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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
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To: The Editors of the NEW YORK TIMES
From: Jimmy Carter
Date: March 28, 1990

I request that this be published with the same prominence as given to the editorials:

Since returning recently from an extensive trip through the Middle East, I have been disturbed by highly biased attacks on both me and President George Bush in editorials by Abe Rosenthal and William Safire.

Mr. Rosenthal insinuated (or stated) that I was a liar by commenting publicly on human rights abuses by the Israeli governing authorities in the West Bank and Gaza while not simultaneously making similar public criticisms of Syria. Mr. Safire wrote that President Bush, Secretary of State Baker, and their top associates are anti-Israel, have shut their eyes to Arab terrorism, are acting to prevent Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, attempt to cut aid to Israel, want to impose a PLO state in the occupied territories, support a divided Jerusalem, and are contributing to a possible pogrom or "death process" for Jews being retained in the Soviet Union.

In my travels I invariably address known human rights abuse in every country, almost always directly with the nation's leader. I did this forcefully in both Egypt and Syria before arriving in Israel. The particular problem which aroused my comments in Jerusalem, both to top government leaders and to the press, was a recent Israeli policy of deporting to Jordan the

cannot prove birth or residence in the area since it was occupied by Israeli military forces in 1967. There were 251 documented cases of this type. I gave the names of those about whom I knew personally to Prime Minister Shamir, and later discussed this issue with Shmuel Goren, who is in charge of civilian administration in the occupied territories. No one denied the accuracy of these reports. Mr. Goren informed me that they were changing this policy. At my urging, he stated further that the mothers and children already deported would be permitted to return home and rejoin their husbands and fathers. Within two hours I announced this positive decision at a press conference in the Tel Aviv airport. What would you have me do differently? What would your editors' policy be if an Arab leader was taking Jewish mothers and children away from their homes and husbands and forceably deporting them to a foreign country? Palestinians are human also, and their rights must be defended.

I am not authorized to speak for President Bush, but I was given a thorough briefing on his policies before my trip and later met with him, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Adviser after my return to give them a personal report. None of Mr. Safire's accusations are true. The President's budget proposal continues the allocation of approximately \$10 million daily in aid to Israel, and he certainly does not support Arab terrorism, imposing a PLO state on the West Bank and Jerusalem, or obstructing Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. Additionally, Safire stated that President Bush is the only president who threatened to cut aid to Israel and affirms a

statement by Yasir Arafat that this is the first administration that speaks of the end of the Israeli occupation. As a matter of historical record, President Richard Nixon used full economic persuasion to halt the Israeli military advance toward Cairo in 1973. Also, I notified Prime Minister Menachim Begin in 1978 that unless the ongoing Israeli invasion of Lebanon was stopped I would notify the U.S. Congress that American weapons were being used for offensive purposes, which would have terminated all military assistance from our country. The invasion stopped, and the forces were soon withdrawn. Furthermore, I worked assiduously to bring about an end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. In fact, this requirement is written into the Camp David accords, both in an affirmation of compliance with U.N. Resolution 242 and the words "the Israeli military government and its civilian administration will be withdrawn as soon as a self-governing authority has been freely elected by the inhabitants of those areas..." It is well known that this agreement was signed by Prime Minister Begin and later ratified by the Israeli Knesset.

I know for a fact that President Bush and Secretary Baker are fully committed to bring a just peace to the Middle East and to help in guaranteeing the security of Israel. Also, no one can deny my friendship and support for a peaceful and secure Israel or the persistent and successful effort I made to seek the freedom of Soviet Jews. The Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty and the 51,000 "refuseniks" who gained their freedom in 1979 alone are at least partial proof of the preceding statement. I did not

seek these goals to gain the approval of N.Y. TIMES editors, but out of deep conviction that I was defending the interests of my country and upholding its basic principles. At the same time, it is incumbent on you and other Americans to realize that U.S. leaders must be objective and fair as we work for peace and the enhancement of human rights even if, on occasion, such actions might displease a friendly nation like Israel or its impassioned supporters in this country.

copy to: President Bush, Secretary Baker