

PREM19

86

ISRAEL

(Farewell call by Israeli
Ambassador, July 1979)

Confidential Filing

The Israeli Ambassador, Mr Kidron's
farewell call on the Prime Minister.

ISRAEL

July 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
11.7.79 24.7.79							
PREM 19/86							



CONFIDENTIAL

Israel of PLO
Middle East: Sit
May 79
Rhodena Fit Pt. 3

THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER IN
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON 24 JULY 1979 AT 1600

The Israeli Ambassador, Mr. Kidron, called on the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on 24 July to say goodbye.

Mr. Kidron told the Prime Minister that he was deeply concerned by current developments in Washington and hoped that the West would soon find strong leadership: the present situation, if prolonged, could seriously harm both the West and Israel. Mr. Kidron said that if oil prices were to run riot, the West might be confronted with political demands by the oil producers which could be very damaging to Israeli interests. He had been disturbed by the recent EEC Statement on the Middle East. The peace which had been achieved between Israel and Egypt was a delicate plant. The issue of the settlements should be viewed in proportion and the Western media were inclined to exaggerate it.

Mr. Kidron condemned Dr. Kreisky for inviting Yassar Arafat to meet him in Vienna. He warmly commended M. Mendes-France, who had refused to attend the meeting when Yassar Arafat declined to return affirmative answers to three questions: did Israel have the right to exist, would he accept Resolution 242 as the basis for negotiations and would he abandon the tactic of terrorism?

Mr. Kidron said that he very much hoped that the UK would not always blindly follow the French line; it had to be recalled that France had initially rejected President Sadat's initiative. If the UK would give a lead in Europe on Middle East matters, the Dutch and the Danes would certainly follow it.

The Prime Minister commented that President Sadat was now out on a limb. Mr. Kidron agreed and said that if the financial help from the West which Sadat was expecting were not forthcoming, he would be in a very dangerous situation. It was important that the Palestinians should be brought into the current round of negotiations but the PLO was exerting pressure on them to refrain from coming forward and they were scared.

CONFIDENTIAL

/In a short

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

In a short discussion of Rhodesia, Mr. Kidron told the Prime Minister that Mr. Sithole had called on him on 20 July. He had said that he had refrained from joining Bishop Muzorewa's government because he wished to expose the falsification of the April election results. He nevertheless still supported the internal settlement and would join the government eventually; he had already been offered a choice between three Ministerial portfolios. His contacts with the Israeli Embassy had been in the context of an earlier Israeli offer to accept black Rhodesians for agricultural training.

The Prime Minister wished Mr. Kidron well in his next post, Canberra.

BW

Distribution

Private Secretary to Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary

24 July 1979

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 July 1979

Dear Sir

Israel Ambassador's Farewell Call on
the Prime Minister: 24 July 1979

A distorted report has appeared in a Beirut publication of a recent meeting between HM Ambassador in Beirut and Yasser Arafat. Mr Kidron is likely to raise the subject when he meets the Prime Minister. A short defensive note is attached.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

[Signature]

P Lever

B G Cartledge Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

ISRAEL AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER
ON 24 JULY

POINTS TO MAKE

1. HM Ambassador met Mr Arafat at a social occasion in Beirut. Nothing particularly novel about such an encounter. Press accounts of their conversation incorrect. Our policy towards the PLO has not changed; and in the special conditions of Beirut, the Ambassador there has had occasional contacts with the PLO at all levels.

BACKGROUND

2. At a dinner on 15 July, the (Saudi Arabian) host asked Mr Strachan whether he wished to meet Yasser Arafat in circumstances in which to refuse would have been a direct snub. The subsequent conversation covered Lebanon and Arab/Israel but broke little new ground. An English Language weekly based in Beirut, Middle East Reporter, has now published a highly coloured account which suggests that Mr Strachan deliberately sought the meeting and during it endorsed the concept of an independent Palestinian state. Ever since the Lebanese civil war of 1975/76 the PLO have controlled the area of Beirut in which the Embassy is situated and the Embassy depends on the PLO for its safety.

3. The Ambassador in Beirut has been authorised to meet representatives of the PLO, occasionally and discreetly (as has the Ambassador in Damascus). The Israelis are aware of this. The meeting with Arafat, while unusual, is not a new departure (Mr Strachan's predecessor met him on one occasion. British government ministers have never met PLO representatives, principally because of the PLO's continued reluctance to accept explicitly Israel's right to exist).

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 July 1979

Dear Bryan,

ISRAELI AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL ON THE
PRIME MINISTER ON 24 JULY

--- I enclose a brief and a personality
note for the Israeli Ambassador's farewell
call on the Prime Minister. This will pre-
sumably not be an occasion for substantive
discussion but there are one or two bilateral
issues which Mr Kidron might raise. Defensive
briefing on these is therefore included.

Yours etc

Paul

(P Lever)

B G Cartledge Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

FAREWELL CALL BY THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, MR KIDRON, ON THE PRIME
MINISTER ON 24 JULY

Points to Make

1. Britain's commitment to Israel's survival and well-being remains firm. But obligation to re-emphasize our opposition to settlement of the occupied territories and continued interference in South Lebanon. Hope that Israel will allow genuine autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza. Further progress towards a comprehensive settlement vital.

