

*The President  
of the Arab Republic of Egypt*

Subject: Egypt: Aug 80  
Mtg with the Egyptian Ambassador  
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August 2, 1980

Dear Prime Minister Begin,

I hope that you have fully recovered and regained your health as you assume the awesome responsibilities you bear at this crucial point. It is the duty of each one of us to cope with a multitude of problems in the light of the current state of affairs, both regionally and globally. We have no choice but to confront these problems with vision and courage. None of us can be unmindful of or indifferent to events around us and their far reaching consequences.

Above all, we have the task of completing the work we have done on the road to peace. I am sure that I need not remind you that, in our various meetings in Egypt, Israel and at Camp David, we made a firm commitment to work tirelessly for a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East.



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Many were those who were skeptical about the prospect for such a comprehensive peace for reasons you are certainly familiar with. However, I remained firm in my determination to pursue the noble cause of peace regardless of the enormity of the effort needed to accomplish the mission. Through determination and perseverance, we were able to achieve last year what was considered impossible by any measure. On the other hand, much remains to be done if we are to continue the peace march for the good of all the peoples of the area including the people of Israel most certainly and, in fact, for the good of all nations of the world. With this in mind, we vowed, in the letter we exchanged on March 26, 1979, to negotiate "continuously and in good faith" in order to conclude the negotiations on the establishment of the self-governing authority with full autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza at the earliest possible date.



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As I pointed out time and again in the course of our talks, the making of meaningful progress in this regard is in the best interest of the Israeli people as much as it is in the best interest of the Palestinians. It would be a grave mistake of untold proportions to waste this opportunity to set in motion the process of reconciliation and harmonious coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. It is imperative to start this process without delay so that we might finally put an end to violence and friction in the holy land while the opportunity exists, for it might not arise again in the foreseeable future.

As you well know, negotiating in good faith requires a certain operational behaviour on the part of the participants. First and foremost, they are under an obligation to apply self-restraint and refrain from taking any action which is incompatible with the spirit of negotiations



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or which is likely to undermine the peace process in one way or the other. No issue should be considered, or rendered, not negotiable. No party should attempt to confront the other with a fait accompli by taking measures which purport to prejudice the outcome of the negotiations or predetermine it unilaterally. Nor should any party set precondition irrespective of his claims. In essence, the negotiating process is one which enables the parties to settle their differences and reach agreement on controversial issues in a collective manner and through an approach based on mutuality and reciprocity and not through unilateral action. It is inconsistent with this fundamental principle that any party attempts to determine a given aspect of the dispute unilaterally and outside the area of meaningful exchange of views. It is true that such unilateral actions have no legal validity whatsoever vis-a-vis



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other parties, but they certainly poison the atmosphere of the negotiations and produce a most unfavorable reaction to the process within the circles whose cooperation is vital to the success of our endeavor.

Let us view together what took place in the recent past with the objective of assessing the situation in clear terms and discussing how best we can serve our cause:

1- We started the current negotiations last year with the goal of reaching agreement before May 26, 1980. That target was not met for reasons on which I am not going to dwell. Nevertheless, we decided to continue negotiating in view of the seriousness of the issues involved and our keen desire to give you ample time to make the necessary adjustments in your position.



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2- We took this attitude despite the fact that what is involved, at this stage, is merely a transitional arrangement and not a final settlement to the Palestinian problem. We are simply opening the door for such a settlement through setting up a transitional regime for a limited period in order to enable the Palestinians to assume their share of the responsibility.

3- To our disappointment and to the surprise of many of Israel's friends, events did not take the course which was likely to bring us closer to an agreement. On the contrary, provocative and negative actions have been taken unjustifiably and in open defiance to the process and its very essence. All along, we were hoping that the factors which prompted you to take this negative attitude would subside and give way to a more positive and responsive approach. To my regret,



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these hopes have not materialized and the situation continued to deteriorate.

4- I am referring here to the actions which are being taken with respect to Jerusalem and the settlements, together with the repressive measures taken in the West Bank and Gaza.

5- At this point, it might be useful to refresh your memory with respect to Jerusalem. You would recall that this issue was the first one I raised with you and your colleagues since I started the peace initiative. Throughout our talks, I emphasized to you the centrality that issue occupies in the minds and hearts of 800 Million Muslims and a greater number of Christians. I pointed to you on several occasions in the clearest terms that a breakthrough in it is certain to give our peace drive more momentum than any other single action.



