One year ago today, on September 17, 1978, Prime Minister Begin of Israel, President Sadat of Egypt, and I returned from Camp David with an agreement establishing the Framework for Peace in the Middle East. We believed then that we had reached an historic turning point in the bitter history of that long-suffering region. One short year later, that belief has become a firm reality.

After 30 years of hostility and war, Israel is truly at peace with its largest Arab neighbor. The relations between them are improving daily. The provisions of the treaty of peace are being carried out precisely and on schedule.

This peace is no longer words on paper. It is now facts on the ground and faith in the hearts of millions of people. This remarkable change—from war to peace, from hostility to friendship—was clearly visible in the recent visit by President Sadat to Haifa, where he was received with genuine warmth and enthusiasm by the people and the leaders of Israel. Such events, which would have seemed amazing, even unthinkable, until the very recent past, are now accepted almost as routine. That is itself a measure of how far we have traveled along the road to peace.

So it is worth remembering on this occasion what an extraordinary change in attitudes has taken place. The successes of Egypt and Israel so far in overcoming three decades of animosity give us renewed confidence in facing the difficult tasks which remain.

Our goal has always been the establishment of a comprehensive peace in which Israel could at last live in security and tranquillity with all its neighbors. The Camp David accords are a long step on that path. We do not underestimate the difficulties that lie ahead, but we knew from the outset that the road would be hard and rocky. And looking back today at the solid achievements of the past year, we are justified in keeping our eyes firmly on the goal of peace rather than in heeding the inevitable cries that say peace cannot be achieved.

The peace process outlined at Camp David 1 year ago is alive and well. The talks on full autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza are proceeding on schedule, in an atmosphere of good will and serious cooperation. I am confident those talks will succeed. Their progress is a tribute
to the vision and courage of President Sadat, Prime Minister Begin, and the two great nations. Over the coming months it will be our common task to continue demonstrating that peace does work and, by the evidence of our deeds, to convince other nations and leaders to join with us in this quest for lasting peace, security, and the opportunity for productive lives for all the people of the Middle East.

NOTE: On the same day, the White House announced that the President had received messages from Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat. As printed below, the messages follow the texts made available by the White House Press Office.

On this the first anniversary of the Camp David agreement signed in Washington on September 17th I vividly recall the wonderful hospitality which you and your gracious lady accorded to my wife, my colleagues and myself during those 13 days of the momentous conference. I remember well the sessions, the strong debates, the mutual convincing, the difficulties we all had to overcome, the weighing of every sentence and word and ultimately the joy of achieving the understanding which became the basis of an historic agreement. Out of it the treaty of peace between Egypt and Israel, certainly a turning point in the annals of the Middle East emerged and the positive concept of full autonomy for the Palestinian Arabs, inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and Gaza District was brought forth.

You, Mr. President did your utmost by your own hard work to make these agreements possible, allow me, therefore, on this memorable anniversary to thank you from the heart for the great assistance rendered to both Egypt and Israel in achieving a rapprochement between two countries which for thirty one years, were in a state of war, and which have now concluded peace, the first step towards a general and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

There are people who do not yet appreciate the value of this moral international achieve-

ment, but many millions of women and goodwill will rejoice together with the accomplishment. Their blessings are and the source of satisfaction.

Accept, Mr. President, my deep feelings and thanks for all you have done with such great results in the service of peace.

Yours respectfully and sincerely,

Menachem Begin

This afternoon I have issued a special statement expressing my views on the anniversary of the signature of the Camp David agreements. On this occasion I wish to express my deep feelings and thanks for your great contribution to this historical event. I am convinced that these agreements, which are the first steps toward a comprehensive and lasting peace, will help bring a solution to the Middle East question in all its aspects. The role of the U.S. as a full partner in the peace process remains a key element in our mutual efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Sincerely,

Anwar Sadat