

٤٢/١١/٨٣
تونس في

جَامِعَةُ الدُّوَالِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ

الأمين العام

Mrs. Prime Minister,

It is for me a pleasure and an honour, on the eve of the European summit, to call your kind attention to the Middle East problem which, as Your Excellency is well aware, is going now through a painful and a dangerous stage. WE would therefore greatly appreciate if this issue could receive careful consideration on the part of the E.E.C. leaders, meeting in Athens, and would lead to a joint declaration reaffirming the clear determination of Europe to contribute to a peace-settlement.

It is only normal that the Mideast, which is so close geographically to Europe and so vital for its economy, should be, for your Community, a question of great concern. The E.E.C. has already made an important step by recognizing the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Yet, this step has not been followed by any practical move, in addition, by equating Israeli security with Palestinian rights, it did not reflect, even, at that time, the reality of the situation. Today, the irrelevance of such a linkage is all the more obvious, after the invasion of Lebanon, the military occupation of the Southern part of this country and the illegal buildup of colonial settlements in the occupied territories. This linkage is today all the more irrelevant after the annexation by Israel of Al Qods and the Golan Heights, and its systematic pursuit of such policies as starkly violate international law and stand in the way of any peace-initiative, whether originating from the Arab side, the United Nations, Europe or even its U.S. ally.

The E.E.C. leaders are now well aware that Israeli security can hardly be said to be under threat and that Israel has more than the necessary means to checkmate all Arab forces put together, let alone the systematic backing it gets from the U.S. and its nuclear capability. In fact, what is in danger is the security of the Arab States, in particular those of the Near East, who are living under the constant threat of a new aggression. What is even more in danger is the Palestinian people, a people dispossessed of its homeland, exposed to daily persecution, and denied, persistently, its most basic right to self-determination. This is why any further European support to Israel would only contribute to more intransigence and more obstination on the part of Israel to pursue the same policies of hegemony and aggression.

On the other hand, it would be fitting that the Ten E.E.C.-countries set up the real parallelism that the reality of the situation imposes. The PLO and all the Arab States proclaimed in Fez their willingness to participate in finding a comprehensive, negotiated solution to the Mideast crisis while, Israël, as I have already pointed out, continues to reject any peace-plans. The Young Plan, the Rogers Plan, the Reagan Plan, not to mention the Arab Fez Plan.

The aggressor and the agressed cannot be put on an equal footing. I believe the moment has come for the European Community to fully realise the dangers of this situation, to overcome a too often biased vision of what it believes to be the interests of Israel and to apply

whatever pressures necessary on Israel so that it will renounce its illusory concept of "Eretz Israel" and come round to the only possible solution, i.e., coexistence with a Palestinian state to be established on retrieved occupied territories. Only in this way can there be an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In view of the daunting difficulties now facing the PLO, it might be highly tempting to bet on the liquidation of the Palestinian problem, which is at the core of the conflict. This would mean driving the Palestinians to despair which, you are all certainly aware, is the worst counsellor for frustrated peoples. It is this despair which explains the PLO's present internal struggles. In fact, it is because of Israel's violent and aggressive response to the peaceful discourse of Yasser Arafat that the enemies of the Palestinian leader are now fighting him with obstination and perhaps an apparent credibility.

There can be no doubt - and the European leaders quickly realised this - that the division and, perhaps, fragmentation of the Palestinian movement can only lead the region into unpredictable turmoil, weakening thus any chances for a peaceful settlement.

I am convinced, Mrs. Prime Minister, that under such circumstances, you will spare no possible effort to avert the impending danger. The solution can only come through a bold international initiative - and we believe the E.E.C. has the proper means for that - that would restore Palestinian hope and confidence in international law and, ultimately, put an end to their ordeal.

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In conclusion let me express the hope that the E.E.C.-summit will adopt, through a new joint declaration, the position which will properly reflect its concern for world peace and the defense of law and justice. Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Chedli KLIBI

Secretary General
League of Arab States

Her Excellency
Mrs Margaret THATCHER
Prime Minister of Great Britain
LONDON
(Great Britain)