



Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

107 Israel-PLO Mutual Recognition- Letters and Speeches- 10 September 1993

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107. Israel-PLO Mutual Recognition, Letters and Speeches, 10 September 1993.

In the days preceding the signing of the Declaration of Principles, negotiations were conducted in Paris and Oslo to bring about an agreement on mutual recognition. The main issue was the Israeli insistence that the PLO renounce terror and violence. Once again the good offices of Norway were utilized and the letter from Yasser Arafat to Prime Minister Rabin was brought to Israel by Foreign Minister Holst of Norway. The letter contained the PLO commitment to renounce terror and its assumptions and expectations. Chairman Arafat also promised to submit to the Palestinian National Council for its formal approval the necessary changes in the Palestinian Covenant. In his reply Mr. Rabin stated that Israel now recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. The text of the documents, signed in Jerusalem on 10 September, and remarks of Prime Minister Rabin, Norwegians Foreign Minister Holst and Foreign Minister Peres follow:

September 9, 1993

Yitzhak Rabin
Prime Minister of Israel

Mr. Prime Minister,

The signing of the Declaration of Principles marks a new era in the history of the Middle East. In firm conviction thereof, I would like to confirm the following PLO commitments:

The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security.

The PLO accepts United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The PLO commits itself to the Middle East peace process, and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides and declares that all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations.

The PLO considers that the signing of the Declaration of Principles constitutes a historic event, inaugurating a new epoch of peaceful coexistence, free from violence and all other acts which endanger peace and stability. Accordingly, the PLO renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence and will assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators.

In view of the promise of a new era and the signing of the Declaration of Principles and based on Palestinian acceptance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the PLO affirms that those articles of the Palestinian Covenant which deny Israel's right to exist, and the provisions of the Covenant which are inconsistent with the commitments of this letter are now inoperative and no longer valid. Consequently, the PLO undertakes to submit to the Palestinian National Council for formal approval the necessary changes in regard to the Palestinian Covenant.

Sincerely,

Yasser Arafat Chairman

The Palestine Liberation Organization

September 9, 1993

Yasser Arafat Chairman

The Palestine Liberation Organization

Mr. Chairman,

In response to your letter of September 9, 1993, I wish to confirm to you that, in light of the PLO commitments included in your letter, the Government of Israel has decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process.

Sincerely,

Yitzhak Rabin
Prime Minister of Israel

September 9, 1993

His Excellency Johan Jorgen Holst
Foreign Minister of Norway

Dear Minister Holst,

I would like to confirm to you that, upon the signing of the Declaration of Principles, I will include the following positions in my public statements:

In light of the new era marked by the signing of the Declaration of Principles, the PLO encourages and calls upon the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to take part in the steps leading to the normalization of life, rejecting violence and terrorism, contributing to peace and stability and participating actively in shaping reconstruction, economic development and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Yasser Arafat Chairman
The Palestine Liberation Organization

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin:

I have just received a letter from Chairman Arafat, in the name of the leadership of the PLO, in which he takes commitments to recognize Israel and its right to exist in peace and security, to solve the long conflict between the Palestinians and Israel through negotiations in a peaceful way. He takes [a] commitment to end terror and violence, to renounce it. He takes upon himself to look at the articles of the Palestinian [National] Covenant as inoperative and no longer valid. I see in this commitment, on the part of the PLO, a change - a dramatic change - that opens the road toward reconciliation and peace between the Palestinians and Israel. It is the first agreement since the creation of the State of Israel. I am fully aware of the difficulties that face the Palestinians and Israel in the solution of our problems. I see a big step toward the achievement of these goals, knowing that there is still a long way to go - with obstacles on the road that we shall have to remove, and it is possible to remove them. I believe it starts a new era, an era in which we will do our best to achieve peace and security in Israel and, at the same time, give the Palestinians the right - in the context of agreement about the interim period - to run their affairs. I believe that there is a great opportunity, of changing not only the relations between the

Palestinians and Israel, but to expand it to the solution of the conflict between Israel and other Arab countries, and other Arab peoples. It is an historic moment that, hopefully, will bring about an end to one hundred years of bloodshed and misery between the Palestinians and Jews, and Palestinians and Israel. I would like to thank you, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, for your efforts, for your involvement in the achievement of these papers. I would like to thank you, Shimon [Peres], for your efforts to bring it about. As I said, it is only the beginning, but a tremendously important agreement.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst:


Let me just very briefly say how pleased we have been and how humble I feel that I had a chance to play a small role in this very important endeavor to bring peace to the embattled area of the Middle East. It has been a very long journey and some very dedicated people have worked very, very hard to produce the documents that settle the immediate matters that need to be settled. We have had the privilege of working together with some fantastic Israelis and, equally, with some unique Palestinians, in finding a solution to what increasingly came to be seen as common challenges, common problems. And then I see the kind of spirit, the kind of cooperation, that has developed between the two groups of people, who so ably and tenaciously represented their different sides. I feel that the future is bright indeed.

There is hope and I think that one has, as the prime minister said, entered a new area. We have gone beyond the stage where decisions could only be made by consensus. We had to break the consensus, in order to make the necessary decisions and in order to provide a basis from which you can build a new consensus. It seems to me that the importance of the documents that have now been initialed and signed is that we have created a new basis for building a common future in the Middle East. One has put history behind us, and we are looking toward the future. The Declaration of Principles that has been agreed upon between the two sides, it seems to me, points toward a future which we will have to build together - and by common endeavor rather than in common conflict. So, my only task is to thank you very much for everything that you have done in accomplishing these very, very important results and for giving us a chance to serve in that very, very important endeavor.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres:

I want to thank, first of all, the Norwegian people and Norway - a wonderful land - that has embraced the peace negotiations with an open heart and hospitality. I would like to thank you, Johan, for your tireless and brilliant work and with your permission I would like to have a look at Marianne, your

wife, and at Mona and Terje Larsen, these were the four people that, day and night, were working tirelessly, without distinguishing between land and air, and day and night. We are very grateful for what you have done and our thanks come from the depths of our heart, for all of you, and you particularly. As the prime minister said, we understand the seriousness of the moment for our own people. It is, for them, a new experiment. We know that this is not just a political accord, this is really something that relates, to every family in our country - to the mother, father, and to the children - what the future will be like, and we understand the seriousness of it. I want to say also, that we wish, from the depths of our heart, to the Palestinian people, a different future. We do not hate people and we do not hate persons. What we are trying seriously, is to get rid of a poisonous past and to use a biblical wish to return to the land of milk and honey. We can do it and we have to believe so accordingly. I think that all of us will work tirelessly to make this agreement - which until this moment is a piece of paper - into a reality. For me, it was a privilege to work with the prime minister. I think that both of us felt deeply that we are serving a great cause and a great occasion, and we must meet the size and the seriousness of it. I would like also to thank from the depths of my heart, the Israeli people. I will not mention names, because I have to return back home, and if I shall forget somebody, I should be in trouble. We shall do it in an organized way, but there are people who worked very, very hard, and we will thank them as well. Again, we are departing to a new future. Difficult was this day, as well. We are not going to face a situation without difficulties. But the difference is that we are facing a new day with many chances and hopes, for us, for our neighbors, and for the whole of the Middle East. Thank you very much.

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