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CAMP DAVID WILL LEAD US TO WAR

If the Camp David Agreement is implemented, the Jewish people will lose Judea and Samaria, and also Gaza. Israel will then be shorn of the only physical guarantee of its security. The stated aim of the agreement, negotiated in 1978 between Israel and Egypt, was "the resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects." The climax of the process of "resolution" would be the "determination" of the "final status" of the "West Bank" and Gaza.

The first phase of the process was to be a "transitional arrangement," lasting no more than five years, "to ensure a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority." The opening act in the "arrangement" would be performed by "the inhabitants of these areas": they would "freely" elect a "self-governing authority." The powers and responsibilities of this Arab authority would be laid down in negotiations between Israel, Jordan, Egypt and representatives of the Palestine Arabs. The next crucial step would follow immediately: Israel would relinquish its effective control of the areas. Not only the Israeli military government but also its civilian administration would be "withdrawn." Henceforth the Arab elected administration would take over the functions of government.

However, "as soon as possible," but not later than the third year, negotiations would take place "to determine the final status" of the areas. The Arab content of those prospective negotiations can be in no doubt. The Arabs - Palestinian, Egyptian, Jordanian - would all insist, as they have always insisted, on Palestinian sovereignty.

WHAT, then, would be, could be, the stance of the Israeli government in those negotiations? When pressed for their answer to the Arab demand for independence, the reply of government spokesmen has been: "We will claim sovereignty." It is hardly credible that any spokesman for a government which for a quarter of a century failed to establish its own legitimate sovereignty, which in the Camp David Agreement never once mentioned or hinted at Jewish rights, or indeed anything but Arab rights, and offered the Arabs self-government as a first phase, should pretend not to understand the absurdity, the self-humiliation of whispering, now, in a pale echo of Arab demands: "We ask for sovereignty." Questioned as to what Israel would do if - as was obvious - the Arabs rejected that claim out of hand, the answer has been: "Then we shall go back to autonomy." First uttered by Prime Minister Begin (whose original Peace Plan contained the roots of all the evils of the Camp David Agreement) this reply has been adopted by his successors in 1991. Indeed? Even the friendliest of Israel's friends will raise their eyebrows. "If you did not intend the Arabs to have more than autonomy, why did you agree to autonomy as a transitional step? Why did you agree to a next phase?" Is it necessary to forecast the response of the Arabs - Palestinian and all the others - and the reaction of "the world" - and of honest Israeli citizens? No.

If the Camp David process is adopted and reaches that stage, there will be no peaceful return to autonomy. IF PRIME Minister Shamir believes (as his various statements indicate) that by implementing the "Camp David process" he will bring peace and also retain Judea, Samaria and Gaza for Israel, he is demonstrably wrong on both counts: If in those negotiations over the "final status" the Arabs (after five or even three years of

possession) are not granted sovereignty, Israel will have a new war on its hands with, as ever before, a coalition of Arab States. If, on the other hand, the Arabs do achieve their objective - reducing Israel to "death-trap borders" - then, too, Israel will have a war on its hands, the "decisive" war the Arabs have dreamed about.

The difference will be only in the timing - and in the amount of sympathy they will find among the nations. Of great relevance in this context are the clauses in the Camp David Agreement relating to security. Contrary to the assertions of government apologists, the Agreement does not provide for continued Israeli responsibility for internal security.

"A withdrawal of Israel armed forces will take place," says the Agreement, and "the remaining forces will be redeployed into specific locations." These are presumably the forces described in the same paragraph as joining with Jordanian forces in "joint patrols and in the manning of control posts to assure the security of the borders." The Agreement also provides for the establishment of "a strong local police force which may include Jordanian citizens." And in a further paragraph it promises that: "All necessary measures will be taken 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 continuing liaison on internal security matters with the designated Israeli, Jordanian and Egyptian officers." So much for Israeli control of internal security. NEITHER when it was first promulgated, nor in the 13 years that followed, was the Camp David Agreement accepted by its projected beneficiaries. Instead, they have maintained their traditional stance - total Israeli withdrawal from "the West Bank and Gaza" - supported by a worldwide campaign of hate propaganda and emphasized by a campaign of terror at home.

Now that our government has in effect revived the offer, with its ultimately dire consequences for Israel, the Arabs have responded with a catalog of demands, 27 in number, as though to a people that has been vanquished in war. The tone of their language, moreover, reflects the belief that they are already the spokesmen of an independent state. Something that Prime Minister Shamir and his colleagues would do well to take for granted is that the Arabs do not intend to abide by his agenda.

They have no intention of waiting five years, or even three years, or for that matter one year. It is doubtful whether they intend, or are able, to hold "free elections." In any case, if and when they set up a "self-governing authority," they will demand, and maybe even proclaim, the "Independent State of Palestine." If the Camp David Agreement is implemented.