



CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Dinner for Arab Ambassadors
at the Dorchester Hotel 2nd July 1981

MIDDLE EAST

FEBRUARY 1981

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
16.6.81 26.6.81 10.7.81							
PREM 19/534							

Middle
East

3 TO PM NO 10 DOWNING STREET

CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 260

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FM FCO 101015Z JULY 81

TO IMMEDIATE BEIRUT

TELEGRAM NUMBER 166 OF 10 JULY,

AND TO IMMEDIATE ALL OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS,

INFO SAVING TO WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, BONN, BRUSSELS,

COPENHAGEN, ATHENS, DUBLIN, THE HAGUE, LUXEMBOURG, PARIS,

ROME AND UKREP BRUSSELS.

PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS

1. THE GUARDIAN OF 7 JULY REPORTED THAT THE ARAB AMBASSADORS IN LONDON CANCELLED A DINNER WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AFTER SHE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE PLO LONDON REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE POLITICALLY EMBARRASSING.

2. THE STORY IS SUBSTANTIALLY ACCURATE AND REFLECTS PRESS BRIEFING BY NO 10 IN RESPONSE TO ENQUIRIES. THE INVITATION TO THE PRIME MINISTER WAS MADE BY THE ARAB AMBASSADORS IN LONDON EARLY THIS YEAR AND WAS ACCEPTED. HOWEVER THE GUEST LIST SENT SUBSEQUENTLY TO NO 10 CONTAINED THE NAME OF THE LONDON PLO REPRESENTATIVE, NABIL RAMLAWI, (WHO HAS SINCE BEEN MADE 'DEAN' OF THE ARAB DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN LONDON: WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE SUCH A POSITION). IT WAS MADE CLEAR TO THE ARAB AMBASSADORS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER COULD NOT ATTEND A DINNER WITH RAMLAWI PRESENT IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PRACTICE THAT MINISTERS DO NOT MEET REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PLO (MY TELNO GUIDANCE 89, PARAGRAPH 12). THE AMBASSADORS FOR THEIR PART DID NOT FEEL ABLE TO WITHDRAW RAMLAWI'S INVITATION AND CANCELLED THE DINNER. THERE WAS NO ACRIMONY.

3. IF YOU ARE ASKED ABOUT THIS, YOU SHOULD DRAW ON THE ABOVE AS APPROPRIATE, STRESSING THAT THE DINNER WAS CANCELLED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT AND THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ILL WILL OR ILL FEELINGS ON EITHER SIDE.

CARRINGTON

MIDDLE EAST STANDARD

NENAD
MED
NAD
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EESD
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MAED
ES & SD
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ESID
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CONS EM UNIT
CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

Note for the Record

The Arab Ambassador's Dinner has now been cancelled - no alternative has been arranged.

A. Hope

26.6.81

NOTE

If Press come out

- a) guest list for Arab Ambassadors
- b) Compliment A.A. on the idea

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 June 1981

Arab Ambassador's Dinner

As I have mentioned to you on the telephone, the Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 15 June on this subject and has decided that she will not be able to attend the dinner if Mr. Ramlawi is there. She does not believe that her attendance together with Mr. Ramlawi would be consistent with her firm public position that British Ministers are not meeting the PLO.

I should record one or two points in this letter:-

- a) It has always been the Prime Minister's understanding that in agreeing to attend the dinner with the Arab Ambassadors, in return for the lunch which she gave for a number of Ambassadors at Chequers last autumn, she was agreeing to dine with a group of accredited representatives.
- b) The arrangements for this meal e.g. the place and time of the dinner were negotiated by the diary secretary here before she saw a list of those who were going to attend.
- c) The list of those attending was not seen by the Prime Minister, or indeed by me, until very recently. There is no question of anyone here having changed their mind about the occasion.
- d) I do not think that it would be enough for Mr. Ramlawi to develop a "diplomatic illness" on the day of the dinner. What matters from the Prime Minister's point of view is that his name should not be on the list of those attending. There would however, in my opinion, be less difficulty from the Prime Minister's point of view if Mr. Ramlawi's name were not to appear on the guest list e.g. because he was away, and the Arab Ambassadors were to explain subsequently that he would have been invited if he had been available.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Francis Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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cannot go
I have been
completely



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

①

The awkward problem of PLO participation
 in this dinner was always likely to give
 trouble - tho' one might have hoped the Arab Ambassadors would have been
 more tactful than to appoint Mr Ramlawi as their Dean a few weeks beforehand.
 The FCO seem to have done their best: would you be willing to accept the line
 at 'A' overleaf? would you like a further effort made to
 persuade Mr Ramlawi to develop a diplomatic dinner?
 It would be a pity to cancel the dinner - tho' not, in
Arab Ambassador's Dinner my view, impossible to do so.

