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The American Jewish Committee

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Howard I. Friedman, President • 1600 One Wilshire Building, Los Angeles, Calif. 90017 • 213/629-0274

March 14, 1985

His Excellency Abdel Raouf el-Reedy
Ambassador L & P
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
2310 Decatur Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I am taking the liberty of forwarding to you for transmission to President Mubarak a letter which I have written him on behalf of the American Jewish Committee. May I ask your assistance in forwarding the letter to him.

I should also like to take this means of thanking you for your assistance in arranging the meeting which it was my privilege to attend in Washington on Monday, March 11.

Sincerely yours,

Howard I. Friedman,
National President,
American Jewish Committee.

HIF:JA

bcc: Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum
Dr. David Gordis

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President Hosni Mubarak
c/o His Excellency Abdel Raouf el-Reedy
Ambassador L & P
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
2310 Decatur Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. President:

As one of the group of American Jewish organizational leaders who met with you in Washington on Monday, March 11, 1985, may I take this means of expressing to you my own organization's appreciation for your generous sharing of time and thought at that meeting. Because the format of the meeting, involving more than two dozen people, makes it extremely difficult to pursue in depth a substantive dialogue, I am taking the liberty of writing this letter to you. What I say here, of course, is only intended to reflect the views of the American Jewish Committee and does not purport to speak for others, although I believe these views are widely shared.

Our leadership met with you, as you will recall, in late October, 1981, in Cairo, shortly after you assumed the presidency of Egypt. That was a particularly constructive meeting and had the effect of conveying most dramatically to us your own commitment to the integrity of the peace process with Israel and your determination to broaden it to the fullest. In that same spirit, we have taken some satisfaction in your more recent efforts to expand the peace process itself. It is, however, primarily because of our appreciation of the seriousness of purpose which has always characterized you that we want to voice to you our conviction that certain aspects of your recent initiative may be counter-productive to what we view as the primary ingredient of the peace process.

Peace can only be achieved, as it was between Egypt and Israel, through direct negotiations between Israel and its adversaries. That is so in our view because the underlying obstacle to peace in the area has always been Arab refusal to accept the reality and sovereign legitimacy of the State of Israel. President Sadat cut through that mind set completely when he made it clear that he was prepared to negotiate directly with Israel as a legitimate sovereign entity.

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Nothing less will be productive with respect to the securing of peace between Israel and its remaining adversaries. That is why we respectfully suggest that the preliminary negotiations which you have urged between the United States and a negotiating group consisting of Jordanians and Palestinians, including in the latter PLO representatives, is not a foundation upon which positive results can be predicated. Rather, it is seen by most observers as an attempt to press the United States into a posture of dealing with representatives different from those with whom Israel can reasonably be expected to negotiate. I understand that our own government's recognition of that reality has been plainly and unequivocally conveyed to you and we believe it is based on sound principles.

We likewise feel profoundly that the process will be most productive if it is not sought by means of a universalist format. Peace can best be built step-by-step. A logical next step would be negotiations with Jordan. As you know Israel has indicated that it would not object to the inclusion of Palestinians who are not PLO officials in such a Jordanian delegation. The alternative of an international conference will encourage the most extreme demands of Israel's adversaries to become the common denominator upon which the totality of Israel's adversaries can join together. Moreover, it suggests a key role in the ultimate negotiating process for the Soviet Union. I realize that you, too, share that apprehension. Such an approach would not be a formula for success, but rather a prescription for failure.

I hope you will forgive the frank spirit in which I address these remarks to you. You have always been a man characterized by openness and frankness. Because we share a common commitment to a meaningful peace in the area, I write you only to provide you with our own sense of the inherent limitations and deficiencies in some aspects of the approach which has recently been advanced.

We share with you as well an appreciation of the importance of the psychological dimension in the fostering of peace among nations. The people of Israel made heavy sacrifices for the sake of peace with Egypt and the Government of Prime Minister Peres has indicated its readiness to take additional risks for true and lasting peace with all its neighbors. Yet we found during our recent visit to Israel many Israelis who are asking themselves whether the Arab world will ever really accept Israel in its midst. They argue that if Arab hatred is unalterable then why made additional sacrifices and take additional risks for peace?

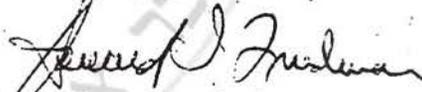
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I believe that Egypt's actions play a crucial role in molding attitudes in Israel as well as in the Arab world. The prompt return of the Egyptian ambassador to his post in Israel would help to reverse the popular pessimism within Israel about Arab attitudes and could also encourage other Arab parties to enter into direct peace talks with Israel.

In this connection we are also distressed to find that articles continue to appear in the Egyptian press, including the semi-official Al Bomhourla, which are not only harshly critical of Israel but contain vicious anti-Jewish stereotypes. Such articles go far beyond legitimate criticism of specific Israeli policies in that they attribute malicious and evil characteristics to all Israelis and to the Jewish people as a whole. We are deeply concerned that the cumulative effect of this hate propoganda among the Egyptian people will be to undermine the progress that has been made thus far by Egypt and Israel to create a new atmosphere of tolerance and reconciliation between Arabs and Jews.

Please be assured that we want to be helpful in any way we can to advance the peace process and look forward to an early opportunity to discuss with you in the same spirit of frankness our mutual concerns as well as our mutual aspirations.

Sincerely yours,



Howard I. Friedman,
National President,
American Jewish Committee.

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