



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

16 December 1983

Monsieur Chedli Klibi

I am grateful to you for your letter of 22 November in which you let me have your views on the present situation in the Middle East.

Although the meeting of the European Council in Athens earlier this month was entirely taken up with Community business and there was no discussion of the Middle East, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that the British Government remains deeply committed to the search for a just and lasting peace settlement. I fully share your concern at the dangers arising from the present stagnation in the peace process. It is a matter of great regret that Israel rejected the proposals put forward by President Reagan on 1 September, 1982 and that King Hussein and the Palestine Liberation Organisation were unable in April to agree a joint approach to negotiations. We all still face the challenge of reconciling Israel's right to exist within secure and recognised borders with the right of the Palestinian people to determine their own future. Otherwise there can be no hope of ending the sufferings of the Palestinians and eliminating the causes of instability and tension in the region. In co-operation with our European partners we shall continue to do whatever we can to assist the parties directly concerned to take the steps necessary towards the peace which we all earnestly desire.

Monsieur Chedli Klibi

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

MS