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6- You would remember that in our meeting in El-Areesh in May 1979, I told you that there was a historic opportunity for us to proceed without delay towards the comprehensive settlement as we started the successful implementation of the Egyptian - Israeli Peace Treaty.

7- You would also recall that in that meeting and subsequent ones in Alexandria, Haifa and Aswan, I concentrated on the issue of Jerusalem and told you that if it is a matter of vital interest to 18 million Jews all over the World, it is equally vital and sensitive to 800 million Muslims. It is impossible to ignore this fact and be insensitive to this spiritual and cultural interest. Many Muslims throughout the globe are inclined to judge Israel's intentions by its behaviour on this question. Why loose their confidence and that of many others while we have a viable and attractive alternative? As I told you, I believe that it is not the most difficult



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issue and that it should be possible to find a solution that respects the rights and satisfies the aspirations of both sides.

8- We are aware of the fact that an overall agreement on the status of Jerusalem can be deferred to the stage of negotiating the final settlement. However, it is also a fact that the issue of Jerusalem is overlapping with many issues which are subject to review at present. Thus, it was natural that it was raised in various meetings both at the plenary level and those of committees, notably the Legal Committee and the Elections Committee.

9- Some might argue that all the actions you have taken with respect to Jerusalem by the various branches of your Government represent no more than a negotiating position that should not be taken



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seriously, especially in light of the fact that they are of no legal validity. However, we can not ignore the following facts:

- a- That such measures form a flagrant violation of Security Council Resolution 242 to which we are both committed to observe and implement.

I need not elaborate on these legal matters, but it is clear that recent Israeli actions represent a territorial expansion and an acquisition of territory by war, an act which is explicitly prohibited under the provisions of Resolution 242. It might be worth mentioning that your Government has declared on recent occasions that it will neither tolerate nor accept any tampering with the resolution.

- b- Furthermore, such actions run contrary to the letter and spirit of Camp David. It violates the letter of the "Framework for Peace in the Middle East" insofar as it is a breach of Resolution 242 which is undoubtedly the legal



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base for the Accord. As to the spirit of Camp David, I believe that we vowed to settle all our differences together in a spirit of reconciliation and not by unilateral acts. It was clearly understood, as we signed the Accords, that none of us will resort to the imposition of a fait accompli on the other .

c- It goes without saying, also, that these actions contradict the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits the annexation of occupied territories.

10- When I mentioned to you my belief that it is not impossible to find a happy solution to the question of Jerusalem, I stated before the entire World that such a solution should not result in dividing the city or the setting up of barriers that could curtail the freedom of movement or worship. I outlined a



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formula which would set a shining model for coexistence and good neighborliness among Muslims, Christians and Jews. In essence, that formula calls for the restoration of Arab legal and historic rights in the City while keeping it united for all practical purposes.

11- In all candor, I feel that the ideas I presented and publicized in this respect have not been given due consideration on your part. I have not received any objective reaction or comment on the proposed formula which safeguards the interests of all those concerned, thus rendering an invaluable service to the cause of peace and a monumental contribution to the process of reconciliation between Arabs and Jews.

12- Your Government has also adopted a negative and counter-productive policy with respect to another sensitive issue, namely that of the settlements. I need



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not elaborate on the universal rejection and condemnation of this policy; both on legal, moral and political grounds. I am not here to enumerate the serious consequences of such policy. Suffice it to reiterate what I stated before, that these settlements in the West Bank and Gaza are illegal and a real obstacle to peace. Therefore they must be removed, be them old or new.

13- I am certain that you remember that I talked to you about the settlements in Aswan I advised you, then, not to fight that lost cause because anything that you do in this respect is doomed to failure.

14- You would also recall that I offered to provide you with water that could reach Jerusalem, passing through the Negev, in order to make it easy for you to build new quarters for your settlers on your own land. You misunderstood the idea behind



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my offer when you said that the national aspirations of your people are not for sale. I never had this in mind as I told you. I was merely cooperating with you in order that we might find a way out to the satisfaction of both sides.

Although the removal of illegal settlements should not hinge upon any incentive, I am willing to go that far to solve that problem as another Egyptian contribution to peace.

I know that you do not need anyone to find a way out for you. But it is always helpful to find certain openings which one was not aware of. At times, our Arab brothers need such a way out due to certain complications in their position. This is a burden I bear as the President of the Egyptian people who have been destined to be at the vanguard of events and developments in the entire region. This is the legacy of our past and the promise of our future.

