

Mr Powell

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PALESTINIANS: 26 MAY

1. This evening's dinner is the subject of sharp debate amongst Palestinians here. Although I have been assured that Khalil al Wazir (Abu Jihad) conveyed PLO approval to Palestinians in the Occupied Territories meeting the Prime Minister, the more radical supporters of the PLO - and the Rejectionists - have been mounting a determined campaign for a total boycott. The mouthpiece of this group is Ash-Shaab, whose editor summarised their views to me this afternoon as being that this was the only proper response to British refusal to receive Bishop Khoury and Mayor Milhem in London on 14 October 1985; and Britain's support of the US "aggression" on Libya. I have, however, been assured by Hanna Siniora and other moderate Arafat supporters that they will not be deterred by this campaign.
2. Siniora is the leading light in the efforts to prepare a Memorandum to be presented to the Prime Minister. This is a cause of dissention amongst the group: Shawwa has told me he objects in principle to the idea of a Memorandum, and Mayor Freij has said that he will not sign a Memorandum "under any circumstances", even if he agrees with the content. There is to be a final "drafting meeting" this evening, attended by all the Palestinian guests. The balance of probabilities is that all will attend, whether or not all sign the Memorandum. But it is quite possible that there will be tensions within the group. For this reason in particular, I have sought to make each of the groups during dinner as homogeneous as possible.
3. I saw the first draft of the proposed Memorandum, which had some promising elements (though also some unsatisfactory ones). I have not been able to get hold of the latest version, which I gather is a good deal shorter. I have been assured that every effort is being made to make the tone "positive".
4. Despite some of the reactions in the press (see attached note) the Prime Minister's speech last night seems to have been well received by our guests, who have noted in particular the point that economic proposals cannot be a substitute for a policy for peace. This meets a particular concern that support for "quality of life" projects and economic development is designed to promote a "Camp David autonomy", rather than a broader solution (the Jerusalem Post headline this morning suggests the Prime Minister is supporting "devolution steps" on the West Bank, and is not helpful in this respect). When discussing the "quality of life" the guests will be certain to emphasize that the most important single factor affecting their lives is the Israeli security policy: and that no amount of economic development can compensate for the treatment they endure daily at the hands of the security forces.

Points on which the Prime Minister is likely to be questioned include:

/a)



- a) Attitude to the PLO, in the light of media reports (not yet confirmed by Tunis) that the Dutch Foreign Minister met Arafat yesterday, in his capacity as President of the European Community. Will the UK do the same when it assumes the Presidency on 1 July? (The meeting is likely to revive sensitivities over the failure of the visit of the Joint Delegation last October).
- b) Are the Prime Minister's remarks about "the emergence of responsible political leaders ready for peace" to be interpreted as support for Jordanian and Israeli efforts to create a substitute for the PLO?
- c) Mr Peres is seen to have made positive remarks about the peace process and improvement of conditions in the Occupied Territories; but the Palestinians here do not see any concrete signs of this. Did the Prime Minister press the Israelis - and will she continue to press them - to translate their fine words into realities?
- d) What were the private reactions of Mr Peres and Mr Rabin to the Prime Minister's remarks about eg elections? (Kol Israel broadcast some very negative remarks by Rabin this morning)
- e) Shawwa and Freij in particular will raise the question of creeping extension of settlements, land expropriation etc (the co-Chairman of the World Zionist Organisation Settlement Department was reported in the Arabic press this morning as talking of 2 new settlements in Gaza; and Shawwa will be bound to refer to other encroachments).
- f) Several will be bound to mention aspects of economic development, and in particular access for Palestinian agricultural and other produce to the EC.
- g) For most, the only sure way of achieving a durable settlement is through Jordanian / PLO cooperation: will the Prime Minister use her standing and join eg President Mubarak in urging King Hussein to mend fences?

