

Charles - if I were to

make this speech, I should have no
chance whatsoever of influencing things at
behind the scenes. Their reactions would be

PRIME MINISTER

to come at the problem a different way
enormous and it would be better not to go. We have
to come at the problem a different way
VISIT TO ISRAEL: SPEECHES ① I am the first to

secure borders despite democracy land that the present situation if uprooted would
You have a number of small speeches in Israel, but the main opportunity to speak on the record will be at the dinner given by Mr. Peres.

The Foreign Secretary has advised that you should be ready to make some points which will be unpalatable to the Israelis on Arab-Israel peace negotiations, the Occupied Territories and withdrawal from Lebanon. His advice is based on two premises. First your high personal standing in Israel and the authority which this gives you to speak candidly. Second, the need to dispel any suspicion among moderate Arab Governments that following our support for American action against Libya, a sort of US/Arab/UK axis is in process of being formed.

If you accept this advice it will not be an easy speech to make. You will not want to go on too long (the draft supplied by the Foreign Office would take some 20 minutes to deliver) and you don't want to tread too heavily on your hosts' sensibilities (which the FCO draft certainly would). There is the added difficulty that it is only a matter of a very few weeks since you spoke at dinner for Mr. Peres here, and used up a lot of the points which might otherwise be made.

I attach a first draft of my own. It singles out the treatment of the Arabs in the Occupied Territories as an area on which your remarks might concentrate because I believe this is the most practical area to look for progress in the near term. It approaches the issue by way of Israel's proud record for democracy and protection of individual rights within its own borders, our position on the rights of Soviet Jews and our determination to fight terrorism. But it deals only passingly

⑤ Underlined plea to reduce poor conditions by economic aid but no ability for political movement

with broader Arab-Israel issues and does not mention Lebanon at all. I believe this is as much as the Israelis will bear. And there will of course be other opportunities to make points on Arab-Israel and on Lebanon, for instance at your Press Conference and in your discussions with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Knesset.

It would be very helpful to have a steer on how you find this approach.

CDP

Charles Powell

18 May 1986

JALARO

Short Speech by Mr Peres at Reception at
King David Hotel, Israel; 26.5.86

PRIME MINISTER PERES

Prime Minister, Your Excellencies, my Colleagues of the Cabinet,
the Speaker of the House, Friends:

The Government of Israel did whatever it could in order to make the visit of Mrs. Thatcher here a complete success. I am referring to the fact that on the evening of her arrival we have had a full moon and in the morning a brilliant sun. That is what a government can do after all! But the rest was done by her and may I tell you, Mrs. Thatcher, you have warmed the hearts of our people after your warm admiration of us following your deeds. It was a very moving experience and I simply was a witness to see with what great and high degree of warmth, of love and appreciation you were received wherever you moved around. As a matter of fact, our Speaker of the Parliament - not the present one - came back from Paris and we asked him how was his visit and his reply was: "I became a mobile Arc de Triomphe" so in a way I felt like you were a mobile Arc de Triomphe in our country representing your own people, representing whatever Great Britain stands for and your own personality and the Jewish community in Great Britain which is very dear to our hearts as well.

I think we have had very constructive talks for the future. Israel would be hold to say that we would solve all of our problems, so we keep some of them for the future and nobody can accuse us of being but a very dramatic country and drama we shall continue to play.

May I say that you did a great service to your people, to our people, to the relations between Great Britain and Israel, historically, at present and for the future. May I thank you

PRIME MINISTER PERES (CONTD.)

full-heartedly for your very successful and very moving visit
to our country. Thank you very much indeed. (applause)

PRIME MINISTER THATCHER

Carry on with the party please!

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ADDRESS OF THE SPEAKER OF THE KNESSET, MR SHLOMO HILLEL
IN HONOUR OF PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER
IN THE CHAMBER OF THE KNESSET
MONDAY, 26 MAY 1986, 17 IYAR 5746

*H. enter
on p. 6*

It gives me great honour to welcome our distinguished guest, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, both as a representative of a friendly state and as a true and steadfast friend of Israel.

Our history has brought our two peoples together more than once. Sometimes this convergence between us has marked a time of jubilation and an uplifting of the spirit, and sometimes of distress and anguish.

Today, as the Knesset hosts Mrs Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, I recall the England of Lord Balfour and of Wingate, and a long list of Englishmen who showed understanding and sympathy for the Zionist cause, thanks to a knowledge and love of the Bible, and a cleaving to the principle of human justice.

I recall too the England of Churchill during the Second World War, when England stood almost alone in Europe against the great Nazi war machine, and paid a heavy price for her refusal to surrender. Most European leaders then preferred to ignore the aggression which threatened to destroy the liberty of states and individuals. They came to terms with it and, in the foolish belief that they would thus escape the evil, even collaborated - and brought tragedy upon themselves, their people and the world. England's stand and the courage of her citizens and especially of her sons during those dark days, saved the world from subjugation, and for this the entire free world owes England a debt of gratitude.

Today too, as we confront the new tyranny which seeks to destroy man's spirit and the liberty of states and individuals through vicious and vile international terror, there are many leaders in the world who think that it is permissible or desirable to ignore the phenomenon and to come to terms and even to collaborate with it. And now, as then, the steadfastness and sincerity of those who are prepared to sacrifice so much in order to safeguard the freedom of the world and the individual, is thrown into sharp perspective. Now too England takes its rightful place in the front-line of those courageous and honourable European nations as a spearhead in this vital struggle, and for this too we are thankful.

During Mrs Thatcher's brief trip to Israel, she has tried to visit many places and to meet people from as many walks of life as possible. I hope and believe that this visit and her various meetings and discussions will increase the understanding and friendship between our two nations.

Madame Prime Minister, on behalf of the Knesset, I extend to you and to your entourage our traditional welcome greeting of "B'ruchim Haba'im", and express the sincere hope that you will have an enjoyable stay in Israel.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 May 1986

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ISRAEL: SPEECHES

I enclose:

i) the current and I hope final version of the Prime Minister's speech at Mr. Peres' dinner. I suggest that you telegraph this to Tel Aviv and ask the Ambassador to give the Israeli Government an account of it, particularly the final section. But it would be better not to hand over a text, since there could still be changes.

ii) the text for the Prime Minister's remarks at Ashkelon (though she may well in practice ad lib).

iii) text for the Prime Minister's remarks at the Weizmann Institute Lunch (though again, she may speak without a text).

You already have the text of the Prime Minister's Arrival Statement.

I am most grateful to David Miers and the Department for their help.

(C.D. POWELL)

Robert Culshaw, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

* Enclosures
in relevant
speech folders
in PM's speeches
Broadcasts file

UA
23/5

PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH AT MR. PERES' DINNER

The text attached is as you saw it last night. We now need to finalise it.

