

Prime Minister  
For information.

cc Mr. Fall FCO

(4)

MR. COLES

A.S.C.  $\frac{20}{1}$

ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION

1. The Jordanian Ambassador invited me to lunch today (19 January). Apart from general conversation about the Palestine problem and about the war between Iran and Iraq, we had a round on the question of the Arab League Delegation.
2. The Ambassador tried to suggest that there was a division between the FCO and Number 10 on this question. I firmly put him in his place. I went on to say that he must understand that our policies were not dictated by pressure groups within the United Kingdom, nor by the Americans. Our policies were formulated for reasons which we believed to be right.
3. In response to a comment from the Ambassador that even the Dutch were ahead of us in their attitude towards the PLO, I said that he must not confuse Britain with smaller European powers without a long history of overseas involvement. Our policy was plain and had to take into account apparently extraneous questions. In the long process of decolonisation, we had been obliged to deal with a number of Liberation Movements. I was not maintaining that our policy in every case was exactly consistent, but our general rule was not to "recognise" Liberation Movements, ie by according them the privilege of being received by Cabinet Ministers, until they were prepared to sit round a table with their adversaries in peaceful negotiation. This principle had been relevant in the case of the Patriotic Front in Rhodesia, Swapo in Namibia and other Liberation Movements which I could mention. We also had the very serious problem on our own doorstep of the IRA, a plain terrorist movement. Our attitude towards the PLO reflected this general policy and I could assure the Ambassador, in answer to his direct question, that we were not about to change policy in response to pressure in connection with the Arab League Delegation.
4. The Ambassador predictably suggested that, if we were prepared to receive the PLO at Cabinet Minister level, this would encourage them in their course of moderation and would make a contribution to the peace initiatives at present in the field. I deflected this question by saying that we were watching with interest Arafat's negotiations with King Hussein. It would be particularly interesting to see

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whether these negotiations led to a delegation acceptable to the  
United States being able to enter into peace negotiations based on  
the Reagan initiative.

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A.D. PARSONS  
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