

Syria-Lebanon-Israel Triangle:

The End of the Status Quo? (full transcript)

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In-Depth Reports

***M**r. Lubrani's remarks represent his own views and not those of the government of Israel

ROBERT SATLOFF: Let me simply open by putting the cards on the table. Mr. Seale, you wrote an obituary for the Syria-Israel peace. Is, indeed, this track dead? If so, why? And if not, why not?

PATRICK SEALE: Well, I want to thank the Washington Institute, Jim Schreiber, and, of course, Bob for inviting me here. I am a voice, in a way, from the other side of the divide. And I take it as an indication that your Institute is, more than ever, ready to listen to voices which don't entirely agree with the policies you've been advocating. You've done a tremendous job in this Institute in expounding Israeli policies and influencing American opinion in favor of Israel, in preaching the identity of Israeli and American interests.

Now, one of the themes I want to try and develop in this conference this morning is that there is a new reality in the region. The time when Israel could impose its terms on a defeated or embattled Arab world, this is over, and really Israel has to now think in terms of coexistence with its neighbors rather than in terms of domination. I think that your Institute, which played such an important role in the past, can, if it adjusts to these ideas, can play a very valuable role. And the fact that you have invited me here today is an indication, to me at least, that you're moving in that direction.

Now, Bob puts a tough question to me: Is the track dead? And as you've kindly suggested, I wrote an article saying it was. I think it is for the moment. It's dead, for the moment, barring a last-minute initiative. And we hear that all sorts of things are afoot. The Egyptians, the Omanis, tried to cobble together some last-minute compromise. But as you all know, the timetable for withdrawal from Lebanon is set; only a few days to go, really, in which such an initiative could possibly delay or consummate such a withdrawal. So to me, at least, it doesn't look too hopeful.

However, that's the bad news. The good news, at least as I see it, is that Israel's leaders, both political and military, have understood that holding the Golan and the Golan settlements are no contribution to Israeli security. On the contrary, perhaps, the real threat is further to the east and therefore, the decision to give up the Golan has been made. Rabin made it. Peres made it. Barak made it. We're not talking about the Golan as a whole. Where the thing broke down is over the last few hundred meters of the Golan. So that's a very important consideration, and I think that strategic assessment will endure. That means that, sooner or later, perhaps under a new American administration, negotiations will pick up again. So it's not all bad news. But it's bad news for the time being, because the withdrawal from Lebanon will create a new reality, and people will have to deal with that new situation, unpredictable situation. So nobody quite knows how that will affect the future of these talks.

Now, Bob said to me, "Why have the talks broken down? Why?" And I want to--I only have a few minutes for these opening remarks--I want to suggest some immediate short-term reasons and some perhaps longer-term ones. Now, the immediate short-term reason, as you all know, and as I'm sure you all studied your briefing book and seen all these maps, the immediate reason was a dispute over borders and water, two linked issues.

Now, Israel wants exclusive control over Lake Tiberias--the Kinneret, the Sea of Galilee, whatever you call it--and of the shoreline which runs round the lake and of the road which runs beyond that, around the lake. And they want total access to, total control of the waters which flow into the lake from the upper Jordan River and other streams. Now, that is the Israeli position.

The Syrian position is that they want access to the lake, because they were on the northeastern corner of the lake in 1967, and they want to share the water that flows into the lake from the upper Jordan, Baniyas Spring and other streams. So this essentially is the immediate reason.

Now, the 1923 international frontier, which you'll see in your briefing books, put the lake firmly inside Palestine. It was a frontier drawn by Britain and France in 1923. And the line runs ten meters from the northeastern shoreline of the lake. That proved unworkable, because there were a number of small Syrian villages there. You can imagine a fence ten meters from the water and people unable to touch the water.

So in 1926, the British and the French completed a good-neighborly agreement whereby people in that area could have access to the water and that pier was built. And from then on, from the 1920s on, the Syrians fished in the lake, swam in the lake. And as far as they were concerned, that shoreline was theirs. And the Syrians, many of them, didn't recognize the 1923 international frontier. They said that was a line drawn by imperial powers. Independent Syria had nothing to do with it. The line they want as their frontier with Israel is the 4th of June, 1967, line, the line which prevailed before the war. And before the war, the Syrians were on the upper Jordan River and on the northeastern corner of the lake. And they say, "We don't want to take water from the lake, but we want access to the lake for fishing and swimming, and we want to share the water that comes into the lake according to the rules of international law," which protects the rights of upstream and downstream states. So that is their position.

Well, Barak could not accept that, for various reasons which we'll go into eventually. Now, so much for, very briefly, the immediate causes for the breakdown, the failure to reach agreement on those few hundred meters. In fact, Barak's position was not simply that he didn't recognize the 4th of June line and Syria's presence on the shoreline of the lake. He wanted to push back the 1923 line several hundred meters eastwards so as to give Israel total control of the road which ran around the lake. The Syrians found this unacceptable.

Now, we should look at some underlying and perhaps more fundamental reasons for the failure to reach an agreement. One is a difference of negotiating styles. When Barak came to power, he made very clear, to me at least, when I saw him before he formed his government but after he'd won the election, that he wanted some sort of summit in which himself, Asad, and Clinton would thrash out some big political deal, and that would be it. He said, "If we could be locked up in a room for a couple of hours together, we could do a big deal, with tradeoffs."

Now, that is completely contradictory to the way Asad likes to negotiate. Asad has a long history and a long experience in these negotiations. He's very meticulous. He believes that the three leaders themselves should only appear on the scene at the end of the negotiations, that he's totally against the way the Palestinians negotiated, which was, defer major issues till later on, left up to Israeli goodwill. Look what's happened to them. And so his position of negotiation is to go point by point, step by step, put aside a point as soon as it's settled, move on to the next one in a very meticulous, careful way.

He also doesn't believe in gestures, in public diplomacy. He believes each leader should be responsible for his own public opinion. He doesn't see it as Syria's responsibility to effect a greater public opinion in favor of peace. He has his hands full with his own public opinion. So there are fundamental differences of style.

SATLOFF: Can I hold you just for a moment?

SEALE: Yes.

SATLOFF: Because I just want to get the general--the first order of response from each, and then we'll go back into each of these issues about style and about tactics and about public opinion.

SEALE: Right.

SATLOFF: Dan, what's your view? Is the Syria track dead? Was it ever alive?

DANIEL PIPES: Mr. Seale wrote his obituary [of the Syria track] in early May. I published mine in the Christian Science Monitor in mid-December of last year, just a week after the meeting at the White House. And my obituary at that time was based not on the diplomacy, not on a few meetings here, not on the charming thought of the Syrians wanting to fish and swim in the Kinneret, but rather on far more basic facts of life. And they are as follows.

