomplished thus far by diplomatic means." ("Falwell, Religious Leaders Confer with Sadat, Begin," 1978)

The delegation that was described in the Liberty University newspaper had actually been an effort initiated by the Egyptians, who raised the idea to a participant, probably Billy Zeoli, at a National Religious Broadcasters convention in Washington, D.C., in January 1978 (Siegel, 1978). Zeoli, who had been a spiritual advisor to Gerald Ford ("Sheila R. Weidenfeld Files," 1974-1977), approached Gerald Strober, who served as an unofficial liaison to the Christian community in the United States, on behalf of Begin's Likud Party, to seek his help in coordinating the Israeli portion of the trip. Falwell became the leader and the spokesperson of the group (Stroeber & Tomczak, 1979, p. 167). Strober remembered significant facts related to the Egyptian portion, which were conveyed to him, although he was at the time awaiting the group's arrival in Israel:

> When they arrived in Egypt, there was no one at the airport to meet them, and they were just standing there in the terminal, not knowing what to do. Billy Zeoli, being a very creative guy, had taken along with him a large color photo of Billy standing next to Gerry Ford. Billy got into a cab, and he went to downtown Cairo and said, "Take me to a government building." The driver took them to some government building, and he ran from office to office, showing the photo and saying, "Look at me; I'm with Gerry Ford." And somebody finally figured out that Billy was a relatively important person, and as a result of that, they got a welcome from the government. (Stroeber, 2023)

Once the group was noticed, the welcome was extraordinary. The theologically conservative, socially liberal, and avowedly anti-Zionist John Warwick Montgomery was the outlier in the delegation. Montgomery, who was an evangelical Lutheran, believed then and believes now, “I have never been a Zionist, and I certainly do not believe that just because the Jew is the chosen people in the Old Testament, that has anything necessarily to do with present-day Israel” (Montgomery, 2023). He does not know exactly how he was invited to join Falwell and other evangelicals on the whirlwind tour they had embarked upon to meet Sadat, Begin, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’s Crown Prince Hassan in April 1978, but he does know what he did not like: Falwell’s teetotalism. It became a point of tension almost immediately. As the delegation entered a large banquet hall for a welcome dinner, Montgomery noticed one of his favorite French wines stored on the wall.

> I was seated across from the head of French television in Egypt, and they did this because they knew I was bilingual. I had a nice conversation with him. But the meal progressed, and no wine arrived at our table, so I called the waiter over and I said, “Well, I saw all of the wine. Why has none come here?” He said, “Well, the head of your delegation said that you did not drink.” I said, knowing full well what the answer would be, “Who is the head of our delegation?” He said, “Jerry Falwell.” I said, “There is no head of the delegation; each of us is chosen separately. Bring out the wine.” (Montgomery, 2023)

Afterward, Falwell said to Montgomery, "I wish you hadn’t done that; I could’ve really helped your ministry,” to which Montgomery said, “Well, Jerry, I think I can survive that.” Nonetheless, Montgomery came to understand Falwell’s views on alcohol when he learned of the story of Falwell’s father, whose alcoholism contributed to his early death, and he also appreciated Falwell’s “great sense of humor.” However, Montgomery also did not appreciate Falwell’s “rigidness,” which he viewed as imposing his beliefs on others (Montgomery, 2023). In some sense, the diverse group of evangelicals did not entirely trust one another.

Eventually, the delegation was transferred from Cairo to Aswan, where they met Sadat. The meeting appeared in a photo above the fold and on the front page of the April 15, 1978

edition of the then state-controlled *Al-Ahram* newspaper in Egypt with the caption, “The President received a delegation of American churches,” noting that the meeting was in Aswan and the delegates represented many millions of Christians ("President Receives a Delegation of American Churches," 1978). Al Ahram was used for “political messages the ruling party wish(ed) to convey” (Al-Said, 1994, p. 118).

السادات: مصر ماضية فى مساعيها لاقرار السلام مادامت لم تفشل حتى الآن

الرئيس يوافق على بدء تنفيذ مشروع مجمع زراعى صناعى جنوب أسوان

المجمع يمتد على مساحة ٢٠ ألف فدان كبداية للثورة الخضراء فى منطقة التكامل

الرئيس يضع اليوم حجر الأساس لمجمع صيد الأسماك ببحيرة المد

الرئيس يستقبل وفد الكنائس الامريكية

الموقف فى لبنان: بدء المرحلة الثانية للانسحاب

فالدهايم يطالب بزيادة القوات الدولية

قنابل البلى الامريكية

*Image courtesy of the American University of Cairo*

Montgomery and Falwell had something in common, however. They both were impressed by Sadat. Montgomery, speaking of Sadat’s personality, said, “It is so rare to find a politician who has transparent integrity” (Montgomery, 2023), and Falwell would later refer to Sadat’s courage on a number of occasions (Falwell, 1981c; Simon, 1984, p. 184). Falwell’s positive view of Sadat began to form after his historic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977. In a nationally televised sermon during the same month, Falwell said,

> Mr. Sadat has now returned to Cairo. We should all be praying for his safety. If ever a man needs the protection of God Almighty to stay alive now, it is President Sadat of Egypt. The Bible says, pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and that’s a

> commandment to us. When President Sadat indicated, "I'd like to go to Jerusalem," the offer was given and accepted, and he came there. He's a Moslem, and I know that, but the Bible says the king's heart is in the hands of the Lord. Whether he knows it or not, he's the Lord Jehovah's servant. He may not be aware of that, I'm sure he isn't. But he did make one statement that would indicate to me that maybe somebody was talking to him. Somebody asked him, why in the world are you thinking about going to Jerusalem? He said, "If I don't, I shall be held accountable by my children and my God. If I don't go, if I don't make an effort." And he did go, and the unbelievable happened, and it had to mean a great deal. If the Lord keeps him alive…if God keeps him alive, and it can happen, and Mr. Begin continues to do his part (there can be peace). (Falwell, 1977)

Falwell's longtime senior assistant noted in an interview that Falwell's feelings about Sadat were so strong that the evangelical leader even speculated about whether Sadat may have had a secret conversion to Christianity (Westover, 2023). Falwell's ability to relate so closely to Sadat, a Muslim, may also speak to Sadat's ability to relate to all kinds of different figures. Of Sadat's warmth, Telhami noted that "he was charming, courteous, loving," and for Carter, he had "this asset that was magnetic" that "kind of shook the existing paradigm about Arab leaders," because Sadat was "pro-American" and "pro-peace" and "said all of the things that everybody was hoping they would hear." Telhami said "there was a stereotype" of Arab leaders, and Sadat was "the anti-stereotype." Kissinger and Carter, while they could not be any more different from one another, both "fell in love with him." It was the same with Carter and Falwell. It was also a two-way street because Sadat "was influenced definitely by talking to Christian leaders as well as Jewish leaders" (2023).

Telhami believes that Falwell's "fascination" with Sadat came from "Sadat visiting Jerusalem" and noted that Falwell and his delegation might not have considered such a visit before that historical moment (2023). Falwell "falls in love, first and foremost, with Begin," who considered evangelicals "an asset" and was busy cultivating a relationship with them. While "he liked Sadat," one must always remember that "he was obviously much more in love with Begin." Falwell said Begin was "a real believer" and a "religious person" who believed in the Bible. Prior

to Begin, “Israel was controlled essentially by leftist elites that were socialists, and certainly secular, and they were not religious in any shape or form” (2023).

Sadat seemed to be well aware of Falwell and his delegation’s friendship with the State of Israel, and with Begin in particular, because at the end of his meetings with the delegation, he sent them on his own presidential plane to Israel by way of Jordan with a message for Begin. The message was the subject of local news reports in Israel, both in English and in Hebrew, and a transcript of the meeting Falwell and his delegation had with Begin includes the message they were asked to pass to the Israeli prime minister.

According to the transcript of the meeting, Falwell began by saying to Begin,

> Mr. Prime Minister, we represent a group of Americans called Evangelicals. We are conservative Christians in America who accept the Bible to be the inspired, infallible Word of God. We are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose death, burial, and resurrection we have accepted as our atonement for sin and acceptance into the family of God. There are some 46 million evangelicals in America who are of like mind and faith. (Begin, 1978, p. 2)

Falwell then conveyed the multi-point message from the Egyptian president, emphasizing a proposed path to peace. Falwell and his delegation received a response from Begin, which they promised to deliver back to Sadat (pp. 1-14). Falwell spoke of traveling from Egypt, where he and his delegation had met Sadat on his veranda. Falwell found Sadat to have a “desire for peace,” and the Egyptian leader had asked Falwell to deliver “three basic things” (p. 3). More of the transcript reads:

> We came at the invitation of the Egyptian and Israeli governments, sponsored by those governments … first of all, finding out what is happening. We have no magic solutions, and we haven't come here as diplomats. We have come here as men of God to offer our prayers, our conciliatory efforts, and to communicate today to you our deep admiration and respect for you as Americans.
>
> We do believe this is God's land and we believe that you are God's people. And we are honored to be here.

> Our first visit was to Egypt, and the President was in Aswan. We were flown down to Aswan, where we met with President Sadat on the veranda of the rest home there. We had a very delightful time with him, and I must say that we were very impressed with his warmness—his warmth, his sincerity—and his expressed desire for peace, all of which you two have talked about in detail. In the course of our conversation he asked us to convey to you three basic things, and he did it very graciously and very respectfully.
>
> He asked us to reaffirm to you that he still very earnestly desires peace, and his efforts will continue in that direction. However, he, in expressing his concern over the Sinai matter, was very rigid in his statement regarding the settlements and security.
>
> He was pleased, he said, when you expressed to him that you were willing to give back the Sinai. He was displeased when he learned that the Israelis were going to provide the security. His words were, "This is a violation of my soil and my sovereignty."
>
> He seemed to indicate that he would not negotiate that point. Secondly, he said that he felt that there could be no peace unless the Palestinian problem was resolved. However, on a positive note, he offered no prescription for the solution. He made no demands. He simply very ambitiously said, "The situation must be solved," but he made no demands or prescriptive requests of you.
>
> Finally, he advised us that he planned to build, on Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Law, three buildings; a church, a synagogue, and a mosque. And he asked us to ask your cooperation. And that is the message from President Sadat. (Begin, 1978, pp. 2-5)

After thanking Falwell and expressing gratitude for “Christians who understand our cause” and “support it wholeheartedly.” Begin conveyed a point-by-point response for Falwell and his delegation to give to Sadat. It reads in part,

> Thank you very much for this message. It is most interesting … I am very grateful to you for the words you uttered in recognition for the Book of Books, which we all believe. It is the source of our life, its etern(al). Some people accuse me, perhaps some of my colleagues that we quote the Bible from time to time. What an accusation. I only can say I plead guilty but I don't apologize! No reason to. It is really the Book which gave us our life—not only our past, also our future. And I am very happy that we have full understanding from it. (I have) met many times—people of good will—Christians who understand our cause, support it wholeheartedly, and therefore, I want to express to you my gratitude.

And now as far as the problem of peace is concerned. If you would go now to Cairo, I would give you also a message to President Sadat. And I would say like this: I remember and I will not forget the wonderful days in Jerusalem and in Ismailia … President Sadat made in November only a short remark, almost by the word of mouth, that he will be prepared to come even to Jerusalem and speak … in order to avoid one casualty amongst his sons. His sons referred to soldiers of the Egyptian. I read about it the following day. I took the time to read it. And every day, I sent another invitation to President Sadat to come. Ultimately, through the good offices of the American ambassador, I got the question (answered) whether I can send him a formal, written invitation. Of course, I said, and I sent him such a very cordial invitation. And that is how President Sadat came here, addressed the Knesset.

I had with him a long talk of several hours. The atmosphere was wonderful in Jerusalem, created both by President Sadat and by our government and people. First of all, we said to each other, "no more war" and secondly, which is very important to stress, "we have differences of opinion but we shall negotiate." That was the summing up, actually, between President Sadat and myself of the Jerusalem meeting, which was absolutely positive.

As a result, the government of Israel elaborated and produced a peace plan. It was praised in the United States; I brought it in December to President Carter; I showed it also to ranking Senators; went then to Britain, and then I went to Ismailia, and in Ismailia, we had a wonderful conference and meeting—it was even a meeting of minds. We understood each other; we consulted each other; we agreed that two committees be formed, joint Egyptian-Israeli committees (one was) political and a military one to deal with us how to achieve peace.

So my first message would be to President Sadat … that the days of Jerusalem and of Ismailia will always be with me and I will not forget them. They were good days for Egypt, for Israel, for mankind, and for peace. The difficulties arose later.... I must dwell on them, because they explain then what the difficulties are now. I hope there will be others, but if President Sadat is rigid on the problem of the settlements, I have to explain why we asked to negotiate; why he shouldn't say non-negotiable, as we do not say non-negotiable. If I may ask you to turn around (and look at a map). The settlements for the Israelis are in this region of the Sinai Peninsula. It is a very small area, as you can see, in comparison with the Sinai Peninsula.

For the sake of peace, we suggested to President Sadat that after a certain transient period … what we suggested is … to make things simple … that in these two very small areas there should be united … I start from the south because there was war after war as a result of the illegal, illegitimate closure of the Tehran Straits and in 1956 there was a war and in 1967, ten years later, there was a war only because we were denied access to our harbor through the Straits, which of course are an international waterway.

Now we were more forthcoming than any other government of my country in the past, because since 1968 (the) decision was … taken that that strip of land in the south which I showed, should be under Israeli control and we gave it up.… The whole Sinai peninsula ultimately will go to Egypt, and there will be two zones of United Nations, and actually, I already explained the vital issue of the future and national security in the south should be always free access to the international waterway.

And I (will) only add a few words about the zone in the north because we had permanent bloodshed from the Gaza Strip for 19 years. We want to stop it, we want to make peace, and we want to prevent any so-called government into the Gaza Strip and it would be, no doubt—were it not for that little zone which should be under the United Nations control; and then, if that shouldn't exist with our settlements there is no transgression, there is no trespassing; it is a matter of making sure that peace will be real.

Everybody will understand that after all the wars we won't have real peace…we want it with all our hearts. When I brought this proposal to President Sadat, including demilitarization, etc., he really told me that for him to accept that proposal about the zone in the north … we shall negotiate. Now, as you yourself said, on this he has got a rigid position and said that cannot be negotiated!

I can't agree to that. It should be negotiated, because the peace plan is forthcoming, everybody admitted it, and to say to us, just dismantle them and go away and connection with the Gaza Strip would be a very dangerous matter to the future. There is reason to believe that peace wouldn't be assured at all. So what I would like to say here, in response to the message: let us negotiate … start negotiating—through the military committee in Cairo; through the political committee in Jerusalem—but those indecisions were suddenly interrupted by the decision of President Sadat and the Egyptian delegation was withdrawn.…

In my second letter to President Sadat, we exchange lately letters, I suggested to him to renew those two committees and the negotiations within the framework of those two committees. Let us sit down, let us reason together, let us look for a way; I think this is the reasonable way to do and to try to achieve an agreement—all over the world this is the way in the matter to achieve an agreement. You can't say to one side, you give me certain things and no negotiations—that is not the way to try to find out the place for an agreement. It's a completely different matter, which, of course, cannot be accepted.

Here I would like to explain to you, ladies and gentlemen, is the difficulty. We want to negotiate negotiations without interruption, and also I explained how vital this issue is to us when you point the way of our future security.… You said that President Sadat spoke to you about what he termed the Palestinian question, and then you used the word, that he was *ambiguous* about (it)…. I can only assure you that there is no ambiguity whatsoever. We cannot even afford ambiguity on this issue. And here I must again, with your permission, go to the map. This is Samaria

> and Judaea—those are two names that are very well known to you from the Bible. As you can see, this is the mountains, this is the Valley of Jordan.…
>
> My message to President Sadat, if you have an opportunity to send it back, is, let us renew the spirit of the days of Jerusalem and Ismailia when we met and shook hands and decided to call each other "my friend" … I didn't change. I am the same man … (they say) you go back to those lines preceding the six day war and then you will have peace. We will not. In those lines, and with those demands, we will have the opposite of peace. There will be permanent bloodshed…. I am very grateful to you for your message. I had to analyze the statement made by President Sadat to me. I also send him greetings and it is my suggestion that we renew first the spirit of Jerusalem and Ismailia. (Begin, 1978)

Falwell's meeting with Begin occurred on April 18, 1978 (Begin, 1978). The meeting was the subject of media attention before and after. Prior to it, *The Jerusalem Post* ran an article anticipating the meeting with Begin scheduled for the next day: "A top-level mission of American Evangelical leaders is to deliver tomorrow a special verbal message from Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Prime Minister Menahem Begin, reportedly stressing Sadat's desire to pursue a peaceful settlement with Israel." The article also included the fact that "Rev. Billy Zeoli and Pastor Jerry Falwell, arrived yesterday in Jerusalem via the Allenby Bridge from Amman," and that "they were flown to Amman from Aswan in an Egyptian presidential plane" after the group "met with President Sadat for nearly one hour on Saturday." It mentioned the group had also met with the Crown Prince of Jordan between the two countries and would be seeing in Israel the country's president and various other political officials, and would be planting trees, visiting settlements in the Jordan Valley, and meeting with Christian leaders from Southern Lebanon ("U.S. Evangelical Group Brings Message from Sadat to Begin," 1978).

The *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* reported on the actual meeting:

> Egyptian President Anwar Sadat is concerned over Israeli settlements in the Sinai, he told a group of American Evangelical ministers with whom he met a few days ago. They met with Premier Menachem Begin in Jerusalem today. Sadat warned that Israel's security in the Sinai could not be based on these settlements, which he said were erected on "his soil" and violated "his sovereignty." However, the ministers noted that Sadat was a "very warm and very gracious" person and

> "conciliatory in nature." The 10-member fact-finding and good-will mission arrived in Jerusalem yesterday via the Allenby Bridge over the Jordan River after a visit to Amman and Cairo. The delegation, headed by Rev. Billy Zeoli and Pastor Jerry Falwell, met Saturday with Sadat and Sunday with Crown Prince Hassan and leading members of the Jordanian government. Delegates handed Begin a special written message from Sadat. Following the meeting with Begin, Falwell told newsmen Sadat had told them the Israeli settlements in the Sinai would not be acceptable "for it was a violation of his land and his sovereignty." Sadat said, "There must be a solution to the Palestinian problem before there can be a lasting peace," Falwell said. However, the delegation members noted, Sadat had been careful not to make any demands that could be construed as hardline or prescriptive, "something that Israel could not live with." "Personally," said Falwell, "I was impressed that Sadat was a warm and generous person, and after listening to him I am convinced that a peace settlement is attainable." The delegation conveyed to Begin yet another wish expressed by Sadat—to build "a church, a synagogue and a mosque" on top of Mt. Sinai. In response, Begin assured his guests that "everything is negotiable." According to the ministers, Begin said: "If we want to have peace, we cannot say that anything is not negotiable. Let's keep talking, let's keep the doors open." Begin, they noted, "indicated to us just as Mr. Sadat did—we want peace—and we believe both of them." (Sedan, 1978)

*The Jerusalem Post* reported in similar detail.

> After a whirlwind Middle East tour that included meetings with Prime Minister Begin, Egyptian President Sadat, and Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan, a group of American Evangelical leaders have concluded that peace will best be achieved without undue American pressure or intervention. "We have asked for a meeting with President Carter next week," Dr. Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia, told reporters yesterday. "If he receives us, I'll tell him that progress is being made in peace efforts, and that as little intervention as possible from the outside is the best way to help it along." Dr. Falwell, who appears on 500 U.S. radio stations daily and 300 TV stations weekly preaching spiritual messages, said he hoped that the U.S. government would "not be a party to any pressure that could create peace that is not lasting, equitable and scriptural." He said he'd tell Carter not to expect an "instant cure" to Arab-Israeli troubles. The tour of nine prominent Evangelicals and their wives originated in Washington, when they met a top Egyptian official while attending a national religious broadcasting convention. After contacting the various countries' representatives, they were invited to tour as guests of the governments. From a tape recording of Sadat's hour-long meeting with them last Friday, *The Jerusalem Post* learned that the Egyptian President remains adamant about his refusal to yield an inch of land in Sinai or to allow Israel settlements there. "Sinai is mine: it is a fact around the world," Sadat told the Evangelicals. "Whenever (Israel is) ready to recognize the concept of my (peace) initiative, I am ready to continue (negotiations), but not at the expense of my land and my sovereignty." That was one of the messages that Sadat asked the Christian leaders to bring orally to Premier Begin, whom they saw yesterday morning. He also thanks the American

people for “helping” him re-open the Suez Canal and for granting economic aid that in 1980 will total $1 billion a year, he said. Dr. Ralph Wilkerson, pastor of Melody Land in Anaheim, California, told reporters that he had the feeling, from various discussion, that “we’ll see the beginning of great changes in attitudes within the next 30 days.” The Rev. Billy Zeoli of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who was President Ford’s spiritual advisor, said that they all felt a “sense of destiny” in all of their meetings. The Evangelicals called Begin an extremely “charming and gracious” man who was committed to peace. He asked them to go back to Egypt and make Sadat understand that Egypt must continue to want to negotiate with Israel on almost any point. “An end to talking,” they quoted Begin as saying, “(it) is dangerous.” (Siegel, 1978)

Sadat praises Israeli agricultural technology

Panel to work out postal pay hikes

U.S. Evangelical group brings message from Sadat to Begin

U.S. Evangelicals to work for lasting, ‘scriptural’ peace

CE TO INDUSTRIAL PEACE

***Images Courtesy of the National Archives of Israel***

Ron Godwin, who met with more than 30 heads of state alongside Falwell, as well as countless members of Congress, was Falwell’s go-to liaison for many of his secular, governmental relationships. Others dealt with the preachers in Falwell’s network, but Godwin’s job was to deal with the people who were most relevant to the public square, political or not. This included many in the Jewish community, and he conveyed a sense of the chemistry between Falwell and Begin and some of what made Begin a different type of figure to evangelicals.

“I always thought, and I talked to Jerry Falwell about this, that Begin was wise in a way that so many other Jewish political leaders were not in that he recognized the value of being friendly with and toward Christians, especially conservative Christians,” Godwin noted.

> There are so many Jews who consider any act of friendship as a devious way to try and convert Jews, being a dishonest effort, and Begin didn't think that at all. No, we need friends. We need friends in America. We need friends in America who can influence the American government. He was just pragmatic. I saw him as being a very savvy internationalist and a pragmatist. (2023)

In the transcript of the meeting with evangelicals, Begin speaks of the Bible as a point of connection between himself, Israel, and the delegation. Yehuda Avner was an Israeli diplomat and advisor to four prime ministers, including Begin, and he dedicated an entire chapter to Begin's weekly Bible study in his landmark book *The Prime Ministers* (2010, p. 395).

Godwin also reflected upon a little-appreciated characteristic of Falwell when he spoke about the meetings in Egypt and Israel in 1978. "It reminds me of a personal characteristic I often saw of Dr. Falwell, who liked to keep his accounts short. He used to always say, 'It was always best to have a healing than to live with strained relationships,' so I believe Dr. Falwell was also saying to Begin, 'You've got to find a way to bring peace.' It was not just blindly saying 'I support you against all those rotten Arabs.'" Godwin recalled the friendships that Falwell himself eventually enjoyed with the likes of Jesse Jackson, Sr. and Larry Flynt (2023).

How relevant was the evangelical delegation, led by Falwell, to the ultimate outcome of the Camp David Accords? The puzzle may be best considered based upon two factors: the timing of the negotiations and the motives of Sadat, Begin, and others in hosting the delegation.

## Was the Evangelical Visit Ultimately Relevant to the Camp David Accords?

Sadat had faced growing global opposition from other Arab and Islamic communities almost from the moment he announced his intention to visit Jerusalem, and that opposition not only grew but also became violent. The CIA notified the White House and Department of State on November 19, 1977, that they assessed the "Arab reaction to Sadat's visit has become increasingly hostile and violent: anti-Sadat demonstrations broke out in Beirut and several Libyan

cities; Egypt Air offices were bombed in Beirut and Damascus; Palestinian demonstrators attacked the Egyptian Embassy in Athens, killing at least one person; and one was killed and two wounded in a rocket attack on the Egyptian Embassy in Beirut" (Agency, 2013, p. 38). However, the situation was always complex; a few days later, the CIA said, "The Saudis reportedly will quietly support Sadat's initiative" (p. 39).

On the very week of Falwell's visit to Egypt and to Israel, the CIA noted "the emergence in recent weeks of a movement in Israel that favors more flexible peace proposals" (Agency, 2013, p. 45). Just a few days after Falwell's visit to Jerusalem, Carter received a letter from Sadat conveying virtually the same points as those Sadat had conveyed to Falwell for Begin (Sadat, 1978). What is especially interesting is that this piece of communication from Sadat occurred after a five-month lapse in any communication among the parties, as documented in the Camp David Accords Archive at the Jimmy Carter Library (Elzy, 2003). Exactly eight days after Sadat's letter, Carter met with Begin at the White House with the intent of conveying some of the same points (Brzezinski, 1978). This meeting was a breakthrough, considering that there were no direct talks between Israel and Egypt from January 1978 until the Leeds Castle meeting in July 1978 (Dayan, 1981, p. 138).

Therefore, at a minimum, the April 1978 evangelical delegation entered into the story at a moment when the negotiations between the parties were close to being stalled and just before they began to thaw. Dayan recalled his impression of Carter's hope for peace during his March 1978 visit to Washington, D.C. "He had been previously full of hope; he now despaired of any progress towards the attainment of peace between Israel and Egypt" (p. 125). In fact, on March 13, 1978, the CIA assessed that "the Egyptian-Israeli talks are foundering" because they had "been unable to bridge their differences over the principles that govern a comprehensive

settlement; the two sides have also lost momentum toward an agreement on Sinai arrangements" (Agency, 2013, p. 44).

