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Prime Minister

difficult. would you like to discuss with the Foreign Secretary?

A.F.C. 23/11

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 November, 1982

No difficulty at all (1)
I do not meet with
Lebanon. I do not meet

the P.A. - INLA -
I will not receive the
P.L.O. Tell our Arab friends
that if there were any terrorist
organisation in their countries I
at least would NOT receive
them. Tell them I expect to
maintain the status quo of the
Middle East. They will

Dear John,

Contacts with the PLO

HM Ambassador in Tunis has reported that the Secretary General of the Arab League has now formally asked whether the Prime Minister would be prepared to receive a PLO representative as part of the Arab League delegation who are due to call on her on 2 December. The Moroccan Minister of the Court, with whom we have been arranging the details of this visit, has also asked us to receive the full delegation as proposed at the Arab League Summit, including a PLO representative. King Hussein has urged HM Ambassador in Amman, in very strong terms, that we agree to receive the PLO representative, backing this up with a message to the Prime Minister. And Saudi Arabia has today made an equally strong plea to HM Ambassador in Jedda. I enclose Amman telnos 517-8 and Jedda telno 548. Arafat himself has told us that King Fahd and President Chadli have agreed that the delegation will not come if the PLO are/

No
No
No

not included (Algiers telno 286).

Our policy on contacts with the PLO has been carefully explained to the organisers of the Arab League visit at every stage. We had earlier reached the position where it was understood by all concerned that the PLO would not be included in the London visit, without our having to turn down flat an Arab League request. But this carefully constructed approach has now collapsed, and we can no longer dodge the direct question. The cancellation of the Arab League visit in public acrimony over the PLO is now a distinct possibility. It would be very damaging. There has been considerable public interest in the visit of the delegation and the Arabs would do their best to see to it that the blame fell entirely on us. They would no doubt make much of the comparison between ourselves and the French (M. Mitterrand received a full Arab League delegation, including Qaddhumi).

We see three possible ways of tackling this problem:

- (i) We could simply tell the Moroccans and the Arab League that there is no question of a PLO representative being received in present circumstances. If King Hassan and his colleagues have a strong enough wish to visit London, the Arab bluff might be called and the visit might go ahead as planned. One possibility in these circumstances would be that King Hassan might come by himself. But there would be a substantial outcry against us in the Arab world.

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(ii)



(ii) We could tell the Moroccans that we would be prepared to meet their belated request provided that the PLO made a satisfactory statement accepting Israel's rights and renouncing terrorism in advance of the visit. This would of course be in accordance with the position we have taken in recent years, in particular the attempt we made in 1981 to induce Yasser Arafat to make a satisfactory statement as the price for a meeting with Lord Carrington. One possibility would be to give the Moroccans a form of words to illustrate the kind of minimum statement we would need (example enclosed). This would help to ensure that the PLO did not make an unsatisfactory statement and then claim to have met our requirements. If the PLO agreed to make a statement on these lines it would of course be a major step forward. Our obligation would then be to accept a PLO representative (at Foreign Minister level or below) at the talks with the Prime Minister and presumably at the dinner she will be offering afterwards. It is of course much more likely that the PLO will fail to meet our conditions, which would leave us in a sound public position. We would emphasise that we remained interested in making a success of the visit and that we had made clear from the start that, in line with existing policy, the Prime Minister would not be able to receive a PLO Representative until crucial ambiguities in the PLO position had been cleared up.

(iii) We could tell the Moroccans that in the continuing absence of a satisfactory statement by the PLO about Israel's rights and the use of violence, there was obviously no question of the Prime Minister receiving a PLO representative, but that Mr Hurd would be ready to meet a PLO representative (presumably Khalid al Hassan, a senior and moderate adviser of Yasser Arafat, who is currently in London and expects to remain here for the delegation visit). This would be arranged strictly in an Arab League context to follow the pattern of the meeting earlier this year between Mr Hurd and Qaddhumi, who came as part of an Arab League delegation. That meeting did not cause particular controversy here. This would not of course meet the Arab League's direct request, but might just be enough of a sop to them to enable the rest of the visit to go ahead and to avoid the damaging consequences of a cancellation.

Of the above options Mr Pym does not believe that (i) is realistic in present circumstances. A decision simply to reject the PLO would damage our interests and our influence. Even our closest friends in the area, including King Hussein, think we are being too negative about the PLO, particularly since the PLO is in a state of flux at present and will shortly have to take important decisions which we should be trying to influence through contact with them. Mr Pym is conscious of the difficulties of (ii) but believes it to be entirely consistent with our existing policy.

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If, as is almost certain, the PLO cannot do what we ask, we are in a very good public and diplomatic position. (iii) would be less satisfactory but might be enough to hold the position. It would also help us to avoid the accusation that our policy on the PLO has actually gone backwards since the summer, at a time when the PLO appear more ready than before to look for a peaceful solution and when contact with them is therefore more than ever important.

For these reasons Mr Pym prefers option (ii).

Mr Pym would be grateful for the Prime Minister's views. He would be very happy to discuss this difficult problem with her before a decision is taken.

Yours ever

John Holmes

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Private Secretary

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Statement to be made by PLO Leadership

The PLO reaffirm that they want to see the Palestinian problem settled by political means. They are ready to take part in negotiations with all of the parties concerned on the basis of the principles set out in the communique issued by the Fez Summit.

The PLO wish to make clear that they interpret point 7 in the Fez Summit communique as meaning that if Israel is prepared to accept just Palestinian objectives as part of a negotiated settlement, the PLO will be ready to accept, also as part of such a settlement, that the rights of all states in the area, including both Israel and the Palestinian state, to live in peace and security must be assured.

The Palestinian people wish not to destroy others, but to live in peace with their neighbours. The PLO confirm that they are opposed to acts of terrorism anywhere in the world.