I believe that any regime, any government, looks first to its own domestic issues, and its foreign policy is a reflection of its domestic issues. And therefore, to understand Syrian foreign policy, you must understand Syrian domestic policy. And the basic fact of Syrian political life is that, since 1966, the government has been run by a small and hitherto despised minority called the Alawites. It's a post-Islamic religion, an intricate and interesting story; something like one-eighth of the Syrian population living in the far northeast of the country, historically despised.

For a variety of reasons, in 1966, an extraordinary development took place by which the Alawites took over the government of Syria. The first few years were a bit rocky. Hafiz al-Asad took over from other Alawites in 1970 and has now been there for thirty years.

I believe it is Hafiz al-Asad's main concern to maintain his rule and the rule of the Alawites in Syria. I believe that he fears that should he and his people, his tribe, his family, and his people--his people meaning the Alawites--lose power, there will be some terrible consequences. It will not just be like Ceaucescu, but it'll be the whole people who will suffer. And therefore, the absolute priority is regime maintenance, staying in power. And everything that the regime does is seen through this prism.

From that point of view, one can understand foreign policy and domestic policy. And in particular, looking to the relations with Israel, I would say that the Asad regime in 1991 saw the writing on the wall, saw the American victory over Iraq, saw the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union, and said, "Well, the time has come to make some changes in our policy. Let's start a negotiating track with the Israelis. We have to. We need to do this in order to assuage the Western powers." And they did, and it was a substantial change in policy. And indeed, at the time I was fairly optimistic that this could lead to other things.

But it quickly became clear that the Syrians were using the peace process as an end in itself, as a way to curry favor with the West, to say, "Look, we're doing our best." Yet they had no intention whatsoever--never had any intention--of reaching an agreement. So my aphoristic summation of this is, "peace process, not peace." And now those negotiations have been going on for eight and a half years.

Nothing has been achieved. Oh, there are all sorts of theoretical agreements that have been reached, but nothing has been achieved; eight and a half years of talk, talk, talk. And if you look more carefully, what you see is that, when there is an agreement, the Syrians have really come up with a new demand. There was a very great sense of excitement in June of 1996 that there was a breakthrough, and suddenly the Syrians decided that the Israelis had to, in advance, give up an early-warning station on the Golan Heights.

In the early part of this year, we saw the Israelis make this extraordinary concession of handing over the Golan Heights. And, what do you know, suddenly the Kinneret comes into play. I'm fully confident that if the Israelis give in on the Kinneret, who knows what? A square mile in Haifa? I don't know what the next demand would be. But there's no pleasing the Damascene government.

In short, Hafiz al-Asad is a man who won't take yes for an answer. He doesn't want yes, because, to get back to my

original point, a treaty with Israel, a peace treaty, a signed peace treaty with Israel, is something much larger than a technical agreement with a neighbor. It is a reorientation of the Syrian regime. It is moving it out of the rogue camp and toward the West.

I like to draw the comparison with Anwar Sadat's decision to throw out the Soviet military advisers in 1972. That was not a military decision, a technical decision having to do with the military. That was a reorientation of his regime from the East to the West. And so, to the populace of Syria, a peace treaty with Israel would represent a shift, a fundamental shift. It would say, "Yes, we're open for business. Now we have political participation. Now we have foreign investments. Now there are human rights groups that are going to be monitoring. Now this is a more open society."

And I believe that Asad, whose eye is always on regime maintenance, looks at this possibility with horror. This is the man who has ruled with considerable success, with a totalitarian grip, a country for thirty years. The prospect of this kind of an opening, which he doesn't know how to deal with, scares them to no end. So, no, there's no way he's going to do that. But, yes, he does have to continue the negotiations. Therefore, the negotiations are a show. They've never been serious, never will be serious so long as Hafiz al-Asad is in power. I don't have any idea what follows, but so long as he's in power, there's no chance of them going anywhere. Thus I wrote my obituary [of the Syrian track] before they started in December.

SATLOFF: So we have, "They were a couple of hundred meters apart, with some underlying differences still to be worked out," and "They were never serious." You should have written your obituary nine years ago. (Laughter.) "They were never serious to begin with, but they were a show." Raghida, which one of these is right?

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Both are wrong, of course. No, I would not say about the Syrian-Israeli track that it is dead and still flying. No, I wouldn't say that. I think it very much depends at this stage on the extent of the need by both Israel and Syria to arrive at either a breakthrough, or to go back to the process, or whether they opt to just wait, the "so be it" diplomacy, if you will, because the process is all right and there's no harm in waiting. It depends on each one of them, and not like Daniel would say--who, of course, wrote the obituary before death and before birth, and therefore he buried it alive before it even came around.

So, in a way, this is dangerous, I would say--but we'll argue this a little later--but I think it's dangerous, because otherwise it would make people question the intent even by Israel and the supporters of Israel to join the peace process if you had already decided it wasn't going to get anywhere so long as Hafiz al-Asad is in power.

Anyway, I think mid-June is an important date to look forward to in terms of what will happen to the whole peace process, and mid-June because, it seems to me, if the United Nations goes ahead with the Security Council and the plan would be to put the arrangements for the withdrawal of Israel from South Lebanon, according to Resolutions 425 and 426, it seems to me that that line of withdrawal will be clearer by mid-June, and therefore we would find out where that part of the developments in the region is heading.

And the second reason is because of that very important meeting that will be taking place in Damascus and the meeting for the regional command of the Ba'th Party, where they would be electing, amongst others, I suppose, the son of President Asad, Dr. Bashar al-Asad. And I think along with what the Syrians have been doing in the last couple of years, and highlighting in the last couple of months, I think they are setting a process within the country in order to bring about fundamental changes that Dr. Bashar al-Asad has himself said were really needed in Syria. They are admitting now that things have gone--things have been very bad and they need to be upgraded in order to survive in this world. And I think they are keeping the window open. The Syrians are keeping the window open on the possibility of the resumption of the negotiations.

Patrick mentioned the several interlocutors, many Saudis, the United Nations, the Europeans, if you would recall,

and Mr. [Peter] Hain was only last week in Damascus, and he said that he went into the meeting very pessimistic and --

SATLOFF: The British defense secretary.

DERGHAM: Thank you, yes--no foreign secretary. What is the official --

SATLOFF: Minister of state.