The Foreign Office have now retreated and withdrawn their proposed passage. But the Foreign Secretary would still want to see an explicit reference to the Palestinians' right of self-determination. He believes that absence of such a reference will be a source of great concern to King Hussein and President Mubarak.

I already have a veiled reference to it on page 27. The choices seem to me:

- (i) to leave the text unchanged;
- (ii) to modify the passage on page 27 to read:
 ".... which embraces the right of free peoples
 including the Palestinians to determine their
 own future";
- (iii) add a phrase at the top of page 26:
 "the emergence of responsible political leaders
 ready for peace, based on the exercise of the
 Palestinian people's right to self-determination".

Which would you prefer?

Content with text as a whole?

CDP

CHARLES POWELL

Speeches in
PM; speeches & broadcasts file ①

PRIME MINISTER

VISIT TO ISRAEL: SPEECHES

In addition to your speech at the dinner given by Mr. Peres, you will be called upon to make short speeches:

- (i) during your visit to Ashkelon, where you will visit a community centre and lay the foundation stone of a school; and
- (ii) at lunch at the Weizmann Institute.

I attach drafts for both speeches for your approval.

The Embassy have confirmed that there will be no speeches at President Herzog's lunch, only an exchange of toasts.

C.D.P.

Charles Powell

22 May 1986

Speech in
PM; Speeches & Broadcasts file ①

PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH AT MR. PERES DINNER

I attach a revised version of the speech in which I have taken account of comments from both the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Sir David Wolfson.

The main outstanding problem concerns self determination. The Foreign Office want to put in a passage which would read:

"The two linked principles which must underlie an eventual settlement are Israel's right to secure existence and the Palestinians right of self determination."

They argue that the Foreign Secretary said this when he went to Israel and that if you say less it will look as though we are resiling. I do not accept that all speeches about Arab/Israel have to use identical language but I think there should be some reference to self determination and I have slipped one in on page 27.

I have consulted David Wolfson about the length of the speech. He thinks that, since this will be the major occasion for you to say something in public in Israel, you should make a substantial speech and that this is about the right length.

CDP

mb

Charles Powell
21 May 1986

JALASE

com.

PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH AT DINNER FOR MR. PERES

I attach a revised version in which I am trying to take account of your comments as well as some from David Wolfson, and to deal with the question of the treatment of the Arabs on the West Bank in a less peremptory way. It would be helpful if you were able to go through it tonight since the subject is likely to come up at your briefing meeting for the Israel visit with the Foreign Secretary tomorrow. There is a very difficult line to be drawn between undermining your influence by saying too many unpalatable things in the wrong tone; and standing firmly by the position which we have taken in the past and which the Arab Governments will scan your speech to find. I think that we are close to the right balance but it is very much a matter for you to say.

CDP

CDP

19 May 1986

VC4AHB

I think we shall have to start with his economic proposals it's need to raise standards of living but no substitute for policy of peace and security for Israel & all states in the region. Good country but must have some self respect - security & order people live & work there with peace & comfort.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 May 1986

Dear Charles,

Appalling: I have asked for a

rewrite.

can 16/5

Prime Minister's Visit to Israel:
Speeches

I enclose a first draft of the Prime Minister's speech at the dinner to be hosted by Mr and Mrs Peres on 26 May, and some ideas for brief remarks by the Prime Minister on other occasions during her visit.

Sir Geoffrey Howe considers that very careful attention should be given to the Prime Minister's public statements during her visit to Israel. Israeli hardliners will seek to play up rhetoric about a common crusade against terrorism and to cast the Arabs in general as the villains. The Arabs will be straining for every nuance in the Prime Minister's words against the background of our support for the US action against Libya and the accusations of Syrian involvement in terrorism.

Mr Squire has recommended (Tel Aviv telegram number 161) that the Prime Minister should exploit her high standing in Israel to speak firmly on the Arab/Israel issue: this would be helpful to Mr Peres against Israeli hawks. Sir Geoffrey Howe entirely agrees; careful drafting will, of course, be needed to stay within the bounds of Israeli tolerance. He would like to discuss the sensitivities of this speech and the visit as a whole with the Prime Minister at their next bilateral meeting. Meanwhile he will himself look further at this draft speech, which he has not had time to study in the great detail it deserves.

Yours ever,

R N Culshaw

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT DINNER HOSTED BY MR PERES,
25 MAY 1986 AT 2030

Mr Prime Minister, Mrs Peres, Your Excellencies,
ladies and gentlemen.

Just four months ago Denis and I welcomed Mr Peres to No 10 Downing Street. We are delighted to be paying a return visit so soon. This is a land rich in history. Britain has shared the legacy of its ancient past and has been closely involved in its modern history. So it gives me particular pleasure that this visit should itself make history in Anglo-Israeli relations: it is the first to Israel by a British Prime Minister in office.

Anglo/Israeli relations

We have absorbed from the Jewish tradition some of the fundamentals on which our society is based. Not least the Jewish contribution to the Rule of Law of which President Herzog spoke eloquently in London 2 years ago. The State of Israel has in turn adopted features of the British legal system. To this day an Israeli lawyer is "called to the Bar", a term for which no Hebrew translation has been found.

This cross-fertilization extends to our political systems. In London in January Mr Peres witnessed a particularly unruly Prime Minister's Question Time at the Palace of Westminster. I have long been an admirer of

Israel's no less lively democracy and look forward to visiting your Knesset. But Disraeli rightly said: "England does not love coalitions." If I may say so, I prefer my majority to your special brand of cohabitation.

Denis and I are most grateful for the warmth of your welcome. This is not of course a new experience for British visitors. In 1840 a British lady said of her reception by the Jewish community in Jerusalem: "They received us admirably, insisting on our partaking of sherbet and sweetmeats." Denis and I are no less delighted by the warm reception we have received, and by this splendid dinner.

Anglo/Israeli relations are warm and close. They are prospering in many fields to our mutual advantage. Our bilateral trade has reached record levels; the UK/Israel Joint Committee meets next month to see that the momentum is maintained. The two way flow of tourism has reached 300,000 a year. Cultural exchanges are no less active: I have heard that "Yes Prime Minister" has an enthusiastic following here. Of course its portrayal of British political life is far-fetched - at least some of the time! I hope that the arrival of the real thing is not a disappointment.

Certainly for me a visit to Israel could never be disappointing. No visitor could fail to be struck in Israel by the resilience and creativity of the Jewish people despite the barbaric crimes committed against them

in Europe. The technological and social achievements of this young country are nothing short of miraculous. I wish I could see more of your beautiful country on this visit. But Prime Ministers must devote their time to the issues of the day. There is a lot to discuss.