5. Shawwa's visit to Cairo earlier this month, and his discussion with the Egyptians of proposals for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza "first" (handing over control to the Egyptians), have now been widely publicised in the local press. They have stimulated opposition, as PLO supporters here (and, it would seem, King Hussein) fear that this would complicate, rather than simplify, a settlement of the problems of the West Bank. Shawwa may prefer to say nothing about these proposals on such a relatively public occasion (but will have the opportunity to do so, if he wishes).

6. Siniora and Abu Rahma were both approved by the PLO (and

/subsequently



subsequently Mr Peres) as members of a joint Jordanian /
Palestinian Delegation for discussions with the Americans last
year. Both are very conscious of the damage violence of any
sort does to the Palestinian cause: Siniõra has condemned
particular violent acts in his paper, and Abu Rahma has told me
that when he was abroad last month, he wrote personally to Arafat
(with whom he was at University in Cairo), to say that all forms
of violence (including the "armed struggle") should be renounced.

26 May 1986

P G de Courcy-Ireland

cc: Mr Fergusson

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT: PALESTINIAN PRESS COVERAGE

Saturday: All dailies quoted from Prime Minister's statement to the Press Association

Sunday: All dailies covered Mrs Thatcher's arrival in Israel. Al-Quds (pro-Arafat) and Ash-Shaab (pro-Fatah hard-liners) quoted from her arrival statement, including the point about self-determination.

In its editorial Al-Quds raked over ancient history and went on to say that HMG followed US policy on every issue, the latest example being the Security Council veto last week. HMG had never really backed the Venice Declaration and their attitude to the Palestinians had been demonstrated by refusal to meet PLO members of a Joint Delegation in London last October. If HMG really respected Palestinian self-determination, why did they not deal with their leadership, ie the PLO?

Ash-Shaab commented in its editorial on references by the US, Israel and the UK, to negotiations with "the Palestinians". What they really meant was that they wanted to find an alternative leadership to the PLO. These attempts would fail.

Monday: All papers had front page coverage of the visit, but only Al-Quds quoted from the Prime Minister's speech at the Knesset last night, getting across all the items we would wish.

Al-Quds carries a signed article by a senior editor, critical of HMG's attitude to the PLO. Tonight's meeting with Palestinian personalities was part and parcel of attempts, spearheaded by the US, to find an alternative leadership, but the finger was not pointed at any of those invited to attend. If HMG really wanted to help find a peaceful solution, they should knock on the right door, behind which was the PLO.

Editorial comment in Al-Fajr (pro-Arafat) urged HMG to use their influence to press the US and Israel to recognise Palestinian self-determination, as enshrined in the Venice Declaration, thus removing the most important obstacle to peace.



Al-Mithaq (Rejectionist) and Ash-Shaab reported a statement by institutions in the Occupied Territories denouncing the meeting with Palestinians scheduled for tonight and describing those attending as "outside the national consensus". The statement also criticised Rashad Shawwa and his "Gaza First" proposals and recent Jordanian actions, which were blessed by the US and Israel.

Mr Powell

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PALESTINIANS: 26 MAY 1986

1. I attach a list of the Palestinian guests who have accepted invitations to meet the Prime Minister at dinner this evening. I have been assured that, despite a campaign by radicals (including some Arafat supporters), all will be attending. But I cannot exclude last minute surprises.
2. The guests have been asked to arrive before the Prime Minister's arrival at 8.30 pm, and will be waiting on the terrace at the front of the house. TV camera teams and press photographers will be in the garden to film the introductions; but they will not be allowed in until after the Prime Minister has arrived, and will be required to leave after not more than 5 minutes.
3. At present (1400 hours), the intention is that the Prime Minister should be handed a Memorandum summarising the views of those attending the dinner. All will be meeting shortly beforehand, so change cannot be excluded. The current intention is to give it to her at the end of the evening (to serve as as aide memoire), rather than at the beginning (when it might tend to become an agenda for detailed discussion).
4. Previous meetings with distinguished visitors have tended to have adopted the form of a "majlis" with all present sitting round for a formal exchange of greetings, and an open general discussion. This approach is in conformity with a deeply-rooted Palestinian tradition. However, experience has shown that this can lead to rather sterile exchanges, more particularly if Palestinians of divergent views start sniping amongst themselves. On this occasion, there seems general readiness to accept the Prime Minister's preference for discussion in small groups. It could, however, be useful if she were to say a few words to set the discussions over dinner firmly in context. This might lead to a general discussion rather like a majlis. If the Prime Minister were to wish to make such remarks, I would suggest these be left until shortly before we move into the dining room, thus reducing the opportunity for collective discussion.
5. There will be 3 tables. As there will be 3 courses, I propose that the Prime Minister, Mr Fergusson and myself should change places for each course, thus giving the Prime Minister the opportunity to speak to all the Palestinians individually (the groups have been made as homogeneous as possible). I attach a table plan showing how this would be done.