DERGHAM: Minister of state. And so he said he'd gone into the meeting with both the foreign minister and Bashar al-Asad quite pessimistic and came back out optimistic. And that's when the Brits--the British say that it's not like, you know, the Arabs, "insha Allah, insha Allah," but there's more to it.

So I think there have been quite a number of messages sent out by Syria, and particularly through Asad the son, when he met, for example, with Azmi Bishara, the member of the Knesset, though an Arab member of the Israeli Knesset.

There is a message there. There is something that they are throwing out so that people who care to bring back the process into the right track, and hopefully for conclusion, so that they could notice this sort of thing. And so I believe that it is not dead. I worry tremendously, not only about what is referred to as a dysfunctional relationship between the Syrians and the Israelis, but I worry more just equally about the disconnect between the United States, the administration and Syria; there is a fundamental misunderstanding and a disconnect that I think contributed to the Geneva failure. I think Rob would want me to get into why I say that later, but I think one should pay great attention to where the impact of the American contribution takes the process.

And finally, we are looking at the imminent withdrawal of the Israeli forces from Lebanon. Very much depends on what Israel does as it withdraws with its proxy, the SLA, the South Lebanon Army. If it leaves any pockets there, it will come back to haunt Israel. I think the SLA is the responsibility of Israel, and I think Sheba--these farms that are disputed right now to see whether they will be included in the line of--not demarcation; the tactical line of withdrawal, whether they will be included or excluded. I think that will be dealt with. But I don't think it's an Israeli problem as such. I think it's a Syrian, Lebanese, and Israeli problem. But as to the SLA, it is squarely, from my point of view, an Israeli problem. And I guess this is the right time to turn it to you.

SATLOFF: Well, the SLA and Lebanese issues we're going to get in as the morning proceeds. But I just wanted to conclude with this first take of where we stand on the Syria-Israel track. And I should say at the outset that Uri is here in his personal capacity, not representing the government of Israel. I don't suppose you're here speaking for Ehud Barak. Since I know the answer is no --

URI LUBRANI: Whether I like it or not, it will be construed as if I do.

SATLOFF: That's the difference between inference--the people can infer, but I can say what I need to say. So you're here in your personal capacity. Uri, do you agree with the assessment--which assessment do you agree with? Were these peace talks a few hundred meters apart from success, or was it really a show for all these years, or something else?

LUBRANI: Well, you know, it's very difficult to read what is happening in Syria. And I don't profess to be a Syriaologist, and therefore I feel rather humble in trying to deal with what Daniel said and what Patrick said. I can only give you my gut feeling. And I think Asad blew it, very simply, because I cannot imagine any Israeli government coming forth, being so forthcoming, as this present government in trying to reach an agreement with Syria. I'm saying this because--and I haven't been privy to all the nitty-gritty of the negotiations; I'm sure Patrick knows much more about them, but I can tell you only one thing--the public opinion in Israel has changed for the last two or three months. Many, many people who would have been accepting a deal in which the Golan would be a part with alacrity,

knowing that this might enhance a comprehensive peace, many of those people will, if they get the same deal today, not vote for it. This is my feeling.

Why? Because I think the Syrians, the way they handled these negotiations, manifested a clear misunderstanding of Israeli psyche, Israeli public opinion, Israeli needs, wants and so forth. It's one thing for Patrick to say that the Syrians say, "Our public opinion is our problem; your public opinion is your problem." Israeli public opinion is the major factor in any government's decisions--any Israeli government's decisions.

And I think the way this was handled by Syria was wrong. I mean, I was always telling anybody who went to Damascus that they should try, at least try to find a way to explain their case to the public in Israel, to put it forward, to have an Israeli team come to Damascus and tell them. Azmi Bishara is not a classical representative of Israeli public opinion and therefore an Arab-speaking Israeli television team--"Come and tell them what you want, what do you want of us?" Nothing of the sort has ever happened. On the other hand, you get diatribes, constant diatribes, diatribes of a very sinister nature. And I don't want to go into that. So we have a problem there.

Now, having said that, having said that, I would like to say I'm sure that there will be a resumption of the negotiations. I don't know when this is going to happen. It's certainly not going to happen before Israel pulls out its troops from Lebanon.

SATLOFF: Certainly not.

LUBRANI: No. No, I don't think so. I think that this is not on. I don't think so. Even miracles will not bring it about. But I think that there will be negotiations, and it will most probably have to wait some time, because I don't think that anybody who will replace Asad will very easily feel self-confident, feel he has the support of the people to go into the next cycle of that sort, because under any circumstances, such an exercise cannot be a give one without a take one. And there will be--this is a hard nut to crack. It has always been one, and it will be one. And therefore, you need both sides with strong public support to go and do it. No government, be it the Israeli government or be it the Syrian government, no weak government can do it. Both governments have got to be strong to take these negotiations on.

Now, having said that, I'd like to say something about Israeli plans to pull out its forces. It's going to happen, and hopefully it's going to happen --

SATLOFF: Uri, we're going to get into Lebanon in just a minute, okay? I just want to focus on the Syrian side --

LUBRANI: No, I just--you know, I'm susceptible. I just heard this from my Labor [colleagues], I thought I'd mention it, but never mind.

SATLOFF: That's all right. We're going to --

LUBRANI: We'll talk about it later. (Laughter.)

SATLOFF: Now that at least the introductory views are on the table, let's go more deeply into some of the issues that were raised. There were issues of territory, issues of leadership, issues of public opinion, issues of the U.S. role, and then the implications of where we are going with this track, the potential for Israel-Syria confrontation in the absence of Israel-Syria negotiations, especially over Lebanon. So let's look at these a bit more specifically.

First, the territory issue. In terms of the idea that Asad blew it, I think this is a common refrain both in Israel and increasingly in the United States, and I would say increasingly even among those in the Arab world, a sense that if you couldn't make it with Ehud Barak, then, you know, it's sort of a "If you can't make it here, you're not going to make it anywhere."

After all the deposits, after all the discussion about withdrawal from the Golan, why is it that a couple of hundred meters kept Asad away from Shangri-La, of peace with America, peace with the world, billions in investments, the

saving of this crumbling economy? Why?

SEALE: Do you want me to try and answer that?

SATLOFF: Yes.

SEALE: I mean, I must speak up on one or two of the points that have been made here by my colleagues. Pipes's remarks are really a caricature of the peace process. It suggests he hasn't really been following it very carefully. (Laughter.) If Warren Christopher were here or Dennis Ross were here, they would tell him that the negotiations that took place in the 1990s were extremely serious, detailed and produced some very considerable achievements. The idea that nothing was achieved--that it was all talk, talk, talk; that Asad was simply concerned with regime stability, that he was interested in the process, not peace--this is garbage. (Laughter.) Not to put too fine a point on it.