Terrorism

The struggle against terrorism is in all our minds. We did not pick this fight. But we shall not flinch from it. My Cabinet colleagues and I have had direct experience of the terrorist's brutality and cowardice. We shall not allow terrorists to dictate our lives. We shall protect the innocent.

We shall defend ourselves against terrorists by lawful means. The Tokyo Summit agreed a series of national and international measures needed against states which organise and fund terrorism. They set an example and a standard for others to follow: not as retaliation or revenge, but for the civilised world to show that crime does not pay.

Most important of all, we must not allow the terrorist to deflect us from searching for the peaceful settlement of problems. It is the man of violence who has most to gain from continuing conflict and from the insecurity and fear it breeds.

Soviet Jews

We are proud in Britain of our unflinching attachment to principle. This applies especially to human rights. Britain has strongly supported the right of the refuseniks to leave the Soviet Union. We have shared your joy over those who have gained their freedom.

Arab/Israel

Principles are also important in the search for peace in the Middle East. May I offer some advice, as a friend? Good advice is not always welcome, even from a friend. But the best friends are those most ready to be candid.

The establishment of the State of Israel was a remarkable achievement. It was made possible by the vision, imagination and conviction, coupled with the determination, energy and commitment of thousands of Jews rising to a historic challenge. Could the Jewish people grasp the momentous opportunity to found a twentieth century state? They did.

That State is now faced with a similar challenge and a similar opportunity. This time it is not the establishment of a Jewish State that is at stake: but provision for its future security. Your friends in Britain do not believe that the future security of Israel can be safeguarded

except through a just and durable accommodation, both with the neighbours who surround you and with the Palestinians dwelling on your doorstep and indeed in your midst. Geography and demography cannot be ignored.

For nineteen years now decisions over the future of the Occupied Territories have been avoided. In facing up to the choices that sooner or later must be made, the views of Israel's friends and of the international community cannot be ignored. Can you envisage a future in which two classes of citizens with different rights have to co-exist indefinitely? Or a future in which Israel has to accept responsibility for a swelling of the number of refugees? Can Israel contemplate aggravation of the despair among Palestinians which fuels the violence and terrorism to which I made allusion earlier?

Israel's friends are confident that those same qualities of vision and commitment which the Jewish people have shown in the past will govern the decisions which need to be taken soon for the sake of Israel's security in the future.

Occupied Territories

There is concern in Britain that the human rights of Arabs in the Occupied Territories should be safeguarded in accordance with Israel's democratic principles. We British are proud of our pragmatic approach to solving problems.

Pragmatism and principle are not mutually exclusive: good and wise government requires both.

A pragmatic approach is especially important in the Occupied Territories. This is at the very heart of the Palestinian problem. Further practical progress in restoring to the Palestinian inhabitants their pride and self-respect could improve confidence among the Palestinians, neighbouring Arab states and even Israel itself. I know from my contacts with Arab leaders that Israeli policy on settlements is regarded as an acid test of Israeli intentions.

I applaud the new, imaginative proposals to reduce the extent of Israeli involvement in the administration of the Occupied Territories. It is right that the Palestinian inhabitants should have the fullest possible control over their own lives.

Of course it takes two hands to clap. There is an equally onerous responsibility on the Arab side to show the pragmatism, imagination and resolve required. I applaud those statesmen of courage and foresight on both sides of the divide. There can be no illusions about the obstacles. I have no easy answers and no new plan to offer. But it is possible to make progress by patient and imaginative negotiation. Israel and Egypt have made a start and we wish both countries well in overcoming their remaining differences.

For a future settlement of the Arab/Israel problem, negotiations can only take place between representatives who share a commitment to peace and who enjoy the support of their people. Only they can make the difficult choices required in negotiation.

A just and lasting settlement will have to include:

- the acknowledgement by all concerned of Israel's right to security:

- the acceptance of the equally legitimate right of the Palestinian people to determine their own future. There can be no peace unless they can freely choose new constitutional arrangements.

Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 provide a widely accepted basis for negotiation.

Lebanon

Principle and pragmatism are equally needed in addressing the appalling problems of Lebanon. Against the wishes of the majority of decent Lebanese, parts of Lebanese territory have become havens for terrorism and lawlessness. Innocent Lebanese and foreigners, including Britons and Jews, have been chased out, kidnapped and murdered. The Lebanese communities have a responsibility to work towards a new national consensus. But they need

the encouragement of the international community to help them restore the rule of law and ensure the security of their borders.

Britain continues to call for the complete withdrawal of all unauthorised foreign forces and full cooperation with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. The removal of foreign troops is right in principle and is also right in practice. External intervention has only added to the Lebanese problem. It has not enhanced the security of Lebanon's borders or of the region as a whole.

Conclusion

I have spoken frankly this evening because of the gravity of the problems in this region, the urgent need for solutions, and Britain's firm commitment to the existence of the State of Israel. All people of goodwill will hope for progress towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. But as Francis Bacon said: "Hope is a good breakfast but it is a bad supper". I know that you, Mr Prime Minister, are committed to using your influence to turn hope into reality. You and other like-minded leaders in this region are assured of Britain's support.

REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER ON ARRIVAL AT BEN GURION
AIRPORT, ISRAEL, 24 MAY 1986

Mr Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to be here and honoured that Mr Peres should have come to meet me in person at such a late hour.

The dialogue between our 2 countries is frank and constructive. That is how it should be. We know each other well, we have close ties in many fields and we share a strong interest in peace in the Middle East.

Since our talks in London, Mr Prime Minister, there have been important developments affecting British and Israeli interests. We have therefore a lot to discuss. I look forward to a stimulating exchange of views with you and other Israeli leaders.

SHORT SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT LUNCH AT THE
WEIZMANN INSTITUTE, 26 MAY 1986

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very grateful for this opportunity to visit the Weizmann Institute, both for personal reasons and for its significance in Anglo-Israeli relations.

My personal reasons are well known to you. You have honoured me by endowing a chair in my name at this world renowned place of research and learning. It is a distinction which I hold especially dear because of my admiration for Dr Weizmann. This Institute, which continues the pursuit of excellence for which his name stands is a lasting and fitting memorial of his achievements.

Britain and Israel are proud to claim Dr Weizmann as their own. On hearing of Dr Weizmann's death Winston Churchill departed from a prepared speech to express the heavy sense of loss felt in Britain at the passing of a man who was famous and respected throughout the free world and whose son was killed fighting for Britain. Dr Weizmann personified the close personal, scientific and political links between our countries.