6. As you will know, the serving of coffee is a sign here that the host considers the occasion is drawing to its end. I suggest that after dessert we move into the sitting room (remaining standing as far as possible), and that coffee is served after say, 20 minutes of further talk, unless you signal to the contrary.

26 May 1986

P G de Courcy-Ireland

cc: Mr Fergusson



IZZAT AL ALLOUL

Born Nablus 1937. Muslim.

Wealth businessman from leading Nablus family. Member of Board of Nablus Chamber of Commerce since 1973. Member of Municipal Council appointed in December 1985, when Zafer al-Masri became Mayor. Deputy Mayor in March 1986, following Masri's assassination.

A pro-Jordanian moderate, not active in national (as opposed to local) politics.

Shrewd and genial, speaks good English.

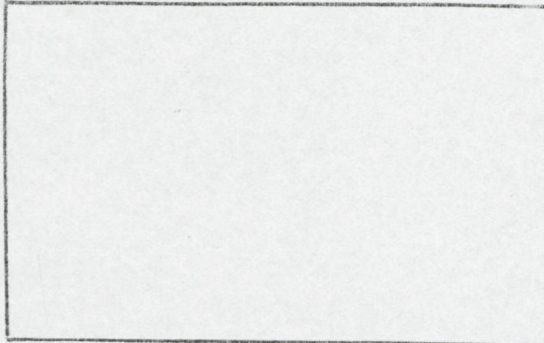
DINNER IN HONOUR OF THE PRIME MINISTER
BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL, JERUSALEM
MONDAY 26 MAY 1986

