

July 19

I appreciate your concerns in this matter, and thank you for your letter. I am satisfied that the investigation is proceeding in a vigorous and impartial manner, and I therefore have determined that appointment of a special prosecutor is neither warranted nor advisable.

Sincerely,

JIMMY CARTER

NOTE: This is the text of identical letters addressed to Representative John J. Rhodes, minority leader of the House of Representatives, and Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., minority leader of the Senate.

Visit of Prime Minister Menahem Begin of Israel

*Remarks of the President and the
Prime Minister at the Welcoming
Ceremony. July 19, 1977*

THE PRESIDENT. This is a very important day in the history of our Nation and, I think, perhaps for the future of the Middle East and perhaps even for the future of the world.

We have with us a very distinguished visitor, Prime Minister Begin and his wife, Aliza. I'm particularly thrilled to have them come here. We've had many distinguished visitors this year, but he's the first one who comes as the head of a nation who is junior to me. All the others have been Presidents or Prime Ministers or Kings much longer. So, I welcome a chance to act as a senior statesman this morning, Prime Minister Begin.

We also have very important questions to discuss between us. We approach these conferences with deep common interests and with a sincerity of purpose that naturally binds us together.

Prime Minister Begin represents a nation which has just demonstrated again

the importance of a true democracy where people in an absolutely unconstrained expression of individual preference in open elections can decide who their leader will be.

This has been a great test for Israel, and the orderly transition of authority and responsibility from one political party to another has been carried out not only with peace and cooperation but, I think, with an enhancement of the confidence in the people of Israel in the future.

I think, to me, having read the writings and biography of our distinguished visitor this morning, there's a great parallel between what Israel is, what it stands for, and what Prime Minister Begin is and what he stands for. He's a man who has demonstrated a willingness to suffer for principle, a man who has shown superlative personal courage in the face of trial, challenge, disappointment, but who has ultimately prevailed because of a depth of his commitment and his own personal characteristics. And this is a strong parallel with what his nation has been and is. He's a man of principle and a man of independence, and the nation of Israel is a people of principle and independence.

One of the important personal characteristics about Prime Minister Begin which I admire is his deep and unswerving religious commitments. This has always been a guiding factor in his consciousness and in his pursuit of unswerving goals. There's a quietness about him which goes with determination and a fiery spirit in his expressions of his beliefs to the public. And this is as it should be.

I was particularly impressed that the first official action of his government was to admit into Israel 66 homeless refugees from Vietnam who had been floating around in the oceans of the world, excluded by many nations who are their

neighbors, who had been picked up by an Israeli ship and to whom he gave a home. It was an act of compassion, an act of sensitivity, and a recognition of him and his government about the importance of a home for people who are destitute and who would like to express their own individuality and freedom in a common way, again typifying the historic struggle of the people of Israel.

I've been encouraged by his statements that all the points of dispute with his Arab neighbors are negotiable; that this year might be a time of success in the so far frustrated efforts to bring permanent peace and security into the Middle East.

We share that common project. And although there might be differences of perspective and viewpoint between him and me, his nation and the United States, that common goal of finding a path to permanent peace will inevitably bind us together.

We are honored by his presence. We welcome him and his wife as our visitors.

And I would like to close my comments of welcome to him by quoting from Isaiah, from a Bible which he and I both read, given to us by God, whom we both worship. Isaiah said: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effects of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."

Thank you very much, and welcome, sir.

[At this point, the Prime Minister responded. His opening remarks were in Hebrew, and the translation follows:]

THE PRIME MINISTER. Mr. President, I have come from the land of Zion and Jerusalem as the spokesman for an ancient people and a young nation. God's blessing on America, the hope of the human race. Peace to your great nation.

[The Prime Minister continued in English.]

Mr. President, I have come to you as the spokesman for an ancient people and a young renaissance nation. In our own time, these people were strewn into the abyss. It had to extricate itself from the depths of the pits with the last vestige of its strength through an unequalled fight for national self-liberation of the few against the many, of the weak against the strong, of right against might.

This is, Mr. President, the reason why we yearn for peace, pray for peace, and shall do everything humanly possible and make all the possible endeavors to bring about real peace between us and our neighbors. Peace is inseparable from national security.

May I assure you, Mr. President, that to us that concept is no excuse for anything; neither is it a cloak of anything. To us, with the experience of physical annihilation and spiritual redemption, national security may mean the lives of every man, woman, and child in Israel. The lives can be, under certain circumstances, directly threatened and put in jeopardy.

Mr. President, we in Israel see in you not only the fair citizen of your great, mighty country, but also the leader and the defender of the free world.

However, the free world has shrunk, indeed has been shrinking. It can be likened in our time to an island battered by bitter winds, by stormy seas, by high waves. Therefore, all free men and women should stand together to persevere in the struggle for human rights, to preserve human liberty, to make sure "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Mr. President, I am deeply grateful for the heartwarming words you said to

me and about me today, which I do not deserve. But your appreciation is very dear to my wife and myself. We thank you.