15 June 1981

Jim don't
it's not
not meeting the
PLO

Dear Michael,

15/6

You asked whether the recent decision by Arab
 Ambassadors to regard Mr Ramlawi, the PLO representative,
 as their Dean could cause embarrassment at the dinner
 which the Arab Ambassadors are giving for the Prime
 Minister on 2 July, and said that if possible things
 should be so arranged that Mr Ramlawi would not be there.

Unfortunately I
 did not see this until
 a month after it had
 been received. But I
 doubt whether it would
 have removed the
 problem if I had seen
 it earlier.

I understand that the Arab League representative in
 London, who has been making the arrangements for the
 dinner, wrote to No 10 giving a list of those who would
 be present, which included Mr Ramlawi's name, before it
 was confirmed that the Prime Minister would accept the
 invitation. (List attached.)

Mr Ramlawi has discussed press comment on his appointment
 as 'Dean' with officials at the FCO. He volunteered that
 it was not the intention to cause any embarrassment to
 HMG, and he would not do so. Referring to the dinner for
 the Prime Minister, he said that it was not intended that
 he should act as Dean, make a speech, or take the lead in
 any way on that occasion, though he would if possible like
 to shake hands with the Prime Minister. He said, however,
 that it would be embarrassing both for his own people
 and for the other Ambassadors if he were left out of the
 party.

Officials subsequently discussed this problem privately
 with the Jordanian Ambassador. He confirmed that
 Mr Ramlawi would not have any role as 'Dean' at the dinner.
 We said that there was a political difficulty about
 Mr Ramlawi's presence. We argued that the purpose of such
 an occasion could only be to improve relations and mutual
 understanding, not to score points or cause embarrassment.
 The Ambassador agreed and said that he and his colleagues
 regarded the proposed dinner as a great opportunity. It
 would, however, be very difficult to exclude Mr Ramlawi.

/no

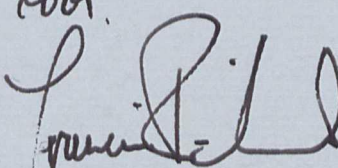


No representatives of the press would be invited and it was intended that the dinner should be entirely private. On present plans the numbers would be small, and guests would be limited to those who fully understood the intricacies of the problem. If, on the other hand, it would be easier for the Prime Minister to attend a larger party, this could be arranged.

Lord Carrington considers that it is unlikely that the Ambassadors will agree to remove Mr Ramlawi's name from the list. This would be an extremely embarrassing step for them, particularly as his name has been firmly on the list from the beginning. It is a fact that they accept Mr Ramlawi as their equal, because the PLO is a full member of the Arab League. It would be politically difficult, probably impossible, for the Arabs to unite on a step of this sort.

Equally, Lord Carrington recognises the awkwardness for the Prime Minister of the presence of a PLO representative. He believes, however, that it would be regrettable if the dinner were to fall through after her acceptance had been so warmly welcomed. The timing, coinciding with the start of the UK Presidency, is an additional factor in our wishing this event to be a success.

A. The best solution, if the Prime Minister agrees, might be to encourage the Arabs to enlarge the guest list (which is at present limited to a few Conservative Members of Parliament sympathetic to the Arabs, apart from the Ambassadors themselves and the Arab League representative). The advantage of another dozen guests would be that it would no longer be possible to argue that Mr Ramlawi's presence implied recognition of any special status for him. Lord Carrington believes that it would be possible to get an assurance from the Arab Ambassadors that Mr Ramlawi would do nothing to embarrass the Prime Minister, and that this assurance would be honoured. In the event of publicity we would say that there was nothing new in the attendance of Ministers, including the Prime Minister, at social functions at which a PLO representative was also present.