Amid all of this, the White House hosted Sadat at Camp David in February 1978. Quandt described the context for the meeting:

> By the end of '77, (Sadat) was actually pretty down in the dumps and he was telling us that he was afraid this whole initiative of his was going to fail. He was being criticized in the Arab world for having broken ranks, and he broke off talks that we were holding in December of '77 with the Israelis. We entered 1978 with a sense that this was falling apart, so Carter invited Sadat to Camp David in February of 1978. People don't pay much attention to it because it wasn't very public, but we actually spent two or three days there more or less alone … strategizing with the Egyptians and Sadat with Carter, about how we could make use of Sadat's quite considerable popularity in American public opinion, to create a setting in which we would be able to say that the negotiations were going to resume. Sadat had accepted two or three very hard issues on his side, and we were pretty sure we would go through the same process with the Israelis and get them to confront several of the hard issues on their side. And then, if necessary, which we thought it probably would be, we would announce that the Egyptians had accepted X, Y, and Z, and the Israelis had not yet come all that way, and the time had come for a kind of overt discussion of these remaining issues. This was quite consciously intended to put pressure on Begin, who was quite clear in saying all he was prepared for was an Egyptian-Israeli deal, nothing to do with the Palestinians, nothing to do with the West Bank, nothing to do with Jerusalem. From our standpoint, that just wasn't going to be enough, or at least we thought we could do better. So, we went through something of a charade with Sadat, getting him to appeal to American public opinion. April was right in the midst of the beginning of this attempt to kind of rebuild momentum on the peace front. (Quandt, 2024)

Attentiveness toward Sadat in American public opinion was not a new phenomenon. The Department of State historian's archives include notes from a December 1977 meeting with another Arab ambassador in Washington, D.C., during which Dr. Brzezinski *"*called President Sadat the first Arab leader to recognize the importance of public opinion in both the United States and Israel," so much so that "Sadat is now the most popular Arab leader in the United States; by contrast, Syria is making it easy for Israel to remain in a rigid position" (Howard, 2013, p. 793). This was not just Brzezinski's view but Sadat's own view, according to notes from a meeting the

Secretary of State had with Sadat in Cairo on December 10. "(Sadat) thought that he had made an impact on Israeli and American public opinion" (Howard, 2013, p. 810). Three days after the meeting, on December 13, the Secretary of State made this very point in a meeting in Damascus with the Syrian foreign minister; he stated that "a recent public opinion poll … showed for the first time (that) 52% of the American public believed that the Arabs want peace, whereas only 48% believe that Israel is especially anxious for peace" (Howard, 2013, p. 845).

So, managing domestic public opinion in the United States was, in a sense, already a tool both in Sadat and the Carter administration's public policy toolbelt. In the consequential meeting in February 1978 at Camp David, the Vice President even told Sadat:

> I think you know that there have been few things in my political career that have made more of an impression than your historic trip to Jerusalem. You swept aside barriers in a simple human stroke. You risked your career and your life to change a framework of 30 years, and the reaction here was indescribable. More people watched your speech to the Knesset than almost anything in American history. In 48 hours, in the minds of Americans, you became one of the world's leading apostles of peace and statesmen.

President Carter concurred,

> I won't mislead you, but without you and your support in American public opinion, I can't force Israel to change. With your support, I can put pressure on Israel to change. This is a new thing. Many American Jewish leaders see Secretary Vance and Vice President Mondale. There is a growing feeling among American Jews that Begin, and the Israeli government, are becoming an obstacle to peace over the settlement issue. In a showdown between me and Begin, it would be hard for American Jews not to support Begin. My hope has been that some key Congressional leaders and American Jewish leaders could join me to press Begin on a settlement. He might accept a five-year plan and then grant the West Bank residents a voice in their future. If you take a position of no more political or military talks, he'll say that Israel wants to continue the talks, and this will set us back and will remove the argument that Israel does not want peace. I have asked for a summary of poll data on the American image of Egypt and of you. This can give an indication of what you can do to help, and I want to go over it with you. (Howard, 2013, pp. 995-996)

Carter wrote a letter to Sadat on March 4 and asked the Ambassador of the United States in Cairo to accompany the written letter with an additional few spoken comments, which included these words:

> The President is deeply appreciative of the restraint and statesmanship President Sadat has shown in this delicate period as we approach a very important and difficult meeting with Begin. Sadat's action in reopening direct communication has been helpful in bolstering awareness in the United States of Sadat's dedication to a continued and successful negotiation. Sadat's important interview with James Reston, published on page 1 of the March 9 *New York Times,* was a most noteworthy and impressive contribution at this juncture…. If he has an occasion in the next few days to make a public statement, it could be helpful to our common purposes if he reaffirmed his commitment to (United Nations resolution) 242 as the basis for negotiation, stressing both the principle of withdrawal on all fronts and the concomitant commitment to peace and security for Israel that constitute essential elements of 242. (Howard, 2013, p. 1055)

This remained a key part of the Carter administration's strategy. In a meeting in Kent, England, between the Egyptian foreign minister and the secretary of state, the conversation focused on the Saudis. The American and Egyptian participants each discussed how the Saudis did not understand "how to mold U.S. public opinion" and that Egypt would "help the United States to consolidate its public opinion" (Howard, 2013, p. 1224).

Ehud Yaari recalled this period in his interactions with Sadat and suggested that the evangelical delegation related to it.

> I would bet that the whole move was aimed at becoming a close ally of the United States. That's the move. It started in '71 when Sadat came to power and realized that Egypt was bankrupt and the Soviet Union was not to be depended upon.… He went to war in October '73. It's not a war that is intended to destroy the State of Israel; it's a war which is intended to force negotiations…. He was seeking ways to America. He had success with Kissinger. He was looking for who has influence. The Jewish Lobby? Yes. He kept asking me for contacts to AIPAC and people like this all the time. The evangelicals, other groups in America, by all means, let me see them, and let's mobilize them because I need America.… For America, the evangelicals are a power and a political power, (so) let's talk to them. I remember him seeking contact with the Greek lobby, which was then very close with the

> Armenian lobby. He wanted everything, so I would say it was in this context. (Yaari, 2023a)

Quandt agreed that in this context, Sadat was "willing to court American evangelical leaders because he knew that they were pro-Israeli…. I think that Sadat realized that these were important constituents for Begin. So, in that context, I was called, at some point, it might have been by one of these evangelical leaders, who had just met with Sadat" (Quandt 2024). Telhami saw it the same way. "I think that if you look at America at that time and now … the reality is that you've got a substantial percentage of America that is religious, and a substantial part of that is evangelical.… You cannot ignore it"(2023).

Telhami continued,

> Sadat was clever. He understood that if he's going to reach out to America, (if) he's going to put his eggs in that American basket—(and) he had made that decision in the early 70s. He made the decision that the future of world politics was on the side of the U.S., not on the side of the Soviet Union—(then) he needed to really reorient his foreign policy. Even aside from Israel, but especially because of Israel, he needed to reorient, and he understood that in order to do that, you have to do outreach to the centers of power in America, and that meant the media. He became good friends with Walter Cronkite and Barbara Walters, and he understood that religious leaders are part of the American influence groups.… At the very same time, you had televangelists' media expanding and, therefore, reaching out to more people. (2023)

By July 1978, Sadat seemed confident that he had leverage over the Americans himself as he threatened to leave behind the peace process: "If my decision embarrasses (Carter), I have no other choice, and let the American public opinion note what the US is doing militarily for Israel" (Howard, 2013, p. 1265). In August 1978, the situation started to change, as cited in the notes from a meeting with Secretary Vance and the Egyptian foreign minister in Alexandria,

> The real question, however, is the American position. If it is clear, people will start to know that Israel is intransigent. International public opinion in the West is prepared. Time is very important. We can't let Israel change public opinion against Egypt. They are starting to do that now. The *Secretary* said that the attacks

> on Begin were hurting Sadat's reputation in the United States. Mr. *Kamil* said that Secretary Vance might mention this to the President." (p. 1299)

The Israeli prime minister, however, seemed to do the same. In the way Sadat saw Falwell and his fellow evangelicals as allies, so did Begin:

> Begin knew that he had a great force of support in the evangelical fundamentalist world in the United States…. Jerry (Falwell) was…at the top of that, and so maybe in Begin's mind—I never discussed it with Begin—but in Begin's mind, there was this idea that "Look, I don't have to capitulate to Jimmy Carter. I'm going to give something, but by giving into autonomy, I'm going to avoid the creation of a Palestinian state at this time, and I know I have the support of Dr. Falwell and his followers." So, I think that played a role. Maybe indirectly, but I'm pretty sure that was in Begin's mind. (Stroeber, 2023)

***Image Courtesy of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library***

Falwell was an ally of Begin who felt close to Sadat, and he remained supportive of the Camp David Accords, giving the initiative a certain nonpartisan veneer. It was one of the only things about which Falwell agreed with Carter. Falwell felt an affinity for, if not a closeness to, Sadat, but his loyalty toward Israel was clear throughout the process. One of the more interesting examples of Falwell's loyalty to Israel was the maneuvering Falwell engaged in to manage the one member of his delegation who was not a Zionist, John Warwick Montgomery. The night before the meeting with Begin in Jerusalem, Falwell huddled with a few members of the delegation to discuss, "What are we going to do with this guy?" The result was that it "was

agreed upon to try to keep Montgomery in the back of the room away from, as far away from the Prime Minister as possible because Begin tended to listen and respond to the people sitting closest to him. It was agreed that somehow Montgomery would be the last person to get in." The only non-Christian delegate was a large man, a local Jewish businessperson from Lynchburg, Virginia, named William Menge, and he was "stationed … at the doorway of the office … and somehow he kept Montgomery from coming in, and Montgomery was one of the last people in the door" (Stroeber, 2023). Montgomery's animosity toward Israel never changed; over forty years later, he is still a fierce, self-described anti-Zionist (Montgomery, 2023).

Although a key part of Sadat's message given to Begin via Falwell related to Israeli settlements, Stroeber noted that Falwell became a key supporter of the settlement movement. He said, "The settlement movement at that time was in its infancy, and Jerry was one of the people who, in my opinion, based upon my knowledge and experience, played a major role in the development of several Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria." Stroeber also noted that the mayor of the settlement city of Ariel, Ron Nachman, became a key figure influencing Falwell in this regard (Stroeber, 2023).

## Who Influenced Whom?

The visit by the evangelical delegation to Egypt, Jordan, and Israel clearly had an enduring impact on all the parties involved.

Falwell maintained his positive view of Sadat and of the Camp David Accords, almost as if he perceived himself as a stakeholder in the ultimate peace accord. Jewish author Merrill Simon conducted a book-length question-and-answer interview with Falwell and, in 1984, published the verbatim answers to his many questions. It is, in fact, a transcript of an elite interview. The audience is Jewish and Christian, and Falwell compliments his domestic political nemesis Carter because of the Camp David Accords: "The Camp David Accords were negotiated

in good faith by men of goodwill. The courage of Sadat and Begin, with the support of President Carter, brought about the best agreement which could have been achieved given the conditions in the world in general and in the region in particular" (p. 81). In the same interview, Falwell politely criticized the incumbent president—and his staunch ally—Ronald Reagan on no less than three occasions, and each related to Reagan's Middle East policy vis-à-vis Israel (pp. 68-69, 83, 92-93). While Falwell was Carter's most visible religious critic, Falwell commended the former president for the Camp David Accords (p.81) and during the Reagan administration, nonetheless. Carter's only references to Falwell in his memoirs and personal diary are negative (Carter, 1995). Yet, even willing to make peace with Falwell posthumously, Carter delivered the commencement address on May 19, 2018, at Liberty University (Carter, 2018).

In a 1981 sermon delivered to his nationally televised audience, Falwell began to illustrate what it meant to be a "champion," and he chose a peculiar example. It was not his friend Menachem Begin; Falwell preached of Anwar Sadat:

> I want you to be a champion, and a champion is somebody who can stand alone. A champion is somebody who, no matter what it costs him, will take his stand. I think of President Anwar Sadat. This world lost a great man when those dirty assassins shot him down because he stood against the warmongers in Libya and Syria and most of the Arab states. (Falwell, 1981c)

Those comments originated in a chapel message delivered at Liberty University, where the word "champion" has a particular lore. Every Liberty University student is encouraged to become a champion for Christ. It is the university's long-standing motto.

Ironically, after Sadat's assassination George McGovern wrote a raging letter to the editor in the Washington Post where he inferred Sadat's assassination was partly the result of Ronald Reagan and Begin "dragging their feet on the Camp David Process," but McGovern also had his sights on Falwell. His concern for the future of Israel, and for regional peace was punctuated by Begin's alliance with "right-wing political preacher Falwell whose political network helped to

defeat some of Israel's strongest supporters in the U.S. Senate, including the recent chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Frank Church" (Washington, 1981). Three years later, the Washington Post cited an Israeli government official who said, "Some great friends of Israel like Frank Church (the late Democratic Senator from Idaho) have been run out of Congress by these people…they have been on the hit lists of the religious right" (Walsh, 1984).

Falwell maintained his staunch support of the settlement movement, but one senses a certain sophistication and nuance in his remarks to Simon in 1984. "Israel must maintain control over all the land west of the Jordan River to meet her future security needs," yet "the government of Israel, as represented by its people, will have to decide what is best. It is a democratic society and the final decision will be the result of the democratic process within Israel" (p. 82).

# CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDY "OSLO ACCORDS"

A case study of the Oslo Accords was conducted utilizing a combination of interviews with elite, living figures who were eyewitnesses or participants in the negotiations of the Accords or of the events surrounding or leading up to the negotiations. Reviewing historical documents related to the Oslo Accords is challenging given that many of the Norwegian files have been lost entirely (Waage, 2008) and many key figures are elderly or deceased. However, one can review first-hand accounts published in the memoirs of negotiators (Abbas, 1997; Hirschfeld, 2014; Qurie, 2006) and other interviews (Cohen-Almagor, 2018). The Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qurie, known commonly as "Abu Alaa," includes detailed notes and transcripts from the meetings in his personal memoirs (Qurie, 2006). The case study begins with an attempt to benchmark "relevancy" as an operative term in this research before it summarizes the relevancy of religion, in particular to the Oslo process. The study concludes by analyzing the most significant evangelical aspects of the Oslo process.

## Providing Relevant Context to the Oslo Accords

The Oslo process developed in a new world emerging after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Cold War was over. The United States had not only emerged from the Cold War as the world's sole superpower but had inflicted a swift, devastating blow on Saddam Hussein after his invasion of Kuwait. At this point, Yair Hirschfeld recalled, "There (was) total American leadership in the world, and there (was) the need to stabilize and build peace in the Middle East from the global point of view" (2023). The leader of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, was also especially weak given the fact that he had aligned himself with Iraq during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and that, in turn, merited the ire of his own Arab compatriots throughout much of the Muslim world.

Arab countries were canceling their financial support of Arafat, even if they maintained some political support (2023).

Meanwhile, the nascent U.S. peace process was floundering, and in Israel, it was apparent that Yitzhak Rabin would soon become prime minister. That is when Israel's deputy foreign minister, Yossi Beilin, came up with a plan "to have a back channel" without consulting with either Shimon Peres or Yitzhak Rabin. "Backchannel diplomacy" refers to "official negotiations conducted in secret among the parties to a dispute or even between a part and a third party intervenor, which complement front channels and are potentially at variance with declared policies" (Wanis-St. John, 2001, p. xiii).

Beilin believed the disagreements between the Israelis and Palestinians were solvable, and they could be negotiated by the parties in a third location and signed by Rabin and Arafat in Washington. Beilin checked with the Norwegian government officials, and they agreed to host the delegations in Norway. Beilin believed "Arafat would search a way out of this corner and that one of the options would be the peace process with the Israelis, especially since in 1988 they formally changed their own strategy and supported the two-state solution" (Beilin, 2024).

Faisal Husseini led the Palestinian delegation, and Yair Hirschfeld led the Israeli delegation. The meetings, which were secret but also ostensibly an academic exercise among scholars, allowed plausible deniability for the participants who were not officially representing their respective governments. The initiative was fully funded by the Norwegians (Hirschfeld, 2023). Mahmoud Abbas ("Abu Mazen") later reflected on the utility of the process, "If the dialogue proved fruitful, we would have achieved something we were after, and if it turned out to be just small talk with an academic, this could not hurt us. So we could lose nothing" (Waage, 2006, p. 56).

The entire process is succinctly summarized in an official history of the Oslo Process published by the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, a study that emerged from dozens of interviews involving most of the key participants in the Oslo process:

> For the two Israelis, the three Palestinians and the various Norwegians gathered at Borregaard Manor on a cold winter's day on 20 January 1993, this was, if not the complete truth, at least close to it. The various individuals who met in Sarpsborg that day had only been working on Israeli–Palestinian peace issues to a limited and varying degree. They were not the most experienced and knowledgeable figures that would normally handle peace issues for their respective governments. They had traveled to Sarpsborg in order to participate in an informal dialogue group. This secret meeting in Norway set off the first phase in the Oslo Back Channel. After five exploratory rounds of pre-negotiations, the meetings in Norway ended with a joint Israeli—Palestinian document—the Sarpsborg Declaration of Principles (DoP)—and a decision by Israel to upgrade the negotiations in May 1993. Until then, the Israeli government was not formally a part of the process. (Waage, 2006, p. 51)

The Track II process was successful in that it transitioned to official negotiations, but it also complicated the process. Although Hirschfeld made the decision "at the beginning" to draw "red lines" (2023), the Track II process led to the perception of agreement on areas which were not acceptable to the official Israeli negotiators.

> There is little doubt that Hirschfeld and Pundik played a vital role in establishing the Oslo channel. It is difficult to conceive how the transition from Israel's perception of the PLO as demons into suitable partners for negotiations could have occurred without the two academics, with their long-standing contact with Palestinians, serving as a bridge between the two sides. At the same time, however, their role proved to be more extensive than warranted. The Sarpsborg DOP … ultimately served as a basis for the Oslo accord. Yet, it contained elements that were contrary to Israeli policy, forcing official Israeli negotiators Savir and Singer to expend limited political capital and make concessions in the ensuing four months just to retract some of the unacceptable elements to which the academics had agreed." (Makovsky, 1996)

"The various phases and various parties eventually led to the emergence of the Oslo Accords," but according to Telhami, "The process was taking place when you have two secular groups in power:" the PLO and Rabin's government (2023). Meanwhile, the PLO was competing against the rise of Hamas, and Israel's secular government had a coalition that was threatened by

the rise of certain religious political forces in Israel (Telhami, 2023). Ehud Yaari agreed, “Arafat wanted to get back to the land … Rabin and Peres wanted the deal because they didn’t trust the local population as partners….I failed to see any religious motivation that played there” (Yaari, 2023a). In other words, it was all politics.

Later, Hirschfeld would say repeatedly that the “exclusion of religion” was the biggest mistake of the Oslo process (Hirschfeld, 2023; "Key Oslo Accords architect says exclusion of religion was ‘a mistake’," 2016).

## The Role of Religion in the Oslo Accords

It actually seems to have taken intentionality to persist in excluding religion from the Oslo negotiations. It wasn’t happenstance. It was a strategy. In the Sarpsborg Declaration of Principles, religion only occurs once, and the reference is hardly what one might expect. The Sarpsborg principles suggest that “Jerusalem voters will vote in the al-Aqsa mosque and in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher” (Hirschfeld, 2014, p. 114). Mahmoud Abbas mentions this in his memoirs (1997, p. 134). That was it. Religion is transparently absent from virtually all the contemporaneous or historical literature published about the actual Oslo Accords negotiation except for passing discussions related to Jerusalem, which the negotiators seemed intent on avoiding, given its complexities.

Abu Alaa became the principal negotiator on behalf of the Palestinians, and he includes in his memoir the entire confidential memo he sent to Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas after a two-and-a-half-hour conversation he held with Yair Hirschfeld in London at the Ritz Hotel in December 1992. The meeting occurred in the pre-negotiations leading into the Oslo process, and the memo includes a great deal of specific detail about the substance of their planned informal discussions, including expectations from the PLO. Despite all of the details included in the

memo, religion doesn't appear in the document whatsoever (Qurie, 2006, pp. 45-50). Religion also doesn't appear among the "ten guiding principles" Abu Alaa brought from the PLO in Tunis as the starting point for negotiations in Norway (p. 59-60). Abu Alaa also includes a transcript of his opening remarks from the first Oslo meeting in his memoir. Those remarks are incredibly detailed and speak of refugees, settlements, a withdrawal from Gaza, the official recognition of the PLO as the peace partner, confidence-building measures for the economy, housing, water issues, the environment, security, and a general steering committee, but there isn't even an allusion to the religious factors involved in Israeli and Palestinian peacemaking (pp.63-66). The status of Jerusalem was discussed at length between Hirschfeld and Abu Alaa at the first Oslo meeting. The conclusion among them was that anything related to the city of Jerusalem should be dealt with later in a bilateral context rather than in the Oslo multilateral forum because Hirschfeld was concerned it might lead to the fall of the Israeli government if the discussions ever became public (p.70). Discussions around Jerusalem emerged repeatedly throughout the latter period of the negotiations, but the "preservation of the religious heritage of the city" only appears in one clause of one sentence of a memo written by Abu Alaa in response to Israeli negotiator Uri Savir (p. 183).

Once the final Declaration of Principles was agreed upon an emotion filled private signing ceremony was held in Oslo where the speakers included Abu Alaa, Uri Savir and Terje Larsen. Alaa includes the transcript of the remarks in his memoirs and none of the speakers referenced anything related to religion including any customary reference to the Holy Land or prayers for peace (pp. 249-253).

Norway's chief mediator seemed to view the negotiations through a lens of revolutionary politics from the beginning, for when Terje Larsen met with Arafat in Tunis to get his blessing for the Oslo negotiations, he seemed to win over Arafat with an unusual—if startling—

observation, "(Larsen) sat down and addressed the Chairman in complimentary terms, saying that he was an admirer of great political personalities such as Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro and that he placed Chairman Arafat on par with these figures" (p. 51). This comports with Larsen's own worldview as described by one documentarian as "a classic Scandinavian product of the 60's, a democratic left baby boomer who cut his ideological teeth on the whole idea of changing the world" (*Terje Rød-Larsen - 'Mr Peace' in the Middle East*, 1994).

The Norwegian disregard for the religious aspect of the conflict was despite the fact that "both the Christian community and the socialists in the governing Labour Party" in Norway historically "tended to view the State of Israel through the eyeglass of religion" (Waage, 2006, p. 32), but it was only after the Oslo Accords Declaration of Principles was signed that anyone seemed to care about it. Moreover, it still was not the government, as much as the Church of Norway.

In May 1995, Norwegian Lutheran pastor Trond Bakkevig was asked by the General Secretary of the Church of Norway's Council on Ecumenical and International Affairs to "go to Jerusalem and organize dialogue between religious leaders" (Bakkevig, 2022, p. 91). The initiative came after Arafat, Rabin, and Peres had received the Nobel Peace Prize, and the various political actors suddenly came to realize "the Oslo Agreements included almost nothing about religion" because "they concluded that religious leaders could spoil any peace agreement." Indeed, religious factions on the right in Israel and among the Islamists in Hamas were already at work trying to spoil the progress made at peace. Bakkevig's "mandate was never spelled out any more than (the general secretary's) simple question" (p. 92).

Bakkevig then engaged with the Chief Sephardic Rabbi of Israel, Bakshi-Doron, and the Palestinian leader, Faisal Husseini. He used existing relationships, first with Rabbi Michael Melchior, who had been the Chief Rabbi of Norway, and then through Norwegian diplomats, to

meet Husseini. Rabbi Melchior believed profoundly in the religious dynamic as an indispensable component of peacemaking. Reflecting back on lessons from the post-Oslo process, he said,

> People are looking towards religion as a main source of identity and legitimization. More and more are practicing, and therefore, to think that you can solve conflicts without taking into account the religious aspects of the conflict is stupid. We could act as if religion was not a component here; we could ignore it as if it would disappear. What happened, of course, was that it didn't go away; it blew up in our faces repeatedly. (Melchior, 2015)

Together, the three leaders agreed to the following guidelines, "Our meetings are not negotiations, our meetings are of an academic nature (i.e., exploratory), sessions are closed and there will be no publicity before or after, (and) themes can be: the land … Jerusalem, religious dimensions of peace, Abraham (and) Holy sites" (Bakkevig, 2022, p. 93). There are clear parallels between the Track II religious initiative undertaken by Bakkevig and the original Oslo process, but organizing the initial meeting and preserving the all-important component of confidentiality was more challenging from the beginning. Secrecy may actually have been more important for the religious leaders than the political actors, but secrecy was much harder to maintain.