You mentioned the decision by the Cabinet and myself in Israel to give refuge and haven to the Vietnamese refugees saved by an Israeli boat from the depths of the Pacific Ocean, threatened with drowning and exposure.

It was a natural act to us, Mr. President. We remembered, we have never forgotten that boat with 900 Jews, having left Germany in the last weeks before the Second World War for Cuba. When they reached the Cuban shores, their visas were declared nonvalid, and then they were 9 months at sea, traveling from harbor to harbor, from country to country, crying out for refuge. They were refused.

Eventually they went back to Europe. Some of them saved their lives. The majority of them went to the gas chambers. We have never forgotten the lot of our people, persecuted, humiliated, ultimately physically destroyed. And therefore, it was natural that my first act as Prime Minister was to give those people a haven in the land of Israel.

Mr. President, now we shall have Hebrews speaking Vietnamese in our country.

I share your view that we stand together for human liberty and dignity. And we may have difference of opinion, but we shall never disagree; we may only agree to differ.

Mr. President, my wife and I are deeply grateful to you and Mrs. Carter for the gracious hospitality you have bestowed upon us. We do hope that not in too distant a future we may reciprocate in Jerusalem. The people of Israel will re-

ceive you with an open and warm heart and with the traditional hospitality all of us inherited from old Abraham.

Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. on the South Lawn of the White House.

Visit of Prime Minister Begin of Israel

White House Statement Issued Following the First Meeting Between the President and the Prime Minister. July 19, 1977

President Carter and Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin met in the Cabinet Room for 2 hours. The meeting was also attended by the Vice President, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., United States Ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis, and William Quandt of the National Security Council staff on the American side; and Israeli Ambassador to the United States Simcha Dinitz, Advisor to the Prime Minister Shmuel Katz, Minister of the Embassy of Israel Hanan Bar-On, Director of the Prime Minister's Bureau Yechiel Kadishai, Political Advisor to the Prime Minister Eli Mizrahi, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister Brigadier General Ephraim Poran, and Advisor to the Prime Minister Yehuda Avner on the Israeli side.

The President began by repeating his personal pleasure at welcoming Prime Minister Begin to the White House so soon after his taking office last month. The President congratulated Mr. Begin once again on his accession to national leadership and expressed confidence that this

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. He took leaves of absence from MBTA in July 1976 to work at the Democratic National Convention, and from August to November 1976 to serve as trip director for the Carter Presidential campaign. Since January 1977, he has been Special Assistant to the President for Personnel.

Visit of Prime Minister Begin of Israel

Toasts of the President and Prime Minister Begin at a Working Dinner for the Prime Minister. July 19, 1977

THE PRESIDENT. First of all, I want to welcome all of you here tonight—the Members of the Senate, the Cabinet, my own staff, the distinguished Members of the House, and also our very fine visitors from Israel, Ambassador Dinitz.

I was very much concerned a few weeks ago, when I discovered that this is a special night and I didn't know if we could induce anyone to come. The Speaker pointed out again tonight that this is the All-Star Game, the major baseball game of the year. [Laughter] And I was taken aback the day before yesterday, when my wife came and said, "Jimmy, we ordinarily have only 20 people come to your working suppers, and we are trying to cut the list down to 60."

I couldn't understand it. So, I talked to Cy and talked to Dr. Brzezinski, and they said that everyone wanted to come to meet the new Prime Minister of Israel. This is the largest group we have ever had, Mr. Prime Minister, and it's a great tribute to you and to the interest in your country and is demonstrative, I think, of the very close ties of friendship between the United States and the great nation of

Israel. I'm pleased to be the host tonight to such a distinguished man.

As I said in my welcoming remarks this morning, this is very gratifying to me. He's the only foreign visitor I have had who is junior to me. I feel like a senior statesman tonight since he's very new in office. And he and I have a lot more in common.

Ambassador Dinitz was telling me that after the election somebody asked Prime Minister Begin how it felt to be unknown. And he said, well, he was known as Menahem who?—very similar to me, except the question was asked about him after he was elected Prime Minister, and it was asked about me when I first started running for President. [Laughter]

But he and I have a lot more in common than those ties that I've described to you, and we've explored some of them today. It's been one of the most gratifying and stimulating discussions that I have had since I have been President.

We've had a chance to get to know each other personally, and it's been obvious to me that our guest is a strong leader. He's a man of deep convictions and unshakeable principle. He's a man of truth and quiet dignity. He's a man who is polite and very modest. The only times today when I've seen him somewhat disconcerted is when he thinks that the praise and the compliments are excessive, and he's embarrassed then.

I think this is a tribute to him. And I know that the people in Israel and the many friends in our country who look with favor on him and his leadership are gratified to have him come to see us.

We've had far-reaching discussions today. We've explored differences of opinion in a very blunt and frank fashion. And I think we've resolved some of the differences; few still remain. But we've discovered and mutually recognized, in

order to make them permanent, the agreements that are inherent in the attitudes of our people.

