

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 3, 1978

To President Sadat

I would appreciate your honoring the confidentiality of this letter, which is private and personal. I want to express myself frankly and directly.

Because of your dramatic and courageous visit to Jerusalem and its accompanying actions and statements, remarkable progress has been made toward peace in the Middle East. The strong leadership qualities exhibited by you and Prime Minister Begin contributed to a better understanding between Egypt and Israel, and opened up the prospect for success in the peace negotiations. In my opinion, you are the leader who, in the foreseeable future, can and must continue this progress.

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You have a strong hold on the government, loyalty among your associates, the well deserved confidence of the people of your country, and the admiration of the world.

It is imperative that every effort be made to capitalize on this unprecedented opportunity - to conclude a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive and permanent peace agreement for the entire region. The consequences of failure may be very serious.

During recent weeks little progress has been made and the relationships have deteriorated. A total stalemate is in prospect. Unless we act boldly and constructively now, those of us who

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now serve as leaders may not again have such a chance to bring peace to the people of your region.

After long discussions with both you and Prime Minister Begin, there is no doubt in my mind that both of you genuinely want peace and have the courage to reach agreement. It is time, therefore, for us to make a renewed effort at the highest level and with the greatest determination.

My hope is that, during this visit by Secretary Vance to the Middle East, progress and harmony will be indicated through positive statements and the avoidance of public disputes. Then, as soon as possible, I would like to meet personally with you and Prime

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Minister Begin to search for additional avenues for peace as we planned at Camp David.

It is important that this proposal be kept completely confidential, that public expectations not be raised too high, and that quiet and mutual preparation lay the foundation for a successful meeting.

Secretary Vance can discuss with you the details of time and place. Unnecessary delay would be a mistake. I have no strong preference about the location, but Camp David is available. My hope is that the three of us, along with our top advisors, can work together in relative seclusion. Any public announcement of our plans for the meeting can be coordinated among us. Secretary Vance is familiar

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with my schedule, and I hope that through him you will send me your ideas and advice.

I look forward to an early opportunity to consider with you again one of the most important and challenging issues ever to be decided by political leaders.

Please remember that you have my continuing friendship and personal best wishes as we work together as partners in a common search for peace.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter