

Weekend Box.

(2)



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Background on the PLO. The formulation in the last para looks to be on the right lines tho' the words are not quite yours.

20 March 1980

Dear Michael,

Phms 2/3

This analysis just doesn't stand up. It is riddled with inconsistencies.

It may be useful for me to explain some of the background to Lord Carrington's answer in the House of Lords to Lord Byers' question on the PLO and terrorism (copy attached).

We have consistently taken the line that it would be wrong to dismiss the PLO as simply a 'terrorist organisation' but that it should instead be described as a political umbrella organisation containing within it many people who wish to achieve their ends by non-violent means as well as avowedly terrorist groups. Lord Carrington's reply to Lord Byers on 17 March was the first time this Government have taken the line in Parliament. But we have followed it in correspondence and diplomatic exchanges. In our view it is realistic.

The historical background is that the PLO's Covenant (the latest version of which dates from 1968) stipulates that armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine; 'Palestine' includes, in this sense, the whole of the area occupied by Israel. But there has been a gradual move since 1968 away from terrorism and towards acceptance of a negotiated settlement. In practice, the PLO leadership no longer support international terrorism but still endorse violence against targets in Israel. Nor has the PLO formally renounced its claim to the whole of Palestine, including Israel. But the leadership speak increasingly of a compromise settlement. For example, in London last year Khalid al-Hassan (a leading PLO moderate) said that the Palestinians were prepared to accept an independent state in only part of Palestine and would not thereafter use force, provided they were not required to give up their democratic right to strive for the unity of the whole of Palestine by political means. Although the PLO leaders still revert to their old line about the destruction of Israel (the attached quotation of Arafat in a Venezuelan paper is the worst we have seen for a long time though we understand the PLO have denied that Arafat was reported correctly) the main thrust of their policy is increasingly to use diplomatic and political means to achieve its ends, and the PLO is of course present with observer and other status at the majority of relevant UN or related meetings.

Dawson's field?

R. Byers doesn't accept it's real

(I attach one version of the Serial Phms)

Nevertheless, the political leadership have only limited control of some of the groups within the PLO umbrella. Some continue to be involved in terrorist activities. Mr Bourguiba Jnr, in his recent discussion with the Prime Minister, implied that these

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groups represent the PLO as a whole. This is not the case; the most notorious of the Palestinian extremist groups involved in international terrorism are not part of the PLO and some of their activities are actually directed against the mainstream PLO leadership (eg the assassination by an Iraqi-backed Palestinian group of the PLO representative in London in January 1978). As the Prime Minister is aware, the PLO assured us last autumn that it has no links with the Irish Republican Army, and since then we have had no evidence of any contacts between them.

There is a further consideration. The PLO in Lebanon constitutes something close to a state within a state and has its own army, as do the other parties in the civil conflict, such as the Christian militias. Lebanon has also served the PLO as a base for attacks on Israel. But for the last two years the PLO has been very much on the defensive throughout Lebanon.

The more the PLO leadership move away from terrorism and towards negotiation and compromise, the better the chances of peace. With the rest of the Nine, we have urged this course upon them. The PLO are indispensable to a negotiated settlement but their unequivocal commitment to the principle of Israel's right to exist must come first. We cannot expect to influence them to undertake such a commitment (which the US sought from them indirectly in 1977) unless, together with the rest of the Nine, we continue to emphasize that we see them as an essential factor in the equation and not accept them at the Israeli estimation as nothing more than a "bunch of terrorists".

Because of the ambiguity of the PLO position, the Prime Minister might nevertheless prefer to use in future a slightly modified formulation of Lord Carrington's point.

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committed by its covenant to armed struggle and it

'The PLO is a political movement, but one which continues to give cover to some terrorist activities. Although it is committed by its Covenant to armed struggle, the PLO *Rank 16* has increasingly come to use political rather than violent means to achieve its goals. We welcome this trend and urge the PLO to abandon violence and accept the principle of a negotiated peace with Israel.'

Tom
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JGK

(G G H Walden)

[Lord Janner.]
destroy Israel whatever happens and no matter how long it takes? Surely, the statements which are being made day by day in respect of the PLO are encouraging the PLO in this kind of action, even though expressions are used to say that we will wait until they recognise Israel? Surely, the line of action which is being taken by us and, with our guidance, by the EEC, is, with the greatest respect to the noble Lord, encouraging the PLO to make the kind of statement which, as I said before, only last February declared categorically that it will not rest until Israel is destroyed by violence? Surely one cannot expect Israel to accept a situation like that.

Lord CARRINGTON: My Lords, I do not believe—and I repeat this—that peace is possible in the Middle East until such time as the Palestinians and the PLO recognise the State of Israel; nor do I believe it is possible until the Israelis recognise the rights of the Palestinians. I simply do not believe that one can ignore the PLO in this question. I would only say about the speeches to which the noble Lord referred that, if one looks objectively at what has been said on both sides about this issue in the Middle East, one sees that there have been some incautious remarks on both sides.

Lord SHINWELL: My Lords, is the Foreign Secretary aware that I have never at any time condemned the PLO because of its existence? I recognise that it is a fact of life. On the other hand, I object to its primary objective. I am not at all satisfied that either the Foreign Secretary in his recent declaration about the Middle East or the attitude of some members of the EEC, are satisfactory in the sense of recognising, definitely and emphatically and without any qualifications, the right of the State of Israel to exist in that area and not to be constantly under threat. Could I obtain from the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary, an explicit statement that, so far as he and Her Majesty's Government are concerned, they will not agree to any change in the situation as long as it appears to impinge upon the sovereignty of the State of Israel?