In fact, it took two years to organize the first meeting at which Bakkevig recalled Husseini saying, "It is a city of two peoples and three religions. It is a city where politics and religion are two sides of the same coin." The next morning, "Israeli newspapers had reports about it," and Bakkevig thought it was all over. To his surprise, the group continued to meet for many years in various forms, prompting initiatives such as the Chief Rabbi of Israel sending a Ramadan message to Arafat (pp. 93-94). During the 2000 Camp David meetings, the Chief Rabbinate issued a statement which included this groundbreaking paragraph:

> Sites which are precious and holy for Muslims, Christians, and Jews should not be the cause of strife and conflict, nor become weapons in the hands of those who battle the peacemakers. We must preserve and respect the current status and

> sanctity of the Holy Temple Mount, which is known to others as the area of the al-Aqsa Mosque. We must be wary of every change in its status, for it could desecrate the sanctity of the place and lead to the kind of bloodshed that is opposed by every religion and civilized society. (p 94)

In 2002, the group had a productive meeting in Alexandria, Egypt, only to come back to the Holy Land to endure many months of violent conflict, often bathed in religious rhetoric and violent religious extremism,

> A Palestinian bomber killed himself and 29 dinner guests, who were celebrating a Jewish holiday; Israel launched the Operation Defensive Shield, which meant reoccupation of all major cities in the West Bank including President Arafat's compound in Ramallah; another Palestinian killed 16 persons in Haifa; in the Israeli reoccupation of a Jenin refugee camp, 15 Israeli soldiers and 53 Palestinians were killed; and in Bethlehem, in April, gunmen took refuge in the Nativity Church after a battle with Israeli soldiers. In the course of two years, 1,599 Palestinians and 577 Israelis had been killed. (p. 95)

After the election of new chief rabbis, the effort led to the establishment of the public and formal Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, for which Bakkevig continued to serve as secretary. The council's purpose was defined as:

1. To maintain a permanent relationship and open channels of communication between religious leaders in the Holy Land in order for them to reflect together as believers on the main issues of conflict between our peoples.
2. To sustain close working relationships with the political leadership of the Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority, especially on issues related to the role of religion and religious communities.
3. To engage with our respective communities in the Holy Land in order to promote peace and justice. The Council seeks to foster, on grassroots and national levels, an environment of mutual acceptance and respect.
4. To engage with religious leaders internationally particularly in the Middle East, in pursuit of a durable and just peace in the Holy Land. (p. 96)

Bakkevig saw three areas as most relevant for his Track II efforts post-Oslo: land, Holy Sites, access to holy places, concept of the other, and acting together (Bakkevig, 2015, pp. 104-105). The following is an example of a pledge that was signed by all participants in the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land:

> *We declare that* (1) the meetings we have held, and wish to hold in the future, of leaders and representatives of the Religious Institutions and Establishments in the Holy Land are of urgent and utmost importance for a better future for our communities, locally and regionally, in order to achieve just peace and coexistence among the peoples of the region; (2) our private meetings have helped us find a formula for mutual dialogue; (3) statements published by us should be objective in order to improve the atmosphere of the dialogue.
>
> *Accordingly each one of us declares* (1) my statements emphasize the value of our collective effort and the fact that we are working to improve the atmosphere of dialogue between one another; (2) we shall avoid any public statement that could endanger our ability to work together; (3) collectively, we shall discuss the details of those matters upon which we most deeply disagree in our private meetings and not in public; (4) we shall emphasize the importance of our dialogue and the good will between us despite our differences.
>
> *Each one of us will exercise the right to* acknowledge that there are issues upon which we disagree, but at the same time assert that we are discussing these issues with mutual respect in an effort to reduce disagreement and promote dialogue towards comprehensive, just peace in the region and not declaring disagreement publicly so that we can achieve the aim of the dialogue.
>
> *We confirm that each one of us is committed to our endeavor to* meet regularly in order to establish agreement and a shared agenda for discussion and action in the forthcoming months. (Bakkevig, 2015, pp. 101-102)

Bakkevig cited the biggest challenges as dealing with what he called the asymmetric nature of the conflict between the parties, several specific incidences when either the Palestinian or Israeli representatives made incendiary comments in public, or when the respective politics on each side of the conflict made it impossible to embark upon certain collaborative efforts. The last meeting of the initiative was in May 2017 with Jason Greenblatt, President Trump's envoy for Middle East peace (pp. 97-100). Bakkevig is now retired, but when reflecting on the lessons of the process, among them is his observation that he wishes he would have played less of a role as moderator, forcing the various stakeholders to take more ownership of the meetings, initiatives and Council (Bakkevig, 2023).

Yet one must remember that the religious track established by the Norwegians was not the first relevant religious effort. Religious actors were active from the very beginning of the Oslo

Accords when "religion played a major role in opposition and in resistance against Oslo, against peace, against reconciliation—on both sides" (Yaari, 2023a). "Regretfully," Beilin recalled, "I must admit that the contribution of the religious forces, generally speaking, was … not to calm the situation, not to fight for reconciliation, but the other way around" (2024). Hirschfeld reflected the mindset of those who tried to oppose the process: "If I'm religious … I may believe that God has ordained me to be the sovereign of Judea and Samaria, or if I'm a religious Muslim, then this is obviously Dar al-Islam, and this has to be an Islamic country. I cannot contradict the will of God" (Hirschfeld, 2023).

Uri Savir was director general of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Israel during the Oslo process. Savir and Joel Singer became the official negotiators when the talks were upgraded. He recalls the challenge of religious extremism post-Oslo in his memoir, though he seemed to believe that making peace alone would help manage the forces of extremism, "The ability to make peace—to compromise and coexist—will determine our ability to resist religious fundamentalism and nationalist fanaticism" (1998, p. 2). The absence of religion in the Oslo negotiations does not mean that the Israelis in the Labor government were disinterested entirely in the religious institutions. On the contrary, Savir recounts conversations with Simon Peres about Israel's commitment to Palestinian "social, cultural and religious institutions," which they had "an interest in seeing develop" (p. 72). The negotiators not only were not unaware of these dynamics, but they understood them. They just chose to deprioritize them in the Oslo negotiations, and it eventually had catastrophic consequences post-Oslo. In his memoir reflecting on the signing ceremony in 1993 at the White House, Uri Savir writes elegantly of the religious undertones of the opposition to the Oslo Accords that had already emerged,

> The Oslo Agreement was wedged between faith in an evolving new reality and ingrained suspicions and prejudices; between common pragmatic economic interests and traditional religious and cultural convictions. But the sharpest clash

> over Oslo was between the supporters of a delicate, intricately crafted peace process and its ideological and physical opponents; between two partners who had decided upon a division of assets as a strategic objective and forces that wanted to have it all; between those who wished to see the walls of hate crumble and those who saw in them a necessary protection of traditional values. Thus, on the day of the famous handshake, the fate of the Middle East was no longer in Oslo but in the laboratory of real life. (Savir, 1998, p. 87)

Savir is clear, "The terrorists were interested in blocking a political solution and perpetuating fear, anger, and despair in the service of religious fundamentalism" (1998, p. 277). Oslo was, to them, "a nightmare of ignominious compromise with an eternal enemy and a threat to a religious and social code fortified against outside influence" (p. 144). It wasn't just the terrorists or right-wing extremists either. Savir writes that one of the first challenges out of the gate after the Oslo Accords was organizing the security arrangements required at Christmas in coordination with the Palestinians; he recalls a moment of levity in a security meeting where one of the officials noted that "Jesus was born in Area A" (p. 250).

Ironically, despite Bellin's agnosticism toward religion in the Oslo process, he was one of the only labor leaders who temporarily considered an alliance with the National Religious Party in Israel in the aftermath of the assassination of Rabin and the rise of the religious right in Israel (p. 263). The May 1996 election, which led to the assumption of power by the "religious right" in Israel, was not just an anti-Oslo movement to Savir but "a sociocultural referendum" (p. 305). After Netanyahu assumed power, Savir met with the Palestinian negotiator, Abu Alaa. Savir had tendered his resignation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but he wasn't giving up on peace. He and Simon Peres were going to establish the Peres Center for Peace. Abu Alaa encouraged Savir to continue his efforts, and Savir encouraged Abu Alaa to do the same. Ironically, he said to Abu Alaa, "It is important to remember that if you make peace with a right-wing government, eighty to ninety percent of the Israeli people will support it. So you can't give up" (p. 309).

Perhaps the closest thing to a semi-official, contemporaneous religious component to the Oslo Accords process was when Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the then Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel and then head of the Council of Torah Sages, issued a religious ruling in 1993 that essentially said decisions about giving land for peace should be deferred to the military if they believed it would save Jewish lives. However, he recanted the ruling in 2005 during the Second Intifada (Shamah, 2013). Even so, the motivation for the religious ruling in 1993 may be considered principally political, as it allowed a one-vote majority in the Knesset to support the Oslo Accords (Yaari, 2023a).

While "Arafat was not motivated by religious conviction" (2023a), his competitors in Hamas opposed the Oslo Accords by violently refusing to accept Israel's right to exist, and, ironically, it was the Oslo Accord process itself that ultimately gave Hamas control of the Gaza Strip (Kristianasen, 1999). In addition to establishing an eastern border for Israel, a key goal of the Oslo Accords was to marginalize Hamas (Beilin, 2024) by strengthening an official Palestinian leadership. That goal failed catastrophically. The religious power of Hamas vis-à-vis the PLO is nearly absent from the contemporaneous discussions during the Oslo process. Hamas is seen through political lenses more than religious ones, despite its obvious Islamism. For "Arafat, the growing strength of the Islamist organizations in the Occupied Territories was another source of worry," and "it definitely increased Arafat's and the PLO's urgency to reach an agreement with Israel and thus secure the PLO's hegemony over its key constituency" (Waage, 2006, p. 57). In some sense, the Norwegians may have seen Hamas as an asset to help move Arafat toward peace.

***Image Courtesy of the General Press Office, the State of Israel***

**Jerry Falwell as a Proxy for Evangelicals and the Oslo Accords**

Less than one week after the signing of the Oslo Accords on the lawn of the White House, Falwell delivered his weekly Sunday morning sermon. The world had watched earlier in the week as the arch-terrorist Yasser Arafat recognized the State of Israel even as Israel recognized the PLO as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people. President Bill Clinton stood between the two as they shook hands on the White House lawn in view of the entire world. It was an occasion many in the world thought they would never see, especially Rabin and Arafat. It was virtually a political miracle. It was once unfathomable. It was an earthquake to a generation of entrenched views on the prospects of peace in the Middle East.

That Sunday, Falwell entitled his sermon, "I never thought I'd see the day." Like all of Falwell's sermons, it would be broadcast on national television via his "Old Time Gospel Hour" program. The introduction of his sermon went like this:

> I've been a Christian for 41.5 years….I never thought I'd live to see the PLO and Yasser Arafat and Israel and Prime Minister Rabin signing a treaty in which they

> recognized each other as legal entities. But, we all saw that happen just the other day. We all pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We believe in the Abrahamic Covenant: God blesses those who bless Israel and God curses those who curse Israel. But, having watched the history of Israel and the 4000-year war between the Jews and the Arabs, I never thought I'd see Yasser Arafat, a terrorist, and Prime Minister Rabin—or any Prime Minister—in which they jointly recognize each other and agree to cease hostilities. Now, only time will tell, but they did it. And we all should pray, and pray earnestly, that God will somehow keep his hand upon that treaty and that commitment. I never thought I would see United States congressmen seeking the signature of Yasser Arafat. They were clamoring for his signature. I wouldn't be caught in the same photo with the guy; I mean, his job has been killing women and children for years … a terrorist of the worst order. (Falwell, 1993)

The Liberty University student newspaper frequently covered Middle East issues, and the week after the signing of the Oslo Accords, an editorial in the Liberty University Champion newspaper was skeptical,

> Will peace ever come to the Middle East? We must be wary as developments continue to unfold, and these two heated rivals attempt a peaceful coexistence. However, as Christians, we need to look no further than the Scriptures to see that, in fact, the enmity between these people stretches back to the days of Isaac and will no doubt continue until Jesus returns. And what should the role of the United States be in this new venture? Both Arafat and Rabin commented that the United States should play a "responsible" role, perhaps acting as a buffer when, inevitably, problems do arise. What would this entail? Would shouldering the responsibility of policing these two nations require economic support and perhaps troop commitments? We remember all too vividly the grim picture of fallen U.S. Marines being removed from their obliterated bunker in Lebanon in the early days of the Reagan administration. Simply placed there as peacekeepers, their memory serves as a caution to future presidents who commit our troops to serve in these peacekeeping roles. But whatever the outcome of the agreement, world leaders must bear in mind that they are embroiling themselves in a struggle that spans a millennium and one that may decide the outcome of the present age. ("Promote Mid-East peace, keep the US out of region," 1993, p. 6)

Reporting on the Oslo accords, the Liberty Champion newspaper looked skeptically, "The peace plan is an admirable effort, but the sudden turn around in Yasser Arafat from murderous terrorist to calm peacemaker makes me believe things are not what they seem to be" (Redick, 1993, p. 6).

The Liberty University archives include only one example of Falwell himself using the phrase “Oslo Accords.” Five years after that sermon, in an edition of the “Falwell Fax” issued on May 15, 1998, he wrote about his friend, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu,

> I continue to support Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—now more than ever. However, he is a marked man and desperately needs our prayers. Not only is Mr. Netanyahu continuing to negotiate a peace settlement with the Palestinians, he now has American liberals, including the Clinton White House, demanding he make unnecessary concessions to the PLO. The Clinton White House has determined (who knows how?) that Israel must surrender an additional 13.1% of the West Bank to the Palestinians. This, says our White House, will ensure that the PLO adheres to old obligations to fight terrorism. But the PLO has a long history of ignoring so-called peace agreements—including both Oslo Accords. But remember, folks, the destruction of Israel remains in the PLO charter and Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists are elevated as heroes by PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat. In other words, the Palestinians will not rest until Israel is obliterated. Let us keep this blessed nation of destiny in our hearts and prayers. (Falwell, 1998)

Itamar Rabinovich was Israel’s chief negotiator with Syria before being appointed by Prime Minister Rabin as Israel’s ambassador to the United States in August 1993, just before the Oslo agreement was signed. Reflecting on the Oslo process and evangelicals, he said, “Throughout my experience in diplomatic negotiations, I did not encounter any evangelical or other religious activity" (Rabinovich, 2023). Beilin had a similar view. Speaking of evangelicals, he said, “I had no contact with them, really. They didn’t approach me. I didn’t approach them” (2024). Telhami explained why evangelicals might seem absent in the context of Oslo: “I think part of the problem for evangelicals around Oslo is that it would have entailed reaching out to the PLO, and the PLO was defined as a terrorist organization. And by then, the evangelical community was solidly behind Israel. It was hard to see how they were going to kind of do outreach to the PLO” (2023). However, it wasn’t just evangelical aversion to the PLO that excluded evangelicals from the conversation. There was also an aversion among the left in Israel to engaging with evangelicals.

In the Israeli National Archive, a 1995 memo that originated in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was addressed to Rabin's office suggested that the prime minister meet with Falwell during his upcoming visit to Israel. The memo noted that Falwell had not been vocal among those supporting the peace process because "in his opinion, Israel is making too great concessions," but "even if Jerry Falwell does not support the process, an effort should be made to bring him to a general statement of the merits of the process, which will undoubtedly have an important meaning for his followers." The memo noted that "Falwell is one of the top leaders of the evangelical right in the US, and his position is getting stronger" (Arnon, 1995).

Beilin did not recall such a memo or any suggestion that Rabin meet with Falwell, but he held nothing back when he learned it existed. "I hope that it was forged … maybe somebody suggested it, but I don't know about it; had I known about it, I would have been very much against it" (2024).

Interestingly, Arafat did reach out to Falwell. On one occasion, Falwell dispatched his deputy, Duke Westover, to meet with Arafat in Bethlehem in response to a letter from Arafat expressing gratitude for an annual Christmas program Falwell helped sponsor in Manger Square in Bethlehem (Westover, 2023). Westover took the opportunity to invite Arafat to the program and shared the Gospel message with him. Westover's subsequent engagement with other Palestinian officials on behalf of Falwell in Bethlehem also resulted in Falwell agreeing to provide annual full-tuition scholarships to Liberty University for a certain number of Christians from Bethlehem (2023).

Some argue that "the Oslo process failed, in part, because it was a secular peace plan imposed by secular leaders on a Holy Land, where large and influential minorities of both Jews and Palestinians are motivated by deeply held religious convictions" (Landau, 2003, p. 13). The first sentence of Bakkevig's published reflections on his efforts to salvage the religious

components post-Oslo encapsulates Landau's point, "Think of yourself positioned on a Friday, standing on the corner of what Christians call Via Dolorosa and what the Jews call ha-Gai Street and Palestinians call al-Wad street" (2022, p. 91).

Yet, Oslo had other enduring effects. It was undoubtedly a "historical breakthrough which opened up Israel to the world; it opened the way to peace with Jordan and to relations with India, with China, and it created a new reality—there were a lot of failures, but also it was a breakthrough" (Hirschfeld, 2023). It was the first peace since the Camp David Accords, and it was also challenging from the very beginning.

On the day of the signing ceremony of the Oslo Accords on the White House lawn, Ehud Yaari was covering the event for Israeli television, and he had an exclusive interview with President Bill Clinton. Clinton knew Yaari personally, and he was struck by what he perceived as a general pessimism in the demeanor of Israel's most well-known news personality, who was also a skilled Arabist. Yaari, after all, was a peacemaker himself, having played a key role in forging the peace between Israel and Egypt as a rare Israeli confidante to Anwar Sadat and his inner circle. Yaari met with Palestinians routinely, spoke Arabic, and believed peace was possible. This, however, seemed different to Yaari. This was not what he had witnessed between Egypt and Israel a generation before.

After the interview, Clinton asked Yaari to explain why he was so skeptical. Yaari answered, "I (have) not heard from Arafat what I had heard … from Sadat, 'no more war, no more bloodshed.'" Recounting the conversation on the 30th anniversary of the Oslo Accords, he reflected on a telling moment at the beginning of the implementation of Oslo:

> Arafat and his entourage were allowed to enter Israel in July 1994. When his convoy arrived from Egypt to the Rafah crossing, the Israelis quickly discovered that he was trying to smuggle in three major terrorists who Rabin had instructed him not to bring until further consultation. In fact, Arafat was sitting on one of them—Jihad Amarin—in the back seat of his black Mercedes. The second fellow

> was hiding in the boot and the third in the next car. Arafat claimed it was a "misunderstanding." (Yaari, 2023b)

Yaari called that moment "the real inauguration of the Oslo Accords" because countries can make peace with one another, but that does not mean they trust each other (2023b). Trust is sometimes the currency of religion.

Seven years later, at the end of the Clinton administration, the parties were still working on implementing the Oslo Accords. Virtually all the participants were different, with the exception of the Clinton administration negotiators, but the issues remained similar. They were still trying to get around to religion. It was in mid-December 2000 when the parties gathered at Camp David with the Americans to discuss Jerusalem. It didn't go well, "the discussion of Jerusalem … quickly deteriorated into a multi-party vein-popping screaming match, the worst that I had witnessed during the Camp David negotiations" (Grinstein & Afilalo, 2023, p. 143).

Reflecting on his administration's role in constructing Middle East peace after the Camp David meeting, President Clinton said in one of the final speeches of his administration on December 23, 2000, "I believe that this is the outline of a fair and lasting agreement. This is the best that I can do … I have taken this as far as I can" (p. vii).

# CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDY "ABRAHAM ACCORDS"

A case study was conducted of the Abraham Accords utilizing a combination of interviews with elite, living figures who were eyewitnesses or participants in the negotiations or the events surrounding or leading up to the negotiations, and the review of historical documents, including first-hand accounts published in memoirs of other eyewitnesses, the review of certain available government documents, and contemporaneous news reports contributed to the case study. The case study begins with an attempt to benchmark "relevancy," as an operative term in this research, before summarizing the relevancy of religion in particular in the process. The study concludes by analyzing the most significant evangelical aspects of the Abraham Accords process.

## Providing Relevant Context to the Abraham Accords

The first time an elected Israeli official discreetly met an Emirati government official was in 2001. Efraim Sneh was then Israel's Minister of Transportation, but his decorated political and military career included stints as the Deputy Minister of Defense and Minister of Health, and he had "commanded Israeli forces in south Lebanon as well headed the civil administration in the West Bank" (Policy, 2022). Sneh was an experienced official, and he was also lifelong friends with an American Jewish businessperson named Eli Epstein, who was working in Dubai in the energy sector.

Without permission from any of his colleagues in the Israeli government, Sneh called his friend Epstein because he knew Epstein had trusted relationships with those close to the rulers of the United Arab Emirates. Epstein agreed to reach out to his friend, prominent Emirati businessperson Mohamed Alabbar, to ask if he might consider discreetly meeting his other friend, Sneh. Allabar agreed, and the three arranged to meet secretly in Cyprus a few days later in September 2001. Sneh, while still not asking permission, informed the prime minister of Israel,

who volunteered security for Sneh's trip. The parties traveled separately via private planes to Cyprus. Sneh passed along a series of messages to the Emirati rulers via Alabbar with an invitation to continue the conversation. In December 2001, the ruler of Dubai, Mohammed bin Rashid, visited London and sent a message to Sneh that he wanted to see him. It was during Hanukkah, but Sneh went, lighting Hanukkah candles in his hotel room beforehand. The meeting was warm, and at the end, Sheikh Mohammed invited Sneh to visit Dubai himself. When the time came for the visit, Sheikh Mohammed sent his private jet to a military airbase near Amman, Jordan, to bring Sneh to him. Sneh crossed the Israeli border in a van with blacked-out windows driven by the security services before embarking upon a short flight to Dubai. When he arrived, he spent the first night in Alabbar's home. The next day he was given a tour of Dubai before being told he had a 4 pm meeting with Sheikh Mohammed. Sneh asked, "Who is picking me up?" He was told, "There will be a jeep outside at 4 pm." To Sneh's surprise, the jeep that picked him up was driven by Sheikh Mohammed himself, who then transferred him to a beautiful hotel. They walked together through the pool area before sitting outside underneath a pergola for their meeting. Sneh's only request was that no one be allowed to stay in the hotel rooms on each side of his hotel room. Sheikh Mohammed, in a grand act of Arab hospitality, instructed the hotelier that the entire floor should be vacant, along with the floor underneath Sneh's room and the floor above it (Sneh, 2024; Sneh & Epstein, 2024).

The first encounter between the Israelis and Emiratis was based upon the relationship that existed between a Jewish American businessperson and an Emirati businessperson. They were able to bring together the two countries based on their individual relationships with government officials. In effect, an informal Track II initiative started it all. It is also significant that the initial contact between the Israelis and Emiratis occurred in the immediate aftermath of the devastating

9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City. The meeting in Cyprus was on September 28, 2001 (Sneh, 2024).

Alabbar's hospitality extended to other groups of informal peacemakers, including the board and rabbis affiliated with the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center. In 2009, a delegation of Jewish-American businesspeople, Holocaust survivors, and board members of the Simon Wiesenthal Center were flown on a mission to the UAE on the private jet of Nelson Peltz, who was at the time chairman of the board of the Wiesenthal Center. The delegation was also hosted by Alabbar. Since most of the group members were observant and ate kosher, they had brought along their own chef. Delegation participants remember wonderful interactions between the head chef of the famed Burj Al Khalifa hotel and their kosher chef. Alabbar and the founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Rabbi Marvin Hier, became such close friends that Alabbar eventually attended the wedding of Hier's granddaughter in Jerusalem (Cooper, 2024).

Twenty years after Alabbar's introduction to Sneh, *Enigma* magazine profiled the Emirati tycoon for a cover story, and they asked him to describe himself in five words; he said, "fast, loyal, fearless, loving, and respectful" (Alabbar, 2021).

A senior Emirati figure, who was a personal eyewitness to virtually every moment of the negotiations and related activities that led up to the Abraham Accords, was asked about the importance of Track II diplomacy paving the way to eventual peace between Israel and the UAE. The person said, "It would have been harder without the Track II efforts, but not impossible" (Official, 2024). The person cited a number of other examples, especially when the Emiratis partnered with the United Nations ten years before the 2020 accords to establish the headquarters of a U.N. entity in the UAE; in so doing, they were required to welcome the Israelis. Later, Israeli athletes started to compete in the UAE. This was slowly accepted. At first, their national anthems were not played; then, the anthems were played to jeers, and eventually, they were not even

noticed. The UAE similarly used the World Expo 2020 as a means of soft power moving incrementally in the direction of normalization by agreeing from the onset to include an Israeli pavilion in the Expo (Engelland-Gay, 2023, p. 56).

"We were subconsciously sending a message" through these Track II activities, as the Emirati leadership itself was engaged in a "learning curve" and recognized that goodwill would not be instantaneous. So, the Emiratis took the approach of a "gradual glide path … getting the country and the people ready for the day" (Official, 2024) when Israel and the UAE would be at peace.

Through all of it, various interests were at play, from economic to security cooperation. Sneh was the most credible figure on the political left in Israel who first took a hardline on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Through the same Track II playbook, he also pursued potential allies for Israel against aggression from Iran throughout the Caucuses and Central Asia, including via Iran's neighbor Azerbaijan.

Robert Satloff saw the strategic component as the most critical of the Abraham Accords: "The Abraham Accords are essentially an economic and strategic set of agreements that were wrapped in a sort of a religious wrapping paper" (2024). Those agreements may have been easier since, as the Oslo negotiator Beilin noted, "If you don't have an enemy on the other side (of the negotiating table), and you don't have to negotiate with an enemy about borders, then it is normalization, but it isn't peace." Nonetheless, Beilin believes the Abraham Accords were "very, very important (Beilin, 2024). The Abraham Accords cannot be understood outside of their broader context, a context that was created over at least two decades.

## Religious Diplomacy as Relevant to the Abraham Accords

About 18 months before the announcement of the Abraham Accords, the president and cabinet of the UAE declared that the entire year would be celebrated as the "Year of Tolerance." The announcement was made "just days after it was revealed" that Pope Francis would be making a historic visit to the Emirates—the first papal visit to the Arabian peninsula, at least since the founding of Islam (Webster, 2019). The goal was "instilling values of tolerance," which would carry on "Sheikh Zayed's legacy and teachings." Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, the Crown Prince and soon president of the UAE, said, "The world needs universal human values to be promoted for the sake of future generations." The papal mass, the announcement said, would be held in the national stadium to an audience of 100,000 people (Webster, 2019).

Later that year, in conjunction with the United Nations General Assembly, the UAE announced the construction of a religious complex in Abu Dhabi that would house a mosque, church, and synagogue on the same piece of land. The synagogue would be the first purpose-built synagogue in the Gulf in more than a century (Tremblay & Gretener, 2019).

According to the Emirati figure who witnessed the Abraham Accords process, the interfaith efforts were actually "not linked to Israel." In fact,

> the Abrahamic Family House was an outcome of the Pope's visit. The original plan was just a church and a mosque, but the leadership of the UAE decided it was incomplete without a synagogue.… if the State of Israel didn't exist, we would have done all of this anyhow, as it reflected the founding principles of the UAE emerging from Sheikh Zayed. He was always respectful of others' value systems, separating religion from politics, and since our country was founded, everyone was welcomed. (Official, 2024)

In addition to reflecting the UAE's values, the grand interfaith gestures also happened in a region at a time not very far removed from the emergence and destruction of the ISIS caliphate, and the UAE had been working aggressively not only to maintain the separation of religion and politics in their own country but to combat the rise of religious extremism in neighboring

countries. They did so with Western partners, leaning upon their expertise, including through the establishment of a messaging center dedicated to this purpose (Dubai, 2016). Those efforts were also accelerated and expanded into neighboring countries during the emergence of the Trump administration, given its zero-tolerance policy for Islamic extremism ("Saudi to Open Militant-Monitoring Center During Trump Visit," 2017).