SATLOFF: We would like you to express your opinions candidly--(laughter)--without that British restraint. (Laughter.)

SEALE: I feel we all here want to get at the truth, to understand what really happened. Now, the two big achievements of the 1992-96 period of negotiations under Rabin and Peres were two, and they were cast in stone, and they are the two fundamental pillars of the Syrian negotiating position.

Now, the peace process, as you know, started in 1991 at Madrid. Now, nothing happened, and the Syrians refused to tackle any substantive issues until they got from the Israelis a conditional commitment to withdraw to the 4th of June [line]. Asad's whole position was that, until the Israelis conceded that, at the end of the day, he was going to get all his territory back, he was reluctant--in fact, he refused to enter into negotiations on the other elements of the peace package, which were security, normalization, the timetable, interfacing, so forth.

And it was only in 1994, to cut a long story short, that Rabin finally gave that commitment that, provided that Israel's needs on security and normalization were met, he was prepared to withdraw to the 4th of June line. He gave that formally to the Americans, conveyed to Asad, through the Syrians, this was conveyed to the Syrians through the Americans. And that once Rabin was assassinated, Peres endorsed that commitment, the so-called deposit in the American pocket. That is very, very clear.

Now, once the Israelis had made that commitment, once Rabin had made it, and it was formal--the documents are not a question of hypothetical, it's there, black on white--the Syrians were then concerned at what Israel might ask as a quid pro quo. They'd made the commitment to withdraw to the 4th of June, what will Israel ask in exchange in terms of security? And so Asad went to great pains to get the Israelis to agree to a paper entitled, "The Aims and Principles of Security Arrangements."

Now, of course, the Israelis wanted considerable security advantages in exchange for that commitment to withdraw to the 4th of June line. So Asad was anxious to limit what advantages they could seek. And so that's why, in this paper on the aims and principles of security arrangements, he spelled out how the security arrangements should work. They should be on either side of the border, the 4th of June border. They should be equal, mutual, and reciprocal on either side, with some small adjustments for geography, and that the security of one side should not be at the expense of the security of the other. This was for him a fundamental agreement, and this paper was lodged with the State Department, brokered by the United States. The United States helped draft it. Warren Christopher came to the region several times, got the agreement from both parties for it.

So these two principles--full withdrawal from the 4th of June [line] and the aims and principles of security arrangements with basic equality were the two great achievements of that period, achievements which Dan Pipes denied.

Now, what's happened with Barak is that Asad gradually realized-- First when Barak came to power, as you recall,

Asad he welcomed him. He thought-- Why did he welcome him? Because Barak said that Syria was the keystone of peace. In fact, when I saw him, at that time, he drew an arch for me, and he said the arch--"You can't dance on it; you can't walk on it until the keystone is in place. The keystone is Syria," he said, which I immediately told Asad about. He also praised Asad as the founder of modern Syria, and he said he's walking in Rabin's footsteps. So of course, Asad said, "Ah. Barak agreed with these two fundamental achievements of the previous period."

Then came the disappointment. Barak wanted to renegotiate the two points. He didn't want to accept the 4th of June line anymore where the lake was concerned, and he wanted to renegotiate the security paper, saying, "Oh, no, no, we have to have a presence on Mount Hermon. We have something there, the early-warning station, which the Americans can't possibly do for us. Satellites are not enough. Aerial surveillance is not enough. Side-looking radar is not enough. We want to have a say in the Syrian's order of battle. We want to have a say in where they put their ammunition and dumps for their fuel, dumps for their armored column and so forth." So he attempted to renegotiate these two fundamental questions. And this, of course, was a huge disappointment for the Syrians. They realized that they weren't going to get a deal with him. And that's really one of the reasons why the whole thing--one of the underlying reasons why the thing broke down.

If I've got another minute--have I got another minute?

SATLOFF: One more minute.

SEALE: One more minute. There is another fundamental issue which we haven't really tackled and which is more difficult, I think, to understand, and that is, in the Israeli mind, there's still the idea that, "We are stronger. We won all the wars. How come they won't-- For our security, we don't need total border security. What's a few hundred yards of Arab territory? They have to acquiesce in the loss of this territory."

Asad sees things completely differently. He wants a negotiation between equals, and he wants a peace which is not dependent on Israeli power alone, which it can break or keep at will. He wants a peace based on some sort of balance of power, mutual deterrence, equality of treatment, equality of security arrangements. So this is really the fundamental sort of difficulty, that Israel's strategic doctrine hasn't yet adapted to this new reality. I mean, I just was reading an article which Ephraim Sneh published the other day in which, if it weren't for the escalation in Lebanon, we might have to act decisively so as to create the new conditions for--[audio break]--relations.

Now, this question of whether Asad wants peace or not--I might just have half a minute to try and answer that question. Asad has wanted peace since the 1970s--since the mid-1970s. He said so then. He thought Kissinger was going to deliver it. His great disappointment was that Kissinger was only interested in taking Egypt out of the equation. Asad was firmly convinced in the past years that Syria--that their interests would be addressed, Israel would withdraw from the occupied territories, and we'd have peace. Again, in the Madrid process--he joined the Madrid process convinced that Bush and Baker really meant it--it was their pledge that brought him in there.

What happened? Israel gave lip service to the notion of peace with Syria. Rabin said yes, he wanted it--wanted it. But over time what did he do? He went to get a separate deal with the Palestinians, then another deal with Jordan. Syria was kicked to the back of the queue. Asad's grievance is not that he doesn't want peace; his grievance is that his interests in peace have not been addressed. He wants peace badly. He has wanted it all these years. He still wants it. He has shown a great deal of flexibility on every issue except the territorial issue. If you look at the draft agreements which Barak leaked, and which were drawn up by the United States, you will see the extent of Syrian concessions on normalization--they have agreed on the joint water board; they agreed the Hermon early-warning station should remain for a number of years under U.S. and French control--made many, many, many concessions. Great flexibility, but not on territory. For Asad, the Golan is a symbol of Syrian sovereignty and independence. Not an inch can be given up. And Barak was ill-advised in the meeting that Asad could be pressured into giving up those few hundred

yards around the lake.

SATLOFF: Daniel? Historical revisionism? (Laughter.)

PIPES: When I studied debating in high school, I was told that you know you've won when your opponent starts to insult you. (Laughter.) So I take it as a form of concession.

SEALE: I am not insulting you--I am insulting your views.

