

13/15

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

1973-12-28, Failed Nixon, Letter

December 28, 1973

Your Majesty:

I have received from Secretary Kissinger a full report of his trip to the Middle East, of the opening phase of the Geneva Conference, and, in particular, of his most recent meeting with Your Majesty. Based on this report, I continue to believe there is opportunity for progress toward a peace settlement.

As Your Majesty knows, much has already been accomplished. The ceasefire, the six-point agreement, the opening of the Peace Conference, important as they are, are only beginnings. We are committed, as I wrote you, to full support and implementation of the November 1967 Security Council Resolution 242. We have made progress also in developing the basic principles of a disengagement agreement with Egypt, subject, of course, to a number of details still to be worked out and negotiated. Israel has sent its military representatives to Geneva where they are meeting with Egyptian military representatives looking towards an early agreement on the disengagement of forces. We have also arranged for Defense Minister Dayan to come next week to the United States so that we can pursue the full details with him of a disengagement agreement. All of these are solid achievements brought about almost exclusively by United States actions.

I am deeply convinced that our two Nations stand at the threshold of a great turning point in history. We can, if we have the will, bring a new era of peace and

I will not be political considerations. I recognize that this government did not do enough in the Middle East during my first term but I am determined now that the Middle East be settled.

I know His Majesty has concern over Jerusalem--that is an extremely difficult problem. He is also concerned over disengagement. I have written to him affirming our commitment to Resolution 242, but that in a way is gobbledygook. What I want you to know is that I have made a commitment. We will work out a permanent settlement as quickly as possible. The full prestige of my office is dedicated to that. You should know that that means I will catch it from some groups in this country. Whatever happens on the embargo I will continue to work for a just peace.

I don't know what the outcome on Jerusalem will be, and you don't know what it will be. Your government probably wants more than I can negotiate on Jerusalem, but I want you to know I will have great difficulty negotiating under pressure. I will have three years more. No one knows who my successor will be, but he could be someone without my determination in this regard, and who may be beholden to special groups. I want the embargo lifted. It is very important that it be lifted. My efforts will be seriously jeopardized if the embargo is an issue. It will be claimed that we are moving only because of pressure from the Arabs. That is what people like Jackson will say. There is no linkage--I will continue to work for a settlement--but I will be unable to do anything in the face of an embargo.

Any gesture which His Majesty can make, even if it results in pressure from his Arab friends, will help me in my efforts to move toward a settlement. If the embargo is not lifted, pressure from Congress and the press will make it extremely difficult for me to make progress--that is the linkage. Expectations were raised in my State of the Union address. The statements I made were based on letters from His Majesty and his Arab friends. I am out on a limb--I have been there before--but I want us to be able to work together for a settlement.

If His Majesty could help in the next few days, so that it does not look like the embargo is being held over our heads, it would be extremely useful. Otherwise, public opinion could shift against the Arabs. His Majesty should know that in me he has a friend who would take great risks but his movement on the embargo would be enormously helpful in this situation.