

News Release

Department of
External
Affairs



Communiqué

Ministère des
Affaires
extérieures

No. 066

March 30, 1989.

OFFICIAL CONTACTS WITH THE PLO

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today that Canada is ending restrictions on official meetings with representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

In addition, Mr. Clark said that Canada has endorsed the principle of self-determination for the Palestinian people to be exercised through peace negotiations.

In making these announcements, the Secretary of State for External Affairs reaffirmed Canada's support for the State of Israel and reiterated Canada's policy of supporting the right of Israel to exist within secure borders. Nothing in the policy announced today detracts from Canada's longstanding position as a close friend of Israel.

None of the above changes the Canadian practice in matters of recognition. Canada does not recognize the Palestinian state proclaimed in Algiers. Canada does not recognize organizations and therefore the question of recognition of the PLO does not apply.

"In recent months the constructive and helpful statements by the Palestine National Council (PNC) and Chairman Arafat have addressed critical Canadian concerns about the position of the PLO," Mr. Clark said. In particular, he cited the acceptance by the PNC of Security Council Resolution 242 as a basis for a peace conference on the Middle East, its disavowal of violence against civilians and Chairman Arafat's explicit recognition of the State of Israel.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

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