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Blessed are the Policy Makers: Jimmy Carter's Faith-Based Approach to the Arab-Israeli Conflict

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Abstract

President Jimmy Carter's pursuit of a faith-based foreign policy caused his early frustrations with the Middle East peace process. He initially pursued a comprehensive, regional settlement. The administration worked toward reconvening a Geneva conference focused on ending the Arab–Israeli conflict. Carter was guided in these efforts by his religious beliefs, specifically his understanding of Christian social justice. As a result, Carter viewed the situation of the Palestinians as one of the most significant human rights challenges he faced in the region and began championing the cause of the people in the West Bank and Gaza as he attempted to secure them a place in Geneva. After the likelihood of a conference collapsed, Carter, in effect, began negotiating directly with the Israeli government on behalf of the Palestinians. Those efforts cost him much political support and caused the peace process to stagnate.

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