It is also the case that the UAE's emphasis on interfaith engagement, intentional or not, created a religious context for the negotiations between the United States, Israel, and the UAE, which were already beginning. Robert Greenway, a chief U.S. architect of the Abraham Accords who served as the senior Middle East official on the National Security Council, said, "You can use religion as a predicate for conflict or use it as a predicate for peace;" "we consciously decided to make it a predicate for peace," and "they consciously decided to make it a predicate for peace" (Greenway, 2024).

The U.S. Ambassador to the State of Israel, David Friedman, also found the role of religion as constructive during the course of his work.

> When I would meet with these people, and they found out that I was observant and that I believe in God and in the Bible, it opened up a channel that made it very easy to explain things. For example, you can talk until you're blue in the face about Judea and Samaria and the West Bank, whether the Palestinians should get this or that. You can talk about it from a geopolitical perspective and a security perspective, and this is what these guys talk about all day long, and it doesn't always resonate. I made the point, "What should we do? I'm a believer; you're a believer, and we both believe in the sanctity of the Old Testament. I don't believe in much beyond that, but we all sort of start with the same foundation. What should I do with Jerusalem and with Hebron? It's mostly Arab right now, mostly Palestinian, but Abraham purchased it to bury his wife, and then he was buried there. Then, Isaac was buried there, and we should just give it away? As Jews, these are the only fathers we have. We don't have Jesus. We don't have Muhammad. We have Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and here's where they're buried. We know this is where they're buried. The Bible says that this is where they're buried. How can I give this away? Especially given the covenant God made with the Jewish people … the Bible says that God's capital cannot be taken by conquest, it has to be bought peacefully." (Friedman, 2023)

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo experienced the same phenomena:

> Sometimes, you could reduce the tension by having what I call a layperson's conversation about the different theologies and acknowledging that they sit there; they sit in the background. They are very real. These Muslim leaders are people of faith every bit that you and I are. You can begin to accept that if you truly believe in religious tolerance and freedom, making peace with Arab nations is central to delivering on that (Pompeo, 2023a).

Whatever the ultimate relevance of religion to the economic and security agreements that constituted the Abraham Accords, Greenway noted, "They were termed the Abraham Accords for a reason … it was a conscious recognition … that there is, in fact, a common thread between the Accord member countries and a shared fate to a certain extent. I don't want to overexaggerate it, but I don't want to under exaggerate it either." On the same token, each country "made a conscious decision to (say) religion informs our people and our government in our policies and practices, but it doesn't determine them in the way that it has in the past" (Greenway, 2024).

The decision to integrate the religious elements actively in the policy planning also had the effect of introducing the Emiratis to American evangelical Christians.

## Evangelicals and the Abraham Accords

The UAE has thousands of evangelical expatriates as residents, and they worship in churches throughout the country. In fact, the history of evangelicals in the UAE goes back to the beginning of the country. Pat and Marian Kennedy were evangelical medical missionaries who arrived ten years before the establishment of the UAE. It took them fifteen hours to drive from Dubai over sand dunes to reach a city near the border of Oman called Al Ain in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Today, it takes about ninety minutes by car. There, they met the future founder of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed, who granted them permission to establish a makeshift maternity hospital among his tribe. The Kennedys were the first doctors in the region of Abu Dhabi. Their small maternity clinic was the first cement building in the Emirates, and it became the first hospital in

the country. Among those born into the hands of Mrs. Kennedy in that hospital in the desert are the UAE's current president, foreign minister, ambassador to the United States, and countless other senior figures who are members of the royal family. After he became president, bin Zayed was asked about the contribution of the Kennedy family to the success of the UAE. He said of the American evangelical couple, "They came to this country when there was no petrol, no hope of petrol, no Abu Dhabi Investment Authority—the sovereign wealth fund—but they came and settled, and now more than 100,000 children have been born at their hospital. We thank them for this" (Editors, 2019; Kennedy, 2008; United, 2021). Bin Zayed named his firstborn daughter after Mrs. Kennedy ("Kennedy, Dr. Marian," 2008).

Yet, it was not until 2018 that the UAE hosted an official delegation of American evangelical leaders to meet with the government. The visit was organized by the evangelical best-selling author Joel Rosenberg and included:

> Former U.S. Congresswoman Michele Bachmann; Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council and the Rev. Johnnie Moore, founder of The Kairos Company—both of whom serve as commissioners with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom; Larry Ross, founder of A. Larry Ross Communications in Texas; Dr. Mike Evans, founder of the Jerusalem Prayer Team; Dr. Jerry Johnson, president and CEO of National Religious Broadcasters (NRB); Michael D. Little, former president and CEO of The Christian Broadcasting Network; Ms. Kay Arthur, respected Bible teacher and founder of Precepts Ministries International; Pastor Skip Heitzig, senior pastor of Calvary Albuquerque in New Mexico; and Wayne Pederson, former president and CEO of the NRB and former president of Reach Beyond radio ministry.
> (Ross, 2018)

The delegation met with the UAE's foreign minister, minister of tolerance, counterterrorism officials, and religious leaders. A scheduled 30-minute greeting with the Crown Prince and soon-to-be president of the UAE, bin Zayed, turned into a two-hour meeting (Ross, 2018). The delegation visit came one year after a similar delegation had traveled to Egypt, where they became the first delegation of evangelicals to meet with Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sissi (Boorstein, 2017b).

***Images Courtesy of Joel C. Rosenberg***

The meeting with Sissi came about when Rosenberg, who now resides in Jerusalem, was visiting Washington, D.C., and had been invited to a think tank where the Egyptian president was speaking. Afterward, Rosenberg approached Sissi, who had mentioned that he had recently met with representatives of the World Council of Churches. Rosenberg asked whether he had ever met with evangelicals. Sissi said "no" but instructed an aide to be in touch. Rosenberg reached out, confirmed a visit, and invited a group of evangelicals to join him (Rosenberg, 2023). The visit was widely covered in the press, both in Egypt and in the United States (Boorstein, 2017b; "Evangelical Leaders Joel Rosenberg, Johnnie Moore, Michele Bachmann Meet with Egypt's President," 2017; Smith, 2017). The Egypt visit may have caught the attention of other leaders in the region, who extended an invitation for Rosenberg to bring a group to Abu Dhabi.

Rosenberg recalled the visit and the meeting with bin Zayed:

> Now, we had all agreed that, wow, this is interesting because this is the first country that we've been invited to that does not have a peace treaty with Israel … so we had all agreed as a group that we really ought to raise this issue of what evangelicals think about Israel before Mohammed bin Zayed. As head of the delegation, that sort of fell to me. We all had other questions we wanted to ask, including religious freedom questions, human rights, Iran threats, etc.…I gave three points to Mohammed bin Zayed.
>
> First, I said, "Your Excellency, I want you to know that the Bible commands us to love Israel. We love Israel, and we love Israel not for political reasons but for theological reasons because the Bible says that God loves Israel and the Jewish

> people and has a special plan for them. That's a deeply held theological position. It has political implications and ramifications, but it doesn't come from politics, so we can't be swayed off of it. It's deep in us. We don't have to agree with everything that an Israeli leader or government thinks or says or does, but we have a responsibility before God to stand with his chosen people, and we just want you to know that because we don't know what you know about evangelicals."
>
> Second, I said, "Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors. The Palestinians are our neighbors. We don't have a peace plan that we're here to pitch to you. It's a very complicated situation, obviously. But we want you to know it's not a zero-sum game for us biblically. Now, there are some evangelicals who are super pro-Israel and then dismissive or even disparaging of Palestinians; we understand that, but that's not a biblical response. We love the Palestinians, and we want them to be blessed. We're not sure how because they've rejected so many treaties over the years."
>
> "The third thing we want to tell you is that Psalm 122:6 commands us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and so we've been praying for, and Christians have been praying for decades and decades (for Jerusalem). We're grateful for the 1979 Camp David Accords and were grateful that in 1994, the late King Hussein courageously made peace with Israel. But you know, it's almost been a quarter of a century, an entire generation, and no other Arab leader has been ready to do that. We're interested because President Anwar Sadat didn't wait for a resolution to the Palestinian question before he made peace. We had the honor of actually going to the home of his widow, Jehan Sadat. She had us over for tea and talked to us in the very living room where Sadat planned the horrific attack against Israel on Yom Kippur, October 6, 1973, and the same living room where he planned the surprise visit to Jerusalem in September 1977, where he extended his hand for peace and spoke to the Knesset.…That set into motion the whole Camp David process. But we really haven't seen any other Arab leader do it, and we're just thinking, does the Arab world really have to wait for the Palestinians? Do they have a veto forever? We're just curious, who will be next?"
>
> We thought: let's just lay out what we believe, biblically, and let him respond, whatever he's going to say. (Rosenberg, 2023)

Multiple members of the delegation recalled the Crown Prince alluding to the UAE's plans, which seemed to signal they were ready to pursue peace with Israel if not actively pursuing it. Yet, the evangelicals made a definitive commitment not to share the contents of the meeting with anyone. "We were now walking out of the palace in Abu Dhabi with the biggest bombshell headline in a quarter of a century, but we couldn't tell anybody because we had given them our

word that this was an off-the-record meeting. Like good evangelicals, your yes is your yes, and your no is your no" (Rosenburg, 2023).

An evangelical, Michele Bachmann was the first Republican woman to run for the presidency and a former member of Congress. She remembered the two-hour meeting as a spiritual experience where she was overcome by an "overwhelming feeling of love" for the UAE, for the Crown Prince, and for his family. She said, "I felt absolute love for everyone in that nation. That's the love of the living God. That isn't just my human love … it was the love of God. I sensed that all throughout the trip, everywhere we went." (Bachmann, 2023)

Throughout the meeting, people were coming and going in the royal home where it was held. Bachmann was also given the opportunity to pray for a loved one of a member of the royal family who was ill, a young woman who "had been stricken with a very debilitating illness." Bachmann said,

> I remember that at that moment, my heart was just struck with compassion for her, and I recall asking His Highness if he would be willing, after she came in, if I could pray for her.… He had said, "Yes, please, pray." At that moment, because I'd asked, I prayed, and I asked for the Holy Spirit to come to that room and be present and be in our midst. I immediately sensed that the room was completely filled with the presence of God and that there was a freedom to pray. (2023)

Bachmann was struck by the "open heart" of the Emirati ruler and his advisors "toward those of us who were in the room," and "he was welcoming to everything that we said. That's because we had all prayed together even before we had gone into the meeting." (2023). Bachmann remembered

> we made it known that we, as evangelicals, were very supportive of Israel. We weren't objecting to Muslim nations. We weren't there to cast curses upon them. We were instead inviting them to be blessed. That's what we're trying to say. We wanted it as the United States has been blessed by blessing Israel. We wanted Muslim nations to be blessed as well.… I think out of everyone that had been with us on that trip, I was probably the one with the most experience in politics and the most background in politics and having been an elected leader, actually having served in government. But that wasn't the point that I saw in all of it. This wasn't about politics. (Bachmann, 2023)

After the meeting with the UAE Crown Prince, the group received word that they had received permission to go directly from Abu Dhabi to Riyadh to meet with the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman. The group spent nearly three hours with the young Saudi ruler just three weeks after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi had made the leader temporarily persona non grata to many world leaders (Boorstein, 2018a; Samuel, 2018). One year later, the delegation was invited to return to Saudi Arabia to continue the conversation with the Crown Prince, as with the visits to the UAE and Saudi Arabia before.

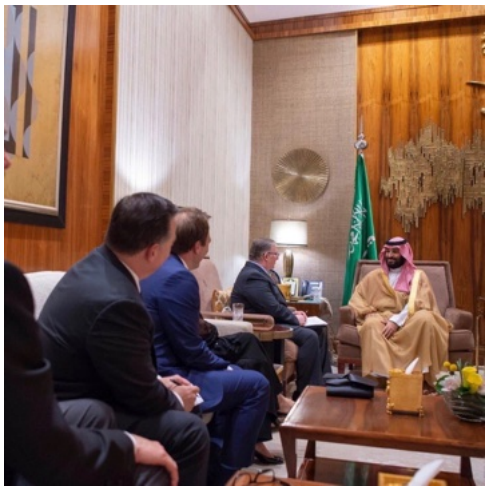

***Image Courtesy of the Saudi Press Agency***

Skip Heitzig, a megachurch pastor from Albuquerque, participated in the second delegation along with his wife, Lenya. The Middle East has been pivotal to both of their lives. Aside from countless trips to Israel, Heitzig once spent a year volunteering at a kibbutz where his first friend was an Arab Israeli. Mrs. Heitzig runs a non-profit that builds playgrounds in places riven by terrorism as a means of helping communities recover from the trauma. Heitzig said, “The fact that you have Muslim leaders inviting Christians to dialogue with them and to invite their prayers for them, that's groundbreaking. That's historic. That's a door that I think we needed to go through, and that's why I went through it.” (Heitzig, 2024)

Heitzig asked himself, “I often wonder, why would they even seek to have a meeting with or allow a meeting with evangelical Christians? All I can think of is in the arena of politics; you want to have as many friends as you can. Given the fact that there are so many evangelicals worldwide, but especially in America, that makes sense” (2024).

Heitzig was right to recognize the political element. That is how the Abraham Accords negotiators from the United States saw it. Rabbi Aryeh Lightstone, who served as the senior advisor to Ambassador David Friedman and who became one of those responsible for forging the people-to-people initiatives post-Accords, said,

> I think that these countries look and say, “How do I get closer to Washington D.C.? And the way I can get closer to Washington D.C., certainly under any Republican administration, is going to be through evangelical leaders.” … I also think that the people who held the largest grudge for radical Islam were the evangelical community, so they have the highest hurdle to leap over and appropriately so.… Evangelicals disproportionately serve in our military and disproportionately care for Israel. I think these countries wanted to introduce themselves to the evangelical leaders, or people who report to be evangelical leaders, and to say, “That is not us either.” (Lightstone, 2024)

Heitzig said the group was educated on the efforts by Arab Gulf states to combat terrorism and Islamic extremism:

> What was a shock to me is that I did not know that both in the UAE and in Saudi Arabia, that they had such active anti-terror programs. They took terrorism very, very seriously. What gripped me is whether we, in our country, could take terrorism that seriously? … You have Muslim countries, and we usually associate terrorism with the Muslim world. But here, you have Muslim leaders who are taking an active role in stamping it out, especially Islamic terrorism. That was shocking. (2024)

Yet, to Heitzig, what was most impactful was the moderate views toward Israel that all the Arab leaders seemed to express in ways the evangelicals had never heard before,

> The greatest takeaway I had was the desire of the governments to make a deal with Israel, to look to the future and let bygones be bygones … a desire to advance peace with Israel…. I didn't expect to hear that quick of a nod toward making that kind of peace. Now, we saw it happen with the Abraham Accords, but we saw it early on, heard about it early on (2024).

Robert Greenway saw the political element as well. “The one thing that everybody studies is American politics, right? Everybody (in the Middle East) has to understand American politics,” and then “they calibrate,” he said (Greenway, 2024). These evangelicals are indispensable to American political power, particularly, but not exclusively, among Republicans. With the evangelicals and the Middle East, however, there was also a different factor at play—a love for Israel. Greenway said,

> I think what came out of these meetings was (the understanding that) these people are with Israel. They're never going to leave Israel. It's a matter of belief. It's not a matter of politics. It’s not a matter of policy. They stand with Israel, and they are perhaps the dominant current force within Republican politics, so we should expect that if there were a Republican president, he would adopt their views because they're his base. (2024)

Over the course of the four years of the Trump administration, the delegations organized by Rosenberg, which included a core group of some of the president’s closest evangelical advisors, traveled to Egypt and Saudi Arabia twice. They also traveled to Jordan, Bahrain, and the UAE. On each occasion, they met with the heads of state, foreign ministers, and other government officials. They did it all without asking permission from the United States, but, in each circumstance, they diligently met with White House and Department of State officials, debriefing what they learned. In fact, the only circumstance when they broke their promise of not sharing the details from the meetings with Mohammed bin Salman and Mohammed bin Zayed was in face-to-face meetings with the president’s National Security Council or Secretary of State (Rosenberg, 2021, 2023). In addition to Rosenberg’s initiatives, other members of the group engaged in their own initiatives, such as the coordination of a public visit of a peace delegation from Bahrain to Jerusalem exactly three days after the president of the United States announced that the U.S. would be moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; the group had been offered permission by the king of Bahrain to travel to Israel and had been granted permission by the State of Israel to visit (Davidi, 2018; "HM King receives Reverend Johnnie Moore," 2021;

"Trump Adviser plays role in forging alliance between Israel and Bahrain," 2017). U.S. government officials looked favorably at the initiatives but also considered them a risk. One said plainly what many officials were thinking at the time, "(Our) number one (concern) was don't mess it up." His observation was prompted by a reason that might not have been obvious to all. "Everybody I met was a spectacular human being," he said but added that the evangelicals were so close to the administration that the Abraham Accords negotiators on the U.S. side believed that the evangelicals could inadvertently make promises that the governments might perceive as U.S. policy which would require officials to then "walk them back" (Lightstone, 2024).

While there were many Jewish groups traveling back and forth between Israel and the Gulf, the difference with the evangelicals was the sheer size of their political influence.

> Many religious leaders traveled the region prior to the Abraham Accords. Several of them purported to speak on behalf of either the USA or Israel. Often, this was not the case, and there was meaningful concern that they could be writing checks that someone else would have to cash. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm and representation that faith leaders, especially Evangelical faith leaders, had in the Trump administration contributed meaningfully to the momentum for the Accords and their implementation after signing. (Lightstone, 2024)

Several factors helped clear the fog when it came to policy: the core team of negotiators included the president's son-in-law, the team of U.S. negotiators was intentionally small, and they managed to conduct the entirety of their discussions with the UAE and other countries without a single leak (Greenway, 2024). In addition, many members of the president's cabinet were evangelicals, including the vice president and the secretary of state.

Secretary of State Pompeo also saw the groups favorably:

> These conversations were groundbreaking... For Christian leaders to travel to Arab countries and be welcomed by those Arab leaders … regardless of the conversation that was had, we were breaking ground by their presence (alone). The world took note of that. So, not only did the peoples in those countries observe that their leaders were meeting with Jewish leaders or Christian leaders, and not only did Israelis see that this was different in kind, in scale, not just a government official on a trade mission, but real people gathering to talk about faith and religious freedom—things that matter to individual humans inside of

> each of these countries. (It) was absolutely groundbreaking just in the fact that it didn't happen before … with the acknowledgment of the leaders and then publicity around it, that is at least acknowledgment that the meetings were taking place. From my perspective, as we were trying to build out a framework where this was possible, those meetings … without approval (at all), just people saying, "Hey, we'd like to come see you and talk to you" sent exactly the right message that I think gave Arab leaders, and frankly, the leadership in Israel as well, the confidence about the downside risks of normalization.… The downside risk was: you will lose your people, you will lose the Arab street or you will lose your capacity to build a coalition or whatever it may be. You'll have sacrificed too much. I think it provided a foundational level of commonality that gave those of us in government the space to build out what ultimately became the Abraham Accords. So this particular non-governmental set of contacts was 100% additive and important to the effort." (Pompeo, 2023a)

Interestingly, the UAE did not necessarily have normalization as the primary focus when it invited the American evangelicals to make an official visit in 2018. It was the first group of evangelicals officially invited to the Emirates, but a senior Emirati figure who witnessed the entire process leading the Abraham Accords said, "We always reach out to those we don't have links to," and when people want to visit, the general answer is "yes." In some cases, the official continued, "We want them to see who we actually are, what we actually believe," and that belief includes "our commitment to never link religion and politics. In fact, we are especially good at de-linking religion and politics" (Official, 2024).

However, the evangelicals who came to Abu Dhabi in 2018 had Israel also on their minds (Rosenberg, 2023). Jay Strack was an evangelical advisor to President Trump, who did not participate in the delegations but spent more than 30 years traveling throughout the Middle East. His first trip to Israel was right after his conversion, and he met Menachem Begin in Jerusalem when he was only 24 years old. Strack is a Christian Zionist who has led Arab students in an annual leadership retreat in Jordan for more than 20 years. Recently, he started doing the same in Egypt. Strack said one of the bridge-building lessons he has learned is, "In the room, in the deal. Out of the room, out of the deal" (Strack, 2023).

Bachmann said, “I have no way of knowing if that meeting played into the passage of the Abraham Accords or not, but I do know that it was a profoundly impactful meeting. What I remember from that day is that, first of all, we were welcomed, which was, in and of itself, a major breakthrough” (2023). Rosenberg agreed, “I don't want to overstate the role of evangelicals, but I believe in the power of prayer and sometimes having advanced intelligence of what someone wants to do, and seeing all the obstacles in front of them, gives you more knowledge, and you can pray in a more specific way” (2023). Reflected Pompeo, “I can't think of a time when it (the evangelical presence in the region) wasn't enormously beneficial; it was beneficial.” (2023a).

## Evangelicals, the Abraham Accords, and Settlements

The best argument for how evangelicals were ultimately relevant to the ultimate consummation of the Abraham Accords has to do with settlements and whether the evangelicals slightly moderated the domestic political environment in the U.S. when it came to a pause on Israel’s stated plan to exercise sovereignty over portions of the West Bank.

Rosenberg remembered a meeting at the White House with a senior negotiator, Jason Greenblatt, where the White House was assessing evangelical views on a potential peace effort:

> Reverend (John) Hagee was the first to speak and almost everyone after him noted that Jerusalem is a redline. Do not divide Jerusalem, and do not create a Palestinian state. This will be terrible. When it got around to me, I said, “I agree with those positions. Because, Jason, I know you're Orthodox Jewish, I'm an evangelical. When I look at my favorite book of the Bible, the Book of Joel, in chapter three in the English version, it says that God is going to judge all the nations that divide his land. I don't believe in a Palestinian state. I believe in Palestine autonomy but not an actual state that would have sovereignty and the ability to wage war against Israel and so forth. But, I want to say this to you and to my colleagues: there are things I can't say, but in traveling in the region, I have a sense that there are Arab countries in the Middle East, particularly in the Gulf, that are leaning towards making peace with Israel, and they're looking for an opportunity. I am certain that the Palestinian leadership will reject whatever you, Jason, and the president and Jared Kushner, and the team put together. Anything

> you say, the answer will be "no." But, I still think you should do it because the Arab world needs to see the Palestinian leadership say "no" again. At that moment, I believe the door is open to the greatest new set of peace deals in the history of the region. I want to just say to my colleagues I have no fear that Mahmoud Abbas is going to seize a Trump plan and go, "Aha! He's going to divide Jerusalem and bring all the refugees back and give me a Palestinian state." So, I want to say to you all, my brothers and sisters in Christ, let's give the president a little bit of leeway here. (Rosenberg, 2023)

Immediately after that meeting, Rosenberg went to have lunch with his longtime friend, Vice President Mike Pence, in the White House mess. Rosenberg had met Pence, Pompeo, the King of Jordan, multiple CIA directors, and others because they had read his popular fiction novels. After about a two-hour lunch, Pence invited Rosenberg to join him in the Oval Office.

> He invited me to come meet with President Trump in the Oval Office, and it just happened to be that Secretary Pompeo and John Bolton were there too, and we had this very similar kind of conversation.… As evangelicals, we certainly weren't playing an official role. Nobody told us to go do these things … but we had an extraordinarily rare opportunity outside of Jared Kushner and the president, vice president, and the secretary of state to know that (leaders in the region) were looking for a window … looking for the moment, and we wanted to pray, give (them) the space, and we wanted to encourage our evangelical brothers not to inadvertently complicate the road. (Rosenberg, 2023)

Rosenberg had the UAE on his mind; he and the entire delegation believed that it would be the next nation to normalize relations with Israel (2023). The normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE—and subsequently Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan—happened within the context of the Netanyahu government setting a July 1, 2020, deadline for the exercise of sovereignty over (or annexing) portions of the West Bank. That is when the UAE ambassador to the U.S., Yousef Al Otaiba, wrote a groundbreaking editorial in Hebrew in Israel's most widely read daily paper, *Yedioth Ahronoth* (Otaiba, 2020b).


