

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 129A/80

ops.
subject copy filed on:-
Middle East situations Pt 3.



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שגרירות ישראל
לונדון

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Prime Minister

Jerusalem, June 17, 1980

(ת"ס 17.6.80)

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"Dear Madam Prime Minister,

I thank you for your letter of June 14, transmitted to me by Ambassador Robinson.

I read its contents with the greatest attention and I express to you my appreciation for your kind and friendly words in the wake of the Venice Conference and Resolution.

However, since it is always with complete candor that we speak and write to each other, it is my duty to tell you that the Resolution hurt us deeply. You write to me: "I know some aspects of our Declaration will be very difficult for you to accept..." May I respectfully tell you, Madam Prime Minister, that "some aspects" (of that Declaration) are impossible for us to accept. I will cite but one example.

The Venice Resolution declares that the P.L.O. should be associated with the peace-making process. Being familiar for so many years as we are with the contents of the so-called "Palestinian Charter" we assume, and we have a right to assume, that all our friends know equally well that that organization preaches one, unchanged and openly declared design: The destruction of the State of Israel. They shall, of course, never achieve that aim but their failure will not be for the lack of trying.

On the eve of the Venice Conference something particular occurred. In Damascus, a Congress of Fatah, the main component of the P.L.O., commanded by Mr. Yasser Arafat who is the P.L.O. Chairman, deliberated for several days and adopted the following Resolution: "Fatah is an independent National Revolutionary Movement whose aim is to liberate Palestine completely (my emphasis) and to liquidate (again my emphasis) the Zionist entity, politically, economically, militarily, culturally and ideologically."

Madam Prime Minister, did anybody since the days of Hitler and Goebels, Goering, Rosenberg and Streicher ever declare more plainly and more precisely that the endeavour is to destroy both our people and our State ("politically" and "militarily")? Again, I repeat, this Resolution was adopted in Damascus but a few days before the Nine convened in Venice. It was distributed for everybody to read, not only in diplomatic dispatches but also in the Press. And yet, the great, free, Democratic countries of Europe assembled and asked us, the elected representatives of the people of Israel, the United States of America, and all other nations to recognize that organization as a future partner in "peace" talks. This is not only astonishing: as I said, it hurt us deeply.



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- 2 -

After having signed a Peace Treaty with Egypt that put an end to a state of war which lasted thirty-one years - five wars having actually been waged on the battlefield - we, Israel, made great sacrifices in order to bring the peace about, as you know well. Now, the autonomy talks will be renewed and let it not be forgotten that the very autonomy idea is ours. We have, until now, done our best to reach an agreement without, of course, sacrificing our rights and the most vital interests of Israel's national security. I wish to assure you that we shall continue the negotiations with goodwill in order to reach an agreement on the second part of the Camp David accord.

I will be happy to be in direct touch with you in the future, Madam Prime Minister, and freely exchange views on the main issues concerning the peace-making process in the Middle East in accordance with the Camp David agreement. I still hope that not only your great country, but also other European countries - with perhaps, the likely exception of one - will positively contribute to this effort which is the only one that could lead to peace in this vital region.

May I, in conclusion, bring to your attention a certain complaint that bears upon our defence needs. I believe we are friendly countries and it is in this spirit that in the past we acquired from Britain quantities of defence items which we greatly appreciated, they being important for our security.

However, we have been confronted with refusals. I refer, specifically, to the supply of light tanks of the Scorpion type, electro-optical equipment (laser range-finders) and especially the information available on the RB-199 engine which would have matched our new aircraft requirements.

I cannot understand the reasons for these refusals, particularly when Britain is selling to Jordan hundreds of the sophisticated Chieftan tanks originally destined for Iran. May I respectfully ask you, Madam Prime Minister, to reconsider those refusals and instruct the appropriate authorities to accept the above-mentioned requests submitted by the Israel Defence Forces.

I look to your goodwill and I thank you in advance for your positive action and reply.

Please accept my very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Menachem Begin
Prime Minister of Israel"

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
SW1.

*Please find
Jews
(Page B
attached)*