Transcript for Interview with Ahron Bregman

**Interviewer:** What was the Knesset's reaction to the Camp David Accords (1978) as it debated its ratification?

**Ahron Bregman:** The Knesset's reaction to the Camp David Accords was a typical Israeli response to such matters: a fierce debate. But the bottom line is that when the moment came to vote for or against the Accords, the vast majority of Knesset members raised their hands in favour, including for the removal of Jewish settlements. We should remember that at Camp David the prime minister flatly refused to agree to remove the Sinai settlements and it was decided there to leave the matter for the Knesset to decide. And now it voted for the removal of the villages which was a most important precedent.

**Interviewer:** The Camp David Accords clearly had negative repercussions on Sadat's presidency. Were there any negative consequences for Menachem Begin's administration also?

**Bregman:** For the Begin government, the Camp David Accords were—and are still regarded—as a major achievement. Begin, who during his many years in opposition insisted on no withdrawals from lands occupied in 1967, became the first Israeli prime minister to sign a peace treaty with an Arab country and withdraw from occupied lands.

**Interviewer:** How do Israelis currently view the Camp David Accords?

**Bregman:** Overall, Israelis still regard the Camp David Accords and the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt that followed the Accords as a major achievement. True, it is a "cold" peace – there’s hardly any trade and commerce, no tourism—but at least Israelis and Egyptians do not shoot at each other as they used to do for many years and the Israeli-Egyptian border has been quiet for many many years now. I strongly believe that the treaty will even survive the current Arab Spring and the calls, particularly in Egypt, to amend it.