

SUBJECT.

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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 2298/82

GRS 752
CONFIDENTIAL
DESKBY 020630Z
FM FCO 012130Z DEC 82
TO IMMEDIATE JEDDA
TELEGRAM NUMBER 384 OF 1 DECEMBER
INFO IMMEDIATE RABAT, DAMASCUS, AMMAN, TUNIS, ALGIERS, WASHINGTON

ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION

1. PLEASE NOW PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO KING FAHD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

YOUR MAJESTY,

MAY I THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE, GIVEN BY CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH TO SIR JAMES CRAIG ON 28 NOVEMBER, EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT THE BRITISH POSITION AS REGARDS THE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION'S PROPOSED VISIT TO LONDON.

I THOUGHT I SHOULD LET YOU KNOW HOW DISAPPOINTED I AM THAT IT HAS NOT PROVED POSSIBLE FOR THE DELEGATION TO COME HERE THIS WEEK.

WHEN THE VISIT WAS FIRST PROPOSED, WE HAD A SERIES OF PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THEY RAISED, INFORMALLY, THE QUESTION OF PLO PARTICIPATION IN THE DELEGATION. WE EXPLAINED THE WELLKNOWN BRITISH POSITION ON HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS WITH THE PLO. AND WE WERE SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD THAT KING HASSAN WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE SIX FOREIGN MINISTERS AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ARAB LEAGUE. WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PLO REPRESENTATIVE, EVEN THOUGH OF COURSE WE KNEW THAT THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN THE ARAB PREFERENCE. WHEN DESPITE THIS A FORMAL REQUEST TO US TO AGREE TO PLO PARTICIPATION WAS PUT TO US LAST WEEK, SUPPORTED BY MESSAGES FROM YOUR MAJESTY AND FROM SOME OTHER ARAB LEADERS, WE WERE FACED WITH THE NEED TO SETTLE THE

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MATTER IN THE FEW DAYS REMAINING TO US. OUR PROPOSAL OF 26 NOVEMBER WAS INTENDED AS A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO BRIDGE THE GAP. THE SUGGESTION WAS NOT THAT THE ARAB SIDE SHOULD MAKE OR SIGN ANY STATEMENT, BUT THAT THE BRITISH SIDE SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO MAKE A STATEMENT ALONG THE LINES INDICATED.

AS REGARDS THE REFERENCE IN THE STATEMENT TO TERRORISM, WHICH HRH PRINCE SAUD DISCUSSED WITH SIR JAMES CRAIG, OUR PROPOSAL WAS THAT THE BRITISH STATEMENT SHOULD SAY THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE VISITING DELEGATION '(NEXT WORD UNDERLINED) CONFIRM THEIR REJECTION OF TERRORISM'. I AM OF COURSE AWARE THAT THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN 1981 INCLUDE A FORM OF WORDS CONDEMNING TERRORISM. STILL MORE IMPORTANT, I AM AWARE OF YOUR MAJESTY'S RESOLUTE OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM, OF WHICH SAUDI ARABI, LIKE SO MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, HAS SOMETIMES BEEN THE TARGET. IT WOULD BE VALUABLE IF THE PLO, IN ASSOCIATION WITH ARAB GOVERNMENTS COULD REAFFIRM ITS CATEGORIC CONDEMNATION, AND THE PROPOSAL WE MADE WAS INTENDED SIMPLY TO ACHIEVE THAT PURPOSE, THEREBY DESTROYING ONE OF THE ARGUMENTS MOST FREQUENTLY USED TO DISCREDIT THE PLO AND THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE.

THE BRITISH POSITION IS NOT MEANT TO BE RESTRICTIVE OR NEGATIVE. THE SOONER ALL THE PARTIES TO THE ARAB-ISRAEL DISPUTE AND THOSE WHO WISH TO HELP THEM CAN SIT DOWN TOGETHER AND DISCUSS THE NEXT STEPS WITHIN A REALISTIC AND POSITIVE FRAMEWORK, THE SOONER THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WILL BE PUT IN A POSITION TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. I DO NOT THINK THAT A CHANGE IN BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE PLO, IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY CLEAR STEP FORWARD BY THEM, AT LEAST A CONDITIONAL MOVE, WILL HELP TO BRING THIS ABOUT. OUR POSITION ON CONTACTS WITH THE PLO, WHICH IS WHOLLY CONSISTENT WITH THE VENICE DECLARATION, AIMS TO UNDERLINE OUR CONVICTION THAT PLO ACCEPTANCE IN PRINCIPLE OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST IN PEACE AND SECURITY, IF ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT LEGITIMATE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, IS A NECESSARY STEP IF THERE ARE TO BE REALISTIC NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE PALESTINIANS. WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS VITAL FOR BOTH SIDES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS NEGOTIATIONS: AND INEVITABLY THIS WILL MEAN BOTH SIDES HAVING TO COMPROMISE ON

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THEIR MAXIMUM DEMANDS.

I AM SADDENED THAT THIS MISUNDERSTANDING SHOULD HAVE ARISEN, FOR I BELIEVE THERE IS A BROAD AREA OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN US ON MANY OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. I HOPE A WAY CAN BE FOUND, CONSISTENT WITH THE PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES OF OURSELVES AND THE ARAB PEOPLES, FOR THE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION TO COME TO LONDON AND FOR US TO HAVE THE PLEASURE OF RECEIVING THEM, I SHOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOU IN ANY EVENT THAT WE SHALL CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE A PART AS WE CAN IN THE SEARCH FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE. WE HAVE FOR EXAMPLE BEEN PRESSING THE AMERICANS HARD ON THE URGENT NEED FOR ISREAL TO IMPLEMENT THE SETTLEMENTS FREEZE PROPOSED BY PRESIDENT REAGAN. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT I ATTACH THE GREATEST POSSIBLE IMPORTANCE TO HAVING THE VIEWS OF YOUR MAJESTY ON THIS AND OTHER MATTERS OF SUCH CONCERN TO BOTH OUR COUNTRIES.

PYM

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PM.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 December, 1982.

BF (cels)

Cancellation of Arab League Delegation Visit

Thank you for your letter of 30 November in which, inter alia, you propose that the Prime Minister should send messages to King Hussein and King Fahd about the visit by the Arab League Delegation.

As I told you on the telephone yesterday, the Prime Minister has approved slightly amended versions of the two messages, which can now be despatched. I enclose the amended texts.

A. J. COLES

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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MESSAGE TO KING HUSSEIN

Your Majesty,

I was grateful for your message sent through Mr. Urwick on 22 November and warmly reciprocate your good wishes. I should be delighted if it were possible for us to meet soon: there is a great deal to discuss on which I should much value your wise counsel.

I considered your message very seriously. The sooner all the parties concerned with the Palestinian problem and those who wish to help them towards peace can sit down together and discuss the next steps within a realistic and positive framework, the sooner the Palestinian people will be released from their ordeals and able to fulfil their right to self-determination. You know from my message of 22 October how much I hope that the American proposals, and your courageous and forthright response to them, will lead to progress. But I do not think that a change in British policy in favour of the PLO, in the absence of any clear move forward by them, will help to bring this about. You yourself have been urging the PLO to make clear their acceptance in principle of Israel's right to exist in peace and security and my earlier message fully supported you in this. I remain convinced that it is an absolutely necessary step if there are to be realistic negotiations on the future of the Palestinians, just as it is necessary that Israel accepts the rights of the Palestinians.

The British position on contacts with PLO, with which our Arab friends are familiar, aims to underline the importance of this step, and is wholly consistent with the Venice Declaration and the European statements which have followed it. I believe it is your own view that the PLO must not be encouraged in the illusion that their maximum demands are negotiable. I fear that

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the news from the recent PLO Central Committee meeting in Damascus is not encouraging. And I cannot see that the latest change in the French approach, for instance, has achieved any progress towards peace. The principles on which our policy is based are intended to be helpful to the cause of Palestinian self-determination. As you know, we have been pressing the Americans hard on the urgent need for Israel to implement the settlement freeze.

I very much regret that the Arab League Delegation will not now be coming to London this week. Only a few days ago it seemed that we had an understanding about its composition that kept apart the procedural and substantive issues. The proposal which we put forward when the formal request for PLO participation was made at a late stage was intended to be constructive. If the PLO were to make or agree to a statement on the lines we suggested, it would go a long way towards silencing those who constantly seek to discredit the Palestinians and their legitimate rights. I am sad that misunderstandings have arisen, and trust they will soon be resolved. The British Government remains firmly committed to helping the search for peace, and to encouraging a positive response to the opportunities that have recently opened up. I hope a way can still be found, consistent with the principles and policies of both ourselves and the Arab countries, for the Arab League delegation to come to London and be appropriately received. I sincerely hope we can continue to work closely with each other in pursuit of our common goals.