SEATING PLAN

Mustafa Natshe

Zuhair al Rayyes

1. Prime Minister
2. Mr Fergusson
3. Mr de Courcy-Ireland

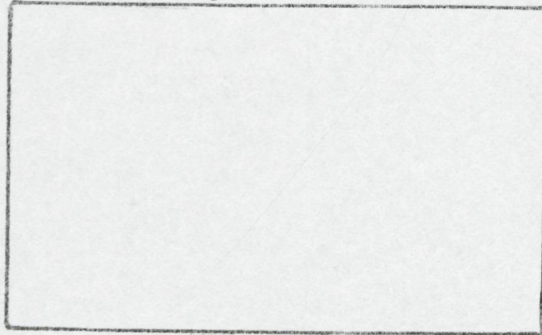


Hanna Siniora

Mr Henderson

Elias Freij

1. Mr de Courcy-Ireland
2. Prime Minister
3. Mr Fergusson

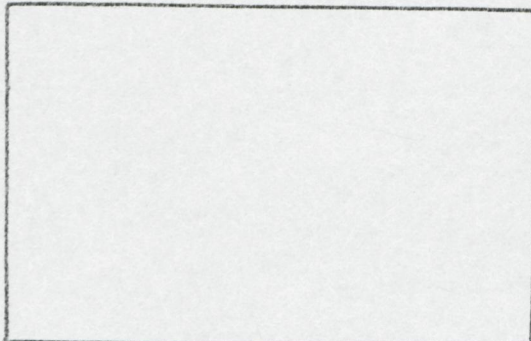


Haj Rashad al Shawwa

Izzat al Aloul

Basil Kan'aan

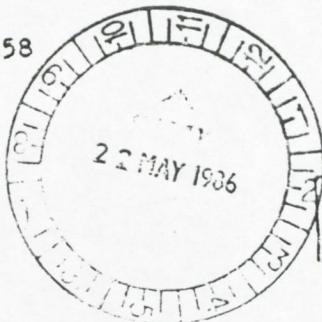
1. Mr Fergusson
2. Mr de Courcy-Ireland
3. Prime Minister



Fayez Abu Rahma

Mrs de Courcy-Ireland

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220800Z MAY
GRS 280



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OF 220800Z MAY 86
UNTO IMMEDIATE AMMAN, TEL AVIV

22/08-04
W/AC London
P/US
Mr Ferguson
Mr Sir D. Meier
Mr N. A. D.
Mr P. O. C. D.
Mr R. L. U.
Mr N. E. D.
Mr I. K. D.
(X10)

YOUR TELNO 28: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PALESTINIANS

1. FREHJ ONLY RETURNED FROM ATHENS AND AMMAN AROUND NOON YESTERDAY.
THE FOLLOWING HAVE NOW ACCEPTED:

1. RASHAD SHAWWA
2. MUSTAPHA NATSHE
3. FAYEZ ABU RAHMA
4. HANNA SANNIORA
5. ELIAS FREHJ
6. BASHIL KAN'AAN
7. ZUHAIR AL RAYYES

2. BARAMKI WAS UNABLE TO ACCEPT. TOUQAN CONFIRMED ACCEPTANCE BEFORE LEAVING FOR AMMAN ON 20 MAY. HOWEVER, HE RECEIVED A TELEPHONE MESSAGE LATE LAST NIGHT, VIA RELATIVES IN THE US, VERY MUCH REGRETTING THAT HE WOULD NOW BE UNABLE TO GET BACK IN TIME FOR THE DINNER.

3. UNEXPECTED CHANGES OF POTENTIAL GUESTS' ESTABLISHED PLANS HAVE THROWN OUT THE CALCULATIONS ON WHICH HE BASED RECOMMENDATIONS IN MY TELNOS 103 AND 106. WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, HE SHOULD HAVE PROVIDED A LONGER LIST OF CONTINGENCY RESERVES. TO HAVE NABLUS REPRESENTED ONLY BY TWO KAN'AANS COULD CAUSE THEM AND US DIFFICULTIES. THE OPTIONS NOW ARE TO RESTRICT OURSELVES TO 7 PALESTINIANS OR TO PROPOSE ADDITIONAL NAME(S). HE RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDE THAT HE MUST RECOMMEND ADDING AT LEAST ONE NAME, EVEN AT THIS LATE STAGE. THE PRESENT BALANCE IS 4 MODERATE ARAFAT SUPPORTERS, AND 3 PRO-JORDANIANS. THOUGH SAID KAN'AAN IS NOW FUNDAMENTALLY IN THE LATTER CAMP, HIS PAST HISTORY (AND THE CAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES WITH THE ISRAELIS) IS AS AN ARAFAT SUPPORTER. THERE WOULD BE A BETTER

BALANCE (CF AMMAN TELNO 212) IF THERE WERE ANOTHER MODERATE PRO-JORDANIAN. THE BEST OPTION WOULD BE HZZAT ALLOUL, WHO IS ACTING MAYOR OF NABLUS IN TOUCAN'S ABSENCE. HE IS A WELL KNOWN NABLUS BUSINESSMAN, WITH GOOD ENGLISH; A TRUSTEE OF AL-NAJAH UNIVERSITY; AND AN ACTIVE SUPPORTER OF AND GENEROUS CONTRIBUTOR TO CHARITABLE WORK IN THE NABLUS AREA. DISCREET INDIRECT SOUNDINGS INDICATE HE SHOULD BE HERE FOR THE DINNER.

