

## Foreign Relations, 1961-1963, Volume XVIII, Near Esst, 1962-1963

Released by the Office of the Historian  
Documents 18-44

### 21. Letter From President Kennedy to Prime Minister Ben Gurion/1/

Washington, August 15, 1962.

/1/Source: Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, Israel, 8/10/62-8/16/62. No classification marking. A handwritten note reads: "orig given to State Dept. officer at Israel mtg. cc to S/S 8/16."

Dear Mr. Prime Minister: I take considerable pleasure in our recent exchange of letters. I am confident you share my view that not only have the mutual interests of Israel and the United States been advanced but that in these matters we have achieved a high degree of understanding and confidence.

I have noted of late with deep satisfaction that Israel's frontiers have been calmer and that the disturbing rash of incidents of the spring and early summer has been largely dissipated. It is a hopeful sign that both Syria and Jordan have given the United States categorical assurances that they wish to avoid trouble on their borders with Israel and to cooperate fully with the United Nations instruments. If means can be found to perpetuate these Arab resolves, and in light of your assurances to me, a significant step will have been taken toward the permanent peace we all seek.

As you know, Mr. Prime Minister, the Department of State and members of my staff have been reviewing intensively certain matters that are of prime importance to Israel's security and well-being as well as to the improvement in the atmosphere in the Near East and in prospects for peace. I refer to Israel's requests for a security guarantee and for the Hawk missile, and to the mission of Dr. Joseph E. Johnson as Special Representative of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine. I have now examined these questions. It is my conclusion that they are of such significance, and the time factor is of such urgency, as to justify dispatching a special emissary in the next day or two to discuss them with you in the necessarily detailed manner impossible in the form of letters.

I have therefore requested Mr. Myer Feldman, my Special Assistant, to prepare to fly to Israel, without publicity, in order to acquaint you privately and in confidence with our viewpoints, to learn your thinking, and to seek to find, with you, the bases for an understanding. Mr. Feldman has my complete confidence and is fully knowledgeable of my thinking. I shall be most appreciative therefore if you will explore these matters with him. I am convinced that our mutual interests will be well served by achievement of an understanding. I hope to hear from you shortly of your willingness to receive Mr. Feldman.

I know of your concern, and that of the people of Israel, that the security and economic stability of Israel not be endangered in the process of resolving the Arab refugee problem. I wish to assure you that the United States Government will use its influence only in support of those proposals which do not involve serious risks for Israel.

Sincerely,

John F. Kennedy/2/

/2/Printed from a copy that indicates Kennedy signed the original.