

In answer to questions addressed to him in the House of Commons and at a press conference, on July 21 and 25, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, disclosed supplementary information on important aspects of the Government of Canada's decision to seek postponement of the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which was to be held in Toronto this coming September. Following are excerpts from these exchanges:

Mr. Allan Lawrence, Member of Parliament for Northumberland-Durham: My question is, will it be a prerequisite of this government that before this country will permit the holding of such a conference, the PLO is not to be admitted to a U.N. conference in this country on criminology and the rehabilitation of the offender?

Mr. MacEachen: . . . The hon. member is obsessed with the PLO. He ought to put this conference into a broader international context and understand that we want to host the conference in a successful and favourable political climate. The hon. member should direct questions concerning the admission of the PLO to Canada to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras).

Mr. Lincoln Alexander, Member of Parliament for Hamilton-West: . . . Is it the position of the government that the PLO should not be an invited participant to any outside conference sponsored by the United Nations? I think the question is clear and, in view of the minister's statement, deserves an answer.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. When the question of observer status was placed before the General Assembly, the Government of Canada took a position against the granting of observer status. The United Nations voted overwhelmingly to grant the Palestinian Liberation Organization observer status in the United Nations. Canada is not contesting the result of that decision, although it voted against that position.