

# Egyptian-Israeli Treaty's Legacy Lives On After 30 Years

Thirty years ago today—on March 26, 1979—Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. The result of months of negotiations, the two men met in Washington, D.C., with President Jimmy Carter to sign the historic treaty. The previous fall, the three men had participated in the Camp David Accords to hammer out the agreement. After its terms were ratified by the legislative bodies of both nations, the treaty was signed at a White House ceremony.

“This resulted in a prohibition of future combat between Egypt and Israel, mutual recognition, the exchange of ambassadors, withdrawal of Israel from the Sinai, and the use by Israeli shipping of the Suez Canal,” Carter wrote about the treaty in his 2009 book “We Can Have Peace in the Holy Land.” “No facet of this treaty has been violated during the succeeding three decades, but none of the promised rights of Palestinians (whose leaders refused to participate) has been honored.”

Sadat and Begin shared the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts that led to the treaty ending three decades of conflict. The two nations had fought four wars in the 30 years prior to the agreement—in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973. In the 30 years since the treaty, the two nations have avoided war with each other. The lasting effect of the treaty makes it the most successful modern effort toward Middle East peace, thus substantially adding to the legacy of the three leaders involved.

Although the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty represents Carter's most significant accomplishment for peace during his presidency, the Baptist Sunday School teacher has continued to promote peace in the Middle East and elsewhere during the three decades since the historic agreement. Through the work of The Carter Center, Carter's efforts to promote peace and fight disease have been seen in 70 countries worldwide. Carter received the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1994, Carter worked to improve relations between North Korea and the U.S. after North Korea expelled investigators from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Carter worked with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung to create the draft of what eventually became the Agreed Framework, which guided relations between the two nations until it collapsed in 2002 after President George W. Bush criticized North Korea as part of the "Axis of Evil."

Also in 1994, Carter worked with Colin Powell and others to prevent military conflict in Haiti and oversee the restoration of the democratic process. The Carter Center oversaw election efforts in the nation in 1995 and 2000.

Over the past couple of decades, Carter has helped improve diplomatic relations and human rights in Tunisia, Sudan, Uganda, Bosnia, Chile, Ecuador, Colombia and other countries. The Carter Center has also monitored more than 70 elections in 28 nations. Additionally, The Carter Center has led efforts in many nations to reduce disease, such as fighting the Guinea worm disease that has now been nearly eradicated with a more than 99 percent reduction worldwide since 1986.

Carter has also continued his efforts to bring peace to the Middle East. Carter and others from The Carter Center assisted with the development of the Geneva

Accord in 2003. Although a non-binding agreement, the effort included Israeli and Palestinian leaders and provides a proposal for how to reach a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Carter has written several books in order to encourage further dialogue and action toward peace efforts. He argued in his newest book, “We Can Have Peace in the Holy Land,” that additional peace efforts in the Middle East should be pursued.

“I am writing another book about the Middle East because the new president of the United States is facing a major opportunity—and responsibility—to lead in ending conflict between Israel and its neighbors,” Carter wrote in his book that came out in January. “The time is now. Peace is possible.”

As Carter encourages the expansion of the New Baptist Covenant movement with regional meetings across the country, he has also been promoting his latest book on achieving Middle East peace. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution asked Carter earlier this year if it was harder to bring peace to the Middle East or Baptists. Carter laughed as he [responded](#), “I don’t know which is more difficult.”

In another recent interview, Carter connected his work with the New Baptist Covenant to his efforts to get more evangelical Christians involved in pursuing peace. Carter [noted](#) that one of the speakers at the New Baptist Covenant meeting in Atlanta in 2008 was a Palestinian Baptist pastor.

**<https://ethicsdaily.com/egyptian-israeli-treaty-s-legacy-lives-on-after-30-years-cms-13951/> March 26, 2009 Brian Kaylor**

“I spoke to 15,000 of them exactly a year ago in Atlanta at the New Baptist Covenant meeting,” Carter told the interviewer when asked about his efforts to involve his fellow evangelicals. “And then this Saturday at noon I’ll be speaking to a large group in Birmingham, Alabama, and later on this spring I’ll be having four more major conferences on this subject at different places in America. So I try to do this and I emphasize, first of all, what I told you earlier (which everybody knows) that we worship the Prince of Peace. It’s part of a Christian’s obligation to try to bring peace to people who are suffering.”

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