As a politician Dr Weizmann was acutely aware of the vital need for co-existence between Israel and her Arab neighbours. He saw that Israel could not afford to be, as he put it "an island in the Arab sea". He believed that the Jews had to come to an understanding with their Arab neighbours. He tried himself to promote such an agreement

in talks with Arab leader including the Emir Feisal at the 1919 Peace Conference. He lived to see the foundation of the State of Israel and to be its first President. But his dream of Israel at peace and accepted in the region has yet to be fulfilled. The challenge has lost none of its urgency since Dr Weizmann's day.

① CHARLES POWELL
② PRIME MINISTER

11 Lampard House 8 Maida Avenue London W2 1SS 01-262 2186

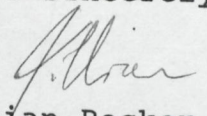
David Wolfson
Bouro Place
London W.8

7 May 1985

Dear Sir David,

The Prime Minister has spoken of another British initiative in the Middle East. To explain just why another move of the same kind as the last time is likely to be very dangerous, I enclose a copy of an article of mine which was recently published in a Washington periodical. I have marked a particular passage on page 48, and if you agree that it makes sense, that my article as a whole substantiates fully what I say at that point, perhaps you will bring the point to the notice of the Prime Minister? Quite simply, she has lives in her hands. Arafat's people are terrorists, not statesmen, and no inclusion of any "PLO" representatives in peace talks is possible. But perhaps this time the idea is to nudge King Hussein into the peace talks with Israel that both the King and Israel desire, excluding Arafat's men which neither side wants? If there is to be any British move at all (my own view is that it would be better if there were no such thing), I hope that it will be in that direction only. I know that whatever overtures have been made to her from the Arab side are likely to be aimed at urging her to use her influence with President Reagan to adjust his view of the matter. But President Reagan's view, as far as I know it, seems far more realistic than the one long nurtured by our Foreign Office.

Yours sincerely,



Jillian Becker

EXPLODING THE MYTH OF THE PLO

by Jillian Becker

If the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) can be said to exist at all anymore, it can only be as a political fiction. This has been the case for some years now, but until a few months ago it suited the interests of many states, both Western and Eastern, to believe in it the way older children still let themselves believe in Santa Claus—and for the same reason: most of them still hoped it might bring them a present, namely, peace negotiations.

The PLO before 1982

The PLO was never a cohesive organization. Before its ultimate disintegration in 1982, it consisted of eight groups, supported by different Arab powers. These were inimical to each other, and within the PLO the enmities were fought out, frequently and with bloodshed, group against group, so representative were they, not of the Palestinians, but of their masters.

The largest group was Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat, who from February 1969 had the title of chairman of the PLO. He received money chiefly from Saudi Arabia, some from other Arab oil producers, and some from taxes levied on Palestinian workers in a number of Arab states.

The second biggest was Saiqa, supported by Syria, whose interest in "liberating" Palestine was to acquire it as a Syrian province. Another was the Popular

Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), led by a Greek Orthodox Lebanese doctor, George Habash, whose first patron was President Nasser of Egypt.

From his group two others had broken off in the late 1960s and become constituent factions in their own right: first, the PFLP-GC (General Command), led by a Syrian named Ahmad Jibril, supported by Syria; and then, the PDFLP (the Democratic Front), led by a Jordanian Bedouin Christian named Nayef Hawatmeh, who developed a closer relationship than the others with the Soviet Union.

Hostility between the three groups remained intense through all the years that they were nominally associated with each other under the PLO umbrella—from which, at times, the PFLP all but totally severed itself.

Then there was the ALF (Arab Liberation Front), an Iraqi group with few Palestinian members, which positively did not seek a Palestinian state since its declared aim was a single, unified Arab state under Iraqi hegemony.

In 1977, another group broke off from the PFLP-GC, naming itself the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF). Its main backer was Iraq, but it was also partly financed by Libya. One of the smallest groups was the Palestine Popular Struggle Front, formed by Palestinians of the

West Bank and consisting of about 100 members.

What bound them together just sufficiently was the 1968 covenant, which declared that the aim of the PLO was the total annihilation of Israel through armed struggle only.

After the 1973 war, which the Arabs claimed as a victory, the possibility arose of a Palestinian state being established by negotiation at a multinational peace conference presided over by the United States and the Soviet Union.

The question of whether to enter into negotiations or not split the loosely bound PLO into two main policy groups opposed to each other. On the one side, Fatah, the PDFLP (which followed



© VIC CANTONE

not accurate
not mine

TERRORIST GROUPS WORLDWIDE

MIDDLE EAST

PALESTINIANS

Arab Liberation Front (ALF)
Abu Nidal Group
Al-Asifa
Al-Beeir
Arab Nationalist Movement
Arab Nationalist Youth Organization for the Liberation of Palestine
Arab Revolutionary Army—Palestine Command
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)
Black September Group
~~Black September June Organization~~
Eagles of the Palestine Revolution
The Storm (al-Saiga)
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC)
Popular Struggle Front (PSF)
Palestine Liberation Front
Palestine Communist Party
Palestine National Front (PNF)
Palestine Liberation Organization
Movement for the National Liberation of Palestine

BAHRAIN

Al-Sandūq Al-Husseini Society
Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain
National Liberation Front Bahrain
Popular Liberation Front of Aman and The Arab Gulf

IRAQ

Al-Daawa (The Call)
Dawah Party
Dissident Baathists
Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK)
Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)
Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP)
Kurdish Socialist Party (Bassok)
National Front for the Liberation of Iraq (NFLI)
National Democratic and Pan-Arab Front
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)
Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq
Unified Kurdistan Socialist Party (UKSP)

ISRAEL

Arab Liberation Front
Black June Organization
Black September Organization
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Heroes of the Return
Movement of Arab Nationalists
Palestine Armed Struggle Command
Palestine Liberation Army
Palestine Liberation Front
Palestine Liberation Organization
Palestine National Front in Occupied Territories
Palestine National Liberation Movement
Palestine Popular Struggle Front
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command
Rejection Front
Sa'iqā
Najure Carta
Redemption of Israel
Jewish Defense League

JORDAN

Arab Nationalist Movement
Force-17

Jordanian Communist Party (JCP)

Moslem Brotherhood

KUWAIT

Moslem Fundamentalists



The U.S. Embassy, in Beirut, following a terrorist bombing.

COURTESY/U.S. DEFENSE DEPT.

the Soviet line, and the Soviet Union wanted the peace conference), and Saïqa (which did as Syria wished it to do, and Syria was being armed by the Soviet Union) agreed that their aims could be attained by negotiation as well as armed struggle and that "Palestine" could be "recovered" in stages instead of all at once—first; the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza; then, Israel.

