

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The President

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T2180/89



SUBJECT
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17th December, 1989

Dear Mrs. Prime Minister,

In keeping with the tradition of regular consultations between us and exchange of views on matters of common concern, I am writing this letter to apprise You of the latest developments of an issue in which Your Government and You personally have shown much interest: the Palestinian Question.

Since the constructive resolutions adopted by the Palestinian National Council at its 19th session at Algiers in November 1988, we have been trying to activate the peace process and give it a new impetus. The United States, which decided to engage in a dialogue with the PLO in support of this trend, submitted a proposal that a number of Palestinian personalities living in the occupied territories be authorized to hold a dialogue with the Israeli Government to discuss the elections proposal. The U.S. side made clear that such authorization did not compromise the role or the legal status of the PLO. Rather, the United States argued that such a step would convince Israeli public opinion in the future of the possibility of direct negotiations with the PLO.

President George Bush discussed this proposal with me during my visit to Washington D.C. on 2nd October 1989.

After consultations with Mr. Yasser Arafat and other PLO leaders, it was viewed that, for the proposed dialogue to be positive, three requirements are essential.

1. That the PLO should name the Palestinian delegation;
2. That the Palestinian delegation be composed of individuals from inside and outside the occupied territories;



- and 3. That the Palestinian delegation will be allowed to raise other issues besides that of elections.

On 6th October 1989, we received from the United States what came afterwards to be known as "the Baker Plan" for Palestinian -Israeli dialogue. We explained to the American side that the PLO, as the legitimate representative that speaks in the name of the Palestinian people, was the party that had the authority to pronounce itself on that proposal.

On 5th November 1989, Israel informed the United States that it had accepted the Baker proposals, linking such acceptance with certain assumptions, most important among which were : That the Palestinian delegation would be composed of personalities living in the occupied territories and accepted by Israel; that Israel would not negotiate with the PLO; that the topic to be discussed during the dialogue would be how to hold elections in the West Bank and Gaza according to the Israeli elections proposal and that Egypt and the United States should publicly support the principles of the Camp David Framework, especially those related to the phases of negotiation.

Having secured Israeli acceptance of the Baker proposals, the United States expected to receive the position of the PLO. The latter found it difficult to develop its position before obtaining specific clarifications from the U.S. Administration. Several points of clarification were put to the United States which handed to Egypt the replies thereto on 16th November.

The answers to the queries were not satisfactory on two points: the right of the PLO to name the Palestinian delegation to the dialogue and whether Israel would be permitted to veto the names of the delegation members. Besides, the PLO was of the opinion that the agenda of the dialogue should be open.



On 27th November, the PLO requested Egypt to convey additional points of clarification to the United States regarding the role of the PLO in the peace process and in naming the Palestinian delegation and the international peace conference. The reply came on the same day, responding to some of the concerns of the PLO.

After receiving this latest reply, the PLO formulated a new version of its position of the Baker proposals, stating that the PLO can accept to deal with the Baker Plan of 6th October in accordance with the decisions of the Palestinian Central Council at its meeting in October 1989. The PLO reiterated its willingness to enter into the proposed dialogue with a delegation representing the Palestinian people inside and outside the occupied territories, that the agenda of the dialogue be open and without prior conditions, that the dialogue be a preliminary step towards convening the international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations and on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The Palestinian position was conveyed to the U.S. Administration on 2nd December. The United States considered the reply as positive in essence. Thus, the two parties have expressed their acceptance of the Baker Plan in principle, though each party linked its acceptance with certain assumptions.

Consequently, the United States has proposed convening a tripartite meeting in Washington between the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Israel and the United States to announce the start of the dialogue. January 1990 is likely to be the date for this meeting.

Needless to say that at the proposed meeting, several thorny, complex and controversial issues will be raised. Nonetheless, we share the

The President



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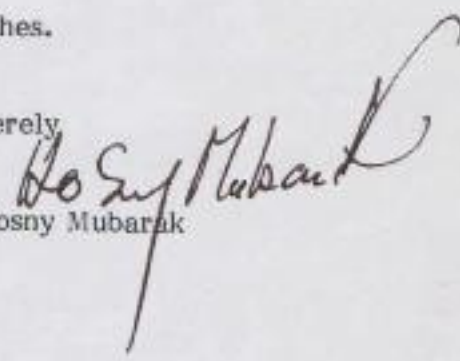
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PLO the view that the initiation of an Israeli Palestinian dialogue can constitute a positive step on the road to peace. The dialogue can also have an impact on Israeli as well as international public opinion.

You will agree with me that we have to seize the available opportunity and utilize the momentum created to the best advantage of peace. The encouragement of the PLO at this stage is crucial to the success of the dialogue. I am confident that the constructive attitude adopted by Your friendly country, both individually and within the European Community will be further enhanced and reaffirmed in the interest of our common objective of reaching a just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian problem. The recent statement on the Israeli Palestinian dialogue, as contained in the conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council, has been received with much appreciation by Arab and Palestinian circles. I would welcome any views You would like to share with us on this issue.

With warmest regards and most sincere wishes.

Sincerely


Mohammad Hosny Mubarak

Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Thatcher
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland