



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

David Wilson wanted  
you to see the  
attached which will  
apparently appear in  
tomorrow's Daily Express.

2. I understand a last  
minute hitch has come  
up over the statement to  
be made by the joint  
delegation, with Wilhem trying  
to delete any specific  
reference to Israel. I have  
told the FCO that you would  
want the meeting cancelled if  
they try to weasel out of the agreed  
text.

C.D. 12

~~6 CLARENDON PLACE,~~  
~~LONDON W.2.~~  
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Chunder.

If we believe Arafat's "Wing"  
of the P.L.F. wasn't responsible,  
we may well be proved very wrong!  
Or very naive, or both.

My concern is to avoid more egg on  
our faces than necessary.

I think the P.M. might benefit from  
glancing at this assessment.

Said

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH  
MOHAMMED MILHEM AND ELIAS KHOURY

1. Milhem and Khoury are colleagues of Mahmoud Zeidan, known as "Abu Abbas", head of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), the group which pirated the Achille Lauro and mutilated and murdered Mr. Leon Klinghoffer, the ailing Jewish American.

2. Abu Abbas is one of the closest companions and political associates of Arafat. Arafat confirmed him as head of the PLF only 4 weeks ago. Arafat took him with him to Iraq last February to meet President Saddam Hussein. Abu Abbas' headquarters are Arafat's headquarters in Tunis. Unless Arafat is excluded totally from the decisions of his closest associates and his own "Executive", **there can be no doubt that Arafat is responsible for the pirating of the Achille Lauro and therefore also for the torture and murder of the American Jewish passenger.**

3. The reason why the Achille Lauro and Larnaca attacks were "necessary" was BECAUSE ARAFAT HAS TO PROVE TO HIS ARAB OBSERVERS THAT HE HAS NOT ABANDONED THE "ARMED STRUGGLE". HE MUST DO THIS BECAUSE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SAYS THAT HE HAS.

4. Arafat is now regarded with considerable contempt even among the conservative Arab states. Jordanian Prime Minister, Zaid Rifai, has called him a "muharijj" - a buffoon. As a result partly of his own manifest weakness, partly of his unpopularity with Arab leaders, and partly of the kidnapping of Soviet diplomats in Lebanon, the Soviet Union is cooling off Arafat on whom they had pinned their last hopes of an international peace conference with themselves co-presiding with the USA. The interests of the Arab states are not served by Arafat being saved from losing all credibility by a sudden decision by the British Government to receive two of his henchmen as Foreign Office interlocutors. The terrorists will make much of the meeting in order to rebuild prestige for Arafat's minority faction of the defunct "PLO".

5. As the facts about Arafat's relationship with Abu Abbas and the PLF emerge, the United States Administration could not be pleased that Abu Abbas's colleagues were entertained at the FO a few days after they had captured his operatives and brought them into custody in Italy.

6. Sir Geoffrey Howe has not publicly produced any evidence that Milhem and Khoury have "abandoned violence" in answer to the ample evidence that has been produced to the contrary.

7. Even if Milhem and Khoury were to declare in London that they themselves and "the PLO" are willing to "abandon violence" and recognize Israel and/or its right to exist, there could be no political results from such a statement. Arafat cannot deliver anything that his men promise. The Israelis have been antagonized by the meeting, and the Larnaca and Achille Lauro affairs have made peace talks far less possible.

8. The British Government by insisting that these two men have committed themselves and/or their Organization to peaceful means of settling their territorial dispute, while giving no evidence, and when all the evidence available points the other way, is putting egg on its own face.

Feature for the EXPRESS - tomorrow 14/10/85

THE ACHILLE LAURO AFFAIR  
WHO AND WHAT ARE THE PLF?  
THE ARAFAT CONNECTION

Mr. Leon Klinghoffer, the Jewish wheelchair-bound victim of the PLF, was hideously mutilated before he was murdered.

**His torturers and murderers were acting on the orders of the man whose representatives are holding talks today at the Foreign Office.**

These are the facts:

The Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) was founded in 1976 by Mahmoud Abbas Zeidan and Talat Yakoub. It consisted at first of about 200 men, a breakaway grouplet from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), a Syrian-backed Marxist group led by Ahmed Jibril.

Although President Assad of Syria armed the PLO in order to disrupt Lebanon, he intervened against it in 1976 to prevent it actually winning the resultant civil war. A PLO victory was undesirable to him because its factions represented a multitude of interests opposed to his own.

Assad's main PLO enemy then was the largest group, Arafat's al-Fatah. Ahmed Jibril stayed with Assad, but some of his PFLP-GC men broke away to side with Arafat. These were the men Zeidan and Yakoub took with them to form the PLF.

When the PLO was dispersed in 1982, Arafat and a select band of his followers were given asylum in Tunis, the rest of his men in Yemen. Fatah itself broke, and a part led by Abu Musa and backed by Assad, fiercely fought those who remained loyal to Arafat, in Tripoli, North Lebanon, in 1983. At that point, Talat Yakoub took a few members of the PLF away from Arafat to fight with Abu Musa. Zeidan, known as "Abu Abbas", and his lot of the PLF, stayed with Arafat.

From 1983 on Arafat has been leader of a **minority faction** of the erstwhile PLO. Only because he retains the title of "Chairman of the PLO", can his remnant plausibly be called "the PLO" in the Western press.

In 1984 Arafat convened his own choice of a Palestine National Council (PNC) in Amman. This PNC elected a new Executive. Among its members are **Abu Abbas, leader of the PLF, Mohammed Milhem and Elia Khoury, the so-called "men of peace" invited to talks at the Foreign Office.** Both Milhem and Khoury have gone on record as insisting that they have not and will not abandon violence.

The PLF men under Abu Abbas are in the pay of Arafat. They are a fanatically violent group which used hot-air balloons and motorized hang-gliders to reach Israel over the South Lebanese

buffer zone. They also took to the sea to reach the Israeli coast. Their victims were civilians, mostly women and children. In April 1979, on the beach of Nahariyya, they dashed out the brains of a four-year-old girl against the rocks while her father was forced to watch.

Abu Abbas, now 36 years old, is a close companion of Arafat's. Only 4 weeks ago he was confirmed as PLF leader in Tunis. Last February he went with Arafat to Iraq and stood beside him at the meeting with President Saddam Hussein. There is a long-established relationship between the PLF and Iraq, both enemies of Syria.

The PLF operates out of Tunis, from the headquarters of Arafat. If the four pirates who boarded the Achille Lauro had belonged to the tiny splinter group under Yakoub, they would hardly have been likely to come ashore and yield themselves into Arafat's hands.

The fact that Abu Abbas came to meet the pirates in Cairo clinches the matter. They were Abu Abbas's men, and that means they were Arafat's men.

So unless Arafat has lost every vestige of power over even the remnant of the "PLO" people about him - in which case nothing his men promise can be worth even 5 seconds of the Foreign Secretary's time - ARAFAT HIMSELF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PIRATING OF THE ACHILLE LAURO.

by Jillian Becker: acknowledged authority on terrorism, well-known author of books on European terrorists, the PLO, etc.