MARGARET THATCHER

MESSAGE TO KING FAHD

Your Majesty,

May I thank you for your message, given by Crown Prince Abdullah to Sir James Craig on 28 November, expressing concern about the British position as regards the Arab League delegation's proposed visit to London.

I thought I should let you know how disappointed I am that it has not proved possible for the Delegation to come here this week.

When the visit was first proposed, we had a series of preliminary discussions with the Moroccan Government in which they raised, informally, the question of PLO participation in the Delegation. We explained the well-known British position on high-level contacts with the PLO. And we were subsequently told that King Hassan would be accompanied by the six Foreign Ministers and the Secretary General of the Arab League. We understood that there would be no PLO representative, even though of course we knew that this would have been the Arab preference. When despite this a formal request to us to agree to PLO participation was put to us last week, supported by messages from Your Majesty and from some other Arab leaders, we were faced with the need to settle the matter in the few days remaining to us. Our proposal of 26 November was intended as a positive and constructive response to bridge the gap. The suggestion was not that the Arab side should make or sign any statement, but that the British side should be in a position to make a statement along the lines indicated.

As regards the reference in the statement to terrorism, which HRH Prince Saud discussed with Sir James Craig, our proposal was that the British statement should say that the members of the visiting delegation 'confirm their rejection of terrorism'. I am of course aware that the resolutions of the

/ Palestine

Palestine National Council held in 1981 include a form of words condemning terrorism. Still more important, I am aware of Your Majesty's resolute opposition to terrorism, of which Saudi Arabia, like so many other countries, has sometimes been the target. It would be valuable if the PLO, in association with Arab Governments, could reaffirm its categoric condemnation, and the proposal we made was intended simply to achieve that purpose, thereby destroying one of the arguments most frequently used to discredit the PLO and the Palestinian cause.

The British position is not meant to be restrictive or negative. The sooner all the parties to the Arab-Israel dispute and those who wish to help them can sit down together and discuss the next steps within a realistic and positive framework, the sooner the Palestinian people will be put in a position to exercise their right of self-determination. I do not think that a change in British policy towards the PLO, in the absence of any clear step forward by them, at least a conditional move, will help to bring this about. Our position on contacts with the PLO, which is wholly consistent with the Venice Declaration, aims to underline our conviction that PLO acceptance in principle of Israel's right to exist in peace and security, if Israel is prepared to accept legitimate Palestinian rights, is a necessary step if there are to be realistic negotiations on the future of the Palestinians. We believe that it is vital for both sides to take advantage of the present opportunities for making progress towards negotiations; and inevitably this will mean both sides having to compromise on their maximum demands.

I am saddened that this misunderstanding should have arisen, for I believe there is a broad area of agreement between us on many other aspects of the Palestinian problem. I hope a way can be found, consistent with the principles and policies of ourselves and the Arab peoples, for the Arab League Delegation to come to London and for us to have the pleasure of receiving them.

I should like to assure you in any event that we shall continue to play as active a part as we can in the search for a just and lasting peace. We have for example been pressing the Americans hard on the urgent need for Israel to implement the settlements freeze proposed by President Reagan. It goes without saying that I attach the greatest possible importance to having the views of Your Majesty on this and other matters of such concern to both our countries.

MARGARET THATCHER



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

I think it is important to put our position clearly to Jordan and Saudi Arabia (I mind much less about Morocco).

2. Agree to send these messages to King Hussein and King Fahd?

30 November, 1982

Dear John,

A.S.C. $\frac{30}{11}$

*Dr. J. Pym
Yes Mr. amended*

Cancellation of Arab League Delegation Visit

The Moroccans have now confirmed officially that the Arab League delegation will not be coming to London this week. As you will have seen from the note I sent you for the Prime Minister's meeting with a group of MPs on 29 November, the UK is currently the subject of widespread criticism in the Arab world; and it will be necessary to make a robust defence of our position. I enclose / a draft message from the Prime Minister to King Hussein in response / to the King's message (Amman telno 518 enclosed) and a draft / message to King Fahd, who communicated his reaction to our proposal / through Crown Prince Abdullah in Riyadh (Riyadh telno 69 enclosed).