PIPES: All right, all right. I think you made three major points, and I would like to address each of them briefly.

First, to the specifics, I dismissed it as achieving nothing, and you gave us mind-numbing detail about what happened in 1992, '93, '94 and so forth. I am happy to agree that when Warren Christopher went twenty-six times to Damascus he did achieve certain theoretical agreements--I think I did refer to theoretical agreements. I'm simply saying: What's there to show for it? It happens to be almost nine years later, and nothing has happened. Nothing has happened--right? There are no agreements, period. It doesn't count to have theoretical agreements on principle when you don't actually have an agreement. Nothing has happened--that's my point. And you can go on for ten years, nine years, eighteen years, twenty-seven years--and my point is that's what the Syrian regime wants, is for these things to go on and on and on and form theoretical agreements that go nowhere.

Point two. The notion the Israelis are arrogant and that Ephraim Sneh and David Levy and others are pounding this kind of arrogance toward the Syrians--well, let's go back a bit. There was a war in 1967, and in that war the Israelis won and the Syrians lost. And there are certain facts that follow from winning a war and losing a war. And right now what has been on the table since that time is the Israelis have made it clear that in theory they will return some or all of the lands they won in return for something they get back. And that something they get back is assurance that those former enemy states will no longer attack them, specifically in the case of Syria. Syria can potentially get back some or all of the territories it lost in return for assuring the Israelis that they are not going to do this again. The Israelis are the judges of this, and the Syrians are the petitioners. The Israelis need to be convinced that this ugly totalitarian regime will not once again use the Golan Heights and other parts of its territory to launch an attack. That's the pure and simple basis of this.

What is so extraordinary is the way in which the Syrians have managed to present themselves as the aggrieved party and the party that needs to be convinced, that needs to be given assurances. I find it remarkable the extent to which the Israelis have been accommodating. I mean, if you go back to December, the White House meeting, here you have the key politician of Israel, the elected prime minister--and who is he meeting with? He is meeting with a foreign minister, and not just that, but the foreign minister of a totalitarian regime that has absolutely no power, no say, no nothing. And why did the Israelis agree to do that? Because he is trying his very best to go--to take the extra step to meet. The Syrians of course, in this kind of arrogant way, say, "Well, we'll send you our second-stringer." And then they each give a talk at the White House Lawn, and the Israeli talks about mothers and peace and so forth, and the Syrian gives this long list of grievances and the like. I find it hard to see this arrogance.

And you mentioned Ephraim Sneh. Ephraim Sneh just yesterday made a very interesting statement. He said that it is not a good idea for Israel to be leaving Lebanon, but we are leaving because we don't have the staying power. Israel is not an aggressive state; Israel is a weak state. Israel is a state that, although it has great economic and military power, it doesn't have the morale to go on fighting this. And so that's why you see this exit from Lebanon. That's why you see the willingness for example for Barak to meet with Shara in December. I don't see arrogance; I see weakness.

The third point was about Asad being willing to have peace since the 1970s. Well, I actually don't use the term "peace." I think the term "peace" is, in this context, useless. Everybody wants peace--the Nazis wanted peace, after all. The question is, "What terms?" The question is, "What are the specifics?" Everybody wants peace. So let's be more specific.

Asad wanted a peace treaty, a signed peace treaty with Israel in the 1970s?

SEALE: Yes.

PIPES: I think you'll have to establish that. I don't think he wanted that peace treaty in the '70s. Moshe Ma'oz, another biographer of the Syrian president, points to 1988 as the decisive date. I have yet to see it. I have yet to see any sign that the president of Syria wishes to have a signed agreement with Israel. And the proof is in the pudding. Look how much the Israelis are giving. If you look at the Golan Heights as a whole, the contested area, the area that was won in 1967, the Israelis have been offering now for years 96, 97 percent of it. Now they are up to 99 and a substantial fraction, and we are being told that it has to be 100 or it's worthless. My advice to the Israelis is make it a hundred-- see what will happen. You know, call his bluff. I mean--

SATLOFF: Let me actually ask Uri about this--just one second--because it does--all the Israeli government positions notwithstanding, it does beg the question--the same question I asked Patrick in reverse. If peace is such a strategic advantage for Israel, if it will open up the doors to the world, to the Arab world, et cetera, et cetera, is there really a belief that these 200 meters should stand in the way of ending the Arab-Israeli conflict and achieving comprehensive peace? Where is Israeli public opinion on that issue?

LUBRANI: First of all, I don't think it's only a matter of 200 meters. Two hundred meters is of substance, certainly of substance. But it is a matter of with whom you make peace. If these 200 meters are to be of substance, they should be of inconsequence to the other party too--if they really want to make peace. And to me, as an individual, I always thought that Asad has a very, very difficult job of persuading us that he really wants peace. And he has been very bad about it. I must say that Asad is very fortunate in having Patrick Seale as his spokesman, and I congratulate him for that. But I think that is the most complicated and the nitty-gritty of what has transpired till now.

I think as I see it there was a point in which Asad had to make a decision: "Do I go and open up Syria?" And he should know--he knows that a peace treaty with Israel is not simply signing on the dotted line and having 200 meters here or there. He will have to open up Syria to crosswinds of change, of new ideas, of intercourse of all sorts, a Syria which has for I don't know how long--thirty-five, forty years--been closed, been closed to ideas, closed to modern technologies. I know a very good friend of mine the other day he told me he met a Syrian professor and asked him how they teach sciences. And this professor said, We don't teach sciences; we teach history of sciences, because our books come from the 1950s and the '60s. So I mean, it is that kind of Syria that has to deal with its future, with its destiny.

So Asad knows that if he opens up, Syria will change, and most probably the Alawi predominance will have to disappear. There will be a new Syria, a different Syria to the one it is. This is what he has to have in his mind when he comes to make peace with Israel.

And apparently the guy decided that he doesn't want that--it's too dangerous for the future of his regime. And that's the way I read it, and that's the way, by the way, that many Lebanese read it to whom I talk and who know better about Syria than I do and many others.

SATLOFF: Raghida, is there something to be afraid of from peace if you are the Syrians? What would peace have done to Syria and to Lebanon?

DERGHAM: You see, this is--I would like to say in answer to your question, referring to Mr. Lubrani's point, when you discussed the possibility of peace with Syria and an agreement with Syria, there is always that precondition and assuming ahead of time that that precondition will not be met. It is always putting the nature of what happens within Syria as if it is the business of Israel, when it signs a peace treaty with Syria, if it does.

