



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 November 1981

Her Excellency

Thank you for your letter of 30 October about the PLO and the Israeli raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor.

You referred to my remarks in Kuwait about the PLO. Both Peter Carrington and I have said on several occasions that Israel cannot be expected to negotiate with an organisation which does not first disassociate itself, in unambiguous terms, from past statements implying its commitment to the destruction of Israel. A clear statement by the PLO that it was ready to accept Israel, provided Israel recognised the Palestinians' legitimate political rights, would be a major step forward. We shall continue to press for such a statement from the PLO.

I have studied with care the document prepared by the Britain/Israel Public Affairs Committee about the Israeli raid on the nuclear reactor in Iraq. The allegations in that paper are simply not supported by the facts. Iraq, unlike Israel, has acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and has agreed to submit all her nuclear facilities to international safeguards, including inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Director-General of the IAEA made it clear after the raid that safeguards had been satisfactorily applied and that all nuclear material at the reactor was satisfactorily accounted for. He was also satisfied that the use of the reactor for the production of plutonium would not have been feasible without detection by IAEA inspectors. There is thus no reason to believe that Iraq was using the reactor, or the associated facilities, for other than

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peaceful purposes. We do not believe that Iraq had the capacity to manufacture fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Of course, Israel has legitimate concerns about her security, and the Israeli Government inevitably faces difficult decisions in ensuring her protection. But the system of international law and international safeguards has been established to avoid precisely the sort of situation which Israel clearly feared. It may be argued that the Treaty is imperfect. But we believe it does significantly diminish the prospect of further nuclear weapons proliferation and that it thereby contributes to world peace and stability. We would like to see all states working to reinforce, rather than to undermine, it. Israel's refusal to accede to the Treaty, and her raid on the Iraqi nuclear facility, constitutes a set-back to the cause of non-proliferation.

*Y
Latham*

Raymond

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