SOUTH LAWN DEPARTURE STATEMENT FOR THE MIDDLE EAST
3/7/79

I leave today on a new mission in the service of the dream of the oldest of human hopes -- the dream for peace.

Nowhere is that hope more fervent, more alive, than in the Middle East; nowhere is the path to its realization more difficult; nowhere might the price of failure be more terrible.

Peace remains the goal of President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin, and of the great peoples they represent. I know that they share my determination to see our negotiations between them bear fruit.

The Middle East has suffered too much and too long from war and the fear of war. Arabs and Israelis alike must now understand that bloodshed and deprivation and death can never settle their differences, can never be the path to renewal and hope.
For the first time in a generation, peace in the Middle East is within reach. President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, and Prime Minister Begin's warm reception opened the way.

At Camp David, we then worked together to forge a political framework in which their differences can be resolved.

Our negotiations we have held at Camp David and since, are based on the idea that peace can only be achieved when the legitimate needs of all who are affected by the conflict are met. Real peace will not come with a single treaty -- important as that would be. But a treaty between Egypt and Israel is an indispensable step toward the broader peace we all seek.

Negotiation is a long and tedious process. But there are times when making peace demands more courage than making war. I believe that President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin possess that special kind of courage -- and that they possess
as well the vision and statesmanship to redeem the great hope they have helped to create.

So it is with hope that I depart, hope tempered by realism. As a friend of Egypt and Israel, we will do our best to help them achieve the peace they have paid for in blood many times over. In doing this -- in seeking to lay the basis for a stable and peaceful Middle East -- we will also be serving our own deepest national interests, and the interests of all the people of the world.

I know that in this endeavor, I take with me the prayers and the good wishes of the American people. In the difficult work that lies ahead, I will draw strength and sustenance from your support.

* * *