Lord CARRINGTON: My Lords, if the intention of the PLO is the destruction of the State of Israel, I condemn that, also.

I think that I have made abundantly plain the position of Her Majesty's Government, which is an even-handed one as between one and the other in the hope that, if there is good sense on both sides, a settlement is possible.

Lord BYERS: My Lords, may I ask the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary whether he sees a difference between the PLO and the Palestinian problem? Will he say—Yes or No—whether he regards the PLO as a terrorist organisation?

Lord CARRINGTON: No, my Lords, I do not think that the PLO, as such, is a terrorist organisation. There are some elements of the PLO which in the past have been associated with the terrorists; but it would be a great mistake to assume that it is possible to get a settlement in the area without taking into account the PLO.

Baroness GAITSKELL: My Lords may I ask the Foreign Secretary a supplementary question following on the recent one? Is he not aware that when I was in the United Nations a couple of years ago I heard Yasser Arafat, when asked on New York television after his spectacular début in the General Assembly, whether he wanted to destroy the State of Israel, say, "This is the first step"? Has he retracted that remark? He was definitely asked, "Are you out to destroy the State of Israel?" He said, "Yes, this is the first step". Has he retracted?

Lord CARRINGTON: My Lords, I am not aware of that. If that is the object of the PLO, then I condemn it.

Lord WIGG: My Lords, would the Foreign Secretary be embarrassed if I said that I wholeheartedly endorsed the policy which he is following?—that of holding a balance between Israel on the one hand and the PLO on the other. Both must exist. Will he bear in mind when he is under constant pressure from Israel, and from Israel's supporters, that there would have been no Israel but for the valour of British troops who fought on the plains of Mesopotamia and in Palestine and who broke the power of the Ottoman Empire; and at the time of the second battle of Gaza, there were not six Jewish settlements in Palestine? Is he further aware of the fact that this country has enfeebled itself, its influence has been

reduced, it destroyed, sovereignty of the Middle East but on Foreign Secretary change has successive British a Labour Government succumbing Israel's support less of the ir

Lord CAI hope that He keeping a be Certainly, w/ afternoon is 1 with good 1 could settle 1 this will be e if the Pales State of Israe that the Pal then there is, bility of a se

Lord SEG Foreign Secre tion of execu PLO might we régime of th Iran; and is n quite enough t

Lord CARR seem to be crc we come to the

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2.57 p.m.

Read 3^a, with

Clause 3 [Pr Director of pos: tice]:

Lord TREFO ment No. 1:

Page 4, line 43, in this subsection from proceeding w/ notwithstanding th the same matters.")

The noble Lord's noticed—admitte

ARAFAT TO EL MUNDO (VENEZUELA) 11-2-80

WE DO NOT MIND DYING. I HAVE MARRIED A WOMAN - HER NAME IS PALESTINE. PEACE FOR US MEANS THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL. WE ARE PREPARING FOR AN ALL-OUT WAR, A WAR WHICH WILL LAST FOR GENERATIONS. SINCE JANUARY 65 WHEN THE FATAH WAS BORN, WE HAVE BECOME THE MOST DANGEROUS ENEMIES THAT ISRAEL HAS.

WE SHALL NOT REST UNTIL THE DAY WHEN WE RETURN TO OUR HOME, AND UNTIL WE DESTROY ISRAEL. THE UNITY OF THE ARAB WORLD WILL MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL IS THE GOAL OF OUR STRUGGLE, AND THE GUIDELINES OF THAT STRUGGLE HAVE REMAINED FIRM SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FATAH IN 1965 (THEY ARE):

1. REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE IS THE ONLY MEANS FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE LAND OF OUR FATHERS.
2. THE GOAL OF THIS VIOLENCE IS THE DESTRUCTION OF ZIONISM IN ALL ITS POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY FORMS AND ITS EXPULSION FROM PALESTINE.
3. OUR REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY MUST REMAIN INDEPENDENT OF ANY PARTY OR STATE CONTROL .
4. THIS ACTION WILL BE ONE OF LONG DURATION. WE KNOW THAT THE INTENT OF SOME OF THE ARAB LEADERS IS TO SOLVE THE CONFLICT BY PEACEFUL MEANS. WHEN THIS OCCURS- WE SHALL OPPOSE IT.

20 MAR 1960



Extract from an interview published in Le Figaro of Thursday, 13th March 1980 in which Yasser Arafat was interviewed at Beirut by Marianne Lohse, the paper's Special Correspondent

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Question

Since you spoke of the "bloodthirsty" Begin, there is an essential point that I wish to clear up with you. The Israeli press accuses you of having declared, in an interview on 11th February last, with a Caracas newspaper: "Peace for us signifies the destruction of Israel" and your National Charter also speaks of destruction. What is the position?

Reply

It is an interview that I gave to the paper "The Third World" and you have just heard the tape recording of it. Hence you can testify that I never said that.

What was published at Caracas was an interview entirely fabricated, entirely falsified. As for the Charter, have you even read it yourself?