

*The President
of the European Parliament*

GET OUT OF VIOLENCE, GET INTO NEGOTIATIONS

I met Mr Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, today at 18.00 hrs.

I used the occasion to spell out the position of the European Parliament on the problem of the Middle East.

I said that the European Community has for many years taken a balanced position on the Middle East. The Venice Declaration of 1980 recognizes the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination. It also stresses the right to existence and to security of all the States in the region, including Israel.

Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are the cornerstone for any eventual settlement.

I spelled out a simple message at the very beginning of the meeting:

"GET OUT OF VIOLENCE,
GET INTO NEGOTIATIONS"

I condemned the many acts of violence and terrorism arising from the Middle East and those who supported such acts. I added that Mr Arafat has a great opportunity to make a fresh start, and I reiterated Parliament's view that the PLO should recognize Israel and its right to exist within secure borders.

Western European public attitude to the PLO would be much enhanced and improved if the PLO made an unambiguous renunciation of violence, if they recognized Israel's right to exist, and if they accepted the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. I hoped that Mr Arafat would publicly support signs of new thinking in this direction.

On the question of the Occupied Territories, I deplored the continuing violence. I said that the European Community Member States had made representations to Israel requesting it to fulfill its obligations as an occupying power, pending its withdrawal (in accordance with SCR 242) in the context of a peace settlement.

I also drew attention to the European Community's role in improving living conditions for the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories: the European Community has given 3 million ECU in aid, 8,25 million dollar in food aid and 20 million ECU in cash to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). I asked Mr Arafat to endorse my condemnation of any supply of arms or training to terrorist organizations in Ireland or elsewhere in the world.

Dialogue and discussion is the only route to making progress in the Middle East.