

SUBJECT

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

The President  
of the Arab Republic of Egypt

SERIAL No. T103A/79T الرئيس

23, September, 1979.

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

Pursuant to my last letter to you on the efforts exerted to solve the Middle East problem, I would like to put you fully in the picture with respect to the talks I held with Israeli Prime Minister Begin in Haifa on the fourth and the fifth of this month. You know that we are committed to work incessantly until we reach a comprehensive settlement to the dispute on the basis of the "Framework for Peace in the Middle East" signed at Camp David a year ago. Having signed the Peace Treaty and the letter on the establishment of a self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza, we are currently concentrating on negotiating the modalities for electing this government and defining its powers and responsibilities.

My visit to Haifa was intended to give impetus to these negotiations and persuade the Israeli Government to adopt the attitude which would be conducive to making progress. Of course I did not expect any concrete steps to emerge from this round of talks. The Palestinian issue is too complex and sensitive to lend itself to simple solutions. However, a determined and firm approach would definitely yield favorable results in due course. In my conversations with Prime Minister Begin, I dwelt in length on the necessity for adopting a broader concept of the jurisdiction of the self-governing

—  
Mrs. MARGARET THATCHER  
The British Prime Minister

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authority. That government, which is to exercise full autonomy in accordance with the provisions of the Camp David Framework, should have real authority in order to attract the Palestinians to the peace process.

I emphasized the necessity for making progress on the issue of Jerusalem at this stage. Hundreds of millions of muslims and Christians and many others do not accept the prolongation of the present situation. It is not impossible to agree on a formula that would allow the return of Arab sovereignty over East Jerusalem while maintaining the unity of the city for all practical purposes. Services and utilities would be administered by one board. Freedom of movement for persons and goods throughout the City would be safeguarded. Freedom of worship would be guaranteed. I urged Mr. Begin to cooperate with us and accept our idea of allowing the Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem to participate in the election of the self-governing authority. This would be a first step that would reassure the Palestinian people without prejudging the issue. Short of this, no progress can be achieved.

Our position on the settlements issue remains as it is : they are illegal and they constitute an obstacle to peace. Furthermore the latest decision by the Israeli government to allow its nationals to purchase land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip constitutes further impeachment to the peace process.

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As I did in my talks with the Israeli Prime Minister, I emphasized to the Israeli public in my speeches the fact that the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people does not jeopardize Israeli security or other interests in any way. Israelis should cease thinking that their interests are diametrically opposed to those of the Palestinians. It is an absolute must to find a formula for coexistence between the two peoples, otherwise the situation would remain explosive and unstable. By and large, I noticed that there was a greater degree of receptivity for such argument than before.

The Prime Minister was giving all these ideas deep thought. At certain points, he reiterated his well-known opinions, while on others, he was willing to consider. Therefore, I decided to leave the points I made with him so that the Israeli Cabinet may study them in the spirit of peace and fraternity. I made it crystal clear to Begin, Peres and other Israeli leaders that much will depend on their cooperation on the Palestinian question. I also indicated that it is vital to make meaningful progress before the end of this year if we remain faithful to the peace ideal.

I was impressed and touched by the spirit of the inhabitants of Haifa. Especially heartwarming was the positive and hopeful

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attitude of the Arab Israelis who constitute a good part of the population in Haifa and the neighboring areas in the Galilee. They support the peace process wholeheartedly as the only way to assure a happy and secure future for everyone in the region.

In the course of my conversations with the Israeli Prime Minister, We settled a few points related to the implementation of the Peace Treaty, such as the sale of Egyptian oil to Israel and moving forward the date withdrawal from mount Sinai . It was also agreed that officials of both sides would meet in Washington next week to consider the question of the Peace-keeping force. We agreed tentatively on an interim arrangement that would allow a small number of representatives of both Parties to perform some supervisory functions on the ground on a limited scale.

My idea is to confront the Israelis in the weeks and months ahead with the necessity for making the decisions that are required for settling the Palestinian question. Every Israeli knows that this is part of the peace package reached with Egypt. This remains an unwavering Egyptian commitment. You might have noticed that Prime Minister Begin himself stated in public more than once during the visit that Israel is committed to work for a comprehensive settlement. I intend to apply the right measure of pressure and persuasion. I am employing every new step taken in the dealing between

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Egypt and Israel to promote a more cooperative Israeli attitude with respect to the Palestinians.

This is why I told Prime Minister Begin that next year after pumping the Nile water through a tunnel beneath the Suez Canal to irrigate Sinai, I may be prepared to supply the Negev with some water. I alluded to this idea, in general terms, as an expression of good neighbourhood policy.

Dear Friend,

I want to tell you that the Egyptian people fully appreciate your support for their principled stand on this and other issues. We count on your continuous understanding and cooperation. This attitude would certainly be reflected in further enhancing our friendly relations.

With Best Wishes and regards,



Mohammed Anwar El-Sadat