מיוחד: לראשונה שגריר איחוד האמירויות בארה"ב כותב מאמר לישראלים

יוסף אל־עוטייבה

# או סיפוח או נורמליזציה


בלעדי בכיר באיחוד האמירויות במאמר לידיעות אחרונות

# "אי אפשר לספח - ולהמשיך לקוות לקשר טוב עם העולם הערבי"

יוסף אל־עוטייבה, השגריר בארה"ב של איחוד האמירויות - שנמצאת בקשר קרוב עם ישראל - מזהיר במאמר ראשון מסוגו לציונות ישראלי: "הסיפוח יתפוך על ראשן את כל השאיפות הישראליות לקשרי ביטחון, כלכלה ותרבות משופרים עם העולם הערבי ואיחוד האמירויות" ● עמ' 2

נחום ברנע

## גולד ב'ן ביולי

עמית סגל

## קשה בסיפוח

***Images are Screenshots***

In June, the UAE embassy in the U.S. also published the editorial in English on its website:

> Recently, Israeli leaders have promoted excited talk about normalization of relations with the United Arab Emirates and other Arab states. But Israeli plans for annexation and talk of normalization are a contradiction. A unilateral and deliberate act, annexation is the illegal seizure of Palestinian land. It defies the Arab—and indeed the international—consensus on the Palestinian right to self-determination. It will ignite violence and rouse extremists. It will send shock waves around the region, especially in Jordan whose stability—often taken for granted—benefits the entire region, particularly Israel. For years, the UAE has been an unfailing supporter of Middle East peace. We have promoted engagement and conflict reduction, helped to create incentives—carrots rather than sticks— and focused attention on the collective benefits for all parties. We have consistently and actively opposed violence on all sides: We designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization, condemned Hamas incitement, and denounced Israeli provocations. All the time, we remain an ardent advocate for the Palestinian people and a long-time champion of the Arab Peace Initiative. We have conducted quiet diplomacy and sent very public signals to help shift the dynamics and promote the possible. I was one of three Arab Ambassadors in the East Room of the White House when President Trump unveiled his Middle East peace proposal in January. I worked closely with the Obama Administration too, including on a plan for confidence building measures that would provide substantial benefits to Israel—improved links with the Arab states—in return for greater autonomy for and investment in Palestine. Annexation will certainly and immediately upend Israeli aspirations for improved security, economic and cultural ties with the Arab world and with UAE. With the region's two most capable militaries, common concerns about terrorism and aggression, and a deep and long relationship with the United States, the UAE and Israel could form closer and more effective security cooperation. As the two most advanced and diversified economies in the region, expanded business and financial ties could accelerate growth and stability across the Middle East. Our shared interests around climate change, water and food security, technology and advanced science could

> spur greater innovation and collaboration. As a global airline, logistics, educational, media and cultural hub, the UAE could be an open gateway connecting Israelis to the region and the world. Annexation will also harden Arab views of Israel just when Emirati initiatives have been opening the space for cultural exchange and broader understanding of Israel and Judaism. The UAE has encouraged Israelis to think about the upside of more open and normal links. And we have done the same among Emiratis and with Arabs more broadly. For example, Israel has been invited to participate in Dubai's World Expo now planned for next year. Israeli diplomats have an ongoing presence in Abu Dhabi at the headquarters of the United Nations International Renewable Energy Agency. The Louvre Abu Dhabi prominently displays side-by-side a seventh-century Quran, a Gothic Bible, and a 15th-century Yemeni Torah in a permanent exhibit about universal religions and civilization. After Pope Francis' historic visit last year to the UAE and his meeting with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, we announced the establishment of an Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi where a Mosque, Church and Synagogue will be co-located in the same complex. Just last month, a new kosher caterer launched in Dubai to serve the growing Jewish community, the first new community in the Arab world in more than a century. These are the carrots—the incentives, the upsides—for Israel. Greater security. Direct links. Expanded markets. Growing acceptance. This is what normal could be. Normal is not annexation. Instead, annexation is a misguided provocation of another order. And continued talk of normalization would be just mistaken hope for better relations with the Arab states. In the UAE and across much of the Arab world, we would like to believe Israel is an opportunity, not an enemy. We face too many common dangers and see the great potential of warmer ties. Israel's decision on annexation will be an unmistakable signal of whether it sees it the same way. (Otaiba, 2020a)

On September 15, 2020, agreements between the U.S., Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain—Saudi Arabia's close ally and nearest neighbor—were signed on the lawn of the White House. The Emiratis had managed to stop Israel from annexation and, in so doing, brought Bahrain into the peace agreement. The New York Times reported that Netanyahu had "abruptly walked away" from his annexation plan (Halbfinger, 2020).

***Image Courtesy of the White House Press Office***

Later, Ambassador Otaiba told an online event hosted by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, "When the Abraham Accords were announced, everybody … looked through their own lens.… The truth is that the Abraham Accords were about preventing annexation. The reason it happened, the way it happened, at the time it happened, was to prevent annexation" (Magid, 2021). The senior Emirati figure who was an eyewitness to the normalization process said, "Of the six Arab states which have made peace with Israel, the UAE was the only one to get something for the Palestinians" (Official, 2024).

The evangelicals who had been shuttling from one country to the next in the Middle East had anticipated a window of opportunity opening for a U.S.-brokered peace between Israel and the UAE, but no one seemed to anticipate that the window would depend upon suspending if temporarily, Israel's ambitions to exercise more control over the biblical heartland, especially the New Testament Judea and Samaria.

Yet, even the staunchest advocates for annexation supported the Abraham Accords, including Christians United for Israel (CUFI) founder and chairman Pastor John Hagee:

> This is an historic announcement. We consistently pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and today those prayers were answered in a big way. In the context of the discussion about extending Israeli sovereignty to portions of Judea and Samaria, we made clear in late June that this is precisely what the Gulf states should do, and we hope other Arab nations will follow the UAE's lead. CUFI backs the decisions of the democratically elected Government of Israel, including the decision to suspend sovereignty extension plans in this context. This proves yet again that when Israel's Arab neighbors are prepared to make peace with the Jewish state, Israel will always be there to meet them. (CUFI, 2020)

Dr. Michael Youssef, an Egyptian American pastor who participated in Rosenberg's first delegation to Egypt, said,

> The "Abraham Accords" (are) a stroke of diplomatic genius. The leaders of UAE and Israel are to be highly commended for their courage and for taking such a bold step forward for the cause of peace in the Middle East. Many, like myself, are old enough to remember Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat's courageous trip to Israel in November 1977, which brought about peace between Egypt and Israel. Similarly, this agreement will go down in history as one of those history-altering events. (Hunt, 2020)

Another evangelical who participated in the delegations told *Haaretz* in an article entitled "What Annexation? Evangelicals Celebrate UAE-Israel Agreement:" "Evangelicals are elated. For years, our community has worked and prayed for peace between the United Arab Emirates, its neighbors, and Israel … peace is a process that has to have a beginning. But, this is far beyond just a beginning … a once-in-a-generation diplomatic achievement" (Tibon, 2020).

*The Jerusalem Post*, in an article entitled "How Trump Traded Annexation for His Christian base," noted:

> One would have thought that the key to winning their (evangelical) support was annexing Judea and Samaria, the Biblical heartland of the Land of Israel, but sources in the Evangelical community told *The Jerusalem Post* that they cared much more about bringing peace in the Middle East than changing the status of barren hilltops." (Jaffe-Hoffman, 2020)

Reflecting on this moment, Rosenberg said, "I think MbZ was already further in his thinking but was looking for the right moment and needed to know a piece of information. It

wasn't the biggest piece of information, but it was critical: evangelicals were not pushing Trump to give Bibi 30 percent of Judea and Samaria" (2023).

Rosenberg described what he believes is the reason:

> There's nothing in the New Testament that tells us to help Israel get more land. The emphasis is 100 percent on peace. It's not that I don't want Israel to get more land over time, and the Bible prophecies in the Old Testament do say it's going to happen. But, if I had to choose between the entire world hating Israel because now we're annexing 30 percent of the territory … everybody getting mad and a new intifada and whatever … or peace with a Gulf state, I would take peace with the Gulf state. (2023)

The U.S. Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, had been a lifelong advocate of the settlement movement and had supported Israel's efforts to exercise sovereignty over more of the West Bank. He said, "Even I got to the point where I said, 'Look, we should do this, this is good for America. It's good for Israel. It's good for the Gulf. And, long term is better than anything, any other option.... The Trump administration correctly saw the Abraham Accords as better for America and better for the world than sovereignty.'" Friedman was careful to negotiate particular wording in the ultimate communique and spent days doing phone diplomacy with leaders all over the region and also religious leaders—evangelical and Jewish—in the United States (2023).

## Why Did Evangelicals Trade Annexation for Peace?

When asked about the influence of evangelicals, Ambassador Friedman highlighted one leader in particular when it comes to Israel, "If one person stood out to me … but he's not the only one; it is John Hagee. The reason I think John Hagee has a lot of influence is because he has developed the following that gives him that credibility. What Hagee can do is, he can put out an email, hit send, and reach 10 million people" (2023). Hagee's influence as a Christian Zionist has markedly increased since the May 15, 2007, death of Falwell.

Yet, Hagee sent his email in support of a deal that stopped annexation in exchange for peace. Why? First, it is because Israel as a whole supported it, according to Friedman. “I’ve never really seen the evangelical community come out against the Israeli government. It's not their style. I mean, they will coax, and they will cajole, and they will pray, but to actually reject what the Israeli government wants … I think, as a group, they were a very respectful group and very deferential to the Israeli government” (2023).

More importantly, however, it is because President Trump first moved the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, according to Gary Bauer. Bauer supports a one-state solution and was initially skeptical of the evangelical delegations interacting with the Gulf Arab countries. Bauer is also a co-founder of CUFI and one of the most powerful evangelical figures in American politics since the Reagan administration, within which he served.

> I was a little skeptical (about the Abraham Accords), but I was not overtly hostile because I saw all the other things (Trump) did for Israel. It's the same reason I give him some leeway now if he says some things on abortion that I don’t like.… The guy gave us three Supreme Court nominees. How do you fill-up the gratefulness bucket? All the previous Republican presidents put together were not able to do that ….
>
> The Accords were possible because Trump moved the embassy to Jerusalem and showed absolutely no sign of caving into all the forces in the American diplomatic and even the American military community that always allowed everybody in Congress to vote for moving the embassy but with this caveat: that everybody, "wink wink,” knew that the president, whoever was president, would find that at the moment that it would not be in the national security interest in the United States…. So, everybody got to act like they were standing strong with Israel but knowing that it never would never happen.
>
> With Trump, he knew that he was going to get the phone call from the State Department. I think he was even a little surprised that he got the phone call from the Pentagon saying, “Don’t do this.” (Bauer, 2024)

Falwell himself had been a long advocate for moving the embassy. For instance, he said in 1984, “I think it is ridiculous that anyone would assume any other place to be the capital of Israel except Jerusalem.… I am sorry to admit that the U.S. embassy is located in Tel Aviv….

Israel should demand that all foreign embassies be moved to Jerusalem" (Simon, 1984, pp. 79-80). On April 1, 2022, the Liberty University School of Government hosted the ambassadors of Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain for a panel discussion facilitated by Robert Greenway, the only such event held on any college campus with all three governments represented (Smith, 2022).

When former President Trump addressed the 2024 National Religious Broadcasters convention in Nashville, Tennessee, he brought Ambassador Friedman to the stage in the middle of his speech. Friedman spoke for a few minutes, describing Trump as "the greatest friend Israel ever had in the Oval Office" and earning a rousing applause. Friedman recounted the moment President Trump made the decision to move the embassy:

> When you moved the embassy to Jerusalem, and we were there together in the situation room, you got pushback from other countries, but you also got pushback from some of your own people…. I was there with you, and I remember what you said: "I promised I'm going to do this, and this is the right thing to do." And the signal you sent to the whole world was that the United States will stand with its allies, and the United States will not flinch to the threats of rogue nations. (Convention, 2024)

The promise Trump had made, which he was keeping, was a promise he had made to his evangelical constituents. Lightstone saw the moving of the U.S. embassy as the beginning of the process that led to the Abraham Accords. He recalled, "I argued that December 6th, 2017, when President Trump recognized Jerusalem (as the capital of Israel), was the kickoff of the Abraham Accords, changing the previous paradigm, acknowledging the truth and pushing the world forward" (2024). The rabbis of the Simon Wiesenthal Center also believe the movement of the embassy could be directly attributed to the advocacy of the evangelical community:

> (When we were) invited to the opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem … truthfully, probably 90 percent of the people in the audience (could) have been evangelicals because they were the only people who badgered for this, and they did it to President Trump every single day from the day he came into office.… It doesn't mean that the Jewish Americans couldn't have achieved it, but, in terms of priority, they had been burned so many times on this issue that basically no one believed that there was going to be a change. That was a singular achievement by evangelicals. (Cooper, 2024)

Satloff agreed, asserting, “Evangelicals have sort of flexed their political muscles here on (Israel) over time” (2024). Lightstone answered the question, “What factors ultimately led to the emergence of the Accords?” He said it came down to standing unequivocally with Israel, recognizing and calling out the “bad guys,” skipping Palestinian intransigence, and going straight to the broader region to find a partner like the UAE, which he described as “the most visionary country” (2024).

Over twenty years after his initial visit to the UAE, Sneh saw the “genius” of the UAE all over the Abraham Accords strategy. It was the UAE, not Israel or the U.S., which crafted all of the plan, he said. “Mohammed bin Zayed desired to promote an Arab interest,” and in so doing, “he killed the Trump plan for the Palestinians, opening the way again for a Palestinian state while giving Bibi and Trump what they needed.” For Sneh, “It was the genius of MbZ, not Bibi and not Trump” (2024).

Part of the policy planning involved getting to the heart of Trump’s evangelical supporters, and, perhaps to the Emiratis’ surprise, they found a group whose politics were not exactly as everyone imagined. Evangelicals could accept nuance as Zionists, too; evangelicals would choose peace.

The Abraham Accords demonstrated that,

> there's more complexity to evangelicals’ politics.… I think traditionally, both Arabs and Israelis view evangelicals as perhaps the American constituency most supportive of the Government of Israel. I don't think there's any disputing that. The interesting question is, when do evangelicals defer to the Government of Israel if it takes a position which might contradict some more fundamental principle about the Holy Land, etc.? There, you saw Hagee deferring to the Government of Israel on the question of annexation and the Abraham Accords. I think, first and foremost, political leaders recognize that the evangelicals are coherent, or have been a coherent, cohesive force to be reckoned with in American politics on this issue, and it’s to their benefit to engage. (Satloff, 2024)

Sneh summarized: “In the Israeli-Arab relations … when religious people send the … message of understanding, of accepting the other, of preferring dialogue over conflict, then all of a sudden, they became the champions of friendship, peace, and so on. UAE invented interfaith diplomacy” (Sneh, 2024).

Whether or not evangelicals played a relevant role in the Abraham Accords—either in leading up to them or in choosing not to oppose them—the White House thought enough of it to invite a number of members of the evangelical delegations to the White House lawn for the signing ceremony. Said Rosenberg, “I got to be on the South Lawn of the White House, watching history be made.… We’re not country bumpkins, but we’re not Billy Graham.… God gave us a front-row seat and a backstage pass to the greatest moment of Arab Israeli peacemaking ever” (Rosenberg, 2023).

# CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS

## Overview

This qualitative study employs thematic analysis to investigate the research question, "How are evangelical Track II diplomatic efforts relevant to Israeli and Arab peacemaking?" The study's empirical approach, grounded in the rigorous examination of three pivotal case studies (Steiner & Steiner, 2001)—the Camp David Accords (1978), the Oslo Accords (1993), and the Abraham Accords (2020)—through the analysis of elite interviews and historical documents, provides a robust foundation for understanding the role of evangelical Track II actors in Middle East peace processes.

The case studies demonstrate the relevance of evangelical Track II diplomatic efforts in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. In the Camp David Accords, evangelicals played a crucial role as intermediaries, facilitating communication and building trust between key leaders. Although peace may have been achieved without their direct involvement, the political support of evangelicals in the United States significantly influenced the perceptions and calculations of the parties involved.

Conversely, the Oslo Accords, which did not involve evangelical Track II efforts, highlight a potential missed opportunity for engaging this influential group. The case study suggests that evangelicals may have been willing to participate in the peace process had they been approached by the relevant actors. This finding underscores the importance of considering the potential contributions of religious actors in peacemaking efforts.

The Abraham Accords further confirm the relevance of evangelical Track II diplomacy, with evangelical leaders again serving as important intermediaries. Their involvement was particularly significant given their strong political influence in the United States during the Trump administration. The enduring nature of the peace agreements reached in the Camp David

and Abraham Accords, compared to the relative instability and ongoing conflicts associated with the Oslo Accords, raises important questions about the potential impact of evangelical engagement on the long-term success of Arab-Israeli peacemaking and also of religion more broadly.

It is important to note that evangelical Track II efforts did not occur in isolation; other groups, such as businesspeople and academics, also played significant roles as official and unofficial intermediaries in these peace processes. However, the specific focus on evangelical involvement in this study allows for a deeper understanding of the unique contributions and challenges associated with religious actors in international diplomacy, specifically evangelical actors.

The thematic analysis conducted in this study not only affirms the relevance of evangelical Track II efforts but also provides valuable insights into how these efforts shape the dynamics of Arab-Israeli peacemaking. By identifying and exploring key themes that emerge from the case studies, historical documents and elite interviews, this research offers a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms through which evangelical engagement influences the peace process.

Moreover, the findings suggest that evangelical involvement may be indispensable to the success of Arab-Israeli peacemaking, given the significant political influence of the evangelical community in the United States and the critical role that the United States plays in mediating and facilitating negotiations between Israelis and Arabs. This assertion challenges assumptions about the centrality of traditional state actors in international diplomacy and highlights the need for policymakers to engage with religious constituencies in the pursuit of peace.

The four primary themes that emerge from the qualitative data analysis provide a framework for understanding the role of evangelicals as Track II diplomats in Arab-Israeli

peacemaking. These themes, which will be explored in detail in the following paragraphs, offer valuable insights for policymakers, diplomats, and researchers seeking to navigate the complex intersection of religion and international relations.

This study's rigorous qualitative approach, grounded in the thematic analysis of elite interviews and historical documents, provides compelling evidence for the relevance of evangelical Track II diplomatic efforts in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. The four primary themes that emerge from the data offer valuable insights into how these religious actors shape the dynamics of international diplomacy and highlight the need for policymakers and researchers to engage more deeply with the role of faith in conflict resolution.

**Theme #1—Evangelicals are Relevant because Religion Itself is Profoundly Relevant and Sometimes Neglected**

Policymakers should not neglect the essential relevancy of religion in Arab and Israeli peacemaking. This qualitative study demonstrates the importance, perhaps indispensability, of religion in Arab and Israeli peacemaking. Obed Weiner asserted, “In the Middle East, almost every person is a religious person,” therefore “the religious leaders are very influential” in the region. (Weiner, 2024).

While “religious leaders do not sign peace agreements …. wise politicians … know that a sustainable peace agreement needs the support of the most important and most relevant stakeholders in a society—in the Holy Land, the religious leaders are among these” (Bakkevig, 2022, p. 100). Rabbi Abraham Cooper gave UAE officials special credit “because they understood that they would have to come up with something in the arena of tolerance” (Cooper, 2024), and especially since “over the course of the last 100 years, the radical Islamists have hijacked their religion and politicized it against Israel” (Friedman, 2023).

Religion need not be institutional, either. “Sadat didn’t project being about Muslims or about Christians or about Jews but about something higher,” said Telhami. “Something about him … not in the literal sense of literal faith, but faith in a sense of having kind of a confidence in a higher authority and values that transcended being beings … that’s what he projected” (2023). Moreover, according to Friedman, “in this part of the world, being someone of faith gets you a level of discourse that you don't get if you just show up because you want to talk geopolitics” (Friedman, 2023). Secretary of State Pompeo agreed, despite the complexities of dealing with religious issues in political systems that often substantially differ from U.S. democracy:

> In the Middle East, you have to recognize that you're going to have to give out some awards for most improved player…. These are places that have different types of government. Gulf states are monarchies. Israel has a parliamentary system that is fundamentally different from ours.… You have to accept that some of the internal dynamics when it comes to religious freedom are things that you're going to have to just say, “That is an issue that we're going to work and manage and measure progress against it.” If you put an absolute bar of religious freedom at the level that we might expect from a Western democracy, or from inside of our own country, we're just not going to be able to build out perfection on day one. (2023a)

Religion can be used as an “additive…in a manipulative sense to animate grievances,” or it can be used constructively as a tool for peace (Greenway, 2024). According to Satloff, religion is a “mixed bag” that can contribute to or serve as an impediment to peace (Satloff, 2024). Friedman noted that it is also the case that “people of faith kind of inherently trust people of faith” (Friedman, 2023). This is particularly the case in “Israeli-Arab relations” where “religious figures have … a … role to play,” and “when religious people send the… message of understanding, of accepting the other, of preferring dialogue over conflict, then all of a sudden, they became the champions of friendship, and peace” (Sneh, 2024).

Lightstone said the “center” of Abu Dhabi is now the Abrahamic Family House, which serves as a type of enduring monument and a daily reminder of the peace that came from the Abraham Accords (Lightstone, 2024). Satloff sees the religious undertones of the Abraham

Accords as a type of marketing tool for peacemaking or as a "conceptualization of peace," but the mainstreaming of Jewish life in the Emirates is something else altogether. It is significant in the way that the introduction of Holocaust education throughout the UAE and other Gulf states is groundbreaking (Satloff, 2024).

A lesson of the Oslo Accords is that "the religious aspect of this conflict has to be dealt with and cannot be ignored at all," and "religion has increasingly become a factor in international as well as internal conflicts" (Yaari, 2023a). As a result, "religious leaders have gained prominence by contributing to the intensification of conflicts but also as peacemakers.… In many political conflicts, religion plays a crucial role when it is linked to ethnic or national identity" (Bakkevig, 2015, p. 95). Some helpful guidelines for religious actors based upon Bakkevig's experience post-Oslo include convictions that,

a. Religious leaders must be able to recognize, respect, and appreciate the religious faith of followers of another religion.
b. Religious leaders must have a perspective beyond their own faith and religion, showing an appreciation to how religion is intertwined with the identity of their people, their tribe, their nation, or their state.
c. Religious leaders should refrain from claims to superior access to God or the mind of God.
d. Holy Scriptures are dear to believers, and religious leaders are guides in interpreting them.
e. In Western Europe, the Americas, and Africa, we are used to separation between religion and state … different types of divisions and the seeming absence of such do not necessarily imply that there is no freedom of religion, or that political leaders direct the actions of religious leaders. Primarily, it means that the relationship between religion, politics, and civil society is organized differently, formally and/or informally.
f. Religious leaders can intensify or escalate conflicts by stressing religious elements, claiming partial or exclusive ownership over places, words, symbols, narratives, and history.
g. Religious leaders have a special responsibility for identifying religiously charged elements of a conflict.
h. When religious leaders enter dialogue, internal discipline within the group is important. (2015, pp. 99-102)

It is nearly unfathomable for those who wish to see peace between Israelis and Arabs to choose to ignore the religious aspect of the conflict. Religion is immensely relevant. Rabbi

Michael Melchior has been deeply involved in religious peacemaking since the Oslo Accords, and he says it this way, “People are looking towards religion as a main source of identity and legitimization…to think that you can solve conflicts without taking into account the religious aspects of the conflict is stupid. We could act as if religion was not a component here; we could ignore it as if it would disappear. What happened, of course, was that it didn't go away; it blew up in our faces repeatedly” (2015).

**Theme #2—Evangelicals as Relevant Because Evangelical Political Influence in the United States is Sought by Various Actors**

Policymakers in the United States, Israel, and Arab states should consider the role of evangelical influence in America as they pursue peacemaking between Israelis and Arabs.

Evangelicals are relevant to peace among Israelis and Arabs to the degree to which America itself is relevant to peacemaking between Israelis and Arabs, especially given the sheer size of the political influence of the evangelical community in the United States. Over time, this phenomenon may change based on changing demographics, but it is simultaneously emerging in other countries where evangelical influence is growing, including Brazil.

“You have to understand … the Israeli government was very deliberate in seeing evangelicals or as a potential ally in the American political mainstream,” said Telhami (2023). Yet, evangelicals in the United States did not need to be persuaded to support Israel as much as activated. Gerald Strober remembered receiving a call from Menachem Begin after Begin ordered the destruction of Saddam Hussein’s nuclear program in Iraq; Begin wanted to talk to Falwell, and Falwell immediately issued a statement in support of the actions. On another occasion, Begin was visiting the United States, and Strober worked with Falwell to organize a meeting of evangelicals the day before the prime minister was set to meet with President Carter. Among the guests was the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, which prompted Begin to tell the

Southern Baptist Carter the next day, “Mr. President, last night I met *your* president” (Stroeber, 2023). Strober recalled Begin saying, “I don't care what people in our community and outside our community are saying, Jerry Falwell is a great friend” (Stroeber, 2023). Falwell’s longtime assistant, Duke Westover, remembered a similar situation many years later when Prime Minister Netanyahu was visiting the United States. Netanyahu met with Falwell and a large group of evangelicals in a widely publicized event the evening before he met with President Clinton. This happened to be the same day the Monica Lewinsky scandal broke (Netanyahu, 2022, p. 297; Westover, 2023). It was 1998 when President Bill Clinton invited Netanyahu to the White House in an attempt to bring Oslo back to life. He hoped to coordinate a meeting between Netanyahu and Arafat in Washington. As an apparent foil to the process, Netanyahu’s first action was to meet with Clinton-nemesis Jerry Falwell upon his arrival, during which Falwell told Netanyahu that Evangelicals would oppose ceding any inch of land. The meeting worked if the goal was to chide Clinton, as the President raised his disdain for it at the beginning of his meeting with Netanyahu the next day (Broder, 1998; Howard & Binswanger, 1998; Wagner, 1998, p. 33). The Guardian called the whole matter “a calculated mobilization of conservative America against the president and the peace process” (Kettle & Borger, 1998), and The Sun wrote Netanyahu did “nothing to help himself with the U.S. president by playing pals with Clinton-bashers of the Christian right” ("Stronger U.S. role in Middle East: Clinton muscle: Telling Netanyahu to meet Arafat, keep to Oslo accord," 1998).

Israel, Egypt, and the UAE each demonstrated in their peace initiatives a prioritization of American evangelicals as a type of constituency. This may have been particularly important in the Trump era when evangelicals played an outsized role, but in each case, evangelical engagement was “a very conscious effort, among other things, to obtain political influence in the United States” (Greenway, 2024). In certain cases, “evangelicals can help smooth out some of the

political obstacles … here in American politics," even if they do not "dramatically transform the decision-making landscape for leaders" (Satloff, 2024). While some argue that the interfaith work in the United Arab Emirates was principally a public relations exercise, one has to judge it by its results, and the results – public relations, or not – was an environment conducive to peace. This can be compared with the Oslo Process, where there was also an intense public relations component but a public relations component that seemed to neglect religion altogether (Margolin, 2005, pp. 70-71).

Evangelical engagement paid dividends in the Camp David and Abraham Accords cases. During the Camp David process, evangelicals simultaneously assisted in endorsing Sadat to an American public, always inclined to draw their allegiances along party lines while also protecting Begin from having to concede more than he was willing or able to concede. In the case of the Abraham Accords, while sometimes unintentional, evangelicals created an environment conducive to peace by successfully advocating for the move of the U.S. Embassy and then lending their trust to the United Arab Emirates in pursuit of a peace agreement that might have otherwise been opposed by evangelicals and those on the political right in America.

Evangelical influence in the U.S. may not be powerful enough to make peace, but it may be powerful enough to derail it. It certainly can make peace easier. Ironically, in the case of the Oslo Accords, one could sense in Falwell's September 19, 1993, sermon that he was willing, ever-so-slightly and however short-lived, to give peace a chance, even with Arafat. Yet, the Israeli government at the time seemed to ignore evangelicals entirely.