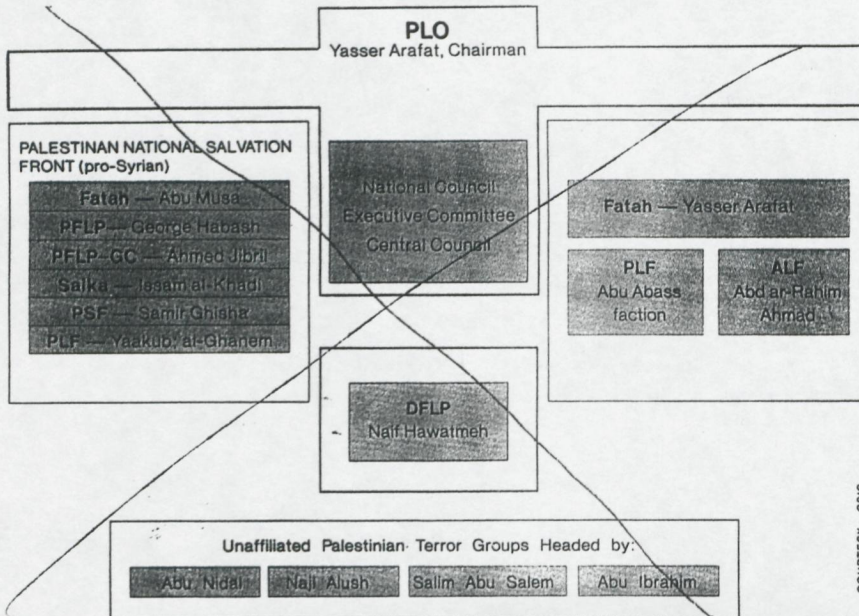
On the other side, the remaining groups (not including the PLF, which had not yet come into existence) rejected both modifica-

tions and so came to be known as the "rejectionists." The Fatah-led side was the majority by far, and so the new "moderate" proposals were adopted as official policy by subsequent Palestine National Councils (PNCs), one which met in 1974, when the "stages" idea was ratified, and one in 1977, when political negotiation was accepted as an auxiliary means to achieve the Palestinian state.

For all the divisions within it, the PLO occasionally gave the appearance of unity during the years that it held territory in Lebanon. In 1975 and 1976, the alien

CURRENT ISSUES

STRUCTURE OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO)



PLO, heavily armed by Syria, and in alliance with some revolutionary Lebanese factions, waged a civil war against the Lebanese Christians. Syrian forces came in to impose peace and gain control of the territory, but Israel warned them not to advance or dig in too close to her border. President Hafez Assad of Syria handed over West Beirut to Yasser Arafat and drew back his forces to the east of Lebanon, where they remain to this day.

The PLO gained unchallenged possession of most of southern Lebanon, subjecting the Lebanese and Palestinian refugees alike to the arbitrary and trigger-happy rule of its internally warring factions.

When President Sadat of Egypt made his historic journey to Jerusalem in November 1977, the immediate response of all the PLO groups was to declare themselves united in their opposition to Egypt's treachery. But within a few weeks, they split apart irrevocably over reactions to the

Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

Arafat wanted to keep a line open to Sadat, but the other groups wanted only Sadat's blood. Mutinies raged within Fatah itself, not for the first time.

In 1973, a splinter group led by Abu Nidal (real name, Sabri al-Banna) mutinied and has attacked Arafat men with as much fury as Israelis ever since. Arafat, in turn, condemned Abu Nidal to death and ordered the death of a number of his rival's followers. In 1978, some 140 Fatah men broke away, most of them under the leadership of Abu Daoud who had planned the massacre of the Israeli athletes at the Olympic games in Munich in 1972; some of Abu Nidal's men joined forces with the new rebels. Groups proliferated as the "united" organization continued to crumble away.

The final, visible dissolution of the PLO came when the organization was pushed out of Beirut by the Israelis in August 1982. Ara-

fat sought for somewhere to go, for an Arab government that would take him in. President Bourguiba finally agreed to let him lodge in Tunis, with a small contingent of armed supporters.

The rest of the fighters who remained loyal to him, about one-third of the Palestinian fighting force, were banished to an island off the coast of Yemen. Among those who went with Arafat to Tunis was the leader of the PLF, Abu Abbas, and most of its small membership, although some of them broke away and went to Damascus. The ALF retracted into Iraq.

The other faction leaders were allowed into Syria by Assad, and there they went, unreconciled to each other, and their fighting men were shut away in camps. An initial restlessness among them was soon settled by the prompt arrival of Assad's tanks.

After 1982

In 1982, a full-scale internecine war broke out within the Fatah organization. Arafat returned to Lebanon, to the northern town of Tripoli, where he still had some supporters in the camps. Angry cohorts of rebel Fatah fighters, armed and paid by Syria and led by a Fatah officer, Abu Musa (real name, Musa Sa'id), besieged the camps; they were bitter at what they saw as their betrayal in 1982 by inept, cowardly, and greedy commanders, especially Abu Ammar (better known as Yasser Arafat) and Haj Ismail, who had ruled Sidon with the gun and greatly enriched himself with loot but had fled ignominiously before the Israeli advance in June 1982.

They rained fire upon Arafat

TERRORIST GROUPS WORLDWIDE

LEBANON

Al Amal
 Arab Democratic Party
 Arab Socialist Action Party
 Armenian Community
 Armenian Revolutionary Federation
 Al-Murabitoun Militia
 Alawite Youth
 Arab Liberation Party
 Cedar Guardians
 Christian Militia
 Conservative Lebanese Front or Kufur Front
 Druse Progressive Socialist Party
 Free Lebanese Army
 Front for the Liberation of Lebanon
 Fityan Ali Organization
 Guardians of the Cedars of Lebanon
 Hezbollah
 Islamic Amal
 Islamic Group
 Independent Nasserite Movement
 Kataeb
 Lebanese National Movement
 Lebanese Revolutionary Party (LRP)
 Lebanese Communist Party
 Lebanese Forces
 Lebanese Youth Movement
 Lebanese Red Brigades
 Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Factions
 Marada Militia
 Maronite League
 Marada Brigade
 Movement of the Disinherited
 Murabitoun
 Muslim Brotherhood
 Musawi
 Nationalist Front
 National Guards
 National Liberation Militia
 National Movement
 National Resistance Front
 Organization of Holy Struggle
 Organization of Revolutionaries of the North (ORN)
 Organization of the Baath Party
 Organization of Communist Action
 Organization of the Oppressed in the World
 Palestine Liberation Organization
 Permanent Congress of the Lebanese Order of Monks
 Phal'Ange, or Lebanese Phalangist Party
 Pink Panther/Militia
 Populist Nasserite Organization
 Progressive Socialist Party
 Progressive Vanguard
 Rawnad Al Islah Militia
 Revolutionary Islamic Organization
 South Lebanon Army
 Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party
 Tanzim
 Towhid Tigers Militia
 Union of Forces of the Working People-Corrective Movement
 Zahra Bloc
 Zghartan Liberation Army
 Workers' League

OMAN

Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO)
 Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF)
 Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG)

QATAR

Popular Front for the Liberation of the Arabian Peninsula
 Shi'ite Moslem Fundamentalists

and his last few supporters in Lebanon, Palestinians who, being encamped in the north, had not had to live under his tyranny between 1976 and 1982. He would certainly have been killed had he not run for his life to the sea and sailed away under the protection of the United Nations.

