

CONFIDENTIAL



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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