**Theme #3—Evangelicals are Relevant, but They Remain Evangelicals When Engaged in Peacemaking, Bringing Their Own Agendas Yet Still Having an Impact on the Peacemaking Process**

While it is unclear whether the motives of evangelicals cited in this study were principally political, as opposed to in response to sincerely held religious beliefs, it is also the case that evangelical beliefs and convictions were present in many ways throughout each case study. When engaging with evangelicals, policymakers should recognize the community is driven by sincerely held religious beliefs, and those beliefs come with the engagement.

Around the time the pre-Camp David meetings began in Morocco, Moshe Dayan had an unusual encounter with evangelicals, which left enough of an impression that he included it in his memoir reflecting on the Camp David process. He was on the first-ever trip to India by an Israeli official, coordinated via a businessperson whom he knew, and it was without any official government involvement on the Israeli side. It was a secret visit, and late at night, the only programming he could receive on the radio in India was "something called 'The Voice of the Covenant' that explained in excellent Hebrew that Jews should understand the Biblical Book of Daniel correctly, accept the New Testament and convert to Christianity" (Dayan, 1981, p. 30).

The majority of evangelicals are Zionists, but evangelicalism does not exist for the purpose of promoting Zionism. Evangelicalism is first a Christian movement with views on the life, death, resurrection, and deity of Jesus, the inerrancy of scripture, the exclusivity of Jesus for the hope of salvation, and the obligation of believers to share the Gospel. Evangelicals bring these beliefs with them as they engage in their peacemaking. This is evident in the prayers prayed by the delegations for various leaders of the Muslim states. It is also evident in frequent pronouncements to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" as a justification for peacemaking and in celebrating Jesus as the "prince of peace" when the time comes to make concessions.

Evangelicals see themselves as advocates for the Jewish people but often defer to the State of Israel, even when its decisions are not exactly aligned with evangelical beliefs or preferences (Friedman, 2023). The Apostle Paul, in Romans chapter 12, wrote that followers of

Jesus "should live at peace with everyone as far as it depends upon them," and this dynamic may be part of what is at work to explain what Satloff referred to as "complexity to evangelical politics" when it comes to Israel and the Middle East. While, according to Satloff, there is no disputing that evangelicals are the constituency in America that is "most supportive of the Government of Israel," they also defer to Israel's government as even John Hagee did when the Abraham Accords meant Israel would no longer annex portions of the West Bank as it had planned to do (Satloff, 2024). Interestingly, Falwell, in 1984, also indicated that he would defer to Israel in the event of land swaps or further concessions. "If Israel desires to give up part of her land to her neighbors, that is her business, but I do not favor that approach" (Simon, 1984, p. 63).

While the majority of American evangelicals are Zionists, not all of them hold those beliefs. John Warwick Montgomery identifies himself as an evangelical, although Lutheran, but he was not and is not a Zionist. In fact, he does not believe Zionist evangelicals are interested in peace at all. (Montgomery, 2023).

Despite his religious peacemaking, Norway's Trond Bakkevig sees American evangelicals as particularly problematic. "In my opinion," Bakkevig said, "they are close to another religion." Bakkevig added that American evangelicals must "start relating to Palestinian Christians, including some Palestinians who call themselves evangelicals. Otherwise, they have no role to play" in peacemaking. He added, "You don't know what you're talking about" until you talk to "your Christian brothers and sisters who have lived there for 2000 years" (Bakkevig, 2023).

When Michele Bachmann was asked if she had an agenda when joining Rosenberg's delegations to Muslim countries, she responded, "Yes, our agenda was the Gospel; our agenda was loving Israel; and our agenda was loving them" (Bachmann, 2023). Skip Heitzig recalled having the responsibility of sharing the Gospel message in the meeting with Mohammed bin

Salman, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. “Most evangelicals look for their spiritual opportunities, and we have no shame about it…. We look for opportunities to be a witness to people” (Heitzig, 2024).

Bachmann added,

> we were equally as bold … whether it was with el-Sisi in Egypt or, MbS in Riyadh or MbZ in the United Arab Emirates. We were as bold with all of them, and we were very clear about what the Bible says about Jesus and salvation. We were very clear about what the Bible says about Israel. And also, we were there to bless them. We asked them if we could pray for them. Every one of them … not one objected. I have never had any Muslim ever object when I have asked if I could pray for them. (2023)

Despite all of their engagement with people of other faiths and their support of religious freedom, the evangelicals also drew a hard line at syncretism, whether it was during the Abraham Accords or the Camp David Accords when Sadat’s vision of all three Abrahamic faiths worshipping on the same site in Sinai prompted Montgomery to say, “I totally disagreed with (Sadat’s) syncretic approach to religion, but he was obviously searching, and the kind of person who, if he came across the truth that he didn't agree with that, I think he'd accept it” (Montgomery, 2023). Ironically, it was the fundamentalist Falwell who told *The Jerusalem Post* that he liked Sadat’s idea of building a church, mosque, and synagogue on the same site in the Sinai as a statement in support of religious freedom ("U.S. Evangelical Group Brings Message from Sadat to Begin," 1978). Bauer noted that it has always been the “Jews who are most serious about their Judaism” who have been “the easiest Jews for Christians to work with, even though neither we nor they were going to easily abandon our opinion of Messiah” (Bauer, 2024).

It is clear that while each of those who engaged with evangelicals over the course of the events in this study had their agendas, evangelicals had their own agendas as well. During the Trump administration, for instance, evangelical advisors to the president were sometimes accused

of being used by Trump for political purposes. Could it be that evangelicals were actually the ones using the president for their own purposes?

**Theme #4—Evangelical Track II Diplomacy is Relevant Because Track II Diplomacy Should Always Play a Role, but it is a Developing Field**

Policy makers who are serious about Israeli and Arab peacemaking must consider the role that Track II diplomacy is to play in those efforts. Each of the case studies has significant Track II components. The Oslo and Abraham Accords began as Track II processes. The Abraham Accords included several second-track initiatives over many years involving religion, sports, and business in particular. While the Carter administration did not appear to know about or favor the Falwell initiative directly, its goal was to engage with the American public more substantively. The Carter administration did engage in its own Track II religious initiative. In August 1977, Carter officials wanted to assess Arafat's willingness to engage in the peace process. Therefore, at the initiative of Rosalyn Carter, the administration tapped a "tough-minded Quaker," Earlham College President Landrum Bolling (Quandt, 2024). Bolling had visited Arafat in the past, so the administration sent him to do it again. After his meeting, Bolling provided the Carter administration with extensive notes, which are archived by the Department of State's historian. Bolling presented himself in the following way:

> I reminded (Arafat), as in previous sessions, that I was only a private citizen and could in no way presume to speak for the United States. I did say that I have some personal direct knowledge of the attitudes and predisposition of U.S. policy makers, at the highest level, and could, therefore, give some insight into current concerns of the U.S. Government on Middle East problems. (Howard, 2013, p. 501)

A Track II initiative "cannot be a substitute to the political negotiations, but it can be and should be, something which is accompanying the political process" (Beilin, 2024). Telhami saw

this as politically important in Oslo because “you had Israeli power elites and you have Palestinian elites who really didn’t know each other, and they, of course, had demonized each other for years” (Telhami, 2023).

A key to the success of Track II initiatives ultimately relates to how “rooted” those initiatives are in the Track I processes (Bakkevig, 2023). It is more effective when you “have specialists on both sides who actually know each other quite well” and are “reading each other's papers, and understanding the kind of security dilemma that each face” (Quandt, 2024) or when there is “a kind of blockage to communication at some level” (Quandt, 1987).

Yet, Track II initiatives present a problem with “people writing checks that they can't cash” (Lightstone, 2024). Nonetheless, Telhami said, “Track II adds information that you otherwise don't have and that addition of information can create a limitation of risk and therefore tip the balance in favor of one option over the other” (2023). By “getting together people who were outside of the government, there could be real discussions about the issues” (Craig, 2023).

It can also be totally arbitrary. Satloff said one of the reasons why the Washington Institute for Near East Policy is not generally active in Track II efforts is because it is often a “conference-building measure” rather than a “confidence-building measure” (Satloff, 2024). Pompeo agreed that sometimes these efforts are little more than “nice meetings in the Four Seasons somewhere, and not much is done.” He added that those meetings can “drive a secretary of state crazy.” Sometimes, the Department of State will reach out to various groups and say, “We appreciate that you have the freedom to do whatever it is you’re doing, but we would like to share with you what we’re working on, how we’re thinking about it, and how what you’re doing could be done a bit differently” (Pompeo, 2023a).

Greenway saw the Track II efforts during the Abraham Accords as “helpful” because they signaled a growing trend of states being more willing to “integrate with Israel.” He said, “All of

these (efforts) are like a thermostat: there's an economic thermostat, there's a security and intelligence thermostat, there's also a cultural and public relations thermostat" (Greenway, 2024). According to Friedman, while some Track II efforts are clearly more helpful than others, the least helpful are those from NGOs that are "in the business of being in business" (Friedman, 2023).

Hirschfeld was a pioneer in Track II engagement, and he said it "is only effective when it is connected to the leadership," adding that the Track II participants "have to have full access to their respective political leadership" so much so that effective Track II is really Track 1.5 (Hirschfeld, 2023). This is especially the case in the Middle East, where "you can't do anything without the government" (Cooper, 2024). However, there can be a process prior to official Track II engagement where there is "a person who wants to achieve strategic goals," and that person "can use the unofficial channels to reach to those making decisions" (Sneh, 2024).

Track II is also especially effective in the implementation of a peace agreement. Lightstone was tasked with this as the "director of the Abraham Fund coming from the Development Finance Corporation of the United States," and his work involved everything from "helping figure out how to issue visas, make the phones work, make the banks work, and make the planes work" (Lightstone, 2024). Yaari noted that the Trump administration's success in normalizing relations with various Arab countries can be attributed to a small group of Jewish businesspeople of Moroccan descent who were constant, effective intermediaries (Yaari, 2023a). They were Track II actors.

Reflecting on 50 years of various forms of Track II initiatives from the Middle East to China and Japan, Rabbi Abraham Cooper put it succinctly: "I'm more convinced than ever that 95 percent of leadership is just showing up" (2024).

## SUMMARY

Evangelicals are certainly as relevant as other Track II participants in Israeli and Arab peacemaking and may be indispensably relevant to peacemaking among Israelis and Arabs to the degree to which America itself is relevant to peacemaking between Israelis and Arabs, especially given the sheer size of the political influence of the evangelical community in the United States. Evangelicals cannot make peace themselves and likely cannot derail peacemaking, but they are the single largest and most cohesive political constituency in the United States. Their activism is especially animated by the security and well-being of the State of Israel.

By shedding light on the understudied role of evangelical Track II diplomacy in the Middle East, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on faith-based diplomacy and the importance of engaging religious actors in conflict resolution. The empirical evidence presented here challenges conventional assumptions about the exclusive role of state actors in international peacemaking and highlights the need for a more inclusive and nuanced approach to diplomacy that recognizes the potential contributions of religious communities. It also challenges some conventional wisdom related to evangelicals and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Furthermore, the thematic analysis provides a solid foundation for future research on the role of religious actors in peacemaking efforts. By identifying key patterns and mechanisms of influence, this study offers a roadmap for researchers seeking to explore the dynamics of faith-based diplomacy in other contexts and to develop more effective strategies for engaging religious constituencies in the pursuit of peace.

# CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

## Overview

This qualitative study contributes to the literature at the intersection of religion and foreign policy by focusing on one of the modern era's most protracted and relevant foreign policy issues (the conflict between Israelis and Arabs), the influence of one of America's most powerful religious constituencies (evangelicals), and one of the most widely used tools of non-governmental diplomacy (Track II diplomacy). The study sought to address the research question, *"How are evangelical Track II diplomatic efforts relevant to Israeli and Arab peacemaking?"* Through the analysis of data collected from a three-case study and the application of thematic analysis it assessed how evangelical Track II diplomacy is relevant to Track II diplomacy with observations drawn from the thematic analysis. This final chapter places this research in the broader context of other research, discusses its implications, and makes recommendations for future areas of study.

## Discussion

John Burton would be pleased to know that people of faith have embraced his vision of unofficial actors engaged in conflict resolution, religious leaders among them (Jones, 2022, p. 79). The work of evangelicals in the Middle East can be called Track II diplomacy (Davidson & Montville, 1982; Graham & Kelley, 2009, p. 82). The Camp David case especially demonstrated that evangelicals found a "space in which groups can discuss their disagreements as well as potential solutions" (De Vries & Maoz, 2013, p. 63). Evangelical engagement with prominent Muslim figures in pursuit of peace affirms "that contact and interactions between members of adversarial groups" can "help improve relations and generate a joint understanding of the conflict" (Cuhadar, 2009, p. 641). Fisher can add to his own case studies where Track II efforts had positive, if limited, outcomes (Fisher, 2006). Certainly, this study supports the need for

Department of State personnel to continue to be trained in Track II diplomacy (Montville, 2009). It complements recent literature on the role that religious appeals play in power politics (Henne, 2023) and contributes to recent research on the role missionaries have played informally in diplomacy (Conroy-Krutz, 2024).

In these findings, those who have written on the value of religion in foreign policy have more arguments for their long-standing advocacy (Agensky, 2021; Modongal, 2023; Prasad, 2014), including on humanitarian issues (Thomas, 2004) and the "soft power" of religious actors (Anderson, 2008, p. 24). Carty analyzed the role of faith in the John F. Kennedy presidency (2011), Schwarzwalder analyzed it in Warren G. Harding's administration (Schwarzwalder, 2021), and Cooper did so for the Woodrow Wilson presidency (2009). Who will study the role of faith in their foreign policies? And what about Donald J. Trump's presidency? Who will compare Carter and Biden? This study affirms Hopf's conventional constructivist framework, which provides a helpful theoretical basis for analyzing the way religious actors behave in international relations (1998). As referenced by Agensky in his review of Daniel Philpott's eminent scholarship on religion and diplomacy, this study affirms the view of constructivists who reject the secular bias of IR theories and welcome "matters of religion" as being relevant to IR as it "highlights the importance of religious ideas, communities, and organizations in promoting models of reconciliation…advocating for a more holistic approach" (2020, pp. 27-28). Checkel's critique of neorealism as largely ignoring the "social fabric of world politics" is subtly affirmed here, given the near absence of the stories in these findings related to the Evangelicals and their role as Track II actors in a field studied as widely as conflict in the middle east (1998, p. 324).

The role of faith and the foreign policy of democracies has been examined with respect to India (Bauman, 2016), Guatemala (Turek, 2015), France (Birdsall, 2014a), Switzerland (Birdsall, 2014b), Italy (Petito & Thomas, 2015), the United Kingdom (Lindsay, 2014), and the

Netherlands (Ubachs, 2014). Observations here can add to the story of the United States and the State of Israel. What about faith in monarchist, federalist systems such as the United Arab Emirates?

Scholars have studied the role of evangelicalism in shaping the opinion of domestic constituencies as it relates to U.S. engagement in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Gulf (Taydas et al., 2012), but what about contributions to peacemaking among Muslims? This study provides more evidence that Marsden was correct when he wrote, "US foreign policy in the first decade of the twenty-first century has been dominated by religion in a way that would not have seemed possible for most of the second half of the twentieth" (2012, p. 953). Which religious studies scholars will identify or create theology in response to these findings?

Various scholars who have analyzed evangelicals and foreign policy have not focused on the Middle East (Agensky, 2020; Balcomb, 2004; Chapman, 2009; Jacobs, 2018) except as it relates to Christian Zionism, but they haven't focused so much on the priority of peacemaking among Christian Zionists (Friedman, 2009; Shalom Goldman, 2020; Miller, 2014; Rynhold, 2021). The outcomes of the interfaith diplomacy of the UAE could be juxtaposed with the efficacy of efforts in other countries (Fahy, 2018; Gutkowski, 2016).

Much work has been done on the voting behavior of American evangelicals, but far less has examined the specific policy implications—and especially not foreign policy. This dissertation contributes to other research on the direct role evangelicals have contributed to American public policy, including foreign policy (Holder & Josephson, 2020; Louwerse & Dart, 2017; Schenker & Abuzayyad, 2020; Smidt, 2022; Trangerud, 2022). This research affirms that evangelicals do indeed have views about the world that matter (Murray & Worth, 2013) and affirms the impact of "religious soft power" (Hoffman, 2023; Yang & Li, 2021). This dissertation challenges the belief that the only foreign policy of evangelicals in the Middle East is a hawkish

one (Baumgartner et al., 2008). More can be added to works on Christian Zionism (Hummel, 2019a; McDermott, 2016) or how evangelicals have affected the "arc" of American foreign policy (Mead, 2023). Jeong's work reflecting on faith-based diplomacy's role in facilitating the Abraham Accords is affirmed (2021). At least one scholar compared Falwell and Carter but seemed to miss the Camp David Accords (Flippen, 2013), even as much work on Falwell seems to miss entirely his interest in peacemaking (Murray, 2011; Williams, 2010, 2018; Williams, 2019). Indeed, all the seemingly definitive works on the Camp David Accords missed the story of the evangelical delegation entirely, despite it being widely reported in the international press at the time. This deserves scrutiny—why?

While the findings of this dissertation appear to align closely with the tenets of conventional constructivism as outlined in the theory section of this paper, recognizing the role discourse and ideas contribute to the relevancy of religious actors in foreign policy. It is important to note the potential relevance of neoclassical realism as an alternative theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of evangelical Track II diplomacy in Arab-Israeli peacemaking (Kitchen, 2010). Neoclassical realism, as an extension of traditional realist thought, incorporates both external and internal variables in its analysis of foreign policy decision-making, recognizing the importance of domestic factors, perceptions of power, and the role of individual actors in shaping international outcomes (Rose, 1998, p. 146).

The case studies presented in this dissertation demonstrate that the success of Track II diplomatic efforts often hinges on the complex interplay of various factors, including the strategic interests of states, the influence of domestic political considerations, and the personal relationships and perceptions of key individuals. From a neoclassical realist perspective, these factors can be seen as intervening variables that shape how states and non-state actors translate their power capabilities into foreign policy actions, but are the states actually calling the shots?

While the evangelical actors in this study are behaving politically, they seem to be doing so apart from the direction or control of states.

The case studies of the Camp David Accords, Abraham Accords, and Oslo Accords demonstrate the potential relevance of neoclassical realist factors in shaping the outcomes of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. The strategic interests of the involved states, such as countering Soviet influence, regaining territory, normalizing relations, and addressing shared concerns over Iranian influence, played a crucial role in creating the conditions for successful negotiations. Moreover, the personal relationships and perceptions of key individuals, including the rapport between evangelical figures and Middle Eastern leaders, can be seen as important intervening variables that complement the traditional material power capabilities of states in shaping foreign policy outcomes.

It is important to note, however, that neoclassical realism does not fully capture the ideational and normative dimensions of evangelical Track II diplomacy that are central to a constructivist understanding. The deeply held religious beliefs and values that motivate evangelical actors and the ways in which these beliefs shape their interactions with state and non-state actors are not easily reduced to the strategic calculations and material interests emphasized by neoclassical realism. Checkel argued that the constructivist critique of neorealists (and of neoliberals) "concerns not what these scholars do and say but what they ignore … the social fabric of world politics" (1998, p. 324).

Nonetheless, the case studies in this dissertation suggest that neoclassical realism can provide a valuable complementary perspective to conventional constructivism in analyzing the dynamics of evangelical Track II diplomacy. By considering the interplay of strategic interests, domestic factors, and individual agency, neoclassical realism can help illuminate the complex

ways in which religious actors navigate the material and ideational dimensions of international relations in pursuit of their peacemaking objectives.

Future research could further explore the relative explanatory power of constructivist and neoclassical realist approaches in different contexts of religious Track II diplomacy, examining how the specific configuration of strategic interests, domestic factors, and ideational variables shapes the success or failure of these efforts. Such research could help to refine our theoretical understanding of the role of religious actors in international relations and inform the development of more effective strategies for leveraging Track II diplomacy in the service of sustainable peacemaking.

Ultimately, while conventional constructivism provides a compelling framework for understanding evangelical Track II diplomacy in this context, the findings of this dissertation suggest that neoclassical realism can offer additional valuable insights. By engaging with both theoretical perspectives, scholars can develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the dynamics of religious peacemaking in the Middle East and beyond.

The study, therefore, affirms Barkin's view that constructivism can actually be a complement to neoclassical realism rather than forced to live in opposition to it (Barkin, 2010).

## Implications

Observations here fill a gap in the literature related to Track II religious diplomacy, the role of evangelicals in foreign policy, and the relevance of religion generally to foreign policy. The scarcity of prior research on these topics, given the significant findings presented here, is remarkable and warrants further academic inquiry. That fact, in and of itself, ought to be examined by scholars. It may be a reflection of a general bias that may exist in the academy when it comes to the evangelical community, which is often derided with small-minded tropes about

Christian nationalism or missionary colonialism. This research demonstrates a great deal more sophistication and nuance in the way evangelicals have approached foreign policy as a community widely known—and rightfully so—for its entrenched views based upon sincerely held religious beliefs. It shows that evangelicals have contributed something of significance to peacemaking, and they did so mostly on their own via Track II initiatives they chose to embark upon or found themselves inadvertently involved in. Imagine if elected officials and others who focus on public policy were more intentionally engaged with this global community, which is networked at a grassroots level by the hundreds of millions spread throughout most of the world. This study reveals little-known history, opens a complex conversation to nuance, and provides good advice to future policymakers tasked with the responsibility of bringing peace to the world.

## Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This modest but focused study is limited in its scope in many ways. First, the universe of potential case studies is limited. There have only been six peace agreements by Arabs with Israel, and four of those agreements were part of the Abraham Accords process. Therefore, the potential sample is modest, and ideally, a study of this nature would have embarked upon understanding each of those case studies. The research would be strengthened if it also examined a case study of a peace negotiation that did not culminate in a peace agreement. One might argue that the Oslo Accords have dramatically failed, but nonetheless, they were signed. However, this type of research might first be undertaken by studying a series of failed peace negotiations, comparing them to themselves before comparing them to negotiations that led to signed peace deals.

The devastating October 7, 2023, terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel and the ensuing war had an impact on this study, presenting both limitations and unique opportunities for insight. As the research was being conducted, the unfolding conflict undoubtedly influenced the perspectives

and responses of the elite figures interviewed, shaping the data collected in ways that may be difficult to fully account for. However, this extraordinary event also provided a rare glimpse into the resilience and durability of peace agreements like the Abraham Accords and Camp David Accords, which were put to the test during this dramatic and ongoing episode. The fact that these agreements survived such a significant challenge is a testament to their strength and the commitment of the parties involved to maintaining peace in the face of adversity. While the impact of the war on this study should be acknowledged as a limitation, it also offers a unique opportunity to understand the dynamics of Arab-Israeli peacemaking in the context of a nearly unprecedented crisis.

Future researchers should give more general attention to the developing macro fields of Track II diplomacy, religion in foreign policy, and, specifically, the role of each in Arab and Israeli peacemaking. Evangelicals have also been involved in similar ways throughout the entire world, involving many conflicts. Similar studies should be engaged upon, focusing on other examples of evangelical Track II engagement. This study also reveals the views and activities of very significant figures in modern history who are often referenced but rarely researched, including the founder of Liberty University, Jerry Falwell. This study reveals nuances to Falwell's views about Israel and peacemaking. Virtually every word Falwell spoke publicly for his entire adult life is available for free online at Liberty University. Many of those words are justifiably considered controversial, and profoundly so, and they are well-documented, but plenty are far more nuanced and less known. Researchers should ask themselves which of his words were a product of their time or based upon spiritual convictions. Many other words spoken by Falwell are relevant to the events vexing the world at the time they were spoken as he had a habit of providing weekly pulpit commentary on the current events of the time; commentary which was

viewed by many millions, and which projected power through discourse and often motivated political action. Evangelicals are complex yet are often presented without nuance.

Additional work should be done to better understand Evangelicals as Zionists and Evangelicals who aren't Zionists and what makes them so. Scholars must juxtapose any research like this paper with the changing trends among evangelicals in their support of Israel, as documented through research by Inbari and Bumin, which demonstrates that "support is eroding" (2024, p. 1). Research should be conducted to measure gradations of Christian Zionism among evangelicals, given that Inbari and Bumin also found a majority of evangelicals to simply be indifferent to major aspects of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict (2020, p. 628). Then, others should cross-reference that work against additional factors such as race, age, ethnicity, and citizenship. The line between Evangelicals operating under theological convictions as opposed to their role as political actors is not always clear, and scholars should give attention to this dynamic and to what degree Evangelicals are self-aware of their political activities as opposed to believing they are operating solely under the auspices of theological convictions. Is the reason why Christian Zionist evangelicals chose peace over annexation in the case of the Abraham Accords because they are not actually driven by theological convictions as much as they are political pragmatism? Is this different now compared to a generation ago? Evangelical support of Donald Trump seems to be best explained by pragmatism, but to what degree did that pragmatism persist throughout the administration when it came to the role of evangelicals as policy advisors or was pragmatism a way of opening a door for the exercise of theological convictions, including as it related to foreign policy? Evangelicals in the United States should also be compared to evangelicals in other parts of the world, including in the Middle East, and the extensive quantitative research conducted by research firms on the convictions, motivations, and behaviors of evangelicals in America should also be applied internationally.

For future researchers interested in building upon this dissertation's findings, it is crucial to consider a wide array of other explanatory variables that may influence the dynamics and outcomes of Track II diplomatic efforts in the context of Arab-Israeli peacemaking. While this study primarily focuses on the role of evangelical actors in Track II diplomacy through the analysis of elite interviews and historical documents, it is evident that a complex interplay of factors contributes to the success or failure of peace negotiations, whether those factors were relevant as Track I or Track II initiatives. These factors may be best analyzed through quantitative analysis.