15- We reached an understanding with you that Israel will take a number of confidence building measures without delay and prior to the beginning of the transitional period. The purpose of such measures



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was defined among us as: alleviating the suffering of the Palestinians and improving the atmosphere in the West Bank and Gaza as a prelude to the election of the self-governing authority. We spoke specifically about a group of actions that were listed in a memorandum presented to you on October 13, 1978 during the Blair House talks. It is obvious that the conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have not improved ever since. To the contrary, they witnessed a marked deterioration. Is this the way to win the support and confidence of those who are addressed by the Camp David "Framework"?

16- Our position has been both clear and unwavering since I initiated the peace process with my mission to Jerusalem. It might be useful, however, to repeat it as follows:

First: We remain wholeheartedly committed to peace. to us, its is a sacred and strategic goal. We will



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continue to work for it even if this entails doubling our efforts in this respect.

Second: We will adhere to the letter and spirit of Camp David and call for a strict observance of all the commitments under these historic documents.

Third: We remain prepared to help our partners in the peace process and provide them with solutions and way out even when they fail to see the realities of the situation and the wisdom of this or that act. We apply to Israel here the same rule we have been applying to our arab brothers.

Fourth: We firmly believe that all matters will be settled at the end, because this is the desire of all peoples of the area and the world. No one can turn the clock back or put the region again in the darkness of war and devastation.

Fifth: We reject all measure or actions taken by Israel unilaterally and against the universal consensus with respect to Jerusalem and the settlements.



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These action are null and void completely.

Sixth: The historic and legal rights of the Arabs and Muslims should be respected while keeping different functions in the city united. Freedom of worship and movement should be guaranteed.

Seventh: Israel should desist from all settlement activities. Settlements built in the West Bank and Gaza should be removed together with settlements in other occupied territories.

Eighth: No nation, certainly not Egypt or Israel, can determine the future of the Palestinian people. This is their God-given right of which they can not be deprived under all circumstances. Egypt will oppose any encroachment on that right.

Ninth: If we reach agreement on the establishment of the S G A, we are prepared to begin its implementation in the Gaza Strip as a first step to be followed by implementation in the West Bank.

Dear Prime Minister Begin,

I am certain that you know, deep in your heart, that it is virtually impossible to continue



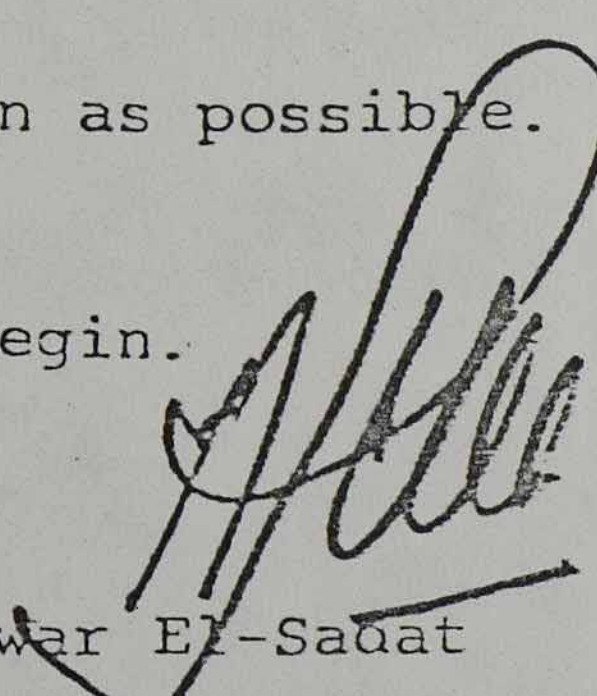
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the negotiations if the present attitude continues. Hence, in the spirit of my journey to Jerusalem and the Camp David Peace Accords, I urge you to take the remedial action which is necessary for the removal of the obstacles which have been placed on the road to peace in the past few months. I leave it to you to choose the appropriate ways and means for achieving that. If we fail to remove those obstacles in due time, we will be reducing the vital process of negotiations to a meaningless exercise in futility which would be a disservice to our cherished ideal of peace. I am sure that none of us wants to or can do that. I hope to receive a positive reply from you so that the negotiations could proceed in a promising atmosphere and as soon as possible.

With best wishes to you and Mrs. Begin.

  
Mohammed Anwar El-Sadat