It's this part of that condescending attitude that Daniel quite continuously has done, because I think we debated four

or five years ago right at the Institute, and you said the same thing all the time: There is a loser and there is a winner in a war, and the loser will have to pay a price. And in that you dismiss everything that has happened in clear attempts to negotiate in good faith a peace process that will bring us to agreement, as if you have dismissed everything that happened in Madrid and thereafter, including Oslo, because if you want to argue your point of that agreement, where are we, what is there to show for it? It's not an agreement--fine. The Palestinians have an agreement--have several agreements. And the Palestinians can say, "Well, show me what's in it. Show me what has it given me." And so far it hasn't given them something that they should just be comfortable with. So if we take your argument and apply it to the Palestinian track, then it becomes a very dangerous thing, because we are urging the Palestinians to wait, because the agreement will show something; whereas with the Syrians we say all these negotiations, everything that has been done, except for whatever, whether it's the water or the shore of Tiberias or the 200 meters--it is stuck at that and only that.

SATLOFF: Let me ask you more specifically--what would peace have done to Syria, to Syrian-Lebanese relations? What--I mean, there is a general sense that if they had signed a peace, lions would have lied down with the lambs in the Middle East, and this would be the comprehensive end to all the Arab-Israeli conflict--Lebanon would be solved, Syria, Israel would be solved. Is that your sense of what would have happened if this small territorial issue were resolved?

DERGHAM: Yes, it is my sense. And the majority of the Arabs--I don't know the ones you are talking to--but the majority of the Arabs have absolutely hoped that the comprehensive peace will bring the breakthrough that will follow through on the breakthrough that has taken place in Madrid. That was quite a psychological breakthrough. And now what we have, the majority of the Arabs say the comprehensive peace with Israel is of course very good for Israel, but also good for the Arab in as far as moving on amongst--in terms of moving on not only economically but also culturally, and within a relationship with each other. The Arabs are united on the comprehensive peace and its value and its improvement of the situation in the region altogether with Israel. But what they are not united about is [what to do] in the absence of a comprehensive peace. If comprehensive peace is elusive, then what? Then where do they stand? Then is it the logic of negotiations or is it the logic of resistance? And that's--but in the final analysis I think-- Mr. Lubrani, I avoided your question, because why--from the point of view of Israel the 200 meters, or whatever the territorial element--why was that not surmountable, if it were to bring the desired peace that Israel wanted and the normalization with its neighbors? I still don't get it. I don't get it from the Syrian point of view, except that I agree with Patrick Seale, because when Asad had said June 4th, and that everything else is negotiable, everything else is flexible, he meant it. It's --

SATLOFF: I think from the American perspective the clear understanding was June 4th was an idea. June 4th was not a line. June 4th was something to be demarcated. June 4th was a concept, not something on a map. And --

DERGHAM: But that's the disconnect.

SATLOFF: And I am sure that this is what American officials will say, is that --

SEALE: There's some truth in that, Bob. So, there is some truth in that the June 4th line doesn't exist on any map, and the Syrians have agreed to set up a committee with the Israelis to demarcate the line. However, everybody knows where the June 4th line lies. If you look at the maps in your briefing papers, you see where the line ran. Syria was on the lake. There is no dispute about that. Of course, Barak was hoping to fudge that. And that's why he was so reluctant to enter into discussions on the demarcation of the line. That's what happened at Shepherdstown--that's why Shepherdstown broke down. If you recall at Blair House, four committees were set up--four joint committees. But when they met again at Shepherdstown, the Israelis didn't show up at the border demarcation committee and the water committee. And only once did they show up on the very last day. They were much more anxious to see what Syria would give on the other issues. And that's why it broke down.

SATLOFF: Uri?

LUBRANI: Well, that's part of the nature of the negotiations, Patrick. Look, constantly there were negotiations in which they reached a point and then some new problem arose on the part of the Syrians. I told you I am not privy to all the nitty-gritty of the negotiation. But constantly we got to know that there is a new demand, there is a new something new. There was a feeling that we are being dragged into something which will become in the end a nonstarter. And so it happened. Look, I must say that I have been for a long time full of admiration at the efforts of the various administrations to get the Syrian-Israeli track on track. They went to great lengths--untold lengths--I as an Israeli sometimes really thought it is much far beyond the call of duty for an American secretary of state to go to Damascus so many times--at times to be humiliated there, waiting on the tarmac--in order to get things moving again.

Now, all this didn't help. And at the end of the day, when I think the crunch line came, something gave, and it was not the Israelis. And, madam, if you ask--I am sure you have occasion to ask people in the Gulf, in Saudi Arabia, in this--who is to blame this time for the breakdown of the negotiations?--it is not Israel; it is Syria. I am sorry. So, Syria has reached a point where the whole Arab world wants peace. They want this business beyond them. And they have Syria as a blockage now--because of 200 meters or without 200 meters, they have it as a blockage. And one man makes the decisions. One man. It's a one-man show. He calls the shots. So, I mean at this point in time--I mean, Israeli public opinion came to understand at this time it is a nonstarter.

SATLOFF: Raghida, then Patrick, and we'll move on.

DERGHAM: I just want to understand why is it not possible to ask both sides, the Syrians and the Israelis, to take an initiative, or bracket the Tiberias issue, the lake issue, or find a way that both--both--will take initiative to make it happen. I am not absolving Syria from its responsibility at this stage as where we are; but I am not ready to absolve Israel other on this --

SATLOFF: I think Patrick wants to absolve Syria. (Laughter.)

SEALE: No, no --

DERGHAM: But let me--what's important is--on this very point this is very important for me to make it clear that I--that it was painted that we say the Syrians are to blame, because President Clinton came out of Geneva, and he said the ball was in Syria's court. And from the Arab point of view that you refer to, that was not so, because then it was understood from the Arab point of view that Mr. Clinton brought Mr. Barak's views, adopted them, brought them into Geneva, and said, "Look, here's what the Israelis can do, and that's the bottom line." That's not negotiations either. Both have not gone the distance. And if it's two hundred meters or two meters, both have not got the distance.

SATLOFF: My sense of the conversation in Geneva, and for what it's worth --

LUBRANI: Excuse me, have you been to Geneva?

DERGHAM: Have I been to Geneva during the meetings?

LUBRANI: Yes.

DERGHAM: No.

LUBRANI: No? How do you know that this was going that way? Maybe it went the other way.

DERGHAM: Okay, I don't know, but I was --

SATLOFF: The story that I heard--I'd be interested, Patrick, if you would correct this--the story I heard about what happened in Geneva is Clinton offered his--put forward the idea on the table about the strip along the northeastern shore. Asad said, you know, "No, I want to swim in the water, I want to barbecue, I fish in the water--"

DERGHAM: I didn't start that way.