Economic factors play a significant role in shaping the incentives and priorities of the parties involved in peace processes. The promise of economic benefits, such as increased trade, investment, and financial assistance, can motivate actors to engage in diplomacy and make concessions. For instance, the Camp David Accords were influenced by the prospect of substantial U.S. aid to Egypt, while the Abraham Accords were driven, in part, by the potential for economic cooperation between Israel and the Arab states. Future research should delve deeper into the specific economic considerations that shape Track II interactions and explore how economic incentives interact with other variables to influence peacemaking efforts.

Security considerations are another critical factor that future researchers should examine more closely. The case studies in this dissertation demonstrate that the perception of common security threats, such as the Soviet influence during the Camp David Accords or the Iranian threat in the context of the Abraham Accords, can create a sense of urgency and shared interest among the parties involved. However, security concerns can also act as a barrier to progress, as evidenced by the challenges faced in the Oslo Accords due to ongoing violence and mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians. Researchers should investigate how security dynamics evolve

throughout the course of Track II efforts and identify strategies for addressing security concerns in a manner that facilitates peacemaking.

Unexpected international events can also have a profound impact on the trajectory of Track II diplomatic efforts. The 9/11 attacks, for example, dramatically altered the geopolitical landscape and shifted priorities in the Middle East, affecting the Oslo process. Similarly, the Arab Spring uprisings and the rise of ISIS have had far-reaching consequences for regional stability and diplomatic initiatives. Future research should be attentive to the ways in which sudden, transformative events can disrupt or create opportunities for Track II diplomacy and how religious actors adapt to these changing circumstances. How will the war started by Hamas against Israel on October 7, 2023, or the unprecedented (and foiled) attack on Israel by Iran on April 13, 2024, affect future events?

Domestic politics and regional dynamics are additional factors that warrant further investigation. The political calculations of leaders, the influence of various interest groups, and the state of public opinion can all shape the willingness of parties to engage in Track II diplomacy and the concessions they are prepared to make. Moreover, the complex web of relationships and power dynamics among Middle Eastern states can create both obstacles and opportunities for peacemaking efforts. Future researchers should consider how domestic and regional political factors interact with the efforts of religious Track II actors and explore strategies for navigating these complex political landscapes. In the case of peace between the State of Israel and Arab nations, it is also important to explore the complexity involved in an autocratic state forming a peace agreement with a democracy as vibrant and diverse as Israel's democracy.

Finally, the role of technological innovation in shaping Track II diplomatic efforts deserves greater attention. Advances in communication technologies, such as social media

platforms, have the potential to transform the way religious actors engage in peacemaking efforts, and they are also powerful, disruptive tools that put the ability to derail peacemaking in the hands of virtually anyone. Future research should explore how religious Track II actors are leveraging these technologies to build networks, share information, and influence public opinion, and assess the implications of these developments for the effectiveness of their diplomatic efforts. How has the ubiquity of first-order or eyewitness information made it possible for entrenched views to be reshaped and challenged?

By taking a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to studying the dynamics of Track II diplomacy in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, future researchers can build upon the findings of this dissertation and contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay of factors that shape these critical diplomatic efforts by studying other explanatory variables. Such research will not only advance our theoretical understanding of the role of religious actors in international relations but also inform the development of more effective strategies for promoting sustainable peace in the region even apart from them.

## Alternative Views and Counter Arguments

While the data in this study make a case for the relevance of evangelical Track II diplomacy in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, it is important understand potential counter-arguments and alternative explanations that may challenge or qualify the main findings via future research.

One potential counter-argument is that the influence of evangelical Track II actors in the case studies may be overstated and that other factors, such as political, economic, or security considerations, were more decisive in shaping the outcomes of the peace processes. For example, in the case of the Camp David Accords, it could be argued that the strategic interests of the United States, Egypt, and Israel in countering Soviet influence and achieving regional stability

were the primary drivers of the agreement, making the efforts of evangelical intermediaries ultimately irrelevant. Similarly, the success of the Abraham Accords could be attributed more to the geopolitical realignment in the Middle East, driven by shared concerns over Iranian influence and the potential economic benefits of normalization, than to any other factor, and those overarching priorities were sufficiently powerful that the engagement of religious actors was nothing more than window dressing. The absence of evangelical involvement in the Oslo Accords, which still resulted in a significant (albeit ultimately unsuccessful) peace agreement, could also be seen as evidence that religious actors are not always necessary or sufficient for achieving breakthroughs in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, whether or not those breakthroughs persist (because failure can be attributed to many factors).

Another counterargument could focus on the potential limitations or unintended consequences of evangelical Track II diplomacy. Some critics will argue that the involvement of evangelical actors, who often hold strong pro-Israel views, could contribute to a perceived bias in the peace process and undermine the trust and legitimacy of the negotiations among Palestinian or other Arab stakeholders. This concern is particularly relevant given the historical tensions and power asymmetries between Israel and the Palestinians and the sensitivity of issues such as Jerusalem, borders, and refugees. Moreover, the theological motivations and worldviews of evangelical peacemakers may not always align with the political, social, and economic realities on the ground, potentially leading to a disconnect between their efforts and the actual needs and aspirations of the parties to the conflict. For example, the emphasis on biblical prophecy and the spiritual significance of the Holy Land among many evangelical groups could be seen as a hindrance to pragmatic, interest-based negotiations and compromise.

An alternative explanation for the success or failure of Arab-Israeli peace processes could focus on the role of leadership and personal diplomacy rather than just the influence of religious

Track II actors. The case studies in this dissertation also highlight the importance of personal relationships and trust between key leaders, such as President Carter and President Sadat in the Camp David Accords or President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu in the Abraham Accords. It could be argued that these personal dynamics and the political will of the leaders involved were more decisive in shaping the outcomes of the negotiations than the efforts of Track II intermediaries.

Another alternative perspective could emphasize the role of regional and international contexts in enabling or constraining Arab-Israeli peacemaking. The shifting balance of power in the Middle East, the evolving priorities and alliances of regional actors, and the involvement of great powers like the United States, China, and Russia could be seen as more influential factors than religious Track II diplomacy in determining the success or failure of peace efforts to a degree to which such faith efforts might be deemed irrelevant. For example, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s created a new geopolitical context that facilitated the Oslo Accords, while the post-9/11 "War on Terror" and the Arab Spring uprisings in the 2010s reshaped the regional landscape in ways that both challenged and created opportunities for Arab-Israeli reconciliation.

While these counter-arguments and alternative explanations raise important points and qualify the findings of the dissertation, they do not necessarily negate the relevance of evangelical Track II diplomacy in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, especially based on the data in this study. Instead, they highlight the complexity and multidimensional nature of the peace processes and the need for a nuanced, contextualized understanding of the role of religious actors in relation to other factors and dynamics. It affirms the modest ambitions of this study which comes to an empirical conclusion as the start of a conversation among scholars, not as the conclusion of a

conversation. This study makes no grand gestures. There's no hyperbole here. It provides a baseline, not a finish line. It does not argue that they are the reason for peace.

By acknowledging the limitations and potential critiques of the study, the dissertation provides a more robust and credible analysis of the significance of evangelical Track II diplomacy, while also pointing to avenues for future research that can further explore the interplay between religious, political, economic, and social factors in shaping the prospects for peace in the region.

## Summary

This dissertation makes a significant contribution to the literature at the intersection of religion and foreign policy by examining the role of evangelical Christians in Track II diplomacy efforts aimed at promoting peace between Arabs and Israelis. Through a rigorous qualitative analysis of three pivotal case studies—the Camp David Accords (1978), the Oslo Accords (1993), and the Abraham Accords (2020)—the study investigates the question: "How are evangelical Track II diplomatic efforts relevant to Israeli and Arab peacemaking?" This study is the first contribution to the academic record to include the origin story of Israel's first contact with the United Arab Emirates (in 2001).

The research employs the theoretical framework of conventional constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of religious beliefs, values, and identities in shaping the behavior of state and non-state actors in international relations. By situating the study within this framework, the dissertation highlights the ways in which evangelical Track II diplomacy operates at the intersection of religious and political factors, challenging traditional assumptions about the role of religion in foreign policy. The study also affirms neoclassical realism as a potential alternative

theoretical perspective, acknowledging the influence of material factors and strategic interests in shaping the outcomes of peacemaking efforts.

Through a combination of in-depth interviews with key participants and extensive document analysis, the case studies provide a nuanced and detailed account of evangelical involvement in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. The Camp David Accords case study reveals the crucial role played by an evangelical delegation led by Rev. Jerry Falwell in facilitating communication and building trust between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin at a critical moment.

The Oslo Accords case study, notable for the absence of direct evangelical involvement, underscores the importance of addressing religious dimensions in conflict resolution. The study argues that the failure to adequately incorporate religious perspectives and actors in the Oslo process may have contributed to its ultimate shortcomings, highlighting the need for a more inclusive approach to peacemaking that recognizes the significance of religious factors.

The Abraham Accords case study showcases the extensive engagement of evangelical leaders with Arab and Israeli officials in the lead-up to the historic normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab states. Through a series of high-level meetings and behind-the-scenes interactions, evangelical figures were involved in building trust, fostering dialogue, and contributing to diplomatic relations. This case study demonstrates the influence of evangelical actors in shaping U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and their potential to contribute to transformative diplomatic breakthroughs.

The findings of this dissertation challenge prevailing assumptions about the role of evangelicals in the Middle East, often characterized as monolithically pro-Israel and hawkish in their foreign policy views. Instead, the study reveals a more complex picture, highlighting the diversity of evangelical perspectives and their capacity to engage constructively in peacemaking

efforts. By shedding light on the often-overlooked role of evangelical Track II diplomacy, the research provides valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to promote peace in the Middle East.

The study argues that evangelical Track II diplomacy has been relevant to Arab-Israeli peacemaking, with evangelicals being influential as other Track II actors have been influential and potentially indispensable given their significant political influence in the United States. However, the dissertation also acknowledges the limitations of the research, including the focus on a small number of case studies and the need for further investigation of alternative explanatory variables.

The theoretical implications of the study are significant, suggesting that conventional constructivism provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of religious actors in international relations. By highlighting the ways in which evangelical beliefs, values, and identities shape their engagement in Track II diplomacy, the dissertation contributes to a growing body of literature that challenges the secularist assumptions of much international relations scholarship. At the same time, the study's engagement with neoclassical realism points to the need for a more integrative approach that acknowledges the interplay of ideational and material factors in shaping foreign policy outcomes.

Future research could build upon the findings of this dissertation by exploring the transferability of these insights to other contexts of religious peacemaking, examining the long-term impact of evangelical Track II efforts, and investigating the potential unintended consequences of religious involvement in diplomatic processes. The study also highlights the need for greater collaboration between scholars, policymakers, and religious leaders in addressing the complex challenges of the Arab-Israeli conflict and other intractable disputes.

Ultimately, this dissertation makes a compelling case for the value of Track II diplomacy and the role of religious actors in building bridges of peace, even in the most complex and intransigent conflicts. By shedding light on the historical neglect of religion, particularly evangelical Christianity, in the study of foreign policy and international relations, the research opens up new avenues for inquiry and policy engagement. The study underscores the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to conflict resolution that takes seriously the religious dimensions of international affairs and harnesses the potential of religious actors as agents of transformation and reconciliation.

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## APPENDIX 1
The Camp David Accords

### Part 1
### The Framework for Peace in the Middle East

Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and Menachem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel, met with Jimmy Carter, President of the United States of America, at Camp David from September 5 to September 17, 1978, and have agreed on the following framework for peace in the Middle East. They invite other parties to the Arab-Israel conflict to adhere to it.

**Preamble**

The search for peace in the Middle East must be guided by the following:

- The agreed basis for a peaceful settlement of the conflict between Israel and its neighbors is United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, in all its parts.
- After four wars during 30 years, despite intensive human efforts, the Middle East, which is the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of three great religions, does not enjoy the blessings of peace. The people of the Middle East yearn for peace so that the vast human and natural resources of the region can be turned to the pursuits of peace and so that this area can become a model for coexistence and cooperation among nations.
- The historic initiative of President Sadat in visiting Jerusalem and the reception accorded to him by the parliament, government and people of Israel, and the reciprocal visit of Prime Minister Begin to Ismailia, the peace proposals made by both leaders, as well as the warm reception of these missions by the peoples of both countries, have created an unprecedented opportunity for peace which must not be lost if this generation and future generations are to be spared the tragedies of war.
- The provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the other accepted norms of international law and legitimacy now provide accepted standards for the conduct of relations among all states.
- To achieve a relationship of peace, in the spirit of Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, future negotiations between Israel and any neighbor prepared to negotiate peace and security with it are necessary for the purpose of carrying out all the provisions and principles of Resolutions 242 and 338.
- Peace requires respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force. Progress toward that goal can accelerate movement toward a new era of reconciliation in the Middle East marked by cooperation in promoting economic development, in maintaining stability and in assuring security.
- Security is enhanced by a relationship of peace and by cooperation between nations which enjoy normal relations. In addition, under the terms of peace treaties, the parties can, on the basis of reciprocity, agree to special security arrangements such as demilitarized zones, limited armaments areas, early warning stations, the presence of international forces, liaison, agreed measures for monitoring and other arrangements that they agree are useful.

**Framework**

Taking these factors into account, the parties are determined to reach a just, comprehensive, and durable settlement of the Middle East conflict through the conclusion of peace treaties based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 in all their parts. Their purpose is to achieve peace and good neighborly relations. They recognize that for peace to endure, it must involve all those who have been most deeply affected by the conflict. They therefore agree that this framework, as appropriate, is intended by them to constitute a basis for peace not only between Egypt and Israel, but also between Israel and each of its other neighbors which is prepared to negotiate peace with Israel on this basis. With that objective in mind, they have agreed to proceed as follows:

- **West Bank and Gaza**
  Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the representatives of the Palestinian people should participate in negotiations on the resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects. To achieve that objective, negotiations relating to the West Bank and Gaza should proceed in three stages:

    1. Egypt and Israel agree that, in order to ensure a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority, and taking into account the security concerns of all the parties, there should be transitional arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza for a period not exceeding five years. In order to provide full autonomy to the inhabitants, under these arrangements the Israeli military government and its civilian administration will be withdrawn as soon as a self-governing authority has been freely elected by the inhabitants of these areas to replace the existing military government. To negotiate the details of a transitional arrangement, Jordan will be invited to join the negotiations on the basis of this framework. These new arrangements should give due consideration both to the principle of self-government by the inhabitants of these territories and to the legitimate security concerns of the parties involved.

    2. Egypt, Israel, and Jordan will agree on the modalities for establishing elected self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza. The delegations of Egypt and Jordan may include Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza or other Palestinians as mutually agreed. The parties will negotiate an agreement which will define the powers and responsibilities of the self-governing authority to be exercised in the West Bank and Gaza. A withdrawal of Israeli armed forces will take place and there will be a redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces into specified security locations. The agreement will also include arrangements for assuring internal and external security and public order. A strong local police force will be established, which may include Jordanian citizens. In addition, Israeli and Jordanian forces will participate in joint patrols and in the manning of control posts to assure the security of the borders.

    3. When the self-governing authority (administrative council) in the West Bank and Gaza is established and inaugurated, the transitional period of five years will begin. As soon as possible, but not later than the third year after the beginning of the transitional period, negotiations will take place to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza and its relationship with its neighbors and to conclude a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan by the end of the transitional period. These

negotiations will be conducted among Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. Two separate but related committees will be convened, one committee, consisting of representatives of the four parties which will negotiate and agree on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, and its relationship with its neighbors, and the second committee, consisting of representatives of Israel and representatives of Jordan to be joined by the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, to negotiate the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, taking into account the agreement reached in the final status of the West Bank and Gaza. The negotiations shall be based on all the provisions and principles of UN Security Council Resolution 242. The negotiations will resolve, among other matters, the location of the boundaries and the nature of the security arrangements. The solution from the negotiations must also recognize the legitimate right of the Palestinian peoples and their just requirements. In this way, the Palestinians will participate in the determination of their own future through:

i. The negotiations among Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza to agree on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza and other outstanding issues by the end of the transitional period.
ii. Submitting their agreements to a vote by the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza.
iii. Providing for the elected representatives of the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza to decide how they shall govern themselves consistent with the provisions of their agreement.
iv. Participating as stated above in the work of the committee negotiating the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.
v. All necessary measures will be taken and provisions made to assure the security of Israel and its neighbors during the transitional period and beyond. To assist in providing such security, a strong local police force will be constituted by the self-governing authority. It will be composed of inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. The police will maintain liaison on internal security matters with the designated Israeli, Jordanian, and Egyptian officers.
vi. During the transitional period, representatives of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the self-governing authority will constitute a continuing committee to decide by agreement on the modalities of admission of persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, together with necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. Other matters of common concern may also be dealt with by this committee.
vii. Egypt and Israel will work with each other and with other interested parties to establish agreed procedures for a prompt, just and permanent implementation of the resolution of the refugee problem.

- **Egypt-Israel**
    1. Egypt-Israel undertake not to resort to the threat or the use of force to settle disputes. Any disputes shall be settled by peaceful means in accordance with the

provisions of Article 33 of the U.N. Charter.

2. In order to achieve peace between them, the parties agree to negotiate in good faith with a goal of concluding within three months from the signing of the Framework a peace treaty between them while inviting the other parties to the conflict to proceed simultaneously to negotiate and conclude similar peace treaties with a view the achieving a comprehensive peace in the area. The Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel will govern the peace negotiations between them. The parties will agree on the modalities and the timetable for the implementation of their obligations under the treaty.

- **Associated Principles**
  1. Egypt and Israel state that the principles and provisions described below should apply to peace treaties between Israel and each of its neighbors - Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

  2. Signatories shall establish among themselves relationships normal to states at peace with one another. To this end, they should undertake to abide by all the provisions of the U.N. Charter. Steps to be taken in this respect include:

a. full recognition;
b. abolishing economic boycotts;
c. guaranteeing that under their jurisdiction the citizens of the other parties shall enjoy the protection of the due process of law.

3. Signatories should explore possibilities for economic development in the context of final peace treaties, with the objective of contributing to the atmosphere of peace, cooperation and friendship which is their common goal.
4. Claims commissions may be established for the mutual settlement of all financial claims.
5. The United States shall be invited to participate in the talks on matters related to the modalities of the implementation of the agreements and working out the timetable for the carrying out of the obligations of the parties.
6. The United Nations Security Council shall be requested to endorse the peace treaties and ensure that their provisions shall not be violated. The permanent members of the Security Council shall be requested to underwrite the peace treaties and ensure respect or the provisions. They shall be requested to conform their policies an actions with the undertaking contained in this Framework.

**For the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt:**

**Muhammed Anwar al-Sadat**

**For the Government of Israel:**

**Menachem Begin**

**Witnessed by:Jimmy Carter,**
**President of the United States of America**

## Part 2
## Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel

In order to achieve peace between them, Israel and Egypt agree to negotiate in good faith with a goal of concluding within three months of the signing of this framework a peace treaty between them:

It is agreed that:

- The site of the negotiations will be under a United Nations flag at a location or locations to be mutually agreed.
- All of the principles of U.N. Resolution 242 will apply in this resolution of the dispute between Israel and Egypt.
- Unless otherwise mutually agreed, terms of the peace treaty will be implemented between two and three years after the peace treaty is signed.
- The following matters are agreed between the parties:

    1. the full exercise of Egyptian sovereignty up to the internationally recognized border between Egypt and mandated Palestine;
    2. the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the Sinai;
    3. the use of airfields left by the Israelis near al-Arish, Rafah, Ras en-Naqb, and Sharm el-Sheikh for civilian purposes only, including possible commercial use only by all nations;
    4. the right of free passage by ships of Israel through the Gulf of Suez and the Suez Canal on the basis of the Constantinople Convention of 1888 applying to all nations; the Strait of Tiran and Gulf of Aqaba are international waterways to be open to all nations for unimpeded and nonsuspendable freedom of navigation and overflight;
    5. the construction of a highway between the Sinai and Jordan near Eilat with guaranteed free and peaceful passage by Egypt and Jordan; and
    6. the stationing of military forces listed below.

**Stationing of Forces**

- No more than one division (mechanized or infantry) of Egyptian armed forces will be stationed within an area lying approximately 50 km. (30 miles) east of the Gulf of Suez and the Suez Canal.
- Only United Nations forces and civil police equipped with light weapons to perform normal police functions will be stationed within an area lying west of the international border and the Gulf of Aqaba, varying in width from 20 km. (12 miles) to 40 km. (24 miles).

- In the area within 3 km. (1.8 miles) east of the international border there will be Israeli limited military forces not to exceed four infantry battalions and United Nations observers.
- Border patrol units not to exceed three battalions will supplement the civil police in maintaining order in the area not included above.
- The exact demarcation of the above areas will be as decided during the peace negotiations.
- Early warning stations may exist to insure compliance with the terms of the agreement.
- United Nations forces will be stationed:
    1. in part of the area in the Sinai lying within about 20 km. of the Mediterranean Sea and adjacent to the international border, and
    2. in the Sharm el-Sheikh area to insure freedom of passage through the Strait of Tiran; and these forces will not be removed unless such removal is approved by the Security Council of the United Nations with a unanimous vote of the five permanent members.
- After a peace treaty is signed, and after the interim withdrawal is complete, normal relations will be established between Egypt and Israel, including full recognition, including diplomatic, economic and cultural relations; termination of economic boycotts and barriers to the free movement of goods and people; and mutual protection of citizens by the due process of law.

**Interim Withdrawal**

Between three months and nine months after the signing of the peace treaty, all Israeli forces will withdraw east of a line extending from a point east of El-Arish to Ras Muhammad, the exact location of this line to be determined by mutual agreement.

**For the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt:**

**Muhammed Anwar al-Sadat**

**For the Government of Israel:**

**Menachem Begin**

**Witnessed by:**

**Jimmy Carter,**
**President of the United States of America**

## APPENDIX 2
The Oslo Accords

**Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements September 13, 1993**

The Government of the State of Israel and the P.L.O. team (in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Middle East Peace Conference) (the "Palestinian Delegation"), representing the Palestinian people, agree that it is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, recognize their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process. Accordingly, the, two sides agree to the following principles:

ARTICLE I
AIM OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council (the "Council"), for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

It is understood that the interim arrangements are an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

ARTICLE II
FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD
The agreed framework for the interim period is set forth in this Declaration of Principles.

ARTICLE III
ELECTIONS

1. In order that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip may govern themselves according to democratic principles, direct, free and general political elections will be held for the Council under agreed supervision and international observation, while the Palestinian police will ensure public order.

2. An agreement will be concluded on the exact mode and conditions of the elections in accordance with the protocol attached as Annex I, with the goal of holding the elections not later than nine months after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles.

3. These elections will constitute a significant interim preparatory step toward the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.

ARTICLE IV
JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations. The two sides view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period.

ARTICLE V
TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND PERMANENT STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

1. The five-year transitional period will begin upon the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.

2. Permanent status negotiations will commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period, between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian people representatives.

3. It is understood that these negotiations shall cover remaining issues, including: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors, and other issues of common interest.

4. The two parties agree that the outcome of the permanent status negotiations should not be prejudiced or preempted by agreements reached for the interim period.

ARTICLE VI
PREPARATORY TRANSFER OF POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, a transfer of authority from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the authorised Palestinians for this task, as detailed herein, will commence. This transfer of authority will be of a preparatory nature until the inauguration of the Council.

2. Immediately after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, with the view to promoting economic development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, authority will be transferred to the Palestinians on the following spheres: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism. The Palestinian side will commence in building the Palestinian police force, as agreed upon. Pending the inauguration of the Council, the two parties may negotiate the transfer of additional powers and responsibilities, as agreed upon.

ARTICLE VII
INTERIM AGREEMENT

1. The Israeli and Palestinian delegations will negotiate an agreement on the interim period (the "Interim Agreement")

2. The Interim Agreement shall specify, among other things, the structure of the Council, the number of its members, and the transfer of powers and responsibilities from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Council. The Interim Agreement shall also specify the Council's executive authority, legislative authority in accordance with Article IX below, and the independent Palestinian judicial organs.

3. The Interim Agreement shall include arrangements, to be implemented upon the inauguration of the Council, for the assumption by the Council of all of the powers and responsibilities transferred previously in accordance with Article VI above.

4. In order to enable the Council to promote economic growth, upon its inauguration, the Council will establish, among other things, a Palestinian Electricity Authority, a Gaza Sea Port Authority, a Palestinian Development Bank, a Palestinian Export Promotion Board, a Palestinian Environmental Authority, a Palestinian Land Authority and a Palestinian Water Administration Authority, and any other Authorities agreed upon, in accordance with the Interim Agreement that will specify their powers and responsibilities.

5. After the inauguration of the Council, the Civil Administration will be dissolved, and the Israeli military government will be withdrawn.

ARTICLE VIII
PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY

In order to guarantee public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Council will establish a strong police force, while Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order.

ARTICLE IX
LAWS AND MILITARY ORDERS

1. The Council will be empowered to legislate, in accordance with the Interim Agreement, within all authorities transferred to it.

2. Both parties will review jointly laws and military orders presently in force in remaining spheres. ARTICLE X
JOINT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN LIAISON COMMITTEE

In order to provide for a smooth implementation of this Declaration of Principles and any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period, upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee will be established in order to deal with issues requiring coordination, other issues of common interest, and disputes.

ARTICLE XI
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC FIELDS

Recognizing the mutual benefit of cooperation in promoting the development of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel, upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, an Israeli-Palestinian Economic Cooperation Committee will be established in order to develop and implement in a cooperative manner the programs identified in the protocols attached as Annex III and Annex IV.

ARTICLE XII
LIAISON AND COOPERATION WITH JORDAN AND EGYPT

The two parties will invite the Governments of Jordan and Egypt to participate in establishing further liaison and cooperation arrangements between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian representatives, on the one hand, and the Governments of Jordan and Egypt, on the other hand, to promote cooperation between them. These arrangements will include the constitution of a Continuing Committee that will decide by agreement on the modalities of admission of persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, together with necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. Other matters of common concern will be dealt with by this Committee.

ARTICLE XIII
REDEPLOYMENT OF ISRAELI FORCES

1. After the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, and not later than the eve of elections for the Council, a redeployment of Israeli military forces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will take place, in addition to withdrawal of Israeli forces carried out in accordance with Article XIV.

