

I conclude with the hope that we shall be able to advance understanding on the important matters that engage our two Governments.

With expressions of highest esteem,

Y. Rabin
Yitzhak Rabin

CONFIDENTIAL

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Your Excellency,

As I address this letter to you I am fully aware of the extraordinary nature of the act. However, the fact that I can entrust it to our mutual friend, Dr. Henry Kissinger, ensures its confidentiality.

The long conflict between our two countries has brought much suffering to our peoples. Both our nations have been victims of tragic historical circumstances and I now express the sincere hope that Providence will extricate us from the vortex of warfare and enmity.

It has always been my firm conviction that Egypt, by virtue of its cultural heritage, its strength, its size and its influence, carries a leading voice with respect to the peace-making effort in our region. From what Dr. Kissinger has conveyed to me, as well as from your public statements, I feel assured that you are determined to make strenuous efforts to achieve a settlement.

I, on my part, am determined to make all efforts to promote peace between us, and it is in this spirit that I express the aspiration that we shall yet succeed in reaching an agreement that will do honor to our two peoples. Please know that, though I am on the other side, I am endeavoring to understand your problems and to see things from your perspective. I know that no agreement

is possible without difficult decisions but I am ready to grapple with them for the sake of the cause of peace between our countries.

With this in mind, permit me, Mr. President, to bring to your attention a concern which we in Israel consider of crucial importance.

The step-by-step approach, as I understand it, is intended to bring our countries closer to peace and thereby provide momentum towards peace for the region as a whole. Hence, my people have to know that through the process of withdrawal to a new agreed line we have reached a turning point and that we are now entering an era in which we will be able to settle all our differences by peaceful means only. As Prime Minister, I must be able to convince both people and Government in Israel that in surrendering physical strategic positions we shall not be exposing ourselves to increased hardships created by lengthier and inferior lines in a resumed conflict. This can be possible only if it is visibly shown that the act of withdrawal marks the real beginning of progress towards peace by deeds and words that demonstrate the intention of peace. X

These, Mr. President, are some thoughts I thought worthy of bringing to your attention. They, together with the suggestions and ideas I have asked Dr. Kissinger to convey have the single purpose of contributing to an understanding of our respective problems. You will, no doubt, want to react and comment on the proposals received through Dr. Kissinger. This will enable the negotiations to develop further.