Yours ever,


(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

<p>ENGAGEMENT</p> <p><i>Dinner held with Arab Ambassadors</i></p> <p><i>Dorchester Hotel</i></p>	<p>LOCATION</p> <p>DATE AND TIME <i>2.7.81</i> <i>8. for 8.30pm.</i></p> <p>DRESS</p> <p>CONTACT</p> <p>PRESS PRESENT</p>
<p>PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY</p> <p>PRIME MINISTER'S SPOUSE</p> <p>PRIVATE SECRETARY</p> <p>PRESS SECRETARY</p> <p>MEMBER OF POLITICAL STAFF</p> <p>GARDEN ROOM GIRL</p> <p>DETECTIVES</p> <p>DRIVERS</p>	
<p>SPEECH AND BRIEF</p> <p>PRIVATE SECRETARY RESPONSIBLE FOR SPEECH</p> <p>HANDOUT TO PRESS</p> <p>REQUEST FOR DRAFT SPEECH TO :</p> <p>BY :</p> <p>REQUEST FOR BRIEF TO :</p> <p>BY :</p>	
<p>OTHER ACTION</p> <p>LETTER TO LOCAL MPs</p> <p>ACCOMMODATION : LOCATION</p> <p>BOOKED</p> <p>TRAVEL : BY</p> <p>BOOKED</p>	
<p>SUBSEQUENT ACTION</p> <p>THANK YOU LETTERS</p> <p>NOTES OF MEETINGS</p> <p>POINTS FOR ACTION</p>	



Accepted 1/6

The Council of Arab Ambassadors

and

The Director of the League of Arab States Office in London

request the pleasure of the company of

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P. and
Mr. Denis Thatcher

at 8.00 *on* Thursday, 2nd July, 1981
for 8.30p.m.

at

The Gold Room,
The Dorchester,
Park Lane,
London W1

Dress: Dinner Jacket

P.S.V.P.
Private Secretary.
52 Green Street.
London W1Y 3RH
01-493 6409

17/6-

NOTE FOR THE FILE

DINE WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS: 2 JULY

Miss Wallace called me to say that Sir John Graham is unable to attend this dinner, and do we have any other suggestions. The FCO are thinking about this and will come back. Please BF Wednesday, 17 June.

5 June, 1981.

jfh

21 May 1991

Your Ambassador kindly wrote with the major names of the people who would be attending the dinner on 2 July. These have been noted.

CS

Miss Juliet Wallace.

KJ



League of Arab States Office

52 GREEN STREET
LONDON W1Y 3RH

Telephone 01-629 0732/3
Cables: Alnasr, London W1

Ms. Caroline Stephens,
Office of the Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON. SW1A 2AA

20th May, 1981.

Dear Ms. Stephens,

Further to my Secretary's letter dated 30th May, 1981, I should be grateful if you would kindly advise the Prime Minister that the following Officials of the Conservative Middle East Council will also be invited to the dinner to be held in her honour, on 2nd July, 1981.

Lord Chelwood - President.

Mr. Dennis Walters, M.P. - Chairman.

The Hon. Charles Morrison, M.P. - Vice Chairman.

Mr. David Crouch, M.P. - Vice Chairman.

Yours sincerely,

Ambassador Omar Al-Hassan,
Director.

5 May, 1981

Many thanks for your letter of 30 April and for letting me have a list of the guests who will be present on 2 July. This is just to confirm that the people the Prime Minister would like to bring with her are as follows:-

Mr Denis Thatcher
The Hon Douglas Hurd
Sir John Graham
Mr Michael Alexander

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Miss Juliet Wallace

MS

CAROLINE



10 DOWNING STREET

MR. THATCHER

The Prime Minister is dining with Arab Ambassadors on Thursday, 2 July. Would you be free to attend?

Yes

S 1/5

A large, stylized handwritten signature or set of initials in blue ink, consisting of a large loop and a vertical stroke.

1 May 1981

Please file
5/5



League of Arab States Office

52 GREEN STREET
LONDON W1Y 3RH

Telephone 01-629 0732/3
Cables: Alnasr, London W1

Ms. Caroline Stephens,
Office of the Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA

30th April, 1981 *R2/5*

Dear Ms. Stephens,

Further to my [redacted] telephone conversation with you earlier today, I write to confirm that the earlier time of 8.00 p.m. for 8.30 p.m. for the commencement of the dinner in honour of the Prime Minister on 2nd July, 1981, is quite convenient for the Arab Ambassadors.