From then on, Arafat was the leader of a minority faction of the PLO—except that it was no longer possible to speak of the PLO and its factions. New groups were formed out of the disintegrated parts. Arafat's remnant of Fatah, along with the PDFLP, the PFLP, a part of the PLF, and a newly formed communist group, banded together as the Democratic Alliance. The remaining factions, those under the protection of Assad, called themselves the National Salvation Alliance. Which group now was "the sole representative of the Palestinian people"—as the PLO had been termed by the Arab states since 1974?

Western wishful thinking

Still the world—that is, the United Nations, Western governments and the media, and the Soviet Union spoke of "the PLO." What they meant by it was Arafat and his broken piece of a group. He still bore the title of PLO Chairman, making it possible, with a little political license, to call that piece the PLO. He also held another asset: a fair amount of support among Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories. The great powers still hoped that he might be able to speak for the Palestinian people if only negotiations could be launched to settle territorial disputes.

It must have seemed to Arafat

that his luck was endless. With no effective armed strength, with such as he had removed too far from Israel to launch attacks across its borders, with Arab leaders—Qaddafi and Assad—refusing to let him set foot in their territory, he was nevertheless courted by newsmen, received by the Pope, and made welcome and treated as a head of state in many lands, both East and West. His "minister of foreign affairs," Farouq Qaddoumi, was sought out in Tunis by a junior minister of the British Foreign Office, Douglas Hurd, now Home Secretary.

Which group now was "the sole representative of the Palestinian people"—as the PLO had been termed by the Arab states since 1974?

It was rumored that President Assad was worried that Arafat might set up a Palestinian government-in-exile in Cairo; Mubarak of Egypt received him with honor, and King Hussein of Jordan conducted a series of talks with him. Something was expected of him by the powers, and as long as this was the case, he went on smiling for the cameras.

Apparently the world supposed that he could deliver peace, or negotiations for peace, or permission to the king of Jordan to negotiate for peace—if only he would. By the look of it, "the PLO," in his person, had never been so important, even in its heyday, when its chairman had

received a standing ovation in the United Nations (just fourteen months after the Munich Massacre by his Black September terrorists) or when he had sat like a president of his own little state in Lebanon.

Yet he may have suspected how hollow was the ground on which he walked, how it quaked beneath red carpets spread for him even in Western Europe. In November 1984, he managed to call a PNC in Damascus, with some slight support from his less unfriendly partners in the old PLO. The assembly itself was packed with notables on whom he could rely. The idea was that he would be strengthened by their assured support by the mere fact that a PNC of some kind had been summoned to lend a semblance of legitimate sanction to such decisions and actions as he might be pushed to take, however much opposition might be voiced by other faction leaders and the heads of the "progressive" Arab states.

The Events of 1985

In February 1985, Arafat reached an agreement with King Hussein of Jordan. It was widely hailed as a breakthrough. There would be a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, the media claimed, ready to start peace talks with Israel. The Israeli government declared itself willing to enter into such talks, provided there were no PLO members in the Arab team.

King Hussein wanted the long-sought multinational conference. He would understandably feel safer from the wrath of other Arab heads of state if both the United States, as arms suppliers to the "conservatives," and the Soviet Union, as arms suppliers

to the "progressives," were to participate. The prospects for a negotiated peace looked more promising than ever before. Arafat must have felt head-of-stateship for himself, or something very much like it; to be almost within his grasp. He had to bring off just one more trick. The conference would have to declare the West Bank and Gaza a self-governing Palestinian entity, but the issue of whether it would be a province of Jordan, as the king wished it to be or a Palestinian state, as he must have it, would be clarified, once the territory had been wrested from Israel's grasp.

But the conference itself had to get under way without his conceding recognition to Israel, without seeming to abandon the armed struggle, and with his own men as the Palestinian side of the Arab negotiating team to prove

that his PLO was still the "sole representative of the Palestinian people."

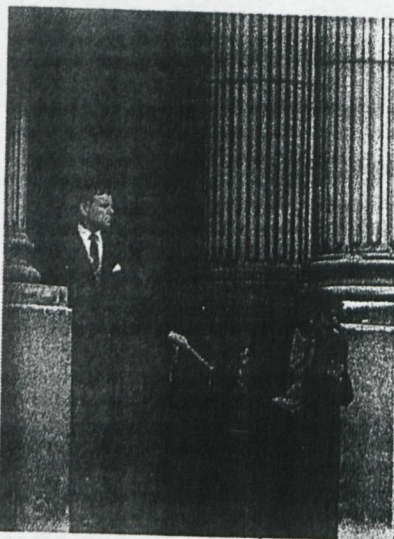
Even to Arafat himself, it must have looked like a tough proposition. But his luck might hold, and something might turn up to help him unexpectedly as it so often had before.

Whatever the media had reported, he had not, in fact conceded the Israeli conditions backed by the United States: recognition of Israel's right to exist, abandonment of the armed struggle, and no PLO members in the Jordanian team. The talks he had been having over many months with the government of Jordan had not been about how to make peace with Israel or about which Palestinians could join a Jordanian negotiating team.

They had for most of that time been about whether or not the king could be persuaded to let Arafat's fighters come from their distant island and establish themselves in bases in Jordan so they could make raids on Israel. The February 1985 agreement had been a compromise. The king finally conceded that Arafat might have a headquarters in Amman but no bases for the Fatah militiamen—the *fedayeen*—anywhere in Jordan.

Arafat was disappointed but did not contradict the king when he announced his joint-delegation plan (Palestinian names to be decided later). After all, Arafat had agreed, that negotiation might accompany armed struggle more than ten years ago, so there was nothing new in that.

King Hussein had learned his lesson bitterly. Fifteen years earlier, the fedayeen had established their own state within a state in



Abdul Kareem Khalki holds a hostage by chain outside the Nantes courtroom he had immobilized in order to release two defendants on trial. Khalki belongs to the Abu Nidal faction of the Palestinian terror network.

