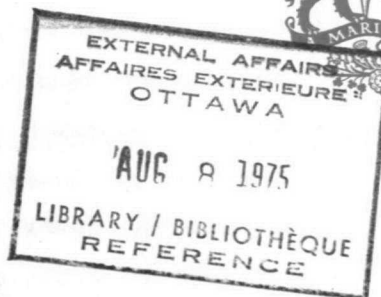


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# STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY  
OF STATE  
FOR EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE  
D'ÉTAT AUX  
AFFAIRES  
EXTÉRIEURES.

COMMENTS BY THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS, THE HONOURABLE  
ALLAN J. MACÉACHEN

"ENTRY INTO CANADA OF  
MEMBERS OF THE PALESTINE  
LIBERATION ORGANIZATION  
(PLO) TO ATTEND CONFERENCES  
SPONSORED BY THE UNITED  
NATIONS AND OTHER REPUTABLE  
ORGANIZATIONS"

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.

Reporter: Did the Cabinet evolve any position on the PLO entry into Canada?

Mr. MacEachen: Yes. I would like to make it clear that notwithstanding the decision of the Government to postpone until a more propitious time this Fifth Congress on Crime, members of the PLO other than those who are members of known terrorist sub-groups or have themselves been involved in terrorist acts will be admitted to Canada by Minister's permit for attendance at U.N. conferences or on invitation by reputable Canadian organizations. That is our policy on the admission of members of the PLO. It is precisely the same policy that was announced in the House some weeks ago by Mr. Andras, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and I was hoping that he would have had an opportunity to make that policy statement in the House today but because it is part of this panorama, I think it ought to be stated here. For more details, I hope you will go to him.

Reporter: Mr. MacEachen, are you prepared to lead some sort of initiative at the U.N. to remove the PLO as an official observer?

Mr. MacEachen: No. I've no intention of tackling what will prove to be a totally fruitless endeavour.

Reporter: Do you think the observers maybe shouldn't attend, those that don't represent full states? I mean, are you differentiating between the General Assembly and technical conferences . . . ?

Mr. MacEachen: No, I haven't made that statement at all. I've made the opposite statement in the House.

Reporter: Do you not see any danger, though, of the (controversy) surrounding the postponement of the conference in Toronto spilling over to Vancouver? Would the PLO, for example, not be observers at that conference as well?

Mr. MacEachen: The PLO would be eligible for attendance at the conference and it may be that a similar outcry would develop at that time. I have no way of being sure. What I hope and will work for is that in the meantime, there will be changes in the political, international atmosphere so that the same outcry will not occur and that these conferences will settle down into technical conferences to help mankind rather than become really forums for important political discussions. There is no question about that; but they have their place in other forums.

Reporter: What if the PLO didn't want to come to Toronto, would your views still be the same?

Mr. MacEachen: No. I don't see that the PLO is the sole factor in this situation at all. We are placing this in the broad international context and I believe that it is about time that a country like Canada, and I hope others, will make it perfectly clear how they feel about these technical conferences.

--Transcript of press conference, July 21, 1975.

Mr. Gérard Laprise, Member of Parliament for Abitibi:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) has indicated in his statement that he will travel to the Middle East, to invite the countries of the area, including Israel, to discuss this problem. Could the minister advise the House whether he will take this opportunity to raise the Palestinian refugee issue and try to solve the problem?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement, Canada has contributed very substantially through the years to assistance for the Palestinian refugees. We supported resolution 242 which refers directly to the Palestinians, and recently in my address at the United Nations I developed Canadian policy further with regard to the Palestinian people. We believe that the Palestinian people must

be consulted about a settlement in the Middle East and they must be involved in that settlement. With regard to the specific question of assistance, if the hon. member is referring to financial assistance, we have been contributing financial assistance to the relief of the refugees.

Mr. Stuart Leggatt, Member of Parliament for New Westminster: Mr. Speaker, the minister stated that he is looking for a change in conditions or climate for the holding of the conference. Will he specify what he wishes to see changed, in terms of the PLO attitude toward Israel, which would perhaps create that kind of climate? Second, will he indicate whether we can expect a definitive decision with regard to Habitat in Vancouver, in terms of the holding of that conference and where exactly the same conditions will apparently prevail unless there is a change in the so-called climate to which the minister refers?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, there are two broad conditions which would indicate an easing of the situation that caused us to seek a postponement of this conference. One is the extreme intrusion of unrelated political discussions into what ought to be technical conferences. Mind you, certain of the developing countries feel that these political matters ought to be discussed. It is our view that they ought not to intrude into what are technical conferences. We had a recent example at the conference in Mexico, which in my opinion was damaged because of unrelated political issues entering the discussion. We hope to make some progress in establishing ground rules against the politicization of these conferences. That is one situation.

The other is the expectation that in the meantime there will be a reduction in tensions in the Middle East and that the present unfavourable climate will, if not disappear, be reduced. For example, successful partial negotiations which

Secretary Kissinger is presently working on would be a significant development. However, who can predict the future? It is possible that the Geneva talks will be held, the status of the PLO will finally be resolved and we can look to a generally more favourable situation in the Middle East. That is what Canada will be working to achieve in the intervening period.

--House of Commons Debates  
Vol.119, No.175,  
pp. 7761-7762.

Mr. Bill Clarke, Member of Parliament for Vancouver-Quadra:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In light of the answer given Monday to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands that preparations for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver next year will continue and in light of the reaction of the United Nations to Canada's postponement of the Toronto conference, will the minister now say what is the government's intention on admission of delegates to the Vancouver conference, keeping in mind that delay similar to that in the Toronto decision will put Canada in another embarrassing position and place Vancouver in a very difficult financial position in relation to the ongoing development done at the urging of the federal government?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs):

Mr. Speaker, the situation is simply this. Preparations for the conference in Vancouver are going ahead. There has been no balk in that respect. That was stated by myself in the House and I am happy to confirm it today. With regard to the admission of members of the PLO, I have stated elsewhere the situation. It is properly a

matter for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, but I think it ought to be put in context with regard to this question. The government has decided that members of the PLO who are non-terrorists will be admitted to Canada under ministerial permit for attendance at the invitation of reputable Canadian organizations or at U.N. conferences.

House of Commons Debates  
July 25, 1975.