SATLOFF: Let me finish. And Clinton turned to Asad and said, "Excuse me, but didn't--but three months ago your foreign minister told me, or didn't raise the issue of the Galilee waters, the Sea of Galilee waters at Shepherdstown." And Asad turns to Faruq al-Shara and said, "Did you really not raise this issue?--or, "Is that really what you said?" And Faruq al-Shara had changed the topic--(laughter)--with the implication being issues that weren't important at Shepherdstown became important later on. Is that --

SEALE: It's not correct. I mean, look, none of us were there, but we've all had accounts from different delegations, and I've had accounts from the Israelis, the Americans, and the Syrians. Now, on the whole, the accounts do concur. One point which they all agree on was that the atmosphere turned sour very quickly--in the first six or seven minutes. Now, the Syrians went to Geneva with great hopes. They had been led to believe, rightly or wrongly, that Barak was ready now at long last, if only privately, to endorse the commitment to withdraw to the 4th of June line, which his predecessors, Rabin and Peres, had made. Now, Asad was very heartened by this, and he was prepared in return to give some major assurances on normalization, on water, on the timetable. And he went to Geneva with a very large delegation of 130 people. He thought this was going to be an historic moment which would relaunch the peace process. And indeed the press at that time reflected this optimism--the Arab press and the international press, and myself. We all thought this was the great moment. In fact, I spoke to Martin Indyk for example in Israel just before that, and he was optimistic. He thought that this could be an indication for an exchange of assurances by both sides.

Now, what appears to have happened was that Barak mobilized Clinton, perhaps unwittingly, into putting forth his own maximist demands, which were total control of the lake and total mastery over the waters flowing into the lake. Now, the question is: Why did Barak think that Clinton could pressure Asad into making these concessions? I think possibly for two or three reasons. One reason, I think the Israelis were very much influenced by Kissinger's account of his negotiations with Asad. And Kissinger wrote in one of his books that Asad would negotiate until the very last minute, and almost go over the edge of the precipice, and holding on with his fingernails he would then yield--the very last minute. Well, in this case it turned out to be a mistake.

Another reason I think of why--a rather complicated reason some of you may not know--but during the Netanyahu era somebody called Ron Lauder did a bit of private negotiations back and forth. And when he got it wrong, when he confused the 4th of June line with the 1923 line, we don't know. But, anyway, Barak saw him shortly after going to power, and Lauder gave Barak the impression that Asad was prepared to negotiate on the basis of the 1923 line. And this I think lodged in Barak's mind.

A third possible reason that the Israelis thought that Asad could be pressured is that very often you hear in Israel that the Syrian economy is on its knees, that Asad is dying and he wants to hand over to his son, and therefore he is in the mood to make concessions. In fact, the contrary is true. Asad doesn't want to give his son a flawed deal. He is likely to be harder in his negotiations, because he wants to give his son a deal which his son can defend, and honorable deal.

Anyway, for all these reasons --

PIPES: You mean it would have been easier five years ago?

SEALE: Well, no, look, on the question of territory--(laughter)--on the question of territory, Asad has been remarkably consistent. Right from the beginning with the Madrid process, he has said the 4th of June line, and not an inch--and I think Barak misread the legacy of the past negotiations. But I have to stress that I am not a spokesman for the Syrian government or for anybody else, contrary to what had been said here today, and that I am very happy to hear Uri Lubrani say that the Arab world wants peace. It's a great misreading of the Arab world to think they don't

want peace, or the Syrians don't want peace. It's also a mistake to think that Syria is a closed society. The point about Syria is this: They are not a high-tech society--they haven't had \$100 billion of American money. They haven't had 300,000 Russian graduates. They are largely an agricultural country, and they have food security, they have energy security. They want --

LUBRANI: They are on the list of terrorist-supporting countries. They can't get any funds. What can you do?

SEALE: They're on the list of terrorist-supporting countries for an incident which happened in 1986, which if you look at it very carefully it's a very mysterious and shadowy incident in which the Mossad was deeply involved. But, nevertheless, the Syrians on the list of--

PIPES: May I note for you that Barak had Clinton be his spokesman, and that in 1986 it was Mossad that caused a Syrian attempt to sabotage an El Al plane.

SEALE: Correct.

PIPES: Do we hear hints here of a Jewish conspiracy behind everything that's going on?

SEALE: No, not a Jewish conspiracy behind everything that is going on.

PIPES: What's going on, Mr. Seale? This is preposterous stuff. Why don't you talk seriously about what is going on. President Clinton was not a spokesman for Barak; he was presenting what he understood to be, as Mr. Lubrani has presented, the very best effort the United States can make to bridge these positions. Why don't you deal seriously with international policy instead of giving us conspiracy theories, like Jewish control?

SEALE: President Clinton was outraged by the briefing he had been given by Secretary Albright and Mr. Berger, and indeed Asad was angry with Shara for setting this thing up. The Syrians knew this, that this ended up by having a trap. Anyway, his expectation of good news from --

SATLOFF: Look, a couple of things. It's difficult for me to imagine--I mean, I don't even want to get into the notion that the Mossad is behind Hindawi. To me that's preposterous.

SEALE: Is it? It's a view shared by many people in the establishment --

SATLOFF: It certainly wasn't a view shared by the British court that convicted Colonel Muhammad Ghuli --

SEALE: No, but since then a lot of information has emerged, which I am happy to share with you.

SATLOFF: Let's just--let's stay with the current Syria-Israel negotiation for a moment. I do want to turn the floor over to questions on Syria-Israel issues before we take a break and then talk about Lebanon-Israel-Syria issues --

DERGHAM: I have a just quick observation.

SATLOFF: Yes, I know, I have to ask this question, because both Mr. Seale, Daniel and Uri--Patrick, Daniel and Uri--spoke about public opinion earlier on. One, has it--actually--Patrick spoke about it as to how the Israelis have a misconception of how the Syrians should act towards Israel. Uri talked about it, how the Syrians just have no idea of the importance of Israeli public opinion. Why is there such a disconnect? Why is it that not only whenever the Syrians have an opportunity to say something, they not only don't say something positive, they say something very, very negative? I think Ehud Ya'ari in the back corner interviewed Faruq al-Shara several years ago--it was a step backwards for the peace process--

EHUD YA'ARI: Thank you. (Laughter.)