TERRORIST GROUPS WORLDWIDE

SAUDI ARABIA

Baath Party of Saudi Arabia
Communist Party of Saudi Arabia
Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Man in Saudi Arabia
El-Salat El-Saleh (Sunnite)
Moslem Revolutionary Movement in the Arabian Peninsula
Party of Labor
Popular Front for the Liberation of the Arabian Peninsula
Shi'ite Moslem Fundamentalists
Union of the People of the Arabian Peninsula

SYRIA

Arab Communist Organization
Islamic Front in Syria
Moslem Brotherhood
National Alliance for the Liberation of Syria
National Salvation Command
Party of Communist Action
Vanguard of the Arab Revolution

SOUTH YEMEN

Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen - FLOSY
National Democratic Front - NDF
National Liberation Front - NLF
Organisation for the Liberation of the Occupied South - OLOS
South Arabian League

YUGOSLAVIA

Cominformists
Croat Illegal Revolutionary Organisation (Hrvatska Illegalna Revolucionarna Organizacija—HIRO)
Croat Liberation Movement (Hrvatski Oslobojilacki Pokret—HOP)
Croat National Congress (Hrvatsko Narodno Vijeće—HNV)
Croat National Resistance (Hrvatski Narodni Otpor—HNO)
Croatian Intelligence Service
Croatian National Liberation Forces—Fighters for a Free Croatia
Croatian National Resistance
Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood (Hrvatsko Revolucionarno Bratstvo—HRB)
Croatian Youth (Hrvatska Mladetz—HM)
Drina
Fighters for a Free Croatia (Borciza Slobodnu Hrvatsku—BSH)
Freedom for the Serbian Fatherland (SOPO)
Krizari (Crusaders)
Rebel Croat Revolutionary Organisation (Ustasa Hrvatska Revolucionarna Organizacija—UHRO)
Trotskyist Organization
United Croats of West Germany (Ujedinjeni Hrvati Njemске—UHNJ)
World League of Croat Youth (Svetska Liga Hrvatske Omladine—SLHO)
Young Croatian Army for Freedom
Young Croatian Republican Army

ALBANIA

Anti-Communist Military Council

AUSTRIA

Justice Guerrilla

BELGIUM

Julien Lahaut Brigade

Revenge and Freedom

CYPRUS

Enosis Movement (EOKA-B)

Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston—EOKA

(National of Cypriot Fighters)

Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston-B

—EOKA-B (National Organisation of Cypriot

Fighters-B)

his kingdom. Armed by Syria, they had nearly toppled him from his throne by force. They had coveted Jordan as part of Palestine. In 1970 and 1971, he had gone to war against them and finally expelled them after much bloodshed. They would have won if Syrian intervention on their side had not been stopped by the Israelis, who, as a warning, massed their own forces on the Israeli-Syrian-Jordanian border. King Hussein will not easily be persuaded to give another opportunity to Arafat brethren to attempt his destruction again.

Arafat lacked strength in his bargaining position. He had only one ace in his hand. King Hussein had, under threat of death, recognized the PLO as "the sole representative of the Palestinian people" at an Arab summit held at Rabat in 1974. At least two-thirds of his subjects on the East Bank of the Jordan are Palestinian—that is, they were born in the area designated as Palestine when it came under British mandatory rule after the First World War. That fact could, however, be overlooked.

The West Bank was a different story: there, just about all the Arab inhabitants are Palestinian. His acquiescing in the Rabat decision was tantamount to a formal acknowledgment that the rightful claimant to the West Bank was not he but the PLO. He could not enter into negotiations over territory, and therefore over a peace settlement, with Israel without the agreement of the PLO, as long as there was anything widely recognized as owning that name. He needed Arafat's consent—unless the other Arab states were willing to recon-

sider the Rabat decision.

Jordan was not strong enough to defy the veto of the PLO alone, as Egypt had done. But all decisions of the Arab League have to be unanimous. If Arafat could not make the king's peace with Israel possible, then Assad, King Hussein's worst enemy, would have to be persuaded to let him negotiate with Israel, recognize Israel, call off the holy war against Israel—all that Assad stood fiercely against! But last summer, it still looked as if Arafat was capable of giving King Hussein the go-ahead, so the king did not need to petition Assad. That hopeless attempt was to come later.

Passing the political buck

President Assad owes his swollen prestige chiefly to the refusal of the West to insist on his withdrawing from Lebanon; to its failure to condemn or even officially notice his command over the suicide terrorist squads that emerged from Baalbek to kill hundreds of Americans in the U.S. embassy in Beirut and the Marine headquarters in 1983 and 1984; and to the stream of visiting Arab leaders, and occasional American diplomats, who come to kneel figuratively speaking on his mat. He can say a decisive "no" and there is no one to compel him to change his mind.

Or is there? The Soviet Union has some 7,000 advisers in Syria and has armed Assad's army so heavily with small arms, artillery, fighter aircraft, and SAM (surface to air) missiles, that it is reasonable to believe that he is susceptible to Soviet influence. The Soviet Union, however, was still looking to Arafat to get them into a peace conference with a



London's Heathrow Airport two days after the Vienna and Rome airports were attacked by Abu Nidal's hit squads. Tanks, armoured vehicles, and armed soldiers participate in a security exercise.

status equal to that of the United States. That would give the Soviets what they have long been craving—a legitimate role in the Middle East.

It is for that prize the Soviets have hitherto been giving their support to Arafat. They saw that Western European governments, anxious that there should be somebody who could negotiate for the Palestinians, were prepared to grant him recognition, in varying degrees, as leader of a "representative" body, which they continued to call the PLO. The Western European governments gave him that recognition partly because the Soviet Union did, which meant that the Soviets would not oppose any agreement he might reach, and partly because the conservative Arab states continued to recognize him as chairman of the PLO. The conservative Arab leaders had to recognize somebody as leader of the PLO in which they had invested

special rights of decision; and Arafat, unlike the other faction chiefs, belonged by background and inclination to their side of the great conservative-progressive divide.

Israel blocked the possibility of the Soviet Union participating in multinational peace talks by insisting that it would accept no country with which it does not have diplomatic relations. This has prompted the Soviets to consider reestablishing such relations, which were broken off after Israel's victory in 1967. Israel has another object in view in entering discussions to this end with the patron of her bitterest enemies: the release of Jewish would-be emigrants from the Soviet Union.

The British invitation

The months of 1985 wore on, and visible developments were slow. Arafat prevaricated. He could not now, at this vital junc-

ture, give up his claim to "sole representative" status and let other men acceptable to Israel but distant from him negotiate for territory. He wanted Palestine on the map, but he could not take the step that might now bring it into existence. He waited. And his luck held. Something turned up for him once more.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, while on her official visit to Egypt and Jordan in September 1985, decided that two members of Arafat's PNC might have talks with the foreign secretary. Her decision was sudden. In Cairo, she told the press that she, like President Reagan, hoped for a Palestinian delegation as part of a Jordanian negotiating team and was only waiting for acceptable names of persons not connected with the PLO to be put forward. In Aqaba, Jordan, a few days later, she announced that Mr. Mohammed Milhem and Bishop Elia Khoury, both members of

Arafat's PNC, were to come to London for talks with the foreign secretary. Somewhere up in the clouds between Cairo and Amman it seems, she had changed her mind. Or perhaps King Hussein persuaded her to accept the persons Arafat was prepared to send.

