

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 29, 1975

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am writing to emphasize the importance of a Congressional decision in the coming week on U.S. participation in the Early Warning System which is an integral part of the Agreement signed between the Governments of Egypt and Israel on September 4 in Geneva.

Over the past two years, our Government has played an essential role in helping defuse the tensions in the Middle East. We have chosen this course because we recognized, as has every American Administration over the past 30 years, that the issues involved in that troubled area are central to the American national interest.

The September 4 agreement, like the two preceding disengagement agreements, was negotiated with the assistance of the United States. The parties themselves have described it as a significant step towards peace in the Middle East. It will reduce the risks of war, create new opportunities for negotiating peace, and help provide a stable environment in which global economic dislocations can be avoided. This Agreement is in the overall national interest of the United States.

There would have been no Agreement without provision for American participation in the Early Warning System. That System is designed to reduce the danger of surprise attack, and the parties to the Agreement were able to agree to entrust the System only to the United States. The special American role was the only one in which both sides had adequate confidence.

I want to be certain that the leaders of the Congress fully understand the consequences of further delay in acting on this important matter.

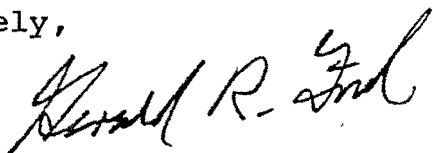
The first step in the implementation of the basic Agreement under the timetable negotiated and agreed to by Egypt and Israel in Geneva on September 22 is scheduled to be taken October 5. This process will not begin, however, until the

Congress has acted on the proposed United States role in the Early Warning System. Delay in Congressional action will, therefore, delay implementation of the basic Agreement. It will risk causing the lengthy and difficult negotiations on the entire five-month implementing timetable to be reopened. It will prevent a lessening of the risks of war. If for any reason the agreement should fail, the responsibility would be heavy indeed.

The issue before the Congress now is whether the Congress will approve acceptance by the United States of the role that has been proposed for it. There are other issues which the Congress must eventually consider in connection with our continuing relations, policies, and programs in the Middle East -- particularly our programs of military and economic assistance there. The Congress will want to consider those carefully at the appropriate time, but they are not integral to the implementation of the Agreement between Egypt and Israel. Voting in favor of the U.S. role in the Early Warning System will not commit anyone to take a position one way or another on these issues.

In summary, I met with the leadership three weeks ago to describe what was involved in the new Agreement between Egypt and Israel and to request urgent approval of U.S. participation in its implementation. This question has been under intensive discussion in the Congress for nearly three weeks. All relevant papers and all U.S. commitments related to the Agreement have been submitted to the appropriate committees of the Congress. If action is not completed in the coming week, the United States will be in the position of holding up implementation of an Agreement which two key Middle Eastern countries have signed as a significant step towards peace. The Middle East is an area where American policy has long had broad bipartisan support. The issue presently before the Congress offers an opportunity to reaffirm that tradition and to demonstrate how the Executive and Legislative branches can work together on a foreign policy matter of high importance to the national interest and for the benefit of world peace. I, therefore, urge strongly that action be completed as early as possible and no later than Friday, October 3.

Sincerely,



The Honorable
The Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515