DEFENSIVE POINTS

2. Sale of Chieftain Tanks to Jordan

Do not believe this sale will alter the military balance. Tanks would not pass out of Jordan's control. Not a precedent for sales elsewhere in the area.

3. EL AL Security

No question of HMG's responsibility for security of El Al crews, but El Al must follow police advice. Hope Israeli Government will urge El Al to comply.

4. North Sea Oil for Israel

Given current world supply difficulties Britain's first obligation is to our EEC and IEA partners. Expect companies exporting North Sea crude oil to do so in those markets. /If South Africa is raised/ North Sea oil cannot be exported to South Africa for same reason. BP and Shell meet contractual obligations from elsewhere.

5. EEC/Israel

UK has consistently urged the Community to respond generously to the Israeli request for improvements in the citrus tariff. But limit to what is negotiable within the Community, given French and Italian opposition. NO link between this question and tariff discrimination against new members of Community which urge Israel to end without delay.

Essential Facts

1. Mr Kidron will leave London on 31 July after just over two years as Ambassador in London. This short period of appointment reflects the fact that Kidron has not enjoyed the confidence of Mr Begin's Government (he was appointed by the previous Labour Government) and, although he has enjoyed unprecedented popularity with the Jewish community in Britain, his appointment as Ambassador to Canberra amounts effectively to a demotion. Mr Kidron is to be succeeded by Mr Shlomo Argov at present Israeli Ambassador to the Hague.

Arab/Israel

2. The fourth session of the autonomy negotiations, attended by the US chief negotiator Robert Strauss, resulted in agreement on establishment of two working groups, on the modalities for establishing the self-governing authority and the definition of its powers. The atmosphere remains reasonably constructive but the fundamental differences remain.

3. The meeting between Mr Begin and President Sadat on 10-11 July passed off amicably, but produced little new. The two men agreed to differ on Israeli policy over settlements and South Lebanon. President Sadat appears determined not to upset the Israelis at this stage and confident of his own ability to break the deadlock in the autonomy negotiations when he chooses. For their part, the Israelis will have been pleased that President Sadat continues to be less vocal in criticising Israeli policy than the West. They will see this as vindication for their decisions to continue expanding the settlements and to strike at the Palestinians in Lebanon when and where /they

they see fit, and will be less inclined to listen to Western arguments that these actions could jeopardize the treaty and undermine President Sadat's position.

Sale of Chieftain Tanks to Jordan

4. The Israeli Government has heard of HMG's decision in June to allow negotiations for the sale of 274 Shir I tanks to Jordan. The Israeli Minister of Defence, Mr Weizmann, summoned HM Ambassador in Tel Aviv on 9 July and spoke of his deep concern and displeasure that the UK were proposing qualitatively to strengthen the Jordanian army by the supply of Chieftain tanks. He feared the tanks might be used, with Syrian and Iraqi forces to menace Israeli security. But he did not ask for the decision to be reconsidered. HM Ambassador replied on the lines of the attached speaking note.

EL Al Security

5. Since the incident in August 1978 when Palestinian terrorists attacked an El Al crew bus outside the Europa Hotel the police have been trying to persuade El Al crews to take precautions against further incidents, principally by staying at hotels at the airport and by not wearing uniforms into central London. El Al have declined to comply arguing that the security of their crews is HMG's responsibility. The police have eventually told El Al that they can no longer provide armed escorts for crews travelling into London or permanent armed guards at the hotel. At the Home Secretary's suggestion Lord Carrington has, in order to protect our position, instructed HM Ambassador Tel Aviv to approach the Israeli Government again to ask them to urge El Al to comply with our requirements.

Supply of North Sea Oil to Israel

6. The Israelis have approached HMG at intervals over the last 3 years seeking supply of North Sea Oil. Mr Begin raised subject with Mr Callaghan in December 1977 but did not raise it on his last visit to the UK on 23 May. HMG have avoided any firm commitment to supply.

7. Before the revolution, Iran supplied 60% of Israel's crude oil needs (about 150,000 bd). This supply is now cut off. The US signed a 15 year agreement to supply Israel if latter unable to obtain adequate supplies from elsewhere. Quantity Israel wants from UK is modest (100,000 tons a year). Motives are as much to obtain political commitment as to diversify sources of supply.

8. Neither BP nor Shell, hard hit by Iran, can accept new customers (or would risk their Arab interests by supplying Israel). BNOC fully committed till 1980. Government guideline on exports of North Sea Oil to IEA/EEC markets effectively rules out direct supply to Israel. Moreover, a contractual commitment to supply would expose UK to real risk of Arab retaliation against our economic interests.