SATLOFF: We're keeping Ehud away from the peace process--(laughter)--when this spring--this spring, not only were there no positive statements from the Syrians, but there were the most vicious Nazi references in the Syrian media in February, March, after the breakdown at Shepherdstown. Why is there a sense that Asad, even if the Syrian

officials, if they don't keep their mouths closed, when they do open it, it is actually a step in the wrong direction. And Raghida, please play on this, because you understand--I mean, you play in the regional media as well. This is not always commonplace--not all Arab leaders have the same approach to understanding Syrian public opinion. Why is it so bad coming from the Syrians?

DERGHAM: Because sometimes half the stories are told too--like your account, Rob, of what--one of the accounts--as Patrick said, we all have heard different accounts as to what happened in Geneva. I concur that I heard the same thing you said. But let me just tell you what else I have heard. Just before the segment that you went through, everybody getting sort of flabbergasted--why would Asad say "I want even the water of the lake?" What happened then, according to that account I heard, is that Asad continuously and repeatedly said to Clinton, "Do I get my land back? Do I get back my land?" And that was--that was one definite thing that Asad had in mind, that, "Once I get the territorial concession that I have been so consistent about throughout the years, then I--everything else is doable." And of course the disconnect from the point of view of Asad is that of course President Clinton said, "Yeah, you know, what--I'll give you your land back." This is the misconception in the Syrian mindset, that they think the U.S. can deliver Israel.

But from other point of view, when Clinton was unable to assure Asad that this is what we have been talking to you about, and we understand you, Asad felt terribly misunderstood, deceived, and he said then, "Not only will I want the lake, the shores, I want the water too." And then goes on your story. This is part of the problem. You reported one part of the story, and there is the other part that will tell us why there is always this disconnect and misinterpretation. And the gestures diplomacy--it was made clear by the Syrians--they never said, "I am going to invest in public opinion." They were consistent. No gestures diplomacy. We only would negotiate, and at the end we will do it.

Now, the thing is, the flexibility they showed was on everything else. Again, we started to bombard them in the American media and the Israeli media. "Where are you? Why don't you shake hands? Where is the gesture diplomacy?" And they have never said they would. So--but we set them up to disappoint us. And that's another reason for the disconnect. They do not communicate in the way that you and I--even the Lebanese track or the Egyptian track--they have their own way. Why am I as a negotiator or as a neighbor going to impose on the Syrians that style before even concluding --

PIPES: Let me see if I understand this right. Because the Syrians do two things consistently--one, always demand every last meter of the land they lost in 1967; and, two, insist that they'll never help the Israeli public opinion, that justifies itself? Because they do it, and they do it every year, and they always do it? Why ask questions? Of course it makes sense --

SATLOFF: Patrick?

SEALE: Well, I tend to agree with those critics of Syria when they say that Syria hasn't engaged in public diplomacy. I think that we should. I think we should make gestures. I think we should be more sensitive to Israeli public opinion, and I think we should help Barak take what is a difficult decision.

Now, we didn't do it--perhaps incapable of doing it for various reasons. I mean, you have to put yourself a little bit into their shoes. Their land is occupied. Lebanon, just next door, is bombed almost daily by the Israelis, and its sovereignty violated for decades. The international community is worried about the 17,000 Israeli settlers on the Golan, but hundreds of thousands of Syrians were expelled from the Golan and are now refugees waiting to return and their villages obliterated. The public opinion in Syria would take--does not look kindly on the regime if you are trying to make very friendly gestures.

Shara obviously comes under some pressure domestically--that's why he didn't shake hands. I think that's a little

mistake. I mean, of course they should have shaken hands, of course they shouldn't have run Holocaust denial articles, one article in the Syrian presses. They are huge mistakes. But that is the way they are. And they feel their cause is right. They feel they are victimized. They feel that Israel is aggressive and expansionist and uses its military power to impose its terms. And they would like that. It is very difficult in such circumstances--and you see at the same time as all this is going on--you think I am harking on something, but David Levy's remarks caused a terrific outcry in the area. And you should understand why. When he says a child for a child and a life for a life, Uri Lubrani will tell you that since 1984 only eight or possibly nine Israelis have been killed in northern Israel as a result of cross-border attacks--eight or nine. Of course, Israel also lost about twenty soldiers illegally occupying a neighboring state.

Now, on the other side of the border, the Lebanese border, thousands were killed--19,000 were killed in the first weeks of Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Hundreds of thousands were regularly disbursed from their homes in Operation Accountability, Operation Grapes of Wrath; material damage running into billions of dollars, and disproportionate violence on both sides was colossal--colossal.

Now, when you ask the Syrians and the Lebanese to make gesture of friendship to Israel, to this colossus that is hitting them whenever it feels like it, you have to put yourself into the other man's shoes. And this is what I am trying to preach here, that the days Israel can impose its rule by force of arms is finished --

SATLOFF: Which days were those?

SEALE: Well, ever since Ben Gurion. Ben Gurion sought hegemony over the region by military means. This has been pursued by other Israelis ever since. That era, I believe, is coming to an end. You now need co-existence. You have to respect your neighbors. Peace is the best guarantee of security--security indivisible--you can't have security with Israel at the expense of the insecurity of its neighbors, which is an important concept.

SATLOFF: Uri?

LUBRANI: Are we in for a recess? (Laughter.)

SATLOFF: We are in for a recess in a moment. (Laughter.)

LUBRANI: Because before going into a recess, I would like to tell you, Patrick, don't bring in these Lebanese dimensions when you talk about Syria.

SEALE: Why not?

LUBRANI: The Syrians don't care a hoot about Lebanese lives.

SEALE: Rubbish.

LUBRANI: Absolutely truth.

SEALE: Sorry.

LUBRANI: Absolutely truth, because if they were--if they were, they would have behaved differently to the Lebanese. They don't want them to make peace with us. Why? Because they want the Golan Heights. Deny this. Deny this.

SEALE: Uri--yes, Uri, they don't want a separate peace, they want a peace for both countries together. Of course they don't want --

LUBRANI: Okay. This is a standstill because they don't know how to put it differently.

SEALE: They don't want separate peace.

LUBRANI: Let the Lebanese decide for themselves. Why do they have to get ❖

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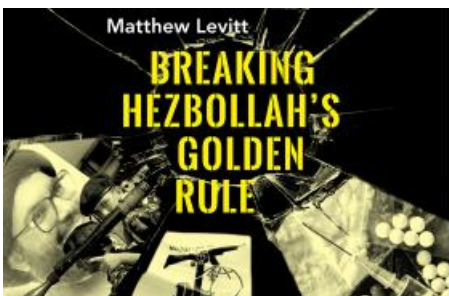
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