I also wish to advise you that the Arab Ambassadors who it is expected will attend the dinner are as follows:-

- H.E. Mr. Abdelkrim Benmahmoud, Ambassador of Algeria;
- H.E. Sheikh Abdulrahman Faris Al-Khalifa, Ambassador of Bahrain;
- H.E. Mr. Hisham Ibrahim Al-Shawi, Ambassador of Iraq;
- H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Izziddin, Ambassador of Jordan;
- H.E. Mr. Ghazi M.A. Al-Rayess, Ambassador of Kuwait;
- H.E. Dr. Khalil Makkawi, Ambassador of Lebanon;
- Mr. Mabrouk El-Kayed, Secretary-General, Libyan People's Bureau;
- Mr. Mohamed Tamer, Charge d'Affaires, Moroccan Embassy;
- H.E. Mr. Malallah Habib, Ambassador of Oman;
- Mr. Nabil Ramlawi, Palestine Liberation Organisation Representative;
- H.E. Mr. Sherida AlKa'abi, Ambassador of Qatar;
- H.E. Sheikh Nasser H. AlManqour, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia;
- H.E. Mr. Mohamed Jama Elmi, Ambassador of Somalia;
- H.E. Sayed Amir El-Sawi, Ambassador of Sudan;
- Mr. Zouheir Namani, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Syria;
- H.E. Mme. Faika Farouk, Ambassador of Tunisia;
- H.E. Sayed Mohamed Mahdi Al-Tajir, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates;
- Mr. Ahmed Abdul Kader Saleh, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen;
- Mr. Abdulkarim Alwazir, Charge d'Affaires/new Ambassador, Embassy of the Yemen Arab Republic;
- H.E. Mr. Omar Al-Hassan, Director, League of Arab States Office.

I look forward to further co-operation between us in arranging this important occasion.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Juliet Wallace

Juliet Wallace
Private Secretary.



10 DOWNING STREET

Spoke to the Private
Secretary & gave her
list of names
who should be
invited. She will
come back with
new time —
if possible.

e.

3014

Dep Under Sec
FCO.



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

YOUR DINNER WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS:
2 JULY

The Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq, who is hosting the dinner, has rung asking who you would like to be invited.

Michael Alexander suggests Mr. Thatcher, Mr. Douglas Hurd, Sir John Graham and himself, i.e. the party that went to the Gulf. Tim?

Do you agree?

*Ed. Yes
mt*

29 April 1981

Nina Stephens.



10 DOWNING STREET

MR. ALEXANDER

The attached letter is the invitation to dine with Arab Ambassadors. Could you please

A. let me know who should accompany the Prime Minister other than yourself?

B. Isn't 2030 for 2100 hours rather late? Do you think I can ask them to change the time if I say that there is a possibility of a vote at 10.00?

B. Yes: 20.00 for 20.30 would be better: it may be something to do with Ramadan.

A. 14 April 1981

You had better discuss with P.A. But I would have thought D.T., P.A., Mr. Hunt & Sir J. Graham is the party that went to the Gulf.

What about bringing them F.O.

13 April 1981

In the absence of the Prime Minister who left yesterday for a visit to India and the Gulf, I am writing to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of 13 April. I can confirm that the Prime Minister is looking forward to attending the dinner on Thursday, 2 July but will have to be in touch with you again on her return regarding attendance.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

His Excellency Mr. Hisham Ibrahim Al-Shawi

JS



R144

League of Arab States Office

52 GREEN STREET
LONDON W1Y 3RH

Telephone 01-629 0732/3
Cables: Alnasr, London W1

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London S.W.1.

13th April, 1981

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Council of Arab Ambassadors, I have the honour to invite you to attend a dinner in your honour on 2nd July, 1981. I understand that this date will be convenient for you. The dinner will take place at the Dorchester Hotel at 8.30 for 9.00 p.m.

I should greatly appreciate it if your Office could kindly confirm that the above date will be convenient. Your Office might also let us know if you would like to bring any members of your staff or officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to this function.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a very successful and pleasant journey in India and the Middle East.

With respectful regards,

Yours sincerely,

al Shawi
Hisham
Dr. Hisham Ibrahim Al-Shawi,
Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq,
Doyen of the Council of Arab Ambassadors

1

Ant

MR ALEXANDER
PRIME MINISTER

LUNCH WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS

They have come back via Denis Walters to say that Friday, 24 July is just at the end of Ramadan and, therefore, not an ideal date. As I have no lunches left that suit them and us they wonder whether you would agree to a dinner which would be permitted as it is after sunset. We have Thursday, 2 July free which is two days after your return from Luxembourg and four days before you go to Warwickshire for the Royal Show.