We both feel that this year is a propitious time to move toward real, permanent peace in the Middle East, a recognition by all nations that Israel has a right to exist, to exist as a proud and independent nation, to exist permanently, and to exist in peace. This is a basis on which we approach the coming crucial months.

We also recognize the sharp differences of opinion that exist between Israel and her Arab neighbors, the historical distrust that must be overcome. We also recognize the intense interest and legitimate concern and involvement of almost all the developed nations in the world and many of those who are still developing in a peaceful settlement of Middle Eastern differences.

We recognize that the basic security of Israel must not only be guaranteed in military terms and from the viewpoint of leaders who are involved, but the security of Israel must be guaranteed in the minds and hearts of people who live in that country and in the minds and hearts of people who would disturb that security if they thought there was hope for success. There must be a reassurance of the staunch friendship that binds our country to Israel.

I have met with the Arab leaders who've been here to see me and whom I've met in Europe, and we've always made clear to them in the early stages of discussion that the basic premise on which we approached a possible Middle East discussion leading toward progress and peace was our commitment to Israel.

We have also explored today some very sensitive questions, some that can prove to be embarrassing because of past statements made in the heat of anger or the heat of challenge or the heat of despair

or the heat or depths of insecurity. And with a new hope being generated, we see a need for a frank discussion of all the issues that in the past have appeared to be insuperable obstacles toward peace.

I've been very proud of the attitude taken by Prime Minister Begin, who has said that all issues are negotiable and who has already expressed publicly his hope that he and President Sadat and King Hussein and President Asad can meet with others in Geneva in October.

We don't know yet that we can resolve all the differences that might prevent such a meeting. But following this week, Secretary Vance will go to the Middle East to have private conversations with the leaders there and will also have a follow-up meeting with the Israeli leaders themselves.

The future, of course, is still in doubt. The historical differences still exist. But I am convinced, having spent hours and hours talking and listening to the leaders involved, that there is a unanimous hope that peace might come and a realization of the great benefits that can accrue to all the people in the Middle East with the coming of security and peace.

We are determined to do our share not to try to impose our will on anyone but to act as a trusted intermediary and, to deserve that trust, to give the same points of view to all the parties who will be negotiating—not to mislead anyone, not to avoid a controversial issue—and, wherever appropriate, to open those controversial issues up to public scrutiny, public analysis, public debate, even when at times it creates some hopefully transient dissension among people who have strongly held opposing views.

But there is no way to postpone any longer those issues that sometimes in the future will be divisive but which have his-

torically been divisive either for 29 years or for 2,900 years.

Finally, I'd like to say this: Success this year is going to require a great deal of courage. As has often been pointed out, it's much more difficult to make peace than it is to make war, because in searching for peace there has to be an accommodation; in searching for war, there has to be an arousing of animosity and hatred and a using of innate dissension and distrust as a basis.

But the courage that exists in our fine visitor is one of the factors which encourages me to look toward great progress this year toward true peace in the Middle East.

We share a common religion. We share mutual economic trials, tribulations, successes, and hopes. We are bound together politically, culturally, ethically by blood relationships. And these common purposes and goals and characteristics provide a sure base which will withstand the trials and difficulties of a challenging year.

I look forward to it with a great deal of anticipation, and I'm very proud tonight to welcome to the White House the new Prime Minister of Israel and to offer a toast to this good and decent and courageous man in whom the hopes of many are focused, and on the brave and courageous people of the great and courageous nation of Israel.

To the people of Israel and to you, Mr. Prime Minister.

THE PRIME MINISTER. Mr. President, after having met you, I can say it was a great day in my life to be here, to speak to you, to listen to you. We have had very few good days in our lives in our generation. Most of the days were spent in struggle, in persecution; to time in being hunted, in dreams, in suffering. And the days of solace are not many.

This is one of the best days in my life, having met the President of the United States, having learned that this is a man, a great friend of humanity, a man of great understanding and feeling and, therefore, as I can say now wholeheartedly, a great friend of Israel.

Therefore, tonight, Mr. President, with your permission, I will say something about what I believed to be, perhaps since my childhood, the moral greatness of America.

In 60 years, America has saved mankind from three very grave dangers. The first was Prussian militarism, which during the First World War almost trampled under foot all of Europe and, ultimately, the world. 1917 was a crucial year. There were mutinies in the French Army. The great question was: "Whom? Who is going to break whom?" And then the outcry was heard throughout Europe: "The Yankees are coming." The army of General Pershing fought valiantly. Mainly, the spirit of the European armies, of the allies, rose. And then victory came.

The second time America saved mankind came during the period when, as Churchill said, all the embodiment of evil in mankind turned a great nation—a nation of poets and philosophers—into a bloodthirsty mob, thirsty first of all for Jewish blood. And in that hour, perhaps the darkest in our time, we lost a third of our people. That would mean 80 million Americans wiped out. Those are phantasmagoric figures which scientists make up in connection with the megatons. But megatons are produced never to be used. As we believe, all free men and all those who believe in divine providence, we have to live with those phantasmagoric figures to the last day on Earth.

A dark age started in Europe and throughout the world. We should always tell the truth. There was a time when Eng-