Transcript for Interview with Meir Litvak

**Interviewer**: Were the Accords characterized more by personal friendships or enmity?

**Meir Litvak:** The Accords had to overcome many years of a deep conflict between two peoples. They were an attempt to build mutual confidence in order to ensure future peaceful coexistence between both people, even if it was not based on great friendship. The Israeli side was split between those who wanted to promote friendship with Palestinians; those who supported the agreements even though they were apprehensive and suspicious, but hoped that eventually there would be peaceful coexistence between the two peoples in two states; and those who opposed the Accords either because them meant giving up territories or because they totally distrusted the Palestinians. From the Palestinian side, supporters of the Accords probably harbored various bitter memories towards Israel and Zionism, but believed that the Accords would eventually lead to an independent Palestinian state and were the most Palestinians could achieve under the circumstances. There were those who opposed the Accords because they meant giving up the territories the Palestinians lost in 1948 or because they believed they gave too little to the Palestinians in return for recognition of Israel.

**Interviewer:** To what extent were the Accords a success or a failure?

**Litvak:** To a large extent the Accords failed. The Accords were in interim settlement designed to pave the way for a full peace agreement. This did not happen, and even worse the attempts to negotiate a final settlement ended in a failure and in unprecedented violence. From an Israeli point of view, the Accords did not bring security, but in fact more terrorism as over 250 Israelis got killed during the heyday of the peace process between 1994 and 1996 and over a 1000 during the period of 2000 and 2005. In addition, the Accords helped Hamas, an organization bent on destroying Israel, to become a dominant movement.
From the Palestinian point of view, the Accords did not end Israeli occupation, did not produce a Palestinian state, probably helped intensify Israeli settlement activity in the territories, and the Palestinians also lost 3000 since 1994.

**Interviewer:** Would you consider this agreement to be a turning point in history?

**Litvak:** The Accords were definitely an important land-mark in the history of Israeli-Palestinian relations. For the first times since the beginning of the Zionist enterprise the Palestinians officially recognized Israel and its legitimacy. On the other hand, the Accords may be a crucial land mark in the future establishment of a Palestinian state. Even if it will not produce a peaceful settlement, it may enable the two parties to co-exist however tenuously.