

5th October, 1994

Your Majesty

I am writing to you in response to your letter of 2nd October 1994 which I received at the hand of your good and loyal emmissary. As I told him after reading it very carefully, the depth and breadth of your presentation necessitated much further thought on my part. Before commenting in detail, may I thank you at the very outset for your initiative in committing to paper so much of your thinking and feelings on the gigantic effort in which we are now so deeply involved and which must, if successful, result in the conclusion of a treaty of peace between Jordan and Israel - a treaty which will provide a solemn and permanent solution to the principal outstanding issues between our two countries. May I also say at the outset that I have been moved not only by the eloquence which has permeated your lines but also by the depth of sentiment which you have so vividly portrayed. Indeed, as we approach these final stages of our negotiations, the issues still outstanding between us take on a character laden with both content and emotion. It is only natural that this is so.

Our meeting in Aqaba, both in plenary and in private session, did, I feel, give us a welcome opportunity to review the progress of our negotiations as of the time we last met in Washington. Our teams have worked hard and well. Much ground has been covered in so many areas and over the last ten days a sustained effort has produced a first preliminary draft of a treaty. I consider this no small achievement, by any international standard; indeed there are still many clauses in the draft which await final agreement and resolution but the will is there to go through with it; a very strong will which I believe has been inspired by yourself and myself and which has captured the hearts and minds of the negotiators all down the line.

On the major outstanding issues may I say that I share your view that the subject of refugees is a question of language, and I am convinced that this will be found. The area of security is a sensitive one, and we cannot forget the past in forging mutual viable commitments for the future. Here again the gaps have been narrowed up to a point that gives me every reason to assume that they are bridgeable, in the spirit of goodwill, in the forthcoming round of discussions. This would leave us with the

two primary elements of water and boundaries - elements which we both knew would be not only the most difficult to accomodate but also the most significant in the whole gamut of our negotiations.

The problem of water is the most active of all in the whole region. So often over recent weeks and months have we both addressed this issue and stated, rightly so, that meeting the present and future needs of the peoples in the region will only be possible if new sources are found, developed or harnessed from outside the immediate area. This is a message we have found it vital to impress upon the public as a whole - and it is in this spirit that we have approached the final wording of our agreements on this vital matter. We have, I believe gone a long way to addressing the immediate needs of Jordan, and the quantities suggested by us and which, combined together, near the 100 million cm³ mark, with the hope that our needs in the south are met, are very close to those originally quoted by your negotiators. In so doing we are making a true sacrifice - a sacrifice we can only make in the context of a major comprehensive effort to effect an agreement on the combined package of water and territory. May I say, in all sincerity that

we should all be hesitant to overload the circuit; we should avoid allowing our negotiators to consider every agreement or compromise as a basis for additional demands. One should not forget that the challenge of water negotiations with Syria and the Palestinians, is still ahead of us.

May I devote the latter part of my letter to the issue of boundaries which understandably took up a major part of your letter. At the very outset I should like to assure you, solemnly and unequivocally, that I have no desire to request or demand for Israel one iota of Jordanian soil.

Maintaining sovereignty over all and every element of a nation's land is a sacred trust of every leader, and I respect and recognize your right so to act. Similarly I am certain that you will be the first to accept that this mission is one which we in Israel must fulfill with identical fervour, trusting that you do not request any of our national sovereign soil. Ever since the days of the early Jewish pioneers, our parents and grand parents took pride in transforming the arid wastes into cultivated land. Making the desert bloom has not been a lyrical

expression of poetry or prose; it has become a central theme of our national ethos. No Israeli leader even if he wished to, could be construed as violating this covenant of people and land; I am sure you will recall how I described these very constraints to you at our last meeting.

The problem we face is especially complex since at no time in the past was the border between our two countries demarcated. In that respect this border differs from our borders with Egypt and Lebanon which were demarcated in the past and to which we could easily redeploy in circumstances of peace. As I said to you, our joint task is to determine our boundary and as you know there is more than one legal and geographical construction and interpretation to this boundary in the south. Our people presented the Israeli case in detail to your negotiators. Neither one of us can forfeit his sovereign rights as construed by him and neither of us has the wish to be found and declared wanting on this cardinal matter.

Under these circumstances I thought and still think that we must seek solutions which could enable each of us to live with them. I fully understand your stand on leasing although in the past this idea was considered by some as an ingenuous solution. I would also like to point out, that in order to achieve peace at this time, we have gone a long way towards your proposed line, notwithstanding our deep convictions. On the other hand I hope you realize that I cannot envisage an outcome which might jeopardize existing enterprises on the ground. Twenty years ago the disputed areas were arid desert. One plot of sand differed little from the other - qualitatively there was nothing to choose from; now there are a few oases of agriculture, diligently and tirelessly developed by pioneers who invested their lives in these projects. I frankly cannot see how we can uproot these farmers and moreover, we have no desire to do so.

How then can we proceed, given our joint commitment to achieve peace as soon as possible! Given the changing circumstances in this Middle East of ours in which what is at hand today may be gone tomorrow. I feel as you do that we have a unique opportunity - but this is not an unlimited window of time. If God forbid, we were to fail, what would we tell our children?

That we could not work out an honourable credible and sensible compromise? Would the achievements so far, including benefits for both countries, be lost?

I have read your idea on territory trade-offs very carefully; we must work on this idea to determine if we both are aiming at the very same thing; we must see how this concept is absorbed in our agreed notion of a territory-water package. I have asked our trusted emissary to discuss these aspects with you when he delivers this letter to you.

ראש הממשלה
THE PRIME MINISTER

Please rest assured that I am not by any means disheartened by your letter and the positions you have described in it. May I repeat once again that as we near the final rounds of our negotiations it is only natural that the pivotal issues will

stand out. These issues have many facets, legal, physical, social and economic. In the final analysis you and I, Your Majesty, will have to make political determinations. Given the strength of our conviction and the determination and courage manifested in recent months we dare not fail and we shall not fail. I look forward to our continued dialogue in this regard.

in deep friendship

Y. Rabin

His Majesty

King Hussein I

of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan