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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Now see the telegram

18 March 1983

I send you enclosed.

Prime Minister

ADL  $\frac{22}{3}$

Apex message to President Reagan

See John

h.a...

A.J.C.  $\frac{18}{3}$

Arab League Mission

I understand that the Prime Minister would like to look at a draft message to President Reagan following the visit of the Arab League Mission and enclose a text.

Yours ever

*J E Holmes*

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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DRAFT MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN

Thank you for your recent message about the Middle East.

The long-deferred visit to London of the Arab League Mission, arising from the Fez Summit, took place on 18 March. I found it encouraging that, after the difficult exchanges which we had had earlier with some of the Arab countries about Palestinian representation in the delegation, and given that we stood firm on not having the PLO, all the governments nevertheless felt it was worth coming, even Syria. Their purpose was to tell us that the Fez proposals, which they now call the 'Arab Peace Plan', are still on the table, and that some at least of the conclusions of the recent meeting of the Palestine National Council should be seen in a positive light.

All those who spoke emphasised the need for speed and determination in US policy towards the Middle East. They seek constant reassurance that Israel does not have your unconditional support. Success in obtaining Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon without unacceptable conditions is seen as a test of your resolution though the Palestine problem of course occupies the first priority for them.

King Hussein told me that he is still not sure how far Arafat will go to enable him to declare his readiness to participate in

/ peace talks.

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peace talks. But he is not in an optimistic mood and feels in need of support, not least from the Saudis. He believes, and I must say I sympathise with him, that we have got into a vicious circle. The Arab world is waiting for a clear signal from you that you are truly determined and even-handed, while you are waiting for a clear signal from them that they are ready to negotiate. I hope that you can find a way to emphasise again to the Arab world that you are totally committed to your proposals and will take the necessary steps to push them forward if the Arabs will do their part.

Phil Habib of course continues to enjoy our full support. It is good that he is making his weight felt on the question of Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. It occurred to me that the appointment of another impressive figure like Habib - if you could find one - to deal exclusively with the Palestine problem might make it easier for you to get across the message I am talking about. It could help to demonstrate your determination to make the fastest possible progress on both fronts at once.

There is no doubt that the next few weeks will be critical. I want you to know that we are right behind your efforts to make progress in these very complex negotiations. Please be in touch if there is any way in which we can be of help.