



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

23 March 1981

Dear Vivian,

Thank you for your letter of 5 March about the PLO and your kind remarks about my visit to the US.

Lord Carrington is not seeking to arrange any meeting with Yasser Arafat after we take on the Presidency of the Ten. But the fact is that in the second half of this year, while he holds the office of President of the Council of Ministers, he may be required to meet representatives of the PLO in pursuit of European diplomatic efforts to help achieve a comprehensive peace settlement. M. Thorn, in his then capacity as President, has already done this. Ministerial contacts with the PLO in such circumstances would not alter HMG's often stated position on recognition.

In the words of the Venice Declaration, the PLO will have to be "associated with" any negotiations leading to a comprehensive peace settlement. But the Declaration also makes clear that the PLO must accept the principles of a negotiated settlement, which specifically include Israel's right to a secure existence. We have stressed repeatedly that the PLO must abandon violence. The aim of contacts between the PLO and European representatives is to spell out these points to the PLO as plainly as possible.

Yours
Vivian

V.W.H. Bendall, Esq., M.P.

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