

# Soviet-Palestinian Joint Communique

On June 22nd and 23rd, 1987, a PLO Executive Committee delegation paid a working visit to Moscow in response to a prior Soviet invitation. The delegation was headed by Farouq Qaddoumi and included comrades Abu Ali Mustafa, Suleiman Najab and Yasir Abed Rabbouh. The delegation was met by Soviet Foreign Minister Edward A. Shevardnadze, member of the politbureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The delegation also met with members of the CPSU Central Committee. The discussions were characterized by mutual sincerity, reaffirming the cohesion of views between the Soviet Union and the PLO concerning present conditions in the world and Middle East. The two parties outlined the means for developing Soviet-Palestinian relations.

Reviewing the international situation, the two parties reaffirmed their support for an international order which would lead to a nuclear-free and violence-free world, a world governed by the principles of free development and independence for all nations without intervention or the imposition of one's will upon the other.

The PLO renewed its support to the broad range of Soviet peace initiatives. In the PLO's view, enacting these proposals would lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons before the end of this century; this would considerably reduce military and political tension on our planet, and allow huge sums of money and resources to be used for development purposes.

The two parties noted that regional conflicts are exploited by imperialist forces to increase tension worldwide and destroy the national achievements of liberated countries. Accordingly, they confirmed that political settlements for regional conflicts are an essential part of the struggle to consolidate international security.

The two parties exchanged views concerning the situation in the Middle East and the means to achieve a just solution to the Palestinian question - the core of the Middle East conflict -within the framework of a comprehensive settlement in the region.

The Soviets renewed their confirmed solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom and independence, led by the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative. The Soviets highly praised the results of the PNC's 18th session, which marked the Palestinians' determination to achieve their legitimate national rights. The results have created a realistic basis for consolidating the PLO's role as an effective, independent factor in Middle East issues.

The Soviet Union and the PLO declare that achieving the fundamental rights of the Palestinian Arab people to self-determination and independent national development remain to be the core of the Middle East conflict. Attempts to ignore this issue, and replace it with unilateral deals that neglect the interests of the Palestinian people, only complicate regional problems and sabotage the settlement process in the Middle East.

In the view of both parties, there are objective possibilities for stopping the dangerous course of events in the Middle East. The Soviet Union and the PLO call for serious international efforts to extract the Middle East from the present crisis. This requires embarking on practical moves to find a comprehensive solution to the conflict through a collective search for an honorable and just peace, based on principles of mutual security and equality in accordance with the UN Charter, its resolutions and international legitimacy.

The Soviet Union and PLO agree that a real settlement requires the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the Palestinian territories, and fulfillment of the Palestinian Arab people's inalienable national rights to self-determination, the establishment of their independent state and return to their homes in accordance with UN resolutions. The main road to that is by convening an international conference, invested with full powers, under UN auspices and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all concerned parties, including the PLO, on an equal footing.

The two parties pointed to the necessity of careful planning for this conference in order to insure its success. The formation of a preparatory committee might play a positive role. Both parties consider as totally unacceptable the ongoing attempts to distort the concept of an international conference and transform it into a cover for bilateral deals and for excluding the PLO...

The Soviets agreed with the PLO delegation's position on the unity of the Arab ranks and the formation of a unified Arab position on the issues of a settlement and an international conference on the Middle East. Such a position is a priority for advancing towards a just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both parties confirmed that achieving this aim requires coordination between nationalist and progressive Arab forces, and the restoration of cooperation between the PLO and Syria.

The Soviet Union and the PLO strongly condemned the continuing Israeli occupation of parts of Lebanon. They confirmed the necessity of complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. Both parties reaffirmed their support to Lebanon's unity and sovereignty, and the resolution of its internal problems in line with the people's interests.

The two parties expressed the need for an immediate halt to the Iran-Iraq war, and the necessity of a political settlement based on respect for the legitimate interests of both countries. The Soviet Union and the PLO oppose exploitation of the present tension in the Gulf area as a pretext for increasing foreign military presence in this important part of the world.

The Soviet Union and the PLO expressed their deep concern about the situation in the Mediterranean where conventional and nuclear weapons remain concentrated. This situation is exploited by the US, other NATO members and Israel to