

S E C R E T

April 30, 1974

Dear Madam Prime Minister,

I am writing to you regarding Secretary Kissinger's mission to the Middle East and on the eve of his arrival in Israel. I received yesterday a full report of his conversations with Mr. Gromyko in which, as he has reported to you, he successfully resisted Soviet proposals which in our judgement would have been enormously complicating and prejudicial to the common efforts of Israel and the US to achieve a satisfactory Separation of Forces Agreement in the Golan Heights.

In my talks with Secretary Kissinger before he left we discussed and reflected on the immediate days ahead, their crucial character, and their decisive impact on future developments. Simply stated, Madam Prime Minister, if a Syrian-Israeli disengagement can be achieved it could build further on the foundation of confidence which has begun to develop as a result of the scrupulous implementations by Egypt and Israel of Disengagement Agreement. It could also open new avenues for additional steps towards peace in the further strengthening in Israel's security.

On the other hand, if we fail in this endeavor I am convinced that Israel will face a situation fraught with risks. It would mean the reversal of the trend towards reduced Soviet influence in the area, the injection of the views of others who neither appreciate nor seem interested in helping to maintain Israel's security, a situation in which the capacity of the US for constructive purposes will have been effectively neutralized, and the likelihood of another war in the Middle East under conditions in which those domestically and internationally American actions would be much more difficult than in October.

Madam Prime Minister, you have often said, and I have appreciated it, that my administration has given more support to Israel -- material and political -- than perhaps any other administration. This is not said, I know, in any partisan way, but I believe this judgement to be accurate. We have pursued a policy of protecting and strengthening Israel's security both with material support and diplomatic efforts.

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I therefore find it profoundly disturbing to see reports from Israel which are casting doubt on the US role and describe our policy as one which is pursuing detente without full regard and understanding of Israel's interests. I cannot over-emphasize what a fundamental mistake I believe it would be for Israel to approach the critical days ahead and Secretary Kissinger's mission in this frame of mind.

Israel is going through a period of re-adjustment. You have suffered pain and anguish from a recent war which was neither your desire nor your choosing. That I find it painful, Madam Prime Minister, to see developing in Israel an attitude of gloom and distrust regarding the US efforts. A vote on a Security Council Resolution, which in our judgement was not as balanced as we would have liked but was more balanced than any in the past, cannot erase the magnitude of the timely airlift in Israel's hour of peril, nor the achievement of an Egyptian-Syrian disengagement agreement which you yourself characterized as very favourable result for Israel. It is difficult for me to understand how much an atmosphere could develop in the week in which I authorized a generous apportionment of 2.2 billion commitment, and sent to the Congress a foreign assistance program for 1975 which provides equally generously for your future needs. It is perplexing to me that our steadfast support for Israel would be seriously doubted at this critical hour as Secretary Kissinger is arriving in your country on this vital mission.

I know and understand your worries and fears. Difficult decisions lie ahead, but the risks of failure are so great and the consequences are so profound that I felt it incumbent upon me to share with you my concerns and hopes regarding the coming weeks. I can assure you that it is not our intention to ask of you and your Government concessions that would be prejudicial to the survival of Israel.

I hope therefore, Madam Prime Minister, that you and your Government approach the talks with Secretary Kissinger in a mood of opportunity as Israel faces one of the most fateful weeks in its history.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Nixon