4. WE HOPE THERE WILL BE NO MORE LAST MINUTE SURPRISES. HOWEVER, AGAINST THAT POSSIBILITY, IT WOULD SEEM AS WELL TO INCREASE OUR RESERVES, TO PERMIT MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY. IN ADDITION TO SAID KAN'AAN, WE WOULD RECOMMEND IBRAHIM ABDUL HADI, A LEADING MODERATE BUSINESSMAN FROM NABLUS, AND MEMBER OF THE NEW MUNICIPAL COUNCIL (PAGE 1 OF ANNEX TO LPP), AND KHALID OSAILY, A LEADING BUSINESSMAN FROM HEBRON, WHO IS A MODERATE AND PRAGMATIC ARAFAT SUPPORTER (LPP NO 37).

5. I AM MAKING FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS SEPARATELY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF A MEETING WHICH IS LIKELY TO PROVE DELICATE, IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS. STAGE MANAGING WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT, AND WE HOPE YOU CAN AGREE TO INCLUDING HENDERSON (AS WELL, OF COURSE, AS MY WIFE).

DE COURCY-IRELAND

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

16 May 1986

**PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ISRAEL:
MEETING WITH PALESTINIANS**

Thank you for your letter of 15 May setting out the proposed arrangements for the Prime Minister's meeting with leading Palestinians over supper at the Consulate General in Jerusalem on Monday 26 May.

I am sure that the Prime Minister would be content with the arrangements and the selection of Palestinians proposed. I agree that she should be accompanied by Mr. Fergusson and by me. It would be helpful if a place could also be found for Sir David Wolfson.

(C.D. Powell)

Robert Culshaw, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 May 1986

Dear Charles,

Yes

Prime Minister.

Are you content
with these
arrangements?
CDP

Prime Minister's Visit to Israel: Meeting with Palestinians

15/5

We now need to make firm arrangements for the Prime Minister's meeting with leading Palestinians over supper at the Consulate General in Jerusalem on Monday 26 May.

Sir Geoffrey Howe recommends that we should instruct HM Consul General at Jerusalem to arrange for attendance by a group of Palestinians which provides a representative cross-section of leading moderate opinion with a good geographical spread and taking into account local jealousies and sensitivities. The number of representative Palestinians with local stature who are also articulate and meet these criteria is small. But Sir Geoffrey does not recommend inviting any representatives with more extreme views: their presence could inhibit the moderates, a dialogue with them would be unlikely to be productive, and the Israelis might well in any case block their attendance. On this basis Sir Geoffrey recommends attendance by eight Palestinians. I enclose a suggested list with two reserves. HM Consul General assesses the risk of any of the proposed guests choosing to boycott the occasion as slight, although this cannot be ruled out.

No leading Palestinian in the Occupied Territories is able openly to admit membership of the PLO but all of those included in our suggested list except Mayor Freij of Bethlehem proclaim their loyalty to the PLO, whatever their private reservations. They are likely to state this in public after their meeting with the Prime Minister. Mr Coles sees a risk that the Jordanians may also take it amiss if the group devote much of the meeting to lauding the current PLO leadership and, by implication or in terms, criticising King Hussein's policy. The Jordanians may not welcome the

/inclusion

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inclusion of Hanna Siniara who has openly criticised Jordanian policy after the break with the PLO. But Sir Geoffrey believes that his omission would be taken by the Palestinians as a deliberate snub to their indigenous leadership as he was selected by the PLO, with US, Jordanian and Israeli acquiescence, as one of the two Palestinians to form part of a joint delegation to meet a United States delegation. To forestall Jordanian criticism Sir Geoffrey proposes to ask Mr Coles to outline in advance to the Jordanians arrangements for the meeting.