Agree?

Yes no
C.S.

7 April, 1981

*Lang Denis Walters
to confirmed July 2nd
Please file.*

C.S. 9/14

NOTE FOR THE FILE

Dennis Walters rang today to say that July 8 was not very convenient as it is Ramadan. I have now offered him Friday 24 July: when the date is confirmed the Foreign Office must be informed.

I asked Dennis Walters to keep the occasion low key and he said he would do his best to pass that message on as tactfully as possible to the Ambassadors concerned.



27 March 1981

Please file in



G.R.
11/13.

10 DOWNING STREET

MR. GOW

The Prime Minister has agreed to lunch with the Arab Ambassadors in London. Could you please ask Dennis Walters to give me a ring to arrange a date. I am afraid there are very few alternatives. Can I have the file back when you have finished with it please?

ep. 11/13
ep. AS HE IS NEVER IN THE HOUSE, HAVE SENT HIM A NOTE TO-DAY ASKING HIM TO RING YOU.

10 March 1981

11/3/1981

file

883

10 March 1981

Thank you for your letter of 5 March with its advice about a possible lunch given by the Arab Ambassadors for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister has agreed in principle to go ahead with this invitation and I will be in touch with you again after I have fixed a date with Dennis Walters MP.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

C. Q. G. Jebb, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

PRIME MINISTER

Ian has received a request from Denis Walters for you to be the guest of Arab Ambassadors at lunch in June or July. I put this to the Foreign Office and to Michael Alexander. The Foreign Office think it would be a good idea though you could receive balancing invitations from the Israeli Ambassador or from the Anglo/Jewish community. Michael Alexander points out that you will be seeing the Jewish community when you address the Board of Deputies of British Jews in December and feels that lunching with the Arabs could be defended on the grounds that you are visiting six of their countries this year.

Agree to lunch with the Arab Ambassadors?

Yes
not
E.S.

9 March 1981



10 DOWNING STREET

Chris Stephens

MR. ~~ALEXANDER~~

Can I have your advice on this please before giving it back to Ian? One doesn't want to be insulting to anybody, but it does rather strike me that the flood gates might open.

ES.

The P.A. will be seeing the Jewish Community in December. A meal with the Arabs could be defended on the grounds that she is visiting six of their countries

6 March 1981

this year - which is a little exceptional.

All of which said, I would not want to press it on the P.A. against her better judgement.

Chris

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 March 1981

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 25 February about an invitation to the Prime Minister to be the guest of Arab Ambassadors at lunch in June or July.

The Prime Minister may wish to bear in mind that the occasion may give rise to balancing invitations either from the Israeli Ambassador or from the Anglo-Jewish Community (as well as the possible need for some gesture to the Egyptians) and that a lunch of this kind coinciding with our takeover of the Presidency could lead to press speculation about its significance. Nevertheless, the Secretary of State sees no reason why the Prime Minister should not accept the invitation, which would reciprocate her lunch for representative Arab Ambassadors at Chequers last year.

Yours ever

C. Q. G. Jebb

(C Q G Jebb)
Assistant Private Secretary

Miss Caroline Stephens
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

File

BK

Lunch with
Arab Ambassadors

Chase?

25 February 1981

— its way
et. 413

Denis Walters, MP, has approached Ian Gow on behalf of the Arab Ambassadors in London to enquire whether, in principle, the Prime Minister would be willing to be the guest of these Ambassadors at a lunch in London in June or July.

I would be grateful if you could let us have your advice as soon as possible.

C STEPHENS

David Neillands, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

274

Caroline I would have been
inclined to favour this



been but at the
right time: one
would want to
hammer with F. 10.

10 DOWNING STREET

Ian

And

Caroline looked at this note
and said flatly that the Prime
Minister has no lunches or
dinners free until August.

E.

23rd February, 1981 Elizabeth,

Yes, but would
be p.m. be
prepared, in principle,
to accept an
invitation for another
month? *I.e.*
~~Michael?~~
C.J. 24/2/1981.



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

ARAB AMBASSADORS IN LONDON.

Denis Walters, on behalf of the Arab Ambassadors in London has asked whether, in principle, you would be willing to be the guest of these Ambassadors at a Lunch in London in June or July?

23rd February, 1981 Ian Gow.

cc: Michael Alexander, Esq.