

ing of the conference; all steps should be coordinated with Washington.

9. The Soviet Union has to change its policy towards 'Israel' and restore diplomatic relations as a precondition for participation.

10. The duration of the conference should be limited.

Thus, the US—Israeli conference puts preconditions and classifications for the conference and the participants. It would only be a temporary procedure, leading ultimately to the goal of bringing the Arabs and Israelis to the negotiations table. The PLO's participation is refused in advance, offering as a maximum a place for the Palestinians within the Jordanian or other Arab delegation. The Soviet Union's participation is conditioned on its restoring diplomatic relations with 'Israel' and allowing the emigration of Soviet Jews.

JORDAN'S DELIGHT

Since the political coordination between the Jordanian regime and the rightist PLO leadership was suspended in February 1986, the Jordanian regime has rapidly proceeded with its policy of normalizing relations with the Zionist state, prior to signing a treaty. At the same time, Jordanian officials have continued to confirm the necessity of convening an international conference. It is by now clear that there is Jordanian-Israeli coordination in imposing their division-of-functions plan in the occupied territories, as a prelude to direct negotiations under the auspices of an alleged international conference.

Although the Jordanian regime has always claimed adherence to the concept of an international conference, this position stems from its attempt to avoid the consequences of overt, direct negotiations with 'Israel', Sadat-style. It is most probable that Peres' primary motive for finding a formula for a conference that would 'beautify' direct negotiations, was extracting the Jordanian regime from the stalemate it is facing.

THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT'S REVIVED ILLUSIONS

Like Peres' real aim of bringing King Hussein to the table of direct negotiations, raising the issue of an international conference aims at extracting the

settlement from its stalemate. It aims at reviving the illusions of the PLO's rightist leadership that by involvement in the 'peaceful solution', it can overcome the political stalemate it entered after coordination with the Jordanian regime was halted.

After the 1973 war, the PLO rightist leadership had the illusion that an international conference would be held. However, after the smoke had cleared, it became obvious that the US planned to advance Kissinger's step-by-step diplomacy instead. A few years later, the developments in the region had clarified in practice the kind of 'peace' Washington and Tel Aviv were seeking to impose, i.e., Camp David. More years passed and the international conference was not held, neither according to the US concept, nor according to the PLO rightist leadership's concept. Throughout these years, US—Israeli obstinacy was responsible for obstructing the possibility of convening an international conference in which the PLO would participate on an equal footing with other concerned parties, especially as the balance of power was leaning heavily in favor of the enemy alliance.

Still, the Palestinian right continued betting on the possibility of a change in the US position, whereby it would recognize the PLO and accept its full participation in the conference. Renewed illusions about the possibility of convening an international conference were seen in the recent political moves of the rightist leadership on several fronts: First, relations were restored with the Jordanian regime, as seen in Khalid Al Wazir's visit to Jordan and the meeting of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian committee. Second, the right-wing leadership continues to consolidate relations with the Camp David regime in Egypt. Third, this leadership is making extensive political moves on the European continent.

Despite all these efforts, facts clearly indicate that the PLO will not be accepted as an independent party, on an equal footing with others, at the international conference now being planned, if the conference is to be held at all. This remains the case even if the PLO were to accept the US—Israeli conditions. While the Amman accord was the result of the PLO rightist leadership's search for a place in the settlement process, the terms of this accord and

the course it charted also prove that any Palestinian participation would only be within the framework of a Jordanian delegation for direct negotiations.

FEASIBILITY

A good number of Arab regimes do not reject the Israeli-US conditions for an international conference in essence. Still, one cannot assume that all these regimes will find the strength to challenge the Arab masses and national liberation movement. One cannot assume that the Soviet Union will accept to participate in a conference of that nature and aim. On the other hand, it is unthinkable that the two strategic allies, 'Israel' and the US, will voluntarily relinquish their conditions, and accept the concept of an international conference as the Arabs or the Soviet Union desire. A rather far-fetched possibility is that the Arab regimes give up the peace plan adopted at the Fez Summit, thus submitting to the Israeli-US conditions. Otherwise, the chances for convening an international conference on the Middle East are nonexistent this year, or in the next three years. (Next year is the US presidential elections, and the next would be the new administration's first year in power).

Experience had proven that Washington and Tel Aviv do not seek an international conference. Rather what is being sought now is the liquidation of the Palestinian cause and the PLO. The rightist PLO leadership's adherence to the Amman accord and restoring relations with the Jordanian regime only help pave the way for the enemy alliance's plans, offering King Hussein a cover for his capitulationist steps in the process.

It is clear that the only road open to the PLO leadership for getting out of its stalemate is officially and publicly cancelling the Amman accord, and ending relations with Cairo. This would set the conditions for restoring the PLO's unity on a clear nationalist basis, antagonistic to the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary alliance and all capitulationist plans and projects. This is the only way to obstruct the Jordanian and Egyptian regime's maneuvers. It is the prerequisite for the PLO's regaining its position in the Arab national liberation movement, as a vanguard fighting the imperialist plans, whether these are promoted via an international conference or without one. ●