Palestinians are more than usually inclined to indulge in sterile argument about the legalities of the Arab/Israel dispute when speaking formally to Western representatives in front of an audience of their peers. To diminish this problem the Consul General intends to organise an informal buffet supper. The guests would be seated at three tables of four, to enable the Prime Minister to move around between courses and have a good talk with each group. We recommend that the Prime Minister be accompanied by Mr Fergusson and a Private Secretary.

It is likely that the Palestinians will present a memorandum on the Arab/Israel dispute. This is a tiresome but probably inevitable formality which enables all participants to claim that they have put certain views on record. The Prime Minister would not be required to respond to this. Nor do we recommend that the Prime Minister should make any formal speech, although some informal opening remarks on her visit and British concern for Palestinian rights would be appropriate.

The Israelis already know that the Prime Minister plans to meet a group of Palestinians and have accepted that this will be outside her official Israeli programme. In accordance with our past practice we propose to give them in advance the names of the Palestinians to be invited. This reduces the risk that the Israelis could attempt to disrupt the occasion.

Done now

R N Culshaw

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street

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PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ISRAEL: 24-27 MAY 1986

PALESTINIAN PERSONALITIES

DR GABI BARAMKI

Dean and Acting President of Bir Zeit University since 1974. Born 1929, university studies in Beirut and Montreal. Orthodox Christian. Staunch Palestinian nationalist (and supporter of Arafat), but adopts a relatively moderate, pragmatic approach. Met Sir G Howe in Jerusalem in 1984. Excellent English.

ELIAS FREIJ

Businessman and Mayor of Bethlehem since 1972. Born 1918. Greek Orthodox Christian. Leading moderate, with links with Mr Peres, accused by the radicals of being a collaborator. Publicly committed to, but privately very critical of, the PLO leadership. Met Sir G Howe in Jerusalem in 1984 and has also met Mr Shultz in Washington. Excellent English.

BASIL KAN'AAN

Leading pro-Jordanian in Nablus. Born 1938, businessman and farmer. Close family links with Jordan. More prepared than most to have dealings with the Israeli authorities if satisfied that this is of benefit to Palestinians. Fair English.

MUSTAFA NATSHE

Acting Mayor of Hebron (1980-83). Born 1930, prominent businessman. Moslem. Moderate, pragmatic supporter of Arafat. Reputation for courage and plain speaking, eg condemnation of terrorist attacks against Israelis in 1983 and 1985. Fair English.

FAYEZ ABU RAHME

One of the two candidates proposed by the PLO in 1985 as Palestinian members of a joint delegation to meet the US, also acceptable to both US and Israel. Until recently President of the Gaza Strip Bar Association. Born 1929, studied in Cairo. Moslem. One of Arafat's leading supporters in Gaza. Good English.

HAJ RASHAD SHAWWA

Deposed Mayor of Gaza. Born 1908, educated in Jerusalem, Beirut and Cairo. Moslem. A distinguished and patrician figure from Gaza's leading family with a long history of political activity. Extensive social and charitable work. A pragmatic moderate whose main objective is to end Israeli occupation: mixed relations with the PLO. Met Sir G Howe in Jerusalem in 1984 and has met Mr Shultz in Washington. Good English.

HANNA SINIORA

One of the two candidates proposed by the PLO in 1985 as Palestinian members of a joint delegation to meet the US, also acceptable to both US and Israel. Jerusalem newspaper publisher. Born 1937, educated in Jerusalem, San Francisco, Beirut and Benares. Committed support of Arafat. Forthright and articulate. Good English.

HAFEZ TOUQAN

Vice President of Nablus Chamber of Commerce and successor to Zafer Al Masri as Mayor of Nablus. Born 1931. Moslem. Moderate political views. Limited English.

ReservesZUHAIR RAYYES

Journalist and businessman. Born 1935. Law graduate from Gaza. Pro-Arafat. Limited English.

SAID KAN'AAN

Businessman and pro-Fatah activist in Nablus. Born 1940, educated in Beirut. Moslem. A committed proponent of joint Jordanian/Palestinian action. Good English.