The invitation restored Arafat to the forefront of the world-shaking Middle East political drama. Fair prospects opened before him again. Here at last was official recognition of his organization's representative status by the British government. No junior minister was to meet with his people now, but the foreign secretary himself. Perhaps, through Thatcher, his shrunken PLO might even reach the best position of all—recognition by the United States government.

Thatcher could not have examined the Israeli-Jordanian-Palestinian question of the moment with her usual care and insight. If the role of mediator was what she had in mind, the choice of two men entirely unacceptable to one side of any proposed peace talks—the Israeli side—was counterproductive. Perhaps she hoped that if she extracted from these two representatives a promise that the PLO would recognize Israel and give up violence, it would be so significant a breakthrough that Israel would relent and smooth the way to a settlement after all.

Probably assurances were given by King Hussein, or attributed to him, that the two PNC men would declare themselves willing to pursue peaceful means only to settle the Palestinian question and that they would recognize Israel's right to exist. It is more

than likely that Arafat believed that once Mr. Milhem and Bishop Khoury were in London, a verbal formula might be devised, like so often in the past, of such a kind as to convey one meaning to Britain and the West (moderation) and quite another to the Arab world (steadfastness).

Sir Geoffrey Howe did not offer proofs to back up his assurances that these were "men of peace" who were willing to recognize Israel's right to exist, although such proofs were requested. In fact, all available evidence pointed the other way. Both men had gone on record as saying, firmly and publicly, several times in the preceding months, that they

But the cold-blooded murder of an elderly, crippled American, Leon Klinghoffer, on the Achille Lauro was not so easily digestible.

would most certainly not abandon the armed struggle.

Howe did, however, assure Britain and the world that they would sign a clear statement committing themselves to abandonment of violence and recognition of Israel. A clear statement in plain English? No. They would not, could not do it, they said. They went away without meeting Howe.

The British government was left with egg on its face, though not nearly as much as if the meeting had taken place. The excuse for having ventured to the brink was that assurances had been

given by King Hussein. But King Hussein, through the national press, denied all culpability. He himself, he said innocently, had been misled.

Howe also wore a look of wounded innocence. Yet innocence had not been within splashing range. The truth is, there had been excellent reason to call off the meeting before the arrival of the two PNC envoys, had not the foreign office been blindly determined that it should take place. What is remarkable in retrospect is how tenaciously some civil servants must have clung to their plan of getting the foreign secretary to receive Arafat's men in the face of events that should have induced anyone in a position of responsibility for Britain's fair name to abandon it.

Arafat overreaches himself

It was while the visit of Arafat's envoys to London was awaited that the murder of three Israelis at Larnaca was carried out by members of Arafat's Force 17, one of whom was a British citizen. And soon afterwards came the terrorist attack on the Achille Lauro cruiser, carried out by members of the PLF.

The Larnaca affair did not send a noticeable tremor through Britain or any other Western country and the news media generally found that those killings could be borne with fortitude. But the cold-blooded murder of an elderly, crippled American, Leon Klinghoffer, on the Achille Lauro was not so easily digestible. The media hastened to report that Arafat was acting as honest broker, trying to persuade the terrorists on the vessel to stop their action. He was being assisted by another

honest broker, Abu Abbas, but then again they were his men, and not members of the other piece of the PLF loyal to Assad. And if he was their leader, then he must surely have had something to do with their activities in the first place. Furthermore, Abu Abbas had his office in Arafat's Tunis headquarters. If such actions as this could be planned in those headquarters without Arafat knowing, there was little point in negotiating with him, or getting his signature to any agreement whatsoever, since he clearly had no control even over those nearest to him. If, on the other hand, he had been party to the plans, did this not contradict the British foreign secretary's assertion that his two representatives were men of peace who had abandoned violence in favor of negotiation?

Abu Abbas welcomed his men ashore in Cairo, and the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, made a plane available to them. When the United States asked him not to let them go, he replied that it was too late, they had already gone. But they had not, and the Americans knew it. When it did leave Egypt, the United States Air Force compelled the plane to land on Italian soil. The Italian prime minister, Mr. Craxi, preferred to uphold the tale of Abu Abbas being an honest broker and thus let him go, to the fury of the United States administration. By then, it was fairly obvious that Arafat's faction had no intention of abandoning violence. Still, the British foreign office did not call off the projected meeting with Arafat's men.

But the case is worse even than that. The disastrous and ugly



Yasser Arafat

truth about all that diplomatic folly is this: the very fact that the British government declared Milhem and Khoury to be men of peace, its insistence that Arafat's PLO was willing to abandon the armed struggle and recognize Israel, forced Arafat to launch the Larnaca and Achille Lauro plans. He had to prove to the Arab world that he was still what he was paid to be—the wager of the holy war against Israel.

Pride before a fall

He had made his worst mistake. Just as it seemed that Thatcher would raise him to the heights of success, he fell.

Arafat is now thoroughly discredited. Even his own propagandists cannot deny it, but they are doing their best to repair the colossal damage. They print headlines announcing his "comeback."

As yet, however, no such thing is perceptible, nor is it very likely.

If the West looks upon him with distaste, it is not worth the Soviets' while to go on backing him as their most likely entry ticket to a peace conference. After all, he had never really been their

sort.

But Arafat knows that if he loses Soviet support he will drop out of the wide political arena where he has circled and performed for nearly twenty years. He is therefore very anxious to please the Soviets. When, very recently, he was warned by Moscow not to interfere in the bloody faction fighting between rival power groups of communist South Yemen, he strove to obey. His fighters remained passive on their Kamaran Island—which indicates that over them, at least, he still has some control.

How long these wild men will contain their frustration is a question that might trouble Arafat himself as he shifts insecurely between Tunis and Baghdad. In Tunis, he is no longer welcome since Israel's punitive raid on his headquarters there after the Larnarca killings. In Baghdad, he has been granted a narrow foothold by President Saddam Hussein, perhaps through Abu Abbas's honest brokerage. For Arafat himself, the question of how he can use his fighters has importance but not for the rest of the world. He has fallen, and it will not be easy for him to rise again. His power of veto has been suspended. What will happen now depends on King Hussein, Hafez Assad, Israel, the United States, the Soviet Union and Western Europe, all of which are watching each other for the next move. ■

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