Oil Supply to South Africa

9. When he called on Mr Hurd on 21 May, Israeli Ambassador contrasted UK refusal to sell North Sea oil to Israel with fact that "we were selling oil to South Africa". Unwise to embark upon detailed rebuttal, but facts are:-

a) Export of North Sea oil to South Africa is precluded by Government guideline, reaffirmed on 24 May, that companies export

North Sea oil only to IEA/EEC markets.

b) Shell and BP jointly own Durban Refinery. Contractual obligation to supply their South African subsidiary. But neither Shell nor BP supply North Sea oil.

c) Government did not object to swap arrangement whereby BP intend to export North Sea oil to IEA or EEC destinations in exchange for non-embargoed third country crude for supply to BP's South African subsidiary.

Israel/EEC

Citrus

10. Israeli citrus exports enjoy 60% tariff reduction under 1975 EEC/Israel Agreement. At the time of the Agreement EEC undertook to "consider" further improvements in citrus tariff as part of a review to be held after beginning of 1970. In this context Israel is now asking for an 80% tariff reduction. UK has consistently supported this while France and Italy have opposed it.

Tariff Discrimination

11. Israel grants all EEC Member States the same degree of tariff preference as agreed in the 1975 Agreement but discriminates between the original Six and the Three newer Members by using the levels of tariffs in force for each in 1975 as the baseline for its calculations ie it uses one base line for the Six and another higher base line for the Three. All legal advice both to the UK Government and to the EEC Commission is that this discrimination is illegal.

12. Among her requests for improvements under the current review of the Agreement, Israel has asked for a two-year postponement (from 1985 to 1987) of full tariff reductions on Israeli imports from the Community with a consequential postponement in the staging of the reductions. Although the UK can agree to the substance of this request, we have made our agreement conditional on the ending of Israeli tariff discrimination. Nonetheless, in the absence of progress on the review negotiations by 1 July, when the Israelis were due to reduce their 1975 tariff levels by a further 10%, the UK agreed to a Commission proposal to "stop the clock" for three months, but only on the clear understanding that, if at the end of the period Israel had not ended tariff discrimination, the Community would insist on immediate implementation of the next stage of tariff dismantlement.

13. A personality note on Mr Kidron is attached.

KIDRON, Avraham

Ambassador to London since 1977

Born 1919 in Poland.

Came to Israel from Germany at age 15, and spent three years on a kibbutz. 1938-43 served in the Mandate Police. 1943-45 in the Censorship Department of the Mandate Government. 1945-47 studied at Hebrew University (history and international relations). 1945-49 in the Hagana, and then a Captain in the IDF. 1949-54 served in the Prime Minister's Office, and as an adviser in the Foreign Ministry on Middle East affairs. 1954-6 Consul in Cyprus. 1956-7 Foreign Minister adviser to the Military Government in Gaza. 1957-9 First Secretary (Press) in London. 1959-63 Director of Research in MFA. 1963-5 Minister, Belgrade. 1965-67 Ambassador, Manila. 1968-73 Assistant Director-General (Administration) and then Assistant Director-General. Director-General 1973-76. Ambassador to the Netherlands 1976-7.

A man of distinguished presence and a clear, incisive mind, he is rather more reserved than many senior Israeli officials; and was perhaps rather too dispassionate to carry his full weight in political circles here. His post in the Netherlands was his own choice, as was the timing of his departure from the Ministry. His appointment in London was the result of Mr Peres's sudden decision after Mr Rabin's resignation in April 1977, to keep Mr Evron in Jerusalem.

Fluent English and German. Married with 2 daughters.

ISRAEL FACT SHEET

<u>Population</u>	3.5 million (1976) (of which 3 million Jews remainder Moslem Christian and Druze)
<u>Area</u>	7, 992 sq miles (excluding occupied territories)
<u>Form of Government</u>	Republic. No written constitution. Supreme authority rests with 120 member Knesset
<u>GNP (1977)</u>	\$ 10,300 million. Growth rate (1970-76) 6.4%
<u>Exports (1977)</u>	Total \$ 3,072.2 million Principal markets:- USA (18.8%) FRG (9.0%) UK (7.5%) Netherlands (5.9%) France (5.3%) Principal commodities:- polished diamonds citrus textiles and clothing
<u>Imports (1977)</u>	Total \$ 5,788 million Principal sources:- US (16.4%) UK (11.3%) FRG (7.7%) Netherlands (7.2%) Principal commodities:- rough diamonds petroleum products transport equipment and machinery



2 July
Israel

10 DOWNING STREET

~~Mr. C. Gedge~~ ^{6/24} 13/7

Mr. Kiehon

16.00 Tuesday
24 July.

E.J.

11/7



10 DOWNING STREET

Mr. Castledge.

Have requested
Duff. F.O.
appalled he was
being doing a)
sets precedence
b) they wd never
have recommended
it.

C.S.

9/7

Caroline -

I'm unwell.
What date?

Bill
1/77

Prime Minister Do you



agree to
Mrs? Yes
Mr.
6/7

10 DOWNING STREET

MISS STEPHENS

The Israeli Ambassador,
Mr. Kidron, is leaving London
for good at the end of this
month and would very much like
to pay a farewell call on the
Prime Minister during the second
half of July.

I think the Prime Minister
likes Mr. Kidron and will probably
agree to see him. Can you
suggest a time?

JM.

Caroline

5 July 1979

Time?

JM

4/7

END

Filmed at the National
Archives (TNA) in London

February 2010