2. In redeploying its military forces, Israel will be guided by the principle that its military forces should be redeployed outside populated areas.

3. Further redeployments to specified locations will be gradually implemented commensurate with the assumption of responsibility for public order and internal security by the Palestinian police force pursuant to Article VIII above.

ARTICLE XIV
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GAZA STRIP AND JERICHO AREA

Israel will withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, as detailed in the protocol attached as Annex II.

ARTICLE XV
RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

1. Disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of this Declaration of Principles. or any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period, shall be resolved by negotiations through the Joint Liaison Committee to be established pursuant to Article X above.

2. Disputes which cannot be settled by negotiations may be resolved by a mechanism of conciliation to be agreed upon by the parties.

3. The parties may agree to submit to arbitration disputes relating to the interim period, which cannot be settled through conciliation. To this end, upon the agreement of both parties, the parties will establish an Arbitration Committee.

ARTICLE XVI
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION CONCERNING REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Both parties view the multilateral working groups as an appropriate instrument for promoting a "Marshall Plan", the regional programs and other programs, including special programs for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as indicated in the protocol attached as Annex IV.

ARTICLE XVII
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

1. This Declaration of Principles will enter into force one month after its signing.

2. All protocols annexed to this Declaration of Principles and Agreed Minutes pertaining thereto shall be regarded as an integral part hereof.

Done at Washington, D.C., this thirteenth day of September, 1993.

For the Government of Israel For the P.L.O.

Witnessed By: The United States of America The Russian Federation

ANNEX I
PROTOCOL ON THE MODE AND CONDITIONS OF ELECTIONS

1. Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process, according to an agreement between the two sides.

2. In addition, the election agreement should cover, among other things, the following issues: a. the system of elections;

b. the mode of the agreed supervision and international observation and their personal composition; and

c. rules and regulations regarding election campaign, including agreed arrangements for the organizing of mass media, and the possibility of licensing a broadcasting and TV station.

3. The future status of displaced Palestinians who were registered on 4th June 1967 will not be prejudiced because they are unable to participate in the election process due to practical reasons.

ANNEX II
PROTOCOL ON WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM THE GAZA STRIP AND JERICHO AREA

1. The two sides will conclude and sign within two months from the date of entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, an agreement on the withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. This agreement will include comprehensive arrangements to apply in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal.

2. Israel will implement an accelerated and scheduled withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, beginning immediately with the signing of the agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho area and to be completed within a period not exceeding four months after the signing of this agreement.

3. The above agreement will include, among other things:

a. Arrangements for a smooth and peaceful transfer of authority from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Palestinian representatives.

b. Structure, powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority in these areas, except: external security, settlements, Israelis, foreign relations, and other mutually agreed matters.

c. Arrangements for the assumption of internal security and public order by the Palestinian police force consisting of police officers recruited locally and from abroad holding Jordanian passports and Palestinian documents issued by Egypt). Those who will participate in the Palestinian police force coming from abroad should be trained as police and police officers.

d. A temporary international or foreign presence, as agreed upon.

e. Establishment of a joint Palestinian-Israeli Coordination and Cooperation Committee for mutual security purposes.

f. An economic development and stabilization program, including the establishment of an Emergency Fund, to encourage foreign investment, and financial and economic support. Both sides

will coordinate and cooperate jointly and unilaterally with regional and international parties to support these aims.

g. Arrangements for a safe passage for persons and transportation between the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.

4. The above agreement will include arrangements for coordination between both parties regarding passages:

a. Gaza - Egypt; and b. Jericho - Jordan.

5. The offices responsible for carrying out the powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority under this Annex II and Article VI of the Declaration of Principles will be located in the Gaza Strip and in the Jericho area pending the inauguration of the Council.

6. Other than these agreed arrangements, the status of the Gaza Strip and Jericho area will continue to be an integral part of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will not be changed in the interim period.

ANNEX III
PROTOCOL ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The two sides agree to establish an Israeli-Palestinian continuing Committee for Economic Cooperation, focusing, among other things, on the following:

1. Cooperation in the field of water, including a Water Development Program prepared by experts from both sides, which will also specify the mode of cooperation in the management of water resources in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will include proposals for studies and plans on water rights of each party, as well as on the equitable utilization of joint water resources for implementation in and beyond the interim period.

2. Cooperation in the field of electricity, including an Electricity Development Program, which will also specify the mode of cooperation for the production, maintenance, purchase and sale of electricity resources.

3. Cooperation in the field of energy, including an Energy Development Program, which will provide for the exploitation of oil and gas for industrial purposes, particularly in the Gaza Strip and in the Negev, and will encourage further joint exploitation of other energy resources. This Program may also provide for the construction of a Petrochemical industrial complex in the Gaza Strip and the construction of oil and gas pipelines.

4. Cooperation in the field of finance, including a Financial Development and Action Program for the encouragement of international investment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in Israel, as well as the establishment of a Palestinian Development Bank.

5. Cooperation in the field of transport and communications, including a Program, which will define guidelines for the establishment of a Gaza Sea Port Area, and will provide for the establishing of

transport and communications lines to and from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Israel and to other countries. In addition, this Program will provide for carrying out the necessary construction of roads, railways, communications lines, etc.

6. Cooperation in the field of trade, including studies, and Trade Promotion Programs, which will encourage local, regional and inter-regional trade, as well as a feasibility study of creating free trade zones in the Gaza Strip and in Israel, mutual access to these zones, and cooperation in other areas related to trade and commerce.

7. Cooperation in the field of industry, including Industrial Development Programs, which will provide for the establishment of joint Israeli- Palestinian Industrial Research and Development Centers, will promote Palestinian-Israeli joint ventures, and provide guidelines for cooperation in the textile, food, pharmaceutical, electronics, diamonds, computer and science-based industries.

8. A program for cooperation in, and regulation of, labor relations and cooperation in social welfare issues.

9. A Human Resources Development and Cooperation Plan, providing for joint Israeli-Palestinian workshops and seminars, and for the establishment of joint vocational training centers, research institutes and data banks.

10. An Environmental Protection Plan, providing for joint and/or coordinated measures in this sphere.

11. A program for developing coordination and cooperation in the field of communication and media.

12. Any other programs of mutual interest. ANNEX IV

PROTOCOL ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION CONCERNING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

1. The two sides will cooperate in the context of the multilateral peace efforts in promoting a Development Program for the region, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to be initiated by the G-7. The parties will request the G-7 to seek the participation in this program of other interested states, such as members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, regional Arab states and institutions, as well as members of the private sector.

2. The Development Program will consist of two elements:

a. an Economic Development Program for the 'West Bank and the Gaza Strip. b. a Regional Economic Development Program.

A. The Economic Development Program for the West Bank and the Gaza strip will consist of the following elements:

1. A Social Rehabilitation Program, including a Housing and Construction Program.
2. A Small and Medium Business Development Plan.
3. An Infrastructure Development Program (water, electricity, transportation and communications, etc.)
4. A Human Resources Plan.
5. Other programs.

B. The Regional Economic Development Program may consist of the following elements:

1. The establishment of a Middle East Development Fund, as a first step, and a Middle East Development Bank, as a second step.
2. The development of a joint Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian Plan for coordinated exploitation of the Dead Sea area.
3. The Mediterranean Sea (Gaza) - Dead Sea Canal.
4. Regional Desalinization and other water development projects. 5. A regional plan for agricultural development, including a coordinated regional effort for the prevention of desertification.
6. Interconnection of electricity grids.
7. Regional cooperation for the transfer, distribution and industrial exploitation of gas, oil and other energy resources.
8. A Regional Tourism, Transportation and Telecommunications Development Plan.
9. Regional cooperation in other spheres.

3. The two sides will encourage the multilateral working groups, and will coordinate towards their success. The two parties will encourage intersessional activities, as well as pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, within the various multilateral working groups.

**AGREED MINUTES TO THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON INTERIM SELF GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

A. GENERAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND AGREEMENTS

Any powers and responsibilities transferred to the Palestinians pursuant to the Declaration of Principles prior to the inauguration of the Council will be subject to the same principles pertaining to Article IV, as set out in these Agreed Minutes below.

B. SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDINGS AND AGREEMENTS Article IV
It is understood that:

1. Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations: Jerusalem, settlements, military locations, and Israelis.

2. The Council's jurisdiction will apply with regard to the agreed powers, responsibilities, spheres and authorities transferred to it.

Article VI (2)

It is agreed that the transfer of authority will be as follows:

1. The Palestinian side will inform the Israeli side of the names of the authorised Palestinians who will assume the powers, authorities and responsibilities that will be transferred to the Palestinians according to the Declaration of Principles in the following fields: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, tourism, and any other authorities agreed upon.

2. It is understood that the rights and obligations of these offices will not be affected.

3. Each of the spheres described above will continue to enjoy existing budgetary allocations in accordance with arrangements to be mutually agreed upon. These arrangements also will provide for the necessary adjustments required in order to take into account the taxes collected by the direct taxation office.

4. Upon the execution of the Declaration of Principles, the Israeli and Palestinian delegations will immediately commence negotiations on a detailed plan for the transfer of authority on the above offices in accordance with the above understandings.

Article VII (2)

The Interim Agreement will also include arrangements for coordination and cooperation.

Article VII (5)

The withdrawal of the military government will not prevent Israel from exercising the powers and responsibilities not transferred to the Council.

Article VIII

It is understood that the Interim Agreement will include arrangements for cooperation and coordination between the two parties in this regard. It is also agreed that the transfer of powers and responsibilities to the Palestinian police will be accomplished in a phased manner, as agreed in the Interim Agreement.

Article X

It is agreed that, upon the entry into force of the Declaration of Principles, the Israeli and Palestinian delegations will exchange the names of the individuals designated by them as members of the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee.

It is further agreed that each side will have an equal number of members in the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee will reach decisions by agreement. The Joint Committee may add other technicians and experts, as necessary. The Joint Committee will decide on the frequency and place or places of its meetings.

Annex II

It is understood that, subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal, Israel will continue to be responsible for external security, and for internal security and public order of settlements and Israelis. Israeli military forces and civilians may continue to use roads freely within the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area.

Done at Washington, D.C., this thirteenth day of September, 1993. For the Government of Israel For the P.L.O.

Witnessed By: The United States of America The Russian Federation

**APPENDIX 3**
The Abraham Accords

***The Abraham Accords Declaration:***

We, the undersigned, recognize the importance of maintaining and strengthening peace in the Middle East and around the world based on mutual understanding and coexistence, as well as respect for human dignity and freedom, including religious freedom.

We encourage efforts to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue to advance a culture of peace among the three Abrahamic religions and all humanity.

We believe that the best way to address challenges is through cooperation and dialogue and that developing friendly relations among States advances the interests of lasting peace in the Middle East and around the world.

We seek tolerance and respect for every person in order to make this world a place where all can enjoy a life of dignity and hope, no matter their race, faith or ethnicity.

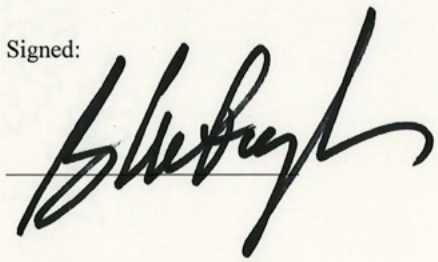
We support science, art, medicine, and commerce to inspire humankind, maximize human potential and bring nations closer together.

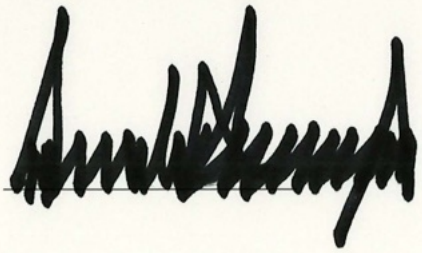
We seek to end radicalization and conflict to provide all children a better future.

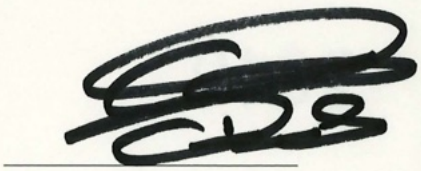
We pursue a vision of peace, security, and prosperity in the Middle East and around the world.

In this spirit, we warmly welcome and are encouraged by the progress already made in establishing diplomatic relations between Israel and its neighbors in the region under the principles of the Abraham Accords. We are encouraged by the ongoing efforts to consolidate and expand such friendly relations based on shared interests and a shared commitment to a better future.

Signed:







# ABRAHAM ACCORDS PEACE AGREEMENT:

# TREATY OF PEACE, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND FULL NORMALIZATION

# BETWEEN

# THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

# AND

# THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Government of the State of Israel (hereinafter, the "Parties")

Aspiring to realize the vision of a Middle East region that is stable, peaceful and prosperous, for the benefit of all States and peoples in the region;

Desiring to establish peace, diplomatic and friendly relations, co-operation and full normalization of ties between them and their peoples, in accordance with this Treaty, and to chart together a new path to unlock the vast potential of their countries and of the region;

Reaffirming the "Joint Statement of the United States, the State of Israel, and the United Arab Emirates" (the "Abraham Accords"), dated 13 August 2020;

Believing that the further development of friendly relations meets the interests of lasting peace in the Middle East and that challenges can only be effectively addressed by cooperation and not by conflict;

Determined to ensure lasting peace, stability, security and prosperity for both their States and to develop and enhance their dynamic and innovative economies;

Reaffirming their shared commitment to normalize relations and promote stability through diplomatic engagement, increased economic cooperation and other close coordination;

Reaffirming also their shared belief that the establishment of peace and full normalization between them can help transform the Middle East by spurring economic growth, enhancing technological innovation and forging closer people-to-people relations;

Recognizing that the Arab and Jewish peoples are descendants of a common ancestor, Abraham, and inspired, in that spirit, to foster in the Middle East a reality in which Muslims, Jews, Christians and peoples of all faiths, denominations, beliefs and nationalities live in, and are committed to, a spirit of coexistence, mutual understanding and mutual respect;

Recalling the reception held on January 28, 2020, at which President Trump presented his Vision for Peace, and committing to continuing their efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive, realistic and enduring solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;

Recalling the Treaties of Peace between the State of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt and between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and committed to working together to realize a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that meets the legitimate needs and aspirations of both peoples, and to advance comprehensive Middle East peace, stability and prosperity;

Emphasizing the belief that the normalization of Israeli and Emirati relations is in the interest of both peoples and contributes to the cause of peace in the Middle East and the world;

Expressing deep appreciation to the United States for its profound contribution to this historic achievement;

Have agreed as follows:

1. Establishment of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Normalization: Peace, diplomatic relations and full normalization of bilateral ties are hereby established between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel.

2. General Principles: The Parties shall be guided in their relations by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law governing relations among States. In particular, they shall recognize and respect each other's sovereignty and right to live in peace and security, develop friendly relations of cooperation between them and their peoples, and settle all disputes between them by peaceful means.

3. Establishment of Embassies: The Parties shall exchange resident ambassadors as soon as practicable after the signing of this Treaty, and shall conduct diplomatic and consular relations in accordance with the applicable rules of international law.

4. Peace and Stability: The Parties shall attach profound importance to mutual understanding, cooperation and coordination between them in the spheres of peace and stability, as a fundamental pillar of their relations and as a means for enhancing those spheres in the Middle East as a whole. They undertake to take the necessary steps to prevent any terrorist or hostile activities against each other on or from their respective territories, as well as deny any support for such activities abroad or allowing such support on or from their respective territories. Recognizing the new era of peace and friendly relations between them, as well as the centrality of stability to the well-being oftheir respective peoples and of the region, the Parties undertake to consider and discuss these matters regularly, and to conclude detailed agreements and arrangements on coordination and cooperation.

5. Cooperation and Agreements in Other Spheres: As an integral part of their commitment to peace, prosperity, diplomatic and friendly relations, cooperation and full normalization, the Parties shall work to advance the cause of peace, stability and prosperity throughout the Middle East, and to unlock the great potential of their countries and of the region. For such purposes, the Parties shall conclude bilateral agreements in the following spheres at the earliest practicable date, as well as in other spheres of mutual interest as may be agreed:

   - Finance and Investment

- Civil Aviation
- Visas and Consular Services
- Innovation, Trade and Economic Relations
- Healthcare
- Science, Technology and Peaceful Uses of Outer-Space
- Tourism, Culture and Sport
- Energy
- Environment
- Education
- Maritime Arrangements
- Telecommunications and Post
- Agriculture and Food Security
- Water
- Legal Cooperation

Any such agreements concluded before the entry into force of this Treaty shall enter into effect with the entry into force of this Treaty unless otherwise stipulated therein. Agreed principles for cooperation in specific spheres are annexed to this Treaty and form an integral part thereof.

6. Mutual Understanding and Co-existence: The Parties undertake to foster mutual understanding, respect, co-existence and a culture of peace between their societies in the spirit of their common ancestor, Abraham, and the new era of peace and friendly relations ushered in by this Treaty, including by cultivating people-to-people programs, interfaith dialogue and cultural, academic, youth, scientific, and other exchanges between their peoples. They shall conclude and implement the necessary visa and consular services agreements and arrangements so as to facilitate efficient and secure travel for their respective nationals to the territory of each other. The Parties shall work together to counter extremism, which promotes hatred and division, and terrorism and its justifications, including by preventing radicalization and recruitment and by combating incitement and discrimination. They shall work towards establishing a High-Level Joint Forum for Peace and Co-Existence dedicated to advancing these goals.

7. Strategic Agenda for the Middle East: Further to the Abraham Accords, the Parties stand ready to join with the United States to develop and launch a "Strategic Agenda for the Middle East" in order to expand regional diplomatic, trade, stability and other cooperation. They are committed to work together, and with the United States and others, as appropriate, in order to advance the cause of peace, stability and prosperity in the relations between them and for the Middle East as a whole, including by seeking to advance regional security and stability; pursue regional economic opportunities; promote a culture of peace across the region; and consider joint aid and development programs.

8. Other Rights and Obligations: This Treaty does not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting, in any way, the rights and obligations of the Parties under the Charter of the United Nations. The Parties shall take all necessary measures for the application in their bilateral

relations of the provisions of the multilateral conventions of which they are both parties, including the submission of appropriate notification to the depositaries of such conventions.

9. Respect for Obligations: The Parties undertake to fulfill in good faith their obligations under this Treaty, without regard to action or inaction of any other party and independently of any instrument inconsistent with this Treaty. For the purposes of this paragraph each Party represents to the other that in its opinion and interpretation there is no inconsistency between their existing treaty obligations and this Treaty. The Parties undertake not to enter into any obligation in conflict with this Treaty. Subject to Article 103 of the Charter of the United Nations, in the event of a conflict between the obligations of the Parties under the present Treaty and any of their other obligations, the obligations under this Treaty shall be binding and implemented. The Parties further undertake to adopt any legislation or other internal legal procedure necessary in order to implement this Treaty, and to repeal any national legislation or official publications inconsistent with this Treaty.

10. Ratification and Entry into Force: This Treaty shall be ratified by both Parties as soon as practicable in conformity with their respective national procedures and will enter into force following the exchange of instruments of ratification.

11. Settlement of Disputes: Disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of this Treaty shall be resolved by negotiation. Any such dispute which cannot be settled by negotiation may be referred to conciliation or arbitration subject to the agreement of the Parties.

12. Registration: This Treaty shall be transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration in accordance with the provisions of Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Done at Washington, DC, this day Elul 26th, 5780, Muharram 27th, 1442, which corresponds to 15 September 2020, in the Hebrew, Arabic and English languages, all texts being equally authentic. In case of divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

For the State of Israel,
H.E. Benjamin Netanyahu

For the United Arab Emirates
H.H. Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Witnessed by:
H.E. Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America

## ANNEX

Pursuant to Article 5 of the Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel, the Parties shall conclude bilateral agreements in spheres of mutual interest, in furtherance of which they have agreed to the following provisions. Such provisions are annexed to the Treaty and form an integral part thereof.

### Finance and Investment

Further to the Agreed Protocol signed between the Parties on September 1, 2020, in Abu Dhabi, the Parties shall cooperate to expeditiously deepen and broaden bilateral investment relations, and give high priority to concluding agreements in the sphere of finance and investment, recognizing the key role of these agreements in the economic development of the Parties and the Middle East as a whole. The Parties reaffirm their commitment to protecting investors, consumers, market integrity and financial stability, as well as maintaining all applicable regulatory standards. Recognizing also their shared goal to advance regional economic development and the flow of goods and services, the Parties shall endeavor to promote collaborations on strategic regional infrastructure projects and shall explore the establishment of a multilateral working group for the "Tracks for Regional Peace" project.

### Civil Aviation

The Parties acknowledge the importance of ensuring regular direct flights between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, for passengers and cargo, as an essential means for developing and promoting their relations. They recognize as applicable to each other the rights, privileges and obligations provided for by the multilateral aviation agreements to which they are both a party, their annexes and any amendments thereof applicable to both Parties, particularly the 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation, opened for signature at Chicago on the seventh day of December 1944, and the 1944 International Air Services Transit Agreement. Accordingly, the Parties shall as soon as practicable conclude all the necessary agreements and arrangements governing civil aviation, and consequently work towards establishing an international air corridor between their two States in accordance with international law. They shall also reach and implement the necessary agreements and arrangements with respect to visas and consular services to facilitate travel for the citizens of both States.

### Tourism

The Parties affirm their mutual desire to promote tourism cooperation between them as a key component of economic development and of developing closer people-to-people and cultural ties. To this end, the Parties shall facilitate the exchange of information through advertisement spots, published and audiovisual promotional materials, and participation in tourist fairs. They shall also work together to promote joint tourism projects and packages between tourist operators so as to enhance tourism from third States. They shall work towards carrying out reciprocal study tours in order to increase knowledge in the development, management and marketing of heritage, cultural and rural tourism with a view to diversifying and deepening touristic links between them; and endeavor to utilize national marketing budgets to promote mutual tourism between the States.

## Innovation Trade and Economic Relations

The Parties shall enhance and expand their cooperation in innovation, trade and economic relations, so that the dividends of peace are felt across their societies. Recognizing that the principle of the free and unimpeded flow of goods and services should guide their relations, as well as the potential for diversification of bilateral trade opportunities, the Parties shall cooperate in order to enable favorable conditions for trade, and the reduction of trade barriers.

## Science, Technology and Peaceful Uses of Outer-Space

The Parties acknowledge the important role of science, technology and innovation in the growth of multiple key sectors and shall strengthen joint action and mutual cooperation in scientific and technological advancement. This shall include furthering scientific cooperation and exchange, including between scientists, research and academic institutions, pursuing the establishment of joint research and development centers, and exploring the possibility ofjoint funding of research and scientific projects in select fields of mutual interest.

The Parties further express their common interest in establishing and developing mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, in a manner consistent with each Party's respective applicable national laws and international obligations. Such cooperation may include implementation of joint programs, projects and activities in the fields of science, space exploration, space related technologies and education, exchange of experts, information and best practices, and the promotion of cooperation between their respective space industries.

## Environment

The Parties acknowledge the importance of protecting, preserving and improving the environment, and shall promote environmental innovation for the sustainable development of the region and beyond. The Parties shall endeavor to cooperate to develop environmental protection strategies on priority issues, including on biodiversity conservation, marine environment protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation, and on the possible establishment of a center for developing pioneering solutions to climate challenges in arid and semi-arid environments.

## Telecommunications and Post

The Parties recognize the necessity of mutually beneficial cooperation for the continued development of telecommunications, information technologies and postal services. They take note of the establishment between them of direct communications services, including telephone lines, and agree to promote, in accordance with relevant international conventions and regulations, direct postal exchange, submarine cables and e-commerce solutions, as well as utilize available satellite systems, fiber optical communication, and broadcasting services. The

Parties will strive to develop frameworks for innovation in ICT, including advanced fixed and wireless communications, collaboration on 5G networks, smart cities, and use of ICT solutions to foster innovation and the creation of best services.

### Healthcare

The Parties welcome progress made in cooperation between them regarding the treatment of, and the development of a vaccine for, the Covid-19 virus, as a sign of the tremendous potential for cooperation between them in the healthcare sphere. Recognizing the importance of building ties in the fields of health and medicine, the Parties shall cooperate, inter alia, on: medical education, training and simulations, digital health and artificial intelligence innovation in the health sector, and emergency management and preparedness.

### Agriculture and Food Security

The Parties recognize the great importance of sustainable agricultural development, recognizing its vital role in addressing food security concerns, as well as in the preservation of the environment. They shall cooperate to harness and maximize existing technologies, actively facilitate new collaborations, and share and develop knowledge, technologies and innovative approaches in the field of arid agriculture, irrigation technologies, mariculture techniques in shallow sea water, sustainable nutritious fish feed production, and seed enhancement in hot and humid climates.

## Water

The Parties recognize the critical importance of sustainable water use and shall cooperate for their mutual benefit to address issues of water supply, water treatment and management, water security, efficiency, wastewater management and re-use, as well as water conservation and desalination.

### Energy

The Parties take note of the strategic importance of the energy sector and in particular of their need to promote renewable energy, cooperation in the natural gas field, regional grids, alternative energy and energy security. They shall advance and develop mutual cooperation in energy projects, share best practices and discuss policies in energy forums that will help to promote and unlock the energy potential of the region, coordinating where appropriate with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), headquartered in Abu Dhabi.

### Maritime Arrangements

Each Party shall recognize the right of vessels of the other Party to innocent passage through its territorial waters in accordance with international law. Each Party will grant normal access to its ports for vessels and cargoes of the other Party, as well as vessels and cargoes destined for or coming from the other Party. Such access shall be granted on the same terms as generally applicable to vessels and cargoes of other nations.

The Parties shall conclude agreements and arrangements in maritime affairs, as may be required.

**Legal Cooperation**

Recognizing the importance of a supporting legal framework for the movement of people and goods and for fostering a continuous business friendly environment between them, the Parties shall make best efforts to grant each other the widest measure of legal cooperation, including, inter alia, in respect of mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters, in accordance with their national laws and shall endeavor to conclude specific agreements and arrangements in this sphere.