We are considering how best to respond to the unfriendly / message from the Moroccans (Rabat telno 474 enclosed). This can be handled more slowly.

The cancellation of the visit has not so far received much press coverage in this country, although there have already been critical comments in the Arab press and these are likely to grow and attract attention here. We have taken the line in public that the formal request to include a PLO representative was made late; that we considered it seriously; and that on 26 November we made / a proposal to the members of the delegation, which if accepted would have meant that they could all be received in London, and that the search for a peaceful settlement would have been taken a step further. We are adding that we remain in touch with the parties concerned.

The draft statement which we put to the Arab side has not so far been published by the Arabs. Mr Pym believes that it is in our interest not to release it ourselves unless we are forced to do so by inaccurate leaks from the Arabs.

Yours ever

John Holmes

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

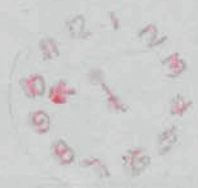
(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 1AA



30 NOV 1982



CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT MESSAGE TO KING HUSSEIN

Your Majesty:

I was grateful for your message sent through Mr Urwick on 22 November and warmly reciprocate your good wishes. I should be delighted if it were possible for us to meet soon: there is a great deal to discuss on which I should much value your wise counsel.

I considered your message very seriously. The sooner all the parties concerned with the Palestinian problem and those who wish to help them towards peace can sit down together and discuss the next steps within a realistic and positive framework, the sooner the Palestinian people will be released from their ordeals and able to fulfil their right to self-determination. You know from my message of 22 October how much I hope that the American proposals, and your courageous and forthright response to them, will lead to progress. But I do not think that a change in British policy in favour of the PLO, in the absence of any clear move forward by them, will help to bring this about. You yourself have been urging the PLO to make clear their acceptance in principle of Israel's right to exist in peace and security and my earlier message fully supported you in this. I remain convinced that it is an absolutely necessary step if there are to be realistic negotiations on the future of the Palestinians, just as it is necessary that Israel accepts the rights of the Palestinians. (What we were talking about was of course a conditional move if Israel accepted Palestinian rights.) // *our final*

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importance of this step, and is wholly consistent with the Venice Declaration and the European statements which have followed it. I believe it is ~~your~~ your own view that the PLO must not be encouraged in the illusion that their maximum demands are negotiable. I fear that the news from the recent PLO Central Committee meeting in Damascus is not encouraging. And I cannot see that the latest change in the French approach, for instance, has achieved any progress towards peace. ~~If the Arabs are interested in British involvement in this issue, then I hope it can be appreciated that the~~

~~The~~ principles on which our policy is based are ~~constructive, and indeed~~ intended to be helpful to the cause of Palestinian self-determination. As you know, we have been pressing the Americans hard on the urgent need for Israel to implement the settlement freeze.

I very much regret that the Arab League Delegation will not now be coming to London this week. Only a few days ago it seemed that we had an understanding about its composition that kept apart the procedural and substantive issues. The proposal which we put forward when the formal request for PLO participation was made at a late stage was intended to be constructive: ~~of course we meant no affront to the Arab world or its leaders.~~ If the PLO were to make or agree to a statement on the lines we suggested, it would go a long way towards silencing those who constantly seek to discredit the Palestinians and their legitimate rights. ~~But our guiding principle continues to be~~

/the

~~the realistic possibility of progress towards satisfactory~~
~~arrangements for both Israel and the Palestinians.~~ Like
 you, I fear that these recent exchanges have not helped
 that course. I should like to reaffirm, however, that

MP
I am sad that any misunderstanding has
arisen and trust this will soon be resolved

The British Government remains firmly committed to
 helping in the search for peace, and specifically to
 encouraging a positive response to the opportunities that
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if Israel is prepared to accept legitimate Palestinian rights, is a necessary step if there are to be realistic negotiations on the future of the Palestinians. We believe that it is vital for both sides to take advantage of the present opportunities for making progress towards negotiations; and inevitably this will mean both sides having to compromise on their maximum demands.

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Have the

pleasure of receiving them

for us to