



Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1967 (Third Edition)
William B. Quandt

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Appendix C

Letter from President Ford to Prime Minister Rabin September 1, 1975

SECRET

His Excellency
Yitzhak Rabin
Prime Minister of Israel

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I wish to inform you that the U.S. recognizes that the Israeli-Egyptian Interim Agreement entailing withdrawal from vital areas in the Sinai constitutes an act of great significance on Israel's part in the pursuit of final peace and imposes additional heavy military and economic burdens on Israel.

I want to assure you that the U.S. will make every effort to be fully responsive within the limits of its resources and Congressional authorization and appropriation on an ongoing and long-term basis to Israel's military equipment and other defense requirements as well as to Israel's economic aid needs, all of this based on the requests submitted by Israel, joint studies and previous U.S. Presidential undertakings.

Further to those undertakings, it is my resolve to continue to maintain Israel's defensive strength through the supply of advanced types of equipment, such as the F-16 aircraft. The United States Government agrees to an early meeting to undertake a joint study of high technology and sophisticated items, including the Pershing ground-to-ground missiles with conventional warheads, with the view to giving a positive response. The U.S. Administration will submit annually for approval by the U.S. Congress a request for military and economic assistance in order to help meet Israel's economic and military needs. Realizing as I do the importance of the Interim Agreement to the Middle Eastern situation as a whole, the U.S. will make every possible effort to assist in the establishment of conditions in which the Agreement will be observed without being subjected to pressures or deadlines.

In the spirit of the special relationship existing between the United States and Israel and in light of the determination of both sides to avoid a situation in which the U.S. and Israel would pursue divergent courses in peace negotiations, the U.S. will take the position that these are negotiations between the parties. As I indicated to you in our conversation on 12 June 1975, the situation in the aftermath of the Israeli-Egyptian Interim Agreement will be one in which the overall settlement can be pursued in a systematic and deliberate way and does not require the U.S. to put forward an overall proposal of its own in such circumstances. Should the U.S. desire in the future to put forward proposals of its own, it will make every effort to coordinate with Israel its proposals with a view to refraining from putting forth proposals that Israel would consider unsatisfactory.

The U.S. will support the position that an overall settlement with Syria in the framework of a peace agreement must assure Israel's security from attack from the Golan Heights. The U.S. further supports the position that a just and lasting peace, which remains our objective, must be acceptable to both sides. The U.S. has not developed a final position on the borders. Should it do so it will give great weight to Israel's position that any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights. My view in this regard was stated in our conversation of September 13, 1974.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Ford

The text comes from Michael Widlanski, ed., Can Israel Survive a Palestinian State? (Jerusalem: Institute for Advanced Strategic Political Studies, 1990), pp. 120-21.

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