Interview with Prime Minister Menachem Begin, conducted 11:00 A.M. on Tuesday, April 18, 1978, in the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem.

Please sit down, ladies and gentlemen.

I welcome you to Jerusalem and I understand you are coming from Cairo.

That is correct, yes sir.

It is a propitious time to hear what's going on in Cairo.

Yes.

We would like to introduce our group to you so you will know who we are. First, it's nice to talk to a real _____. We are pleased to talk t men of great truth. We admire you. We appreciate you and we are very thankful to God for you. You are a great person. This is Dr. Jerry Falwel from the United States and Lynchburg, Virginia -- on his telecast and television program - - his program reaches about 15 million people a week This is a good man. He is one of your excellent employees. This is Dr. Toser from Covenant Presbyterian Church near Perdue University; Dr. and Mrs. Montgomery - - Dr. Montgomery is a theologian, philosopher and _____. This is his wife, Joyce. It is always nice having the wome with us. Vivian Toser, who is the wife of Dr. Toser over here. Mr. Menge who is an economist and industrialist. Roger Elwood, who is the editor an

publisher of Inspiration Magazine; Mr. and Mrs. Wilkerson - - Mr. Wilkers is from California. His organization is Melody Land, which is across from Disney Land, so he has an excellent time at all times. Back here is Nelson Keener who is also from Virginia and Paul Polmyrie from California - - and we are very pleased to be your guests.

I asked my friends who are on their feet to bring in a few chairs and let them sit down.

Thank you very much. In other words, I get here _____ _____ after this presentation.

Dr. Falwell has a message for you from Mr. Sadat (I read about it). We will start there.

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've accepted as our atonement for sin and acceptance into the family of God. There are some 46 million professing evangelicals in America who are of like mind and faith. We came at the invitation of the Egyptian and Israeli governments, sponsored by those governments, to represent these people in, first of al 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 very 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 the 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 indicat that he would not negotiate that point. Secondly, he said that he felt th

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 ambiguously 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 to Prime Minister Begin.

Thank you very much for this message. It is most interesting. As far as the latest idea is concerned, there could be a problem I am very grateful to you for the words you uttered in Recognition for the Book of the Books which we all Believe.

It is the source of our life, it's eternity. 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 understa from it. _____ met many times - - people of good will -- Christians who understand our cause, support it whole-heartedly, 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 to the _____ 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 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 _____, and 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 Jerusalemite 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 Britian and then I went to Ismaili 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 committee ~~of~~ a political and a military one to deal with _____ _____ us how to achieve peace. So my first message would be to President Sadat Would have Been OR Would Be that the days of Jerusalem and of Ismailia will always be with me and I will not forget th They were good days for Egypt, for Israel, for mankind, and for peace. The difficulties arose later. And as you used the two words, rigid and would not negotiate -- the three words -- excuse me for my mistake and correction - - and ambiguity, I must dwell on them, because they are collected with a very peacemaking ? and explain then what the difficulties are now. I hope there will be other _____ 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 - -- The settlements for the Israelite are in this region of the Sinai Peninsula. It is a very small area, as yo can see, in comparison with the Sinai Peninsula. For the sake of peace, we suggested to President Sadat that we, ~~offer to accept~~ after a certain transient Per. _____ international bord which is here, and all the Sinai Peninsula will go to Egyptian rule. Now here we have settlements and closer this problem between the Nort and Between _____. We have also a few settlements but it appeare also the main problem is to make sure of the freedom of navigation. What we suggested is - - to make things simple and to say them 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 othe government of my country in the past, because since 1968 decision ?? was taken that that strip of land in the south which I showed, should be unde Israeli control and we gave it up. United _____ and also there in the northern part. This is our complete ~~report~~ Proposal. 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 only add a few words about the zone in the north because we had permanent bloodsheds from the Gaza Strip. ~~In~~ For 19 years we want to stop it, we want to make peac 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 peac this is our striving, and 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, But, he summed up, we shall discuss it, 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 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 atall. So what I would like to say here, in response to the message - - let us negotiate. _____started negotiating -- through the military committee in Cairo; through the ~~military~~ Political committee in Jerusalem - - but those (indecisions) were suddenly interrupted by the decision of President Sadat. And the Egyptian delegation was withdrawn. I already, in my second letter to President Sadat, we exchange lately letters, suggested to him to renew those two committees and the negotiati 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 achievement 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 interruptance. And also I explained how vital this issue is to us when you point the way of our future security and keeping _____.

Now you said that President Sadat spoke to you about what he termed the Palestinian question, and then you used the word, he was ambiguous about it, ~~and~~ that he didn't put it in concrete terms. What about ambiguity we had much, but 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 and this is the _____. Here the bulk of our population is. If this mountain _____ _____ by Mr. Arafat, then we face immortal danger, for obvious reasons. We had, for 19 years, permanent bloodsheds from that part of the land; the line was absolutely indefensible; there were permanent _____ and therefore, when we are asked to go back to that line behind the mountains, it would be only nine miles or ten miles from the seashore - - now you come from the United States of America -- what is nine miles in the United States of America? But here it would be our lifeline, perhaps priceless. _____ _____

With all the experience we have about airlifts to Angola, to _____ B to _____, from Modessa to this part of the land, it is a matter of two hours _____ cargo jet plane - -supersonic jet plane -- two hours. This part of the land would become a solid base, dealt? _____ against us, day in and day out. The whole civilian population of our country would be in the range - - directly threatened with their lives. There cannot be any ambiguity about it. We must know clearly what's our future. Therefore, we have a different suggestion. And in Ismailia I had good words from President Sadat about our plan. The second part of our plan is called autonomy, or _____ Self-rule _____ for the Palestinian Arabs. So that they can in Judaea, Samaria, also in the Gaza Strip, elect their own administrativ council, _____ departments, dealing with all the affairs of the daily life, we will not interfere whatsoever -- only we ~~will~~ shall have responsibility to secure it. So the Palestinian Arabs will have Self-Ru OR autonomy _____. I will ask you later to bring these pamphlets to distribute amongst our friends, and ~~because~~ of course the Palestinian Jews should have their security.

That is the _____, that was the idea. And again it was praised at the time. There cannot be any ambiguity about it. Now lately we are

faced with these two demands. We should say in advance, in a declaration of principles, that we will withdraw out of those ~~alliances~~ lies of 4th of June, 1967, and there should be _____ words usually brought our self-determination, but, again, no ambiguity - - it means exactly that. Such was our peace plan. Such it is. It wasn't yet negotiated. We didn't get down to proposals. Now I can't understand when, for instance, President Sadat talked to you and made things completely simple. They will withdraw to those lines; they will gi me Sinai and we will dismantle the settlements and there will be peace. The impression is, well, this is the chance. My dear friends, please understand, it is not so in reality. In what source does our peace proposal endanger Egypt? Not atall. Not one Egyptian man is in danger. Not one Egyptian woman. Not atall. Now I can say this about all other nations - - where is the nation ~~that~~ which is endangered by our peace proposal? Not atall. But when we speak about us, our lives are in danger; the lives of our children are in danger. When President Sadat says that he will dea with our security, I can tell him, with all due respect, he couldn't guarantee the security of his own friend, _____ _____, and got killed by the very same people who want to kill our children. Again, at a glimpse of this map you will see that it is our

home - - to repeat, it is our life. That is the difference. Therefore, we are not rigid; we cannot be ambiguous. We want to negotiate.

My message to President Sadat, if you have an opportunity to send it back, is, let us renew the spirit of the ~~base~~ days of Jerusalem and Ismailia when we met and shook hands and decided to call each other, "my friend" - - as he called me so. And only a few months ago in Ismailia there was a placard - - I didn't see, but I was told - - with my name and the man of peace. I didn't change. I am the same man. (I saw it. You did see it. I didn't) (And he agrees.) (Yes.) I didn't change. And it is the same peace plan. Let us review those days of understanding. Then there is a real reason to believe that there will be peace.

We believe that.

Yes. Of course it may take some time, some negotiating process; that is natural. You don't have peace with two sentences. Let me again repeat the statement by President Sadat. The ambiguous sentences. 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. We have the experience, We see it, we know the people, we can see what happened ~~to~~ in Lebanon. We can see what happened in our country

only several weeks ago on the road _____

and we can read the charter. You should know, my dear friends, there is now one country in the world, this little country, against which there is a written document to the effect that it must disappear?. We have nearly 140 members of the United Nations; I think it's a characteristic fact to stress and there is one and one only of? this country against whom there exist a written charter -- Israel must be wiped off the map. We must take it very seriously. We do take it seriousl So I would like to end on a hopeful note and say again, I am very gratefu 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 and then the negotiations within the framework of the two committees he and I agreed to establish in ~~the summer~~ December, 1